The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for acceptance, a thesis/dissertation entitled:

**New Cuts, Dark Continents: Hannah Höch’s From an Ethnographic Museum**

submitted by Stella Maria Gatto in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Art History and Theory

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Abstract

Between the years 1924-1934, Berlin dada artist Hannah Höch (1889-1978) created the collage series *From an Ethnographic Museum*. The work comprises twenty sheets with cut-out images of modern women’s bodies alongside African and Oceanic tribal objects. The result is a collection of small, ambiguous totemic-like figures. Through the series, Höch captures the landscape of the Weimar Republic, particularly the inseparability of primitivism and ethnography from the moment’s psychoanalytic discourse. This thesis argues in part that *From an Ethnographic Museum* grapples with the ways in which the discipline of psychoanalysis contributed to constructs of gender and race as monolithic Other. By analyzing several works from Höch’s series in detail, comparing them to various other dada and surrealist works, as well as exploring the connections between psychoanalysis, dada, gender, race, and ethnography in Berlin at the edge of the Second World War, I examine how *From an Ethnographic Museum* navigates its way through multiple discourses in new and jarring ways via the gesture of the “cut.” This thesis further traces the ways in which psychoanalysis gained a wide audience in Berlin. A close reading of *From an Ethnographic Museum* sheds light on the role of psychoanalytic discourse and ethnography at this tense historical moment, and how gender and race were perceived during the Weimar Republic. Rather than treating Höch’s aesthetic choices in her collages as distinct operations, the series, through the gestures of the cut, shows that political arrangements are not separate in their discourses from aesthetic ones.
Lay Summary

This thesis is about a series of collages titled *From an Ethnographic Museum* by German artist Hannah Höch (1889-1978). By looking at the series in detail and examining the photographic fragments used by the artist, I argue that the series can be understood as a site where various discourses meet. Ranging from ethnography, psychoanalysis, and the role of women during the Weimar Republic, Höch engages with these complex and pervasive discourses through her series by cutting and pasting image fragments together on the surface of the page.
Preface

This dissertation is original, unpublished, independent work by one author, Stella Maria Gatto.
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I owe particular thanks to my family and friends: specifically, my parents Daniela and Pasqualino Gatto, and my grandparents Ruth and Harald Müller for their love and support. I would also like to thank my dearest friend Vanessa Milite for always believing in me. Lastly, I wish to thank my partner Sandy Buchanan for his kindness, encouragement, and love.
Dedication

For my family and in memory of my grandfather, Harald Müller.
Introduction

Berlin dada artist Hannah Höch’s (1889-1978) collage series *From an Ethnographic Museum (Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum)*, made between the years 1924-34, comprises twenty sheets with cut-out images of modern women’s bodies alongside African and Oceanic tribal objects.\(^1\) In *Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum: Die Süße* (Fig. 1), for example, a female figure-cum-tribal item is presented as a fetish object on display. Höch exaggerates the scale of the figure’s head by placing a large mask from the Congo on top. Colliding with the mask are photographic image fragments of an eye and a mouth belonging to a white woman, made visible through the use of incisions that reveal the white skin around the eye and the edges of the lips. The figure’s legs also belong to a white woman who is wearing fashionable patent leather heels. Reminiscent of a nail polish advertisement, a photograph of painted fingernails on a slender hand meets at the center of the body. The product which would usually be on display has been removed. In its place, the hand functions to focus the eye on the wooden sculpture’s torso. The mid-section appears open and hollow, as the phallic bottom-half of the wooden figure suggests a skirt from which a pair of legs appear. The figure is placed in a small vitrine space with a velvety watercoloured background made up of bright reds, oranges, and yellows. Several of the works in

the series resemble similarly hybrid, fetish-like figures as *Die Süße*, and are framed in a similar manner. The result is a collection of individual small, totem-like objects.

Höch’s ethnographic collection has been predominantly understood as both engaging with representations of the Weimar New Woman and as exemplary of modern primitivism. Two leading scholars on Höch, Maud Lavin and Denise Toussaint, offer various interpretations on the series. In Lavin’s formative book, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife: The Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch* (1993), the author suggests that Höch never substantively or explicitly challenged the racist or colonialist ideas of her contemporaries. And although her use of irony creates an implicit criticism, Höch’s montages mainly function to question the representation of Weimar women. In the chapter “From an Ethnographic Museum,” Lavin argues that Höch used images of tribal objects and the exhibition format from ethnographic museums almost exclusively to comment on European gender definitions. According to Lavin, Höch counters the rigid characterizations of racial difference and its application to gender politics by creating allegories of modern femininity and montages that criticize the status and representation of Weimar women, particularly conceptions of the New Woman, or *neue Frau*. Having provided a compelling and insightful understanding of the work, Lavin’s interpretation has dominated the discourse as countless exhibition essays and theses have adopted her framing of the series.

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2 In the context of the Weimar Republic (1918–1933), the New Woman was a conflated and idealized representation of woman as sexually liberated and “modern.” Albeit a slippage between representation and reality, images of the *neue Frau* were projected across media. For a comprehensive study of the New Woman, refer to Marsha Meskimmon and Shearer West, eds. *Visions of the ‘Neue Frau’: Women and the Visual Arts in Weimar Germany* (Vermont: Scolar Press, 1995).

Nevertheless, Lavin’s reading fails to address the broader scope in which Höch was working and to which she was responding. Although Lavin briefly touches upon the critical subtext behind the series by suggesting Höch equates infantilism with primitivism through the work Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum: Negerplastik, the author remains primarily concerned with the artist’s intention behind the series. Lavin’s singular focus tends to eclipse alternative readings of the series, and the collisions of various discourses which the fragmented photos conjure.

Toussaint, more recently, argues in Dem kolonialen Blick begegnen (2015) that the artist indeed had clear intentions to construct a critique of Germany’s role in colonization, and goes so far as to view the series as ahead of its time by framing it as a postcolonial critique. The author thoroughly outlines the popular colonial sentiment pervasive at the time Höch constructed her series. However, Toussaint adopts a tendentious view of the series when she writes:

Höch has no interest in escapist exotism or in cannibalising the Other for her own art’s sake. She does not participate in the general enthusiasm about non-Western cultures, nor does she delve into the reception of non-European art. Rather, she observes. She analyses and describes how the primitive Other is transferred into Western ideologies in both art and society, and points out to the gaps and errors of the latter. She critically contemplates, and offers new approaches by creating awareness of the defectiveness of the accepted approach.4


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Toussaint’s quote, although promising, presents another blind spot; the author fails to take the persistence of primitivism in modern art into account. In the context of modern art, primitivism refers generally to “the attraction to groups of people who were outside Western society, as seen through the distorting lens of Western constructions of ‘the primitive’ which were generated in the later part of the nineteenth century.”

Primitivism describes a Western event and does not imply any direct dialogue between the West and its ‘Others.’ If we take this definition into consideration, Toussaint’s critique that Höch’s series is fully critical of primitivism is wishful thinking. The fact of the matter remains that Höch, regardless of intention, appropriated photographs of ethnographic objects for her own art’s sake, the result of which was a collection of twenty works.

Both Lavin and Toussaint’s arguments underestimate the more complex web of references in Höch’s series. By focusing more readily on one or another issue, the authors neglect the way that her aesthetic formal arrangements complicate the tangle of overlapping elements in her collage. Such arguments have effectively de-emphasized the sophistication of Höch’s method of capturing the landscape of the Weimar Republic, particularly the inseparability of primitivism and ethnography from the moment’s psychoanalytic discourse.

