

Hanne Bergius: „The Motor of Things“: Wheels – Symbols of the Dionysian, in: Dada Triumphs! Dada Berlin, 1917-1923. Artistry of Polarities. Montages - Metamechanics - Manifestations. Translated by Brigitte Pichon. Vol. V. of the ten editions of Crisis and the Arts. The History of Dada, ed. by Stephen Foster, New Haven, Conn. u. a., Thomson/ Gale 2003. ISBN 978-0-816173-55-6, 154–164, 337–338.

**“The Motor of Things”:
Wheels — Symbols of the Dionysian**

Motion, speed, and dynamics that in the early twenties equally dominated technological, economic, social, and cultural processes fascinated Dada Berlin as well. “We want to let ourselves be thrown around and torn apart by the mysterious dimension, by our sixth sense of motion! So that we realize our being alive, alive today!”¹⁰⁴ The photograph “*Variété*” in the weekly edition of *Neue Jugend*, June 1917 (fig. 114) shows an artist who is thrown around inside a wheel by its momentum and yet keeps his balance. He passes on the challenge of dynamics not only as ecstasy and vertigo, but also in its great danger. Being present

within the moment meant "all" or "nothing": intensification or annihilation of life. The artist's creative energy straining to surpass itself could be likened to the rolling wheels of life re-creating itself at each instant.

The demand for mobility was basically directed against a bourgeois culture paralyzed by a tradition remote from reality. The dynamic, activating, simultaneous citational process of montage was powered by a hunger for motion; it did not want in the least to be reminiscent of static compositions, which might give rise to contemplative considerations. The montages were to trigger impulses of motion. They were indebted to "becoming," to the dynamic, to the processual, to change. Thus their effect upon the recipient was one of activation. The wheels symbolized the Dionysian moment of destruction and the utopian transgression of all limitations previously imposed upon mankind. We have to ask: did technology create for the Berlin Dadaists a new cult of life with new symbols, or did the Dadaists undermine the power of technology with its own means and effects?

With the dynamic, machinoid aesthetics, the Dadaists at first joined a discourse, which was common to the international avant-garde in general. Technical advancement created a new world language that could be universally understood. Not only the Italian and Russian futurists, but also the French Delaunay and Léger promoted the connection of the cultural revolt to technological revolution. For the Dadaists of France and America, especially Duchamp, Picabia (cat. no. 47–49, 103), Man Ray, and later Ribemont-Dessaignes and Crotti, machine elements were multi-layered signs of the mechanization of life and culture. The "motor of things" (Huelsenbeck) governed most of Berlin Dadaist simultaneous montages: *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser* (Cut with the Kitchen Knife, 1919–20; fig. 130), *Das schöne Mädchen* (The Pretty Woman, 1920; fig. 131), *Hochfinanz* (High Finance, 1922; fig. 134), *Elasticum* (1920; fig. 108), *Das Pneuma umreist die Welt* (Pneuma Travels around the World, 1920; fig. 116), *Dada cordial* (1919–20; fig. 159), *Dada-merika* (1920; fig. 162), *Dada-Tanz* (Dada-Dance, 1922; fig. 133), *Leben und Treiben in Universal-City, 12 Uhr 5 mittags* (Life and Bustle of Universal City, 12:05 noon, 1920; fig. 117) and others.

With their colossal, oversized effect, the rotating wheels could also refer to the traditional, mythic sense of those Titans created by nineteenth century heavy industry: the steam engines invented by the new Prometheus. Wilhelm Kaulbach's sketch for a fresco titled *Die Erzeugung des Dampfes*¹⁰⁵ (The Generation of Steam, ca. 1859; fig. 118) displayed, next to the union of Vulcan and Nymph, whose elements fire and water produced steam, a rolling iron wheel as a symbol of the industrial age, its energy and dynamics; the three-quarters view is quite comparable to Dada's rubber wheels and ball bearings. But Dada montage showed the shock of industrialization, which opened a wide and unsecured space, removed boundaries, and challenged the subject. Grosz in 1917 highlighted the audacious, unprotected self-assertion of

the individual in the violent stream of things: "An apartment block is ablaze — a child is falling into boiling spinach, you're cycling on spare tires already — don't give it up, boy, even if it should take you six days."¹⁰⁶ These lines suggest a daring ability to cope with reality in the face of the threats of technology. The Six Day Races became synonymous of the lifestyle in modern sports conditioned for the demands of modernity by hard training without giving up — always focusing on the here and now, affirming toward "this thousand fold simultaneity of the most banal today."¹⁰⁷ Grosz presented the fact that the wheels could indeed lose their air in the montage *Ein Opfer der Gesellschaft* (A Victim of Society, 1919; fig. 85). The victim's bicycle tube was rolled up on his shoulder: the war had taken the air out of him and mutilated his body and his face.