This thesis seeks to answer the following questions: How does Höch’s series negotiate the complex landscape of ethnography, primitivism in art, and psychoanalysis in dada production? How might the series reflect or respond to this network? How does the gesture of the “cut” and the subsequent “paste” of photomontage bring these discourses into collision?

6 Ibid., 8.
Proposing an alternative understanding of the series, I argue in part that *From an Ethnographic Museum* not only mediates the messy terrain of primitivism in dada and the Weimar New Woman, but moreover grapples with the ways in which the discipline of psychoanalysis contributed to constructs of gender and race as monolithic Other in the first place. By analyzing several works from Höch’s series in detail, comparing them to various other dada and surrealist works, as well as exploring the connections between psychoanalysis, dada, gender, race, and ethnography in Berlin between the first and second World War, this essay will examine how *From an Ethnographic Museum* navigates multiple discourses in new and jarring ways via the gesture of the “cut.” Rather than acting as illustrative blueprints for psychoanalytic concepts, numerous works in the series instead point to how Berlin dada, ethnography, and mass media were submerged within the popularization of psychoanalytic discourse.

Caroline Levine’s *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (2015) will help me trace how formal juxtapositions on the pages of Höch’s photomontages overlap and collide simultaneously. Levine’s book provides a method of how subtle and complex formal patterns allow for the relations between politics and aesthetics to become visible. Levine’s expanded definition of forms makes clear that forms always indicate an ordering, patterning, arranging or shaping of elements that prefigure and participate in social organization. Rather than treating Höch’s aesthetic choices in her collages as distinct operations, the series, through the gesture of the cut, shows that political arrangements are not separate in their discourses from aesthetic ones. Höch’s series depicts numerous discursive conflicts taking place on the surface of the page wherein the cuts from one edge of the fragmented image collide with those of another. By

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cutting and pasting seemingly disparate fragments of images together, *From an Ethnographic Museum* becomes a site onto which various discourses meet, resulting in twenty jarring hybrid figures that highlight the ways in which the arrangement of seemingly disparate elements is in fact bound to one another. Regarding the “cuts” she incises in her collages, the fragmented images meet to create new yet uncanny fetish-like figures, as in *Die Süße* and *ohne Titel II*. Several of the figures appear as if in small vitrine glass boxes in front of velvety water coloured backgrounds, such as *Fremde Schönheit or Mutter*, while others yet are staged on tilting plinths, as in *Entführung and Masken*. Many works from in the series appear without plinths and simply float ungrounded on the surface of the page, thus bearing a strong resemblance to how photographs of tribal objects were captured in not only *Der Queerschnitt* (the cross-section), a popular Weimar magazine,¹ but also in the heavily illustrated book *Negerplastik* (1915) by German art historian and critic Carl Einstein (1885-1940).

The following exploration is divided into three chapters. Chapter one, titled “*Die Sammlung*: Carl Einstein, Ethnography in Berlin, and Primitivism in Dada,” traces the ways in which ethnography played a major role in the development of the series. The artist sets up this condition by designating it in the very title itself: these works are *from* an ethnographic museum. Höch often referred to the series as “the Collection” or *die Sammlung*.² Within those very conditions, Höch makes visible the interweaving of discourses omnipresent in Weimar Germany and particularly Berlin dada concerning ethnography. Since the European public was informed

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about distant countries and colonies through media such as daily newspapers, magazines and other publications, the objects to which they referred had already been filtered through the prism of cultural supremacy and evaluated according to Eurocentric terms. Höch, acutely aware of the filtered media contexts, violently cuts and removes sections of images from popular Weimar magazines, and transplants the amputated fragments into new compositions. Furthermore, by looking at ethnography in Germany alongside Einstein’s 1915 text *Negerplastik*, an interconnected discussion comes to light revealing a climate saturated in colonial discourse.

Chapter two, ““Durch Freud aufgeklärt”: Max Ernst and Hannah Höch,” aims to connect the discursive threads present in the photomontages between colonialism and psychoanalysis’ relationship to one another; particularly regarding how psychoanalysis received primitivism. Ranjana Khanna’s *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (2003) will provide the theoretical framework to investigate Freud’s psychoanalysis as a colonial discipline developed in the former Hapsburg Empire—a context adjacent to the one Höch occupied in Germany. Furthermore, comparing the works of Surrealist Max Ernst’s (1981-1976) *Une semaine de bonté* ("A Week of Kindness") to Höch’s series, an ambivalent relation between the two projects and their subject matter is exposed. As Höch noted, “Through all phases of development, he [Ernst] has been my closest relative.” Through the comparison between Höch’s and Ernst’s method of photomontage, the relationship between psychoanalysis to primitivism in both surrealism and dada via Freud becomes clear. Particularly when considering that for Freud, “the

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10 Toussaint, “Dismantling colonial representation,” 27.
primitive position to which neurosis is a regression always has a ‘feminine’ character.’’

Regarding the conflation of the terms primitive and feminine, as noted by Celia Brickman, “the rhetoric of colonization took up the conflation of these terms characterizing Europe’s new worlds as uncultivated nature, alluringly and submissively awaiting European possession and cultural inscription.” Freud’s comment that female sexuality is a “dark continent” for psychology points out the fusion of race and gender in psychoanalysis.

Chapter three, “‘Ich möchte die festen Grenzen auswischen’: Colliding Cuts and Psychoanalytic Discourse,” examines the ways in which psychoanalysis gained a wide audience in Berlin during the Weimar Republic. Its popularity reached beyond the scope of medical professionals and into literary, artistic, popular, and other scientific circles. Veronika Feuchtner’s 2011 book Berlin Psychoanalytic: Psychoanalysis and Culture in Weimar Republic Germany and Beyond argues that culture of 1920’s in Germany is inseparable from the psychoanalytic discourse on war neurosis and sexuality specific to Berlin, and it connects paradigmatic movements, forms, and themes of Berlin modernism, such as dada, multiperspectivity, and the urban experience. The Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute’s strategy was to popularize psychoanalysis through mass media. In addition to Feuchtner’s book, examining extant letters between Höch and her colleague as well as partner Raoul Hausmann (1886-1971), shows that Freud, but also Berlin psychoanalyst Otto Gross (1877-1920) and his theories regarding matriarchy and the family, were popular topics of conversation. Hausmann, armed with the

13 Ibid., 104.
15 Ibid., 11.
concept of an oedipal structure to frame political and familial tensions, attempts extensively to psychoanalyze Höch. Although Freud was globally a major force, Berlin had its own variation of Freudian psychoanalytics which at times diverged from, or expanded on, Freud’s theories and methods.

A close reading of From an Ethnographic Museum sheds light on the role of psychoanalytic discourse and ethnography at this tense historical moment in Berlin, and how gender and race were perceived during the Weimar Republic. Höch’s series acts as a witness and testifier to the discursive exchanges between various, at times conflicting, political and aesthetic forms.
Chapter 1: *Die Sammlung*: Carl Einstein, Ethnography in Berlin, and Primitivism in Dada

It is crucial to begin this exploration by asking: what does it mean for Höch to create her own collection, which she often referred to as *Die Sammlung*,\(^\text{16}\) at a time when German ethnography and ethnographic museums were gaining popularity? By looking at ethnography in Germany alongside Carl Einstein’s 1915 text *Negerplastik*, a complex network of interconnected and shared sentiments about race and gender come to light revealing a climate saturated in colonial and psychoanalytic discourse. Reflected in the collaged fragments used in *From an Ethnographic Museum*, Höch carefully selected, cut, and pasted into new configurations photographs which are each linked to seemingly disparate discourses into a *Sammlung* of her own, thereby inserting herself as an artist-cum-ethnographer into the nexus.

### 1.1 Ethnography in Weimar Germany

*From an Ethnographic Museum* was constructed at a time when Germany had lost its colonies following the First World War. Höch recalled later in life that what drew her to create the series was a trip she made to the Rijks Ethnographisch Museum Te Leiden in 1926 with fellow artist Kurt Schwitters. Höch was also an avid visitor of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin. Regarding the cultural and political climate at the time, the mission of ethnographic museum collections in Germany had to do with a sense of urgency in amassing collections to “save”

\(^{16}\) Lavin notes that Höch refers to the series as “aus der Sammlung.” or “die Sammlung.” See *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, 160.
objects. The sentiment being that due to modern technology spreading rapidly across the globe, it was urgent for the “West” to protect all cultural artifacts from corruption and destruction.\footnote{H. Glenn Penny, \textit{Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany} (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 31.} The notion of fleeting time, coupled with ethnologists’ calls to action, is captured in a quote by Karl Northoff, Chairman of Leipzig’s Museum fur Völkerkunde in 1896: “It is thus necessary to quickly save what can still be saved from the ethnographic artifacts of the Naturvölker, in order to collect and secure the material out of which science can proudly erect the knowledge of the totality of mankind.”\footnote{Ibid., 32.} The sentiment expressed by Northoff was shared by many, and points to how “salvage anthropology”\footnote{Salvage anthropology refers to a discourse of urgency to collect and “salvage” objects from other cultures, due to a concern that colonization and technology would destroy artifacts. See Penny, \textit{Objects of Culture}, 30-32.} was framed within the discourse of science as being for the sake of humanity and the advancement of knowledge.

By creating her own collection full of hybrid creatures, Höch’s series is in direct dialogue with the scientific rhetoric of that time, particularly challenging its ideas of truth and rationality. Höch questions the validity of “rationalism” in her series by creating an ethnographic collection which flies in the face of science. Her hybrid creatures are grotesque and physiologically inaccurate, and upon closer inspection, ask of the viewers to question their own narratives of who ‘the Other’ is or how it might look like.\footnote{For a discussion on the grotesque in Höch’s \textit{From an Ethnographic Museum}, see Maria Makela, “Grotesque Bodies: Weimar-Era Medicine and the Photomontages of Hannah Höch, in \textit{Modern Art and the Grotesque}, ed. Frances S. Connelly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).} This is particularly evident in \textit{Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum: Fremde Schönheit} (Fig. 2). Nude and sprawled onto her side is the body of a white woman. The figure is pasted onto a pink and blue watercolour background, and gentle horizontal lines of coloured brushstrokes are painted following the outline of the long
odalisque-style nude. The head however, does not match its bottom half. Staring out at the viewer to meet their gaze is a photograph of a shrunken head, a Bushongo idol cut from the glossy pages of *Der Queerschnitt*. Magnifying the eyes is a large pair of spectacles effectively underlyng the notion that the figure is aware of the viewer’s gaze. Throwing the viewer off, this recognition shatters the illusion of a figure which is beautiful from head to toe. The sharp cuts unite not only the photographic forms of the female figure and the shrunken head, but also their discursive forms that come with them: namely, that of an ideal feminine beauty said to be the image of the New Woman, as well as ethnographic curiosities brought to Germany through colonial networks. Their collision on the page, united by the seams of their cut edges, render the disparate fragments and their composition as one that is strange, or *fremd*. If ethnologists are meant to carefully study the objects they amass to further the knowledge of science, what do Höch’s formal collisions in *Fremde Schönheit* do? The joining of the cut edges of the body parts and tribal objects function to reveal a complex process of discursive similarities present via the subject matter of the image fragments, and the frames from which they have been cut out of. The racial Other and the feminine Other are both presented in Weimar Germany through mass media as a fetishized, monolithic Other. In a way, the series asks of its viewers to engage in the ethnographic process of looking, describing, labelling, and understanding, thereby directly implicating the viewers in the process of constructing the monolithic Other. But moreover, the series asks of its viewers to question why this strange juxtaposition of African tribal objects and women’s body parts seems so familiar. In tracing the image fragments to their source materials, namely magazines such as *Der Queerschnitt* and *Berlinische Illustrierte Zeitung*, viewers are made aware that race and gender have been amalgamated and are often presented as infantilized and “primitive.”
In the early twentieth century, images of the racial “Other” came from a variety of sources. Objects for ethnographic museum collections were brought to Europe through economic, missionary, scientific, and colonial networks, as a broad public was confronted with “the foreign” through colonial exhibitions such as Völkerschauen. Non-European cultures and societies were therefore denied their history, and the actual contexts of the peoples and objects were regarded as irrelevant. Since the European public was informed about distant countries and colonies through media such as daily newspapers, magazines and other publications, the objects to which the European public referred had already been filtered through the prism of cultural supremacy and evaluated according to Eurocentric terms. Höch, acutely aware of the filtered media contexts, performs a similar gesture in the realm of collage when she violently cuts and removes sections of images from popular Weimar magazines, and transplants the amputated fragments into new compositions. This is especially noticeable in Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum: Denkmal I (Fig. 3). Viewers of the photomontage are confronted with a jarring tripod, figure standing in *contrapposto* with one shoulder raised, its legs upright on a large black base or pedestal. The figure juts-out towards the viewer with its right limb on what appears to be an animal hoof, but upon closer inspection reveals itself to be a bent female arm and hand. The left leg belongs to actress Lilian Harvey, and in the place of a head is a Gabon mask attached to a torso belonging to a stone statue of a Theban goddess.

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23 Maria Makela has traced most of the source photographs in the 1996 Walker Arts Centre exhibition catalogue *The Photomontages of Hannah Höch*. My references to the source materials for the *Ethnographic Museum* series are indebted to Makela’s work.
photographic fragments were all cut-out from Der Queerschnitt. Höch was an avid consumer and reader of the magazine, having had unlimited access to it while working at Ullstein Verlag. Erika Esau outlines in her article “‘The Magazines of Enduring Value’ Der Queerschnitt (1921-1936) and the World of Illustrated Magazines,” that in 1929 circa 2,600 magazines and newspapers were published in Berlin alone.  

Magazines became the main forum for the presentation of artistic expression, political beliefs, and the construction of urbanity and new ways of living in the twentieth century. On an artistic level, the magazine gained inspiration from a variety of sources, given that Alfred Flechtheim, creator of Der Queerschnitt, was also an art dealer and collector of African objects.

David Jenkins argues that ethnology during this period “represented a shift from delighting in the world’s strange offerings and the appeal of subjective involvement, to an attempt to master and control the world’s diversity through new forms of conceptualization.” German ethnographic museums began with accumulating as many ethnographic objects as possible. As stated by Adolf Bastian, an ethnologist who directed Berlin’s ethnographic museum from 1873 to 1905: “Völkerkunde is an inductive science, and as such it requires the greatest possible pooling of materials from which to draw conclusions, because these conclusions gain more certainty and value as the number of observations on which they can be based increases.”