In 1917, even before the pictorial montages, the dynamization of life entered literary language in the form of the simultaneous poem creating the Babylonian Confusion of Tongues of the Dada choirs. In Hugo Ball's words the simultaneous poem meant to express "that man is swallowed up in the mechanistic process," "the conflict of the *vox humana* (human voice) with a world that threatens, ensnares, and destroys it, a world whose rhythm and noise are ineluctable."¹⁰⁸ Influenced by this new form of art, presented at Cabaret Voltaire, the Berlin Dadaists on April 30, 1919 staged a simultaneous poem with seven persons and a bruitist poem by Huelsenbeck, tellingly titled *Dada – machinel* (fig. 25), at the Graphische Kabinett of I. B. Neumann. The effect of the simultaneous poems was intensified at another soiree on May 24, 1919 by two kettle-drums and ten rifles; this time the cast included "ten ladies and a post-man": *Chaoplasma* (fig. 26).¹⁰⁹

The shock inflicted by mechanical violence upon people in World War I belonged to one of the most basic, tragic-Dionysian, Dadaist experiences. It was the catastrophe initiating it. Already at the beginning of the war, Otto Dix in his oil painting *Das Geschütz* (Artillery, 1914)¹¹⁰ arranged the rattling machine guns and cannons in a fan-like superposition of levels. At the center is an erect gun barrel, cogwheels rotate and the war apparatus rages while man loses his place among all this machinery. The war developed its own energy potential, which took effect on the sea, on the ground, and for the first time in air, thereby not only transcending previously known dimensions but also releasing very high velocities. The kinematics of aviation, of tanks and troop movements caused a breakdown of the traditional spatial continuum and literally exploded not only perception: humanity itself was blown to bits.

The war intensified the sense of catastrophe, which was generated by the development of nineteenth century technologies:

Machines were created that replaced the individuals. Complexes and creatures of super-human, supra-individual horror were constructed. Fear became a creature with millions of heads. Power was no longer measured

by that of the single man, but by tens of thousands of horsepower. Turbines, boiler houses, iron hammers, and electricity created fields of force and ghosts that kept whole cities and countries in their horrible thrall . . . A world of abstract demons devoured the single utterance, consumed individual faces in towering masks, devoured private expression, deprived individual things of their names, destroyed the ego.¹¹¹

More than ever, people felt physically threatened by, even annihilated by technology. Fear was a fundamental mythic experience, which Dada creatively overcame. Dionysus was dismembered on the battlefield. Yet Dada tried to sublimate this experience as a cruel law immanent in life by artistic activity, by the "game from nothing" — by creating montages. The Dadaists included destruction in their creations and developed it further into a new means of aesthetic production in which Dionysus was reborn and reassembled by Apollo. In the context of current events, this process of "anthropomorphization of dissonance" was never ending, and the points of breakdown were conceptually used in the principle of montage for a criticism of civilization and culture. That is why the rolling wheels in the montages denote an energy that symbolizes both the destructive and the creative aspects of life: the life that, through violent transformation, intensifies itself as the "will to power" in Nietzsche's sense.

The ball bearings and wheels appear as incalculable, oversized rolling matter. In the montage *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser* (Cut with the Kitchen Knife, 1919–20; fig. 130), for example, they enter the picture abruptly, as do the cars, planes, and railway trains. Their impulses, exits, and destinations cannot be defined. They announce transitions, a processual indeterminacy whose powerful motion can be sensed. The machine elements have freed themselves from human control and, similar to the atomized linguistic signs and numbers, begin to provoke independent communications. Regardless of human presence, their rotation continues unflaggingly. "The motor of things" sets the accelerated pace of life, sets its "subject-less" course, ultimately sets the cycle of the material universe. Nietzsche backed this cosmological concept of "eternal return" with the physical theorem of the conservation of energy: in all possible connections its amount will always remain the same.