This idea of possession leading to knowledge is all the more interesting when we know that

26 Esau, 882.
28 Penny, Objects of Culture, 52.
Höch was creating these works over a ten year period, carefully amassing her own collection of images for the series. As Höch’s sister Grete König notes: “She (Höch) had a great interest in negro sculpture, and in all ethnographic things.” Arguably, Höch’s relationship to ethnography was one of ambivalence.

Höch’s *Sammlung* reflects the reality of many ethnographic displays at the time, particularly the ways in which audiences engaged them. Often, the objects in museums or media publications had inadequate labelling or guides accompanying the materials. Höch’s series somewhat mimics the display practices by titling her collages “monuments,” “African sculptures,” or simply “mask,” leaving room for interpretation and little in the way of fixed meaning. In some ways, this mode of presentation was advocated by individuals such as Carl Einstein, a major and influential figure for several modernist artists. In his book *Negerplastik* (1915), the author argues for a presentation of ethnographic objects that raises their status to that of art.

### 1.2 Carl Einstein

Carl Einstein was a critical figure in both artistic and ethnographic circles. Out of the 14 books he wrote, the slim but significant *Negerplastik* was his most famous. Einstein’s pioneering monograph included a short introductory text and 119 black-and-white photographs illustrating African sculptures. Its numerous high-resolution photographs adorned almost two thirds of the glossy-papered book. The photographs were printed, one per page, without commentary or any indication of origin or date. It was the first of its kind to present African art and objects in such a manner.

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29 Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, 168.
high reproductive quality. Unlike the images in Einstein’s book, the way African and Oceanic tribal objects were staged in ethnographic museums was cluttered. Due to Einstein’s publications on African art, but also his connection to collectors and dealers, he was a crucial figure for many dadaists in introducing them to the theory and reception of colonial objects as art. Einstein was also involved with the Berlin Ethnographic Museum, having reviewed the museum’s new display of African and Oceanic tribal objects in Der Queerschnitt. In 1919, Einstein became directly involved with the Berlin dadaists by editing the satirical weekly Der blutige Ernst with George Grosz (1893-1959). Through his close collaboration with Grosz, Negerplastik traveled amongst dada circles, influencing many artists such as Hugo Ball, Marcel Janco, Richard Huelsenbeck, Raoul Hausmann, Lajos Kassák, and especially Hannah Höch.

In 1919, Höch received from Hausmann an individualized copy of Negerplastik that was outfitted with decorative paper and one of his woodcuts on the cover. Although she did not directly source any photographs printed in Negerplastik, her series nevertheless shares a similar appearance to those found in Einstein’s book. This is particularly evident when comparing her collages where figures are staged on plinths, as in Denkmal I, Trauer, Masken, ohne Titel II, and Denkmal II: Eitelkeit. They recall for example, a figure listed under “Panel 36” in Einstein’s book. As noted by Uwe Fleckner, the sculpture has now been identified as a Ngumba work from South Cameroon. As with the Ngumba sculpture, eighty percent of the objects in Negerplastik

32 Uwe Fleckner, “‘Drunk, I dance the feather-bright fantastic’: Carl Einstein and the African vitalism of Dadaist art,” in Dada Africa: Dialogue with the Other, ed. Ralf Burmeister, Michaela Oberhofer, and Esther Tisa Francini 159.
33 As noted by Uwe Fleckner, the work has been identified as being a sculpture by a Ngumba artist in South Cameroon, today in the Musée du Quai Branly. See Dada Africa: Dialogue with the Other, 159.
are presented in full-figure from a single vantage point, posed either in a frontal or three-quarter view while skilled lighting portrays the sculptures as an interlocking series of planes. Trauer in particular shares several compositional similarities with how the Ngumba sculpture is presented, particularly the way the figure is staged and photographed. The frontal pose and the way in which Höch positioned the body to make it appear as if captured in crisp lighting, mimics the scale and format of the “Panel 36” photograph. One might go so far as to suggest that in several ways Negerplastik acts as a formal template to From an Ethnographic Museum. This is evidenced not only in how the figures in From an Ethnographic Museum are staged as if photographed for Einstein’s book, but also in the choice of image fragments Höch employs given they strongly resemble many of the objects printed in Negerplastik. However, Höch is also doing something entirely different from Einstein in that she disturbs the "purity" of the ethnographic objects as an object of aesthetic appreciation for its formal qualities. In a way, by leaving the cuts crude and the edges exposed, the artist makes her working-process visible, revealing its method of construction, questioning the ways in which objects are presented in books, magazine, and display cases go through a process of intervention: they are removed from their original place and presented through a Western lens for a European audience. The noticeable cuts motivate the viewer to engage in close observation and to determine from where these fragments were sourced, and how they may have been altered.

In her article “Looking for Africa in Carl Einstein’s Negerplastik,” Z.S. Strother writes:

It is important to realize that Einstein was drawing not on African ethnography but on a mishmash of sources on the so-called primitive mind because it reveals something important about his project. Negerplastik has presented a puzzle to scholars since Einstein describes his method as one based on “formal analysis” and yet frames his study

with long exegeses on religion and psychology. Perhaps the problem lay in collapsing Einstein’s “analysis of forms” (*Analyse der Formen*) with the dry description that passes today for “formal analysis.”

Strother’s quote leads me to consider the complex formal collisions that Höch’s series reveals. That is, showing how forms, when understood in a more expanded definition as outlined by Levine, collide into one another, and open themselves up to numerous connections. She points to the ways that forms, in their structuring principles, bring the political and aesthetic together. In *From an Ethnographic Museum*, this is achieved via the gesture of the cut. Although Höch never cut images directly out of *Negerplastik*, it remains to be said that *Negerplastik* is referenced in the staging of the works. This functions to bring together not only discourses concerning ethnography and display practices, but also primitivism in dada, and how objects from outside of Europe were often received and incorporated into the artistic practices of artists.

### 1.3 Primitivism in Dada

Often compared to the work of her fellow dada and surrealist colleagues, Höch’s series is frequently framed as an exemplar of primitivism. Okwui Enwezor labels Höch in the 2010 Wangechi Mutu exhibition catalogue *My Dirty Little Heaven* (2010) with the following description: “[this] work was in many ways implicated in the pictorial amnesia fundamental to European reception and consumption of African objects and images as belonging to the category of the fetish and non-human.” Höch’s series, although implicated in primitivism, does not necessarily reflect the ways in which other dadaists worked. The primitivist works of Hugo Ball,

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35 Ibid., 19.
Richard Huelsenbeck, Lajos Kassák, and Marcel Janco foreground how Höch’s series is distinct from theirs.