The wheels seemed to take on the "meta"-dimensions of enormous supra-individual elementary forces. They inspired the Dadaists to grotesque images, which displayed a mixture of fear, irony, and fascination. In Dionysian terms, the wheel was described as *grande roue du monde* (great world-wheel) in Huelsenbeck's novel *Doctor Billig am Ende* (Doctor Billig Ruined, 1921). Dr. Billig is afraid of the wheel's violent course because it does not stop even at murder or death. At the same time, the unleashed power opens up a dimension of life to him, access to which his narrow bourgeois world has previously denied him. "The

great wheel, *la grande roue du monde*, began to turn, spraying squibs and colorful fireworks in all directions across the earth." Here its dynamic potential is combined with the idea of Eros as transgressive immoralist forces, which Billig sees embodied in the prostitute Margot. Margot appears like a car decorated with flowers, driving down a street he saw in a dream: "'Margot!' he shouted, 'Margot'— and he saw the room begin rapidly to move on great, white-hot wheels."¹¹²

Beyond the borders of bourgeois European culture, Dada also discovered the Dionysian force of the driving life-wheel in the myth of America. *Hjulet* (Das Rad, The Wheel, 1905), the novel by the Danish writer J. W. Jensen, sequel to his epic depiction of the young America *Madame D'Or* (1904), was Grosz's cult book of modernity. It was so important to him that he sent a copy to his friend Otto Schmalhausen, in the "memory of July 1918 (military hospital) that we share making us brothers."¹¹³ From the perspective of wartime and post-wartime Berlin, Jensen's *The Wheel* at first appeared like a dream of the great urban America of motion and intensified life, which concentrated in Chicago:

While city traffic now resembled an excited inland lake in a thaw storm, the drift of long-distance traffic, the trains seemed like the long pregnant breakers of the sea. In the deep hollow between Michigan Avenue and the water, the trains departed from and arrived at Illinois Central, hundreds of long, heavily laden trains from all regions of America, from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, from the polar regions to the gardens of Florida, a rolling of thousands of wheels.¹¹⁴

In the novel, American technology receives the utopian dimension of perpetual Dionysian motion. The Dada montages seem to be kept swinging by this Americanized myth of the wheel, pointing toward a different, better world that supersedes the old world of Europe: *Dada-merika* (fig. 162) by Grosz and Heartfield seems to yield tribute to this myth; even if the crowds amid rotating images of progress still show traces of panic – both in the novel and also in Grosz's graphic in the center of *Universal City* (fig. 117).

The wheel symbolism is driven by the American myth and by the energy of the Russian revolution. Berlin after World War I became a focal point of these driving forces, which overlapped in the city and contributed to the shape of twenties culture. Tatlin's machine-art for Dada Berlin combined cultural revolt with the communist and technological revolution of Russia. In this sense the mechanically rotating elements in the montages, overrunning the dismembered remnants of society, could also be carriers of a concrete utopia. "Revolutions are the engines of world history"; – this Marx quotation had a programmatic place in *Jedermann sein eigener Fussball* (Everyone His Own Football, February 1919). In the same manifesto in which Hausmann demanded the "liter-

ary factory," in his *Alitterel Delitterel Sublitterel* (1919), he praised the "communist élan against the bourgeois."¹¹⁵ In his novel *Die Eroberung der Maschinen* (The Taking of the Machines; fig. 122), begun in 1921, Franz Jung conjured up the revolutionary idea of a united workers' army, which was to set the conquered machines in motion on a changed social basis. No doubt, at this time, Heartfield, Herzfelde, and Grosz still shared this utopia. On the title page of the novel, Heartfield symbolizes the power of revolution in the convergence of wheel and pistol taking aim.

The effect of the wheel symbolism was so strong that it reflected from Dada Berlin back to Moscow. Alexandr Rodchenko, who in 1922 was given reproductions of Dadaist photomontages that Malevich had brought from Berlin, was inspired by them: car and tire with Charlie Chaplin on the cover of *KINOFOT* magazine (1922),¹¹⁶ cogwheel and car tire in a self-portrait (1922)¹¹⁷, or airplane, wheel, metropolitan architecture and the crowds in one of the photomontages to Mayakovsky's poem "Pro eto" (1923; fig. 150). Rodchenko's daring attempts to balance on the wheel demonstrates the physical and mental presence, aptness, and endangerment of the New Man — resembling a Chaplinesque feat. He confronted the determination, widespread among Russian avant-gardists at the time, with which they embraced technology, with the artistic daring of the artist's approach to the new dynamics, in an ambiguous way comparable to Dada.