Generally, for dada artists engaging in primitivism, the goal was not to imitate or merely adopt “exotic” elements, but instead to push the boundaries between traditional art genres. Inspired by the apparent ‘foreignness’ of African or Oceanic objects, they adopted new materials, forms, and techniques for their own artistic creation.37 Traumatized by World War I, and aware of fascism in Europe, many dadaists involved with photomontage used images of “primitive” art to express their rebellion, to expose the current order, and to ridicule and highlight its absurdity.38

Primitivism in art was a broad phenomenon in other artistic forms as well. For example, artifacts from foreign cultures, especially African art, provided inspiration for the works of the cubists, as well as for German Expressionist painters in the artistic groups Der Blaue Reiter and Die Brücke.39 The study of Oceanic and African sculptures was a catalyst for the shaping of their own pictorial expression, as they saw formal aesthetic principles in non-European art.40 Zürich and Berlin dadaists Ball and Huelsenbeck performed their sound poems at the Cabaret Voltaire in 1916. Their poems and performances served as a provocative attack on German high culture,41 as their performances were about exiting and embodying the “primitive Other.” Ball’s

38 Valentine Plisnier, “Non-Western art in Dada photography and photomontage,” in Dada Africa: Dialogue with the Other, ed. Ralf Burmeister, Michaela Oberhofer, and Esther Tisa Francini (Zurich: Verlag Scheidegger & Spiess, 2016), 194.
40 Burmeister, Oberhofer, and Francini, “Introduction,” in Dada Africa: Dialogue with the Other, 8.
“Karawane” (Fig. 4) was made up of words that mimicked an imagined African dialect in order to achieve the effect of a magical or foreign language. Dressed as a shaman-like political leader, Ball stood on stage rehearsing nonsensical words because, according to Ball, “language had become tainted and impossible through ideology.” In his performance of a poem from *Phantastische Gebete*, Huelsenbeck repeated “Umba” on stage over, and over again to convey the kind of tribal song he thought was imitating a “call and response” structure. Huelsenbeck’s performance piece, which tended towards exoticism and enthusiasm for the word “Umba,” was in possible reference to the Umba river which separated German East Africa from British East Africa. Presented to an audience cognizant of the German colonies in Africa, this information may have been known. Kassák, a Hungarian artist, author, and European avant-garde theorist who created the work *Montage-Autoportrait* (Fig. 5), can be seen at a typewriter as two African sculptures float above him – a mask and a bird – that, while observing his work, dictate words to him. Kassák’s work suggests that the tribal objects are the source of his inspiration. Lastly, Janco’s relation to primitivism was much like Kassák’s in its deep romanticization of African and Oceanic objects. Janco notes that he saw in the arts of Africa “a subconscious mastery, an honest, primal, pure expression of experience and a craftsmanship so intense and authentic that everything that they make has the smell of blood, the color of life, and the form of eternity.”

42 Ibid., 25.
43 Michael White, “Sounding the Other, sounding the same,” in *Dada Africa: Dialogue with the Other*, ed. Ralf Burmeister, Michaela Oberhofer, and Esther Tisa Francini (Zurich: Verlag Scheidegger & Spiess, 2016), 165.
44 Ibid.
45 Plisnier, “Non-Western art in Dada photography and photomontage,” in *Dada Africa: Dialogue with the Other*, 193.
emphasized both the purported traditional originality and spiritual components of Africa.”

Janco’s masks (Fig. 6), constructed of found objects such as cardboard, string, and wire, were often worn in Ball and Huelsenbeck’s dada performances. Whereas the above artists reflect a romanticization and essentializing of other cultures, Höch’s series performs a kind of questioning of primitivism in art. Hence, in her Sammlung, the artist frames her clashing figures using the syntax of the ethnographic museum, yet self-reflexively situating the practice of appropriation in vitrine-like spaces. But these “Other” forms do not stay put, so to speak; rather, as in Trauer, they aggressively remind the viewer of their decontextualization, appearing to push against the glass boxes that contain them. Unlike Ball, Huelsenbeck, Kassák, and Janco’s recourse to cultures outside of Europe to present their desires for an unleashed vitality in art and German culture, Höch’s series, rather than engaging in any projected yearnings for the “wild,” instead interrogates such appropriations all-together by leaving the colliding image fragments exposed.

Be it objects encountered at the Berlin Ethnographic Museum, images in Ullstein Verlag’s magazines, or photographs in Einstein’s Negerplastik, the ways in which dadaists were engaging with cultures outside of Europe, regardless of respect and admiration, was through colonial contexts often tainted with racism and built on unequal exploitative exchanges.

47 Michaela Oberhofer, “‘Our belief in a direct, magical, organic and creative art’: Marcel Janco’s Masks and designs,” in Dada Africa: Dialogue with the Other, ed. Ralf Burmeister, Michaela Oberhofer, and Esther Tisa Francini (Zurich: Verlag Scheidegger & Spiess, 2016), 34.
48 Press photographs published in Berlinische Illustrierte Zeitung and Der Queerschnitt often featured people from the colonies. As noted by Brett M. Van Hoesen, “while these images innocently appealed to the curiosity of the armchair traveler of the 1920s, they also reinforced a series of tropes intrinsic to the power structure of colonialism. The German explorer typology (both male and female), the so-called non-European “Other,” as well as multiple markers of the exotic proliferated. While this casual, even passive avoidance of the past and present truths of Germany’s colonial status may seem inconsequential, documentary photography of the popular press greatly contributed to the inherent complexities of the postcolonial condition of the Weimar Republic.” Quoted in Brett M. Van Hoesen, “Weimar Revisions of Germany’s Colonial Past. The Photomontages of Hannah Höch and László Moholy-Nagy,” in German Colonialism, Visual Culture, and Modern Memory, ed. Volker M. Langbehn (New York: Routledge, 2010), 198.
Although Germany lost its overseas territories after World War I, the ideological heritage of colonialism was still strong in the Weimar Republic. The actions and motivations of the directors who ran the ethnographic museums in Germany reveal a Germany that was caught-up in self-fashioning at the personal, local, and national level.\textsuperscript{49} The imperial idea, with its significant key paradigms of nation, race and identity, established a hegemonic consciousness which was noticeably present in the politics, society, and especially the media of Weimar Germany.\textsuperscript{50} By leaving the seams of the photographic fragments exposed, the series acknowledges its colonial sources. However, when transplanted into a new composition, they are fragments from magazines which, on the pages of Höch’s series, collide to create new forms and highlight new connections. Höch employs the framework of the ethnographic museum through the title of her series, the staging of the objects in similar fashion to Einstein’s \textit{Negerplastik}, and the visual strategies of photography and ethnography as found in magazines such as \textit{Der Queerschnitt}, to expose how bound-up the visual and political language and forms of ethnography, primitivism in art, and mass media aided in constructing a fetishized Other.

However, as the following chapter will show, \textit{From an Ethnographic Museum} is also a site unto which the complicated synthesis between such discursive forms and psychoanalysis meet.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{49} Penny, \textit{Objects of Culture}, 9
\item \textsuperscript{50} Toussaint, “Dismantling colonial representation,” 28.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Chapter 2: “Durch Freud aufgeklärt”: Max Ernst and Hannah Höch

2.1 Max Ernst: Oedipe

According to art historian Werner Spiess, Max Ernst (1891-1976) was one of the first artists who concerned himself with psychoanalysis. While studying at the university in Bonn in 1910-1914 Ernst read Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). This would leave an everlasting mark on the artists oeuvre. One of Ernst’s earliest work dealing with psychoanalysis is *Pietà ou La révolution la nuit* (1923) (Fig. 7). In the painting, a young man is being held by his father or a father-like figure. On the right-hand side of the painting is a strange white and blue object with phallic connotations. Prior to painting his *Pietà*, Ernst made another nod to Freudian content aptly titled *Oedipus Rex* (1922) (Fig. 8). As noted by Samantha Kavky, the work is complete with symbols of Oedipal conflict: the hand, meant to represent the hand of God or Father, pierces the walnut which represents a womb. The spindle is suggestive of the phallus. Both *Pietà* and *Oedipus Rex* underscore the role of the unconscious mind wherein the dream state, as taken-up by Ernst, one could discover “ruptures of rationality.”

In 1933, Ernst created *Une semaine de bonté*, a series comprised of 182 collages which were divided into seven chapters and published in five volumes. The collages combine images cut out from nineteenth century wood engravings in lavishly illustrated but cheap popular French novels and books. After the artist selected, cut, and subsequently pasted the images where he

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52 Ibid., 18.
wanted them, he had the completed collages photographically reproduced, printed as *clichés-traits*,
and assembled into book form. Analyzing Hannah Höch’s *From an Ethnographic Museum* alongside Max Ernst’s collage novel *Une semaine de bonté* reveals an intriguing comparison in how each series manipulates pictorial fragments. In a journal entry dated December 1951, Höch writes fondly of Ernst: “Durch alle Entscheidungsphasen ist er immer noch mein nächster Verwandter” (Through all phases of decisions, he [Ernst] has been my closest relative). She even refers to the surrealist artist, after having visited one of his exhibitions in 1969, as “mein Bruder” (my bother).

How are connections between race, gender, and sexuality via Freud’s theories confirmed or contested in *From an Ethnographic Museum* and *Une semaine de bonté*? How does Höch’s series, via the gesture of the cut, expose juxtapositions of race and gender in psychoanalysis? Comparing Ernst’s collage novel and Höch’s series shows how each artist’s work engages with conceptions of the European self as expressed by psychoanalysis.

In a plate from *Oedipe* (Fig. 9), from the fourth booklet of *Une semaine de bonté*, the scene depicted is one of extreme violence. Standing above a bent over and naked woman’s body is a man, his head replaced by that of a large bird’s. The bird figure—which is understood as Ernst’s *alter ego* named Loplop—pierces a knife through the woman’s right foot as she flails her arms. Her head is turned away from the viewer. *Oedipe* is often understood as a violent psychosexual scene inspired by Freud’s writings about his own dreams. Freud gave his dreams

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55 *clichés-traits* is an etching process that resembles wood engravings, as noted in Elza Adamowicz, *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image: Dissecting the Exquisite Corpse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 112.
an overriding sexual significance by often associating the figures in them as engaging in the slang term for sexual intercourse, which he called vögeln. The term Vogel can also be directly translated to mean “bird.” Freud traced the source of his own anxieties generated by certain dreams “to an obscure and evidently sexual craving that had found appropriate expression in the visual content of the dream.” Details from this anecdote ring throughout Ernst's work. Using Freud’s method of self-analysis and particularly dream analysis, Ernst analyzed the symbols of his dreams and thoughts, subsequently creating a persona in the form of Loplop. The bird-headed figure, both a grim reaper and a potential sexual perpetrator, is a theme linking the imagery of Freud's dream and Ernst's sexual and violent collages in Une semaine de bonté.

Hal Foster argues in Compulsive Beauty that within the ambiguous persona of Loplop Ernst explores both sexual ambiguity and traumatic sexuality where he is the active creator and passive outsider; he is both the participant inside and voyeur outside the scene of his art. By simultaneously inhabiting the position of insider and outsider, through the figure of Loplop Ernst fills the gaps between the usual oppositions of male/female, subject/object, active/passive, and heterosexual/homosexual via the very techniques of collage. Loplop becomes a figure from which Ernst can act-out some of his darkest desires. Via the means of collage, he creates a fictitious character with whom he identifies. Particularly apt to this discussion is Freud’s own method of understanding his patients dreams and interrogating the dreamer. He explains:

If I say to a patient who is still a novice: ‘What occurs to you in connection with this dream?’ as a rule his mental horizon becomes a blank. If, however, I put the dream before

59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
62 Ibid., 81.
him cut up into pieces, he will give me a series of associations to each piece, which might be described as the ‘background thoughts’ of that particular part of the dream. Thus the method of dream-interpretation which I practice already differs in this first important respect from the popular, historic and legendary method of interpretation by means of symbolism and approximates to the second or ‘decoding’ method. Like the latter, it employs interpretation \textit{en détail} and not \textit{en masse}; like the latter, it regards dreams from the very first as being of a composite character, as being conglomerates of psychical formations.\footnote{Sigmund Freud, \textit{The Interpretation of Dreams}, translated and edited by James A. Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 128-129.}

Freud’s quote highlights the uncanny meeting between literary and formal collisions, where contents of the dream are “cut up into pieces,” much like in the method of collage, to expose connections \textit{en détail}.

Due to its method of juxtaposing image fragments, we could add, collage can simultaneously construct contradictions, but also reveal them. Collage can dissolve identities as well as forge new ones.\footnote{Brandon Taylor, “The Cutting Edge,” in \textit{The Ends of Collage}, ed. Yuval Etgar (Luxembourg & Dayan: London, 2017), 159.} Ernst defines collage in his 1936 text “Beyond Painting” as “the coupling of two realities, irreconcilable in appearance, upon a plane which apparently does not suit them.”\footnote{Max Ernst, “Beyond Painting,” in \textit{The Ends of Collage}, 128.} Calling them his “visions,” he continues to discuss the accumulation of images and bringing together of elements as he writes: “these visions called themselves new planes, because of their meeting in a new unknown (the plane of non-agreement).”\footnote{Quoted in: Ernst, “Beyond Painting,” 130.} Ernst directly engages with the anecdote set forth by Lautrémont, a nineteenth century French poet who was listed by André Breton as an ideological precursor to the surrealist movement.\footnote{Katherine Hoffman, “Collage in the Twentieth Century: An Overview,” in \textit{Collage: Critical Views}, ed. Katherine Hoffman (UMI Research Press: London, 1989), 17.} In \textit{Les Chants de Maldoror} (1869) Lautrémont writes: “et surtout, comme la rencontre fortuite sur une table de dissection

Through the figure of Loplop, Ernst brings together apparently irreconcilable realities in the context of the Victorian romantic novel. Ernst wanted to portray the unconscious of the nineteenth century by taking melodramatic images from cheap romances and exposing the aggressive drives behind their innocuous appearance which threatened to tear apart polite middle-class culture.\footnote{Matthew Beaumont, “Cutting-Up the Corpse: Agatha Christie, Max Ernst, and Neo-Victorianism in the 1930s,” \textit{Literature Interpretation Theory} 20 (2009): 18.} As noted by Matthew Beaumont, Ernst “conducted a kind of immanent critique of Victorianism, collaging its everyday icons in order to reveal the exotic fantasies to which it could not admit.”\footnote{Ibid., 19.} Ernst’s series is therefore more interested in finding the \textit{surreal} in fragments of the real.

The discipline of psychoanalysis, and particularly Freud’s theorization of the unconscious, relied heavily on the colonial language provided by ethnography. According to Ranjana Khanna’s \textit{Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism} (2003), Freud’s writings borrowed both linguistically and methodologically from archaeology and anthropology. Khanna further notes that the concepts of “self” and “being” that came into existence in psychoanalysis were dependent on strife or violence, that is, on the politics of colonial relations. She writes:

\begin{quote}
[T]he national self in Europe is structured in psychoanalysis as a modern counterpart of the primitive colonized. […] In the space between the earth and the colonizing world of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Europe, a national-colonial self was brought into existence, or perhaps more accurately, into un concealment. And it situated itself,
\end{quote}
with fascination, in opposition to its repressed, concealed, and mysterious “dark continents”: colonial Africa, women, and the primitive.\textsuperscript{71} Khanna reveals how colonial history shaped the discipline of psychoanalysis, ultimately constituting it as a colonial discipline.