Influenced by Dada, in 1919 and 1920 the Hungarian constructivist László Moholy-Nagy also discovered a new basis for art and design in industrial culture. He tried to sharpen people's sensibility to the changed conditions of life. *Die große Gefühlsmaschine* (The Great Machine of Emotions, 1920; fig. 148) emits numbers, letters, wheel motifs, and machine elements out of a circular red center. The signal colors red, yellow, and black vitalize them on a ground of darker yellow. The circle is broken up, and the result is a lively dynamic rotating game between inside and outside. In the sketch for his film script *Dynamik der Gross-Stadt* (Urban Dynamics, 1921–22),¹¹⁸ he intensified the perceptual shock of motion by contrastive sequences of images, superpositions, wild panning shots, views from below and above. The unleashed technology was placed in analogy to the ferocity of wild animals. The dynamic forces, which once emanated from nature and of which man had freed himself in the course of history, now faced him as qualities of his own products. The second nature of the city seemed wild and indomitable; only the film montage, which focused the metropolitan chaos, could capture it for a moment. If man could manage to adapt his senses to these new conditions, Moholy-Nagy thought, then he would attain an undreamed-of weightlessness and Dionysian intensification of life. While the constructivist artist wanted to programmatically sensitize his audience by combining art and technology, Dada Berlin still kept in mind the Dionysian abyss of man's dismemberment by the machinery of war. For Dada's pessimism of strength, the intention was to make the

tragic become grotesque.

The rotating wheels, therefore, symbolize Dada's ambivalent transvaluation of experience, of perception, and of creation. The man-machine interface was shocking, brutal, grotesque. A contrastive combination of organic and mechanical elements is represented in Otto Dix's *Kartenspielende Kriegskrüppel* (War Cripples Playing Cards, 1920; fig. 60). The cripples' dregs of life, painted in oil, possess a striking intensity, as of decaying flesh; they enter a grotesque symbiosis with the glittering pseudo-animation of artificial clattering limbs that are executed as a montage of materials (tin foil, buttons, medals, playing-cards, etc.).

In *Ein Opfer der Gesellschaft* (A Victim of Society, 1919; fig. 85; also known as *Uncle August, the Unhappy Inventor*), Grosz distorted the painted portrait of a man, especially his sense organs, by reproduced photoparticles of machine parts, which transformed the face into a terrifying mask. In connection with the war cripples in Otto Dix's *45% Erwerbsfähig!* (45% Fit for Work! 1920; fig. 59), upon whom the montage at the First International Dada-Fair was fixed, it is the image of a soldier victimized by the belligerent interests of society (View VII of Dada-Fair).

In different ways Otto Dix, Rudolf Schlichter, and Hannah Höch designed montages that included the female body in the process of mechanization. In *Altar für Cavaliere* (Altar for Gentlemen, 1920; fig. 56.1, 56.2), Dix composed the prostitute as a combination of machine and erotics, which could be undressed down to the skeleton like in anatomical folding panels. Her shadow, unfolded, exposed a body made of hand grenades. Dix connected Eros and death with the experience of war, which beyond its nationalistic ideology — represented by the soldier-type citizen with swastika and glued-up brain — reveals a Dionysian unbounding long repressed — symbolized in the analogy of hand grenades and erotic ecstasy. By contrast, Schlichter disillusioned the female body by the machinery he inserted into the torso of the woman in *Phänomen-Werke* (Mysterious Products, 1919–20; fig. 152): in the dressed-up cocotte, he saw a mechanistic image of the allegory of *Frau Welt* (Lady World), behind whose dazzling façade was revealed not the skeleton but tubes and regulators as symbols of death. In Höch's montages the interface woman/machine is more ambivalent: on the one hand we experience alienating appropriation of the bodies by technological machines, on the other new electrifying possibilities. Is this the reason for the electric light bulb in the place of a young woman's head (fig. 131)? Hausmann created the male equivalent in the Tatlin-montage (fig. 109). Beyond the polar tensions between nature and technology the interfaces also point into the realm of transfer from artistic imagination into energetic technical innovations — in the sense of a possible symbiosis of art and technology. It was Grosz who made the machine heart of the Dadamechanic Heartfield beat for a new art (cat. no. 62).

Beside the confrontation of man/woman and machine, a process of hybridization among machines and among people was developing, a

process that led to meta- and mechano-morphoses. In *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser* (1919–20; fig. 130), the elephant at the center of the *circus mundi* between trunk and cogwheel is holding a grotesque, androgynous hybrid: an Indian boy who blends into a white-skinned female body. The process of hybridization becomes particularly clear in dance, in movement: in *Dada-Tanz* (Dada-Dance, 1922; fig. 133) it is performed on spiral machine parts as on a volcano — by a dancing woman's body from which a black man is protruding, proportionately diminished.

Examples of mechano-morphosis are the block and pulley sticking out from the steam engine close to Einstein's head in the *Kitchen Knife* montage; the grating superposition of machine parts in Hausmann's *Elasticum* (1920) (fig. 108). Schwitters raised "fusing fusions" to the monumental concept of the Merzbühne and its "most conscientious violation of technology."

Take a dentist's drill, a food chopper, a tramway track cleaner, omnibuses and automobiles, bicycles, tandems and their tires, wartime spare tires too, and deform them. Take lamps and deform them in the most brutal fashion. Make engines collide. Make curtains dance spider web threads with window frames, and break whin- ing glass. Make steam boilers explode to generate rail- way smoke.¹¹⁹

In *Mechanischer Garten* (Mechanical Garden, 1920; fig. 137) Hannah Höch creates a landscape of mechano-morphously machinoid, dysfunctionally rotating cogwheels, ball bearings and machine parts in bloom. A railway track, having lost its straight line, crosses the mechanical garden in a zigzag pattern. Technical elements robbed their environ- ment of its vital energy and began a dysfunctional, purposeless inde- pendent game in a cold beauty and sensuality of their own.

In this work, endlessly generating, these machine elements seem to create their own poetical hybrid worlds held in balance ingeniously by an inner mechanism. The artist as constructor plays with the mechan- ic repertoire of her imagination and creates a *hortus conclusus* (closed garden) of pure production. The illusory effect of these artifices taking on the character of montage intensifies by the medium of watercolor. Quality and mixture of colors seem to argue out the contrast between nature and technology. Between steel blue, green, yellow, red, and brown their discord is balanced.

With the same intensity with which the Berlin Dadaists unfolded the artistry of metamechanics in their Dadaist game, they tried to cast a critical glance outward into rotating reality: mobility of traffic and com- munications corresponded to the urban circulation of commodities. Berlin was one single machine pulling "everything" into this cycle: peo- ple, animals, language, machines, arts, and culture. The cumulative condensation of image quotations in the montages resemble the multi-

tude of commodities into which formerly familiar single objects had been turned: "The continual cycle of the two oppositional metamorphoses of goods or the rapid turnover of buying and selling shows itself in the unceasing currency of money or its function as the *perpetuum mobile* of circulation" (Marx).¹²⁰ The hybrids of montage were also parts of this unceasing circulation, revealing its leveling effect. Circulation determined the relations of people, replacing social contact. Its motion reveals the universal interlocking of social relations through the economic principle of commercialization.

Dada Berlin pointed to contexts, which exposed the fact that the power of rotation was connected to the power of economic strength. The literary and artistic montages signaled the social dimension of technical relations of power. For example, Hannah Höch in *Der Milliardär* (The Billionaire) or *Hochfinanz* (High Finance, 1923; fig. 134) associated the wheel metaphor with portrait photographs that were oversized in relation to their bodies. These portraits resemble Stinnes (in profile) and Kirdorf (frontal), the two most powerful business leaders of the time, who in the montage stride across their empire. In fact, the worried-looking right half of the face belongs to so-called chemist Sir John Henschel from *Die Dame* (no. 15, May 1920, p. 5). The wheels are a cipher for the power of technology in union with capital whose inescapable laws ruled the city by force. Moreover, the barrel of a gun associates violence.¹²¹