Freud also famously collected artifacts, especially small sculptures from around the world, from which he drew inspiration regarding his theories of the unconscious.\textsuperscript{72} The sculptures became instruments of self-analysis through which he would read his own prehistory.\textsuperscript{73} Not only did the larger discourses of archaeology inform Freud’s language, but more so the notion of the construction of the European self. Celia Brickman’s \textit{Aboriginal Populations in the Mind: Race and Primitivity in Psychoanalysis} (2003), outlines how several of Freud’s books such as \textit{Totem and Taboo} (1913), as well as \textit{Group Psychology and the Development of the Ego} (1921), discuss the ways in which “psychic configurations of members of primitive groups differ from those of the modern individual subject.”\textsuperscript{74} As Freud said, “I am not an anthropologist but a psychoanalyst. I had a right to take out of ethnological literature what I might need for the work of analysis.”\textsuperscript{75} Due to Freud’s account of the origins of the psyche and his understanding of the genealogy of subjectivity, the assumptions which emerged from Freud were that pathology became linked to the “primitive” psychologies of culturally superseded races.\textsuperscript{76} Combined with a belief in the creative power of the unconscious, Ernst’s fifth and final

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 27.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 40.
\textsuperscript{74} Brickman, \textit{Aboriginal Populations in the Mind}, 90.
\textsuperscript{75} Khanna, \textit{Dark Continents}, 66.
\textsuperscript{76} Brickman, \textit{Aboriginal Populations in the Mind}, 90.
section of *Une semaine de bonté* titled *Le Rire du coq, L'Ile de Pâques*, reveals a more complicated engagement with primitivism as received by the artist via Freud.

In *Le Rire du coq, L'Ile de Pâques*, nine works depict hybrid figures with sculptural Easter Island statue heads. Plate 2 (Fig. 10) in the book depicts a large figure with the head of an Easter Island sculpture gazing at itself in a mirror at a dressing table, on top of which sits an oversized insect. Upon closer inspection, the body of a naked young woman can be seen peering through a window into the room where the sculptural Easter Island figure stands, observing the scene inside. The gestures of the cut, incised with such care and precision that they appear seamless, suggest this is a realistic scene reinforced by the technique of photographing the collages to make them appear as a flat and continuous plane. In a similar vein to Loplop, the Easter Island hybrid figure finds itself in many sexual and violent scenes. Other plates in *L'Ile de Pâques* show the figure assaulting a woman, while in another it is acting as the object of her desire as she caresses his head. It appears that the inclusion of the sculpture can be understood as attempting, in primitivist fashion, at constructing a relation between the European “self” and the primitive “other.” This is achieved via the artist’s montage technique which attempts to create, albeit an illusion, a credible scene. The primitivism of Ernst functions as an escape route from the sexual constrictions of European society.

As noted by art historian Charlotte Stokes, Ernst made visual Freud’s concept of the verbal device known as “condensation.” In psychoanalysis, condensation is the placing together of two or more elements into a new word or phrase so that each original element retains its own
character all the while interacting with the others. Freud’s concept of condensation provided Ernst with a structural model, which the artist translated into a literal operation via the technique of cutting and pasting elements (such as the bird heads with human figures). Stokes notes that even though the two elements retain their identities, “their condensation into a new personality is consistent with Freud’s description.” In addition to creating his personal emblem as sexual perpetrator and grim reaper, Loplop also takes on the qualities of a totem – Loplop is a creature who is a spiritual father, protector, and an identifying clan symbol. Like a number of dada and surrealist artists during his time, Ernst was particularly influenced by Freud’s theories of the unconscious, especially in how the European male subject was chartered, namely, with a fear of his father and desire for his mother. Enhanced by their engagement with mass media imagery, Ernst’s collages gain complexity in exploring the relationship between collage, mass media, and femininity. Ernst’s method of seamless collages is an attempt to connect modern neuroses and primal forces by pasting them together.

2.2 Hannah Höch: Entführung

Höch’s Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum: Entführung (Fig. 11), or “Abduction” in English, reveals a complicated relationship not only to psychoanalysis, but moreover to the art historical canon. The collage depicts a wooden sculpture of a large animal carrying four figures, two males and two females. The males—one carrying a large spear—sit one either side of the two females. The photograph of the wooden sculpture is an image which Höch cut out of the magazine

78 Ibid.
Berlinische Illustrierte Zeitung. Höch replaced one of the female’s wooden heads with a photograph of a Weimar New Woman, her mouth open wide and her head rotated the opposite way. The tribal object sits on a prominent base which Höch cut from dark blue sheets of paper. Given the title of this work, as well as the insertion of the woman riding a large animal, the scene of abduction can be understood as referencing a popular subject of Renaissance painting: the Greek myth “The Rape of Europa”—alternatively titled, “The Abduction of Europa.”

These Renaissance “Abduction” or “Rape of Europa” paintings often served as erotica and aimed to sexually arouse the viewer. Titian’s mid-sixteenth century The Rape of Europa (Fig. 12) serves as an appropriate example to highlight how the mythological scene has often been represented in European artistic traditions. The large and richly coloured painting shows Europa as she is forcefully carried off on a white bull soon to be received by Jupiter who captures and rapes her. The painting eroticizes Europa’s abduction in numerous ways. Her glossy clothes barely cover her body, thus highlighting her figure. Her legs are spread apart, and the cherub on the bottom left of the painting directs the viewers gaze towards Europa’s genital region. Titian’s painting presents Europa as a willing participant rather than a victim. Furthermore, it eroticizes Europa’s rape and portrays a fantasy in which the woman desires to be raped, therefore suggesting that rape is, in a sense, a myth. This is a subject which Freud took-up in his “seduction theory.”

In his 1896 paper “The Aetiology of Hysteria,” Freud developed his seduction theory which revolved around the real or imagined scene where the subject, generally a child, submits
passively to the sexual advances of an adult.\textsuperscript{80} Freud later abandoned this theory due to his belief that the scenes of rape his female patients described to him were the product of fantasies they had constructed.\textsuperscript{81} The psychoanalyst felt his patients had been lying to themselves and to him. Freud, under the conviction that his female patients were hysterical, believed they had simply been sexually awaked by their fathers innocent caresses (much like the mother’s for a son which eventually developed into Freud’s theory of the Oedipus complex). As in Titian’s painting of the abduction of Europa, Freud’s seduction theory posits rape as a possible myth or even an unconscious desire.

Höch’s *Entführung* inserts itself into this complicated network of discourse concerning Freud’s seduction theory and the representation of abduction and female sexuality in the history of European art. *Entführung* is thus caught between a state of conflict and harmony. The formal content as well as title places the work in direct conversation with tropes found in Renaissance painting, however, *Entführung* interjects any harmonious reading of the scene. This is achieved via the gesture of the cuts incised. They are sharp, jarring, and clearly highlight the construction of the scene set-up by the artist. Since the Weimar woman’s head is turned the other way from the rest of the figures, the reverse positioning of her head shatters the illusion of complacency in her being captured by the male figures on the beast.\textsuperscript{82} If this work is to be understood within the context of “Abduction” genres in the history of art, then Höch’s collage disrupts the viewer’s gaze as it tries to read the procession of figures by interrupting the harmony of their positions.