Comparable to the wheel's momentum is the dimension of numbers in simultaneous montage. In *Dada-merika* (1919; fig. 162) the inflationary number 100,000 appears – as it does in the montage *Herr Krause* (1919; cat. no. 45). In a typographic montage for *Dadaco* (1919–20), it is associated to the following text by Grosz:

Occasionally a little run for the banks/Or:/Stock-market panic! /The apoplectic vein is swelling up to the size of a finger!!/While even auntie is fingering for her purse! /Silence! The gramophone begins to crow: /Suez Canal 4645/4650/Caoutchouc 217/. . .¹²²

The numerical dimensions of money after 1920 were to rise immensely while its material value took an abysmal decline up to 1923. A pound of lard, for example, cost 1,200 marks. Devalued bills formed one of the main elements of the paper dimension of the rotating city body. Dada numerics were connected with money and to the urban way of life, which included the feeling of being only a number: thus Hausmann in *Mechanischer Kopf* (*Der Geist unserer Zeit*) (Mechanical Head (The Spirit of Our Age), ca. 1921; fig. 113) pasted the number "22" onto the forehead of a mannequin. The war had enormously expanded the Dadaists' sense of vast numbers: "13 million dead, 11 million crippled, 50 million soldiers marching, 6 billion bullets, 50 billion cubic meters of gas" (Piscator).¹²³ The events of the revolution also mobilized large crowds of people, which left their traces in the Dadaists' drawings and montages.

To detach numbers from commercial contexts and to lead the counting and speaking consciousness back to a non-dissociated primal base where letter and number still mutually determined the logos – as in numerical mysticism and magic, this may have been Baader's motivation in introducing his own chronology. Years and months were counted as letters; the days were counted as numbers. Hausmann, also in *ABCD* (1923; fig. 105), arrived at an equivalent position: as elementary parts, letter and number are kept in suspension — letters are arranged like numbers and numbers are spoken like sounds.

Dada reacted also with an ironic distance to the motor of things, whose power had become detached from people: "What good is a mind in a world that runs on mechanically?"¹²⁴ The "idle nonsense"¹²⁵ placed the "meta"-constructions of traditional culture in question: hermeneutics of meaning, human emancipation, teleology of mind. The body of the young artist Niddy Impekoven in the *Kitchen Knife* montage (1919–20; fig. 130) performed a light, suspended, graceful, headless dance amid threatening machine elements. One of Man Ray's photographs of ready-mades (fig. 147) confirms this ambivalence of Dada toward the mechanical elements. The title of the machine body, which is assembled from cogwheels, has a metaphorical, artistic double meaning: the C of "DANCER" could be read as a G, "DANGER." Dada's reaction consisted in the balancing resistance of a dancer, artistically unsaisable. "In opposition to a so-called freedom that proceeded like a machine," Dada Berlin pursued "a tendency of the non-tragic."¹²⁶

Dada Berlin reacted with the paradoxical attempt to capture the "motor of things" (Huelssenbeck) by letting it run. It mobilized qualities, which stemmed from the rotation process itself. In this enterprise, the Berlin Dadaists received impulses directly from Friedlaender's *Schöpferische Indifferenz* (Creative Indifference, 1918): As the creator was "the living ball bearing and absolute stabilizer of the world,"¹²⁷ the Dadaist transformed himself into a *Seelenautomobil* (soul automobile, Hausmann) and was "like a child in a thousand amusement parks / And like a strip of tape, film, / Turning red and yellow / . . . Someone is constantly turning the crank" (Grosz).¹²⁸ For, according to Friedlaender, "We need the most powerful, world-superior, Dionysian initiative."¹²⁹ The wheel set in motion then triggered the poetic process of montage and destructively as well as constructively moved toward a constant state of incompleteness. According to Friedlaender it was "particularly the explosive, the destructive, the creative" energy that needed the counteracting force of the Apollinian, "of the polar ordering economy of its inexhaustibility."¹³⁰ In the child's playing that, according to Nietzsche, was the highest level of the mind, the process of creation attained a newly won freedom and new values: "The child is innocence and forgetting, a beginning-anew, a game, a wheel rolling by itself, a prime motion, a sacred affirmation."¹³¹ The "wheel rolling by itself" symbolized the ecstatic return of creation to its origins, which had been lost

in the process of civilization. It became identical to the "World-wheel, the rolling one," which, as Nietzsche wrote in the first of his *Lieder des Prinzen Vogelfrei* (Songs of Prince Outlaw), "strolls along from one destination to another: / The resentful man calls it 'need,' / The fool calls it 'play' . . . / World-play, the mighty one, / Blends reality and appearance: – / The eternal foolishness / Blends us – into it!"¹³²

Although the Dadaists themselves only related the concept of metamechanics to Apollinian constructions, the wheel symbolism constituted their polar equivalent: the supra individual "will to power," driving force behind global events, ultimately is the metaphysical version of the Dionysian process of rotation. The wheel symbolism remained ambiguous in the Dadaist context: it was both life-enhancing and life-destroying, a leveler of values; it was an explosive force of revolution and of aesthetic revolt, and it moved indifferently. Two distinct interpretations can be inferred: one saw Dionysian rotation supra-historically, as an elementary transgressive driving force in a Nietzschean sense; the other concretized it in the context of history and combined it with Dada's topical social and critical ideas. For the wheel symbolism did not stem from a naive yearning for origins: Dada first had to struggle for the new beginning and the child's play, using all contemporary forms of resistance and contradiction. It related to that phase of transition in which Dada Berlin found itself in the early twenties.

104. Hausmann, "PRÉsentismus," 139.
105. See Bergius, *Montage und Metamechanik. Dada Berlin — Artistik von Polaritäten*, (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 2000), 113, fig. R 38 (Bergius, *Montage und Metamechnik*).
106. Grosz, Letter to Otto Schmalhausen, n.d., *Briefe*, 52.
107. Ibid.
108. Ball, *Flight*, 57.
109. Hausmann, "Chaoplasma (Simultangedicht)," in Bergius, *Das Lachen Dadas*, 342.
110. Bergius, *Montage und Metamechanik*, 116, R 40.
111. Ball, "Kandinsky," in *Der Künstler und die Zeitkrankheit*, 42f.
112. Huelsenbeck, *Doctor Billig am Ende. Roman. Mit acht Zeichnungen von George Grosz* (Munich: Kurt Wolff Verlag, 1921). Re-edited (Frankfurt and Main: Makol Verlag, 1973), 33, 133.
113. Grosz, Letter to Schmalhausen, July 9, 1918, *Briefe* 76.
114. Johannes Wilhelm Jensen, *Das Rad. Roman* (1905; 5th to 9th ed. Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1921), 10f.
115. Hausmann, "Alitterel Delitterel Sublitterel," in *Dada* 1, 3.
116. Bergius, *Montage und Metamechanik*, fig. 98.
117. Ibid, fig. R 42.
118. Moholy-Nagy, "Dynamik der Gross-Stadt" (n. 15).
119. Kurt Schwitters, "An alle Bühnen der Welt," in *Anna Blume. Dichtungen (Die Silbergäule 39/40)* (Hannover: Paul Steegemann Verlag, 1919), 33.
120. Karl Marx, *Marx Engels Werke* (MEW) 23, 114.
121. See *Photomontages of Hannah Höch*, ed. Maria Makala and Peter Boswell (Minneapolis, MN: Walter Art Center, 1996).
122. Bergius, *Montage und Metamechanik*, fig. R 127.
123. Piscator, *Das politische Theater* (1929; Berlin: Henschel Verlag Kunst und Gesellschaft, 1968), 9.
124. Hausmann, "Dada in Europa," *Der Dada* no. 3, 3.
125. Hausmann, "Kabarett zum Menschen," *Schall und Rauch* no. 3 (Berlin, February 1920), 1.
126. Hausmann, "Dada ist mehr als Dada," 47.
127. Friedlaender, *Schöpferische Indifferenz*, 326.
128. George Grosz, "Kaffeehaus," *Pass auf! Hier kommt Grosz. Bilder, Rhythmen und Gesänge 1915–1918*, ed. Wieland Herzfelde and Hans Marquardt (Leipzig: Verlag Philipp Reclam junior, 1981), 16.
129. Friedlaender, *Schöpferische Indifferenz*, 154.
130. Ibid.
131. Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra* (Thus Spoke Zarathustra), 4, 31.
132. Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (The Gay Science), 3, 639.