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 405.
\textsuperscript{82} Moreover, the work also feeds into the idea of objects being “abducted” or stolen from their original contexts via colonial networks.
Moreover, it also takes away from the viewer’s conditioning of seeing works which are usually depicting the rape of Europa as willing and complicit in abduction. If this work can be understood as responding to the Renaissance trend of depicting the rape of Europa as erotic and willing, what might the inclusion of the African tribal sculpture suggest? When asked about the series in an interview with Heinz Ohff in 1968, Höch said:

Ich wollte mit der Serie: *Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* die skrupellose und simple Verwendung, der zu dieser Zeit aus Afrika – Europa überschwemmende Negerplastik anleuchten. Sie wurde mir zu simpel dem Arbeitsprozess gewisser Gruppen einverleibt. (With the series *Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* I wanted to shine a light on the unscrupulous and simplistic use of Negro sculpture from Africa that was flooding Europe at the time. In my view, it was assimilated too simply into the working processes of certain groups.)

When read together with the above quote, Höch’s following insight concerning Freud and gender suggests an interconnection between primitivism, gender, and psychoanalysis:

Durch Freud aufgeklärt – Aus Protest zur älteren Generation und auf dem aufgebrochenen Freiheitswillen der bahnbrechenden Frauen war ihn (sic!) allen diese neue wohl (sic!) Frau begehrenswert. Aber – das (sic!) auch von ihrer Seite Neueinstellungen nötig waren lehnten sie (sic!) mehr oder weniger Worten brutal ab. Dies führte zu diesen wahrhaft Strindbergischen (sic!) Dramen, die das Privatleben dieser Männer kennzeichnete (sic!). Mit den Schicksalen dieser Frauen wären viele Bände zu füllen um das Zeitbild zu vervollständigen. (Enlightened by Freud, and in protest against the older generation, and because of the emerging will for freedom of those pioneering women, this New Woman was desirable to all of them. But they rejected rather brutally with more or less words that a new orientation was also necessary on their part. This lead to Strindbergian dramas that characterized the private lives of these men. Many volumes could be filled with the fates of these women to complete the picture of the time.)

Although fragmentary, reading the quotes together highlight Höch’s frustration with her fellow dadaists and their engagement with primitivism, gender, and psychoanalysis. While many male

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84 Quoted in: Thater-Schulz, *Hannah Höch: Eine Lebenscollage* 1921-1945, volume 2, book 1, 71. If not otherwise noted, translations are mine.
dadaists and surrealists seemingly espoused equality for women, there was a slippage between belief and practice. For example, although dadaists such as Raoul Hausmann, Höch’s former partner, rallied for a liberated role for women in society, his relationship with Höch contradicted certain tenets of his own “feminism.”

Entführung might best be understood not so much as displaying a direct response to Freud’s seduction theory, but rather acts as a surface onto which the art historical representation of the rape of Europa, and therefore also the idea of rape as mythology or fantasy as proposed by Freud, is challenged. This differs from Ernst’s Oedipus and its direct engagement with The Interpretation of Dreams. Whereas Ernst’s scene is one of violence towards a woman, excitement of the perpetrator, and the dark fantasies of the artist, Höch’s is a much more ambiguous work where the joining of a Weimar woman’s head to an African tribal sculpture suggests an uncanny assemblage. Höch’s series, quite contrary to Ernst’s, is not a dreamscape of unusual couplings but a meeting of uncanny encounters through photographic fragments. Unlike Höch’s collages, which bring together different photographs to create new forms on either watercolour or colored paper backgrounds, Ernst not only re-imagines preexisting scenes, but also attempts to render the scenes as credible as possible. In Höch’s collages the fragments, with their seams rough and exposed, function to provide a disjointed and disquieting result. The relationship between race and gender as found in Freud’s configurations of primitivity and femininity is most notable when exploring the psychologies of enthrallment with male power by

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85 Höch recalls her relationship with Haussmann as difficult and sad, fraught with physical violence towards her. See Lavin, Cut with the Kitchen Knife, 26.
which Freud characterized both race and gender. Brickman writes of Freud’s characterization of primitivity:

Cloaked in an essentialist rhetoric, we find a theory of the political production of primitivity: primitivity is the psychology of domination and subordination. It is social and political arrangements of domination that produce enthrallment: the imposition of authority becomes inscribed on the psyche as desire, and primitivity is revealed as an erotics of authority and subjugation.\(^86\)

Regarding Freud’s conflation of the terms primitive and feminine and its formatting of a powerful scientific analogy, the rhetoric of colonization took up the conflation of these terms characterizing African nations in particular as uncultivated in nature, alluring, and submissively awaiting European possession and cultural inscription.\(^87\) *Entführung* enters into these debates and can be understood as a rebellion against domination and subordination as expressed in psychoanalysis and ethnography. The work acts as a search for voice and subjectivity in the form of negation. That is, simultaneously engaging in the very negations this work addresses: the “possession” of both the New Woman and the African object, the Western art historical canon’s representation of rape, and psychoanalysis’ “seduction theory.”

### 2.3 *Die Sammlung*

Freud’s comment concerning female sexuality as a “dark continent” for psychology points out the imbrication of race and gender in psychoanalysis, where “primitivity and femininity each came to signify the other in a network of evolutionary correspondences.”\(^88\) Freud writes that “maleness combines [the factors of] subject, activity, and the possession of a penis; femaleness

\(^87\) Ibid., 104.
\(^88\) Ibid.
takes over [those of] object, and passivity." What does it mean for Höch to insert *Entführung* into her *Sammlung*? Its insertion exposes ethnographic museums, as well as the discipline of psychoanalysis, of studying people in similar fashion to ethnographic objects against which to measure the white European male self. But moreover, it marks an irony and contradiction in the work itself, for her ethnographic series relies on those *very* objects stolen from cultures outside of Europe, which were subsequently photographed and placed into ethnographic museums. Thus, Höch’s primitivism is marked by an open-ended self-reflection and persistent questioning rather than any ideological certainty.  

Psychoanalytic theory in the early-twentieth century reproduced notions of the need for relations of dominance and subordination between European males and gendered as well as racial/cultural others, suggesting that those without a complete superego (women and people racially marked other) need, for their completion as human beings, to be bound to those who have a fully-formed superego (white European males). According to Freudian psychoanalytic theory, those who do not have completely formed superegos cannot take full-fledged positions in language, culture, or society, which in turn suggests their need for guardianship. Freud’s assumptions about gender and race, read in the context of Höch’s series, are illuminated in *From an Ethnographic Museum* in two crucial ways: First, in its title alone, the series points to how the role of the ethnographic museum in collecting assumes a position of power under the guise of “protection” and “salvage.” Second, Höch’s creation of her own collection—which involves the

89 Ibid., 105.
91 Brickman, *Aboriginal Populations in the Mind,* 111.
92 Ibid.
act of removing and transplanting images of women and objects—is produced on her own terms over the course of ten years. This time span suggests the artist carefully selected what to include in the series that would constitute a collection. Nevertheless, artistic intentions aside, the series falls under the category of primitivism as it employs images from cultures outside of Europe for certain comparisons between race and gender to be made. *From an Ethnographic Museum* is therefore a complex and contradictory work which should not be read as an anti-colonial critique, but rather as a series which grapples with the search for subjectivity—and which exposes the problematic nature of that definition.

The two most critical moments of constructing collage, that of separation and inclusion, become the operations necessary to the constitution of subjectivity. Rather than amalgamate and draw similarities between race, gender, New Woman and tribal objects, *From an Ethnographic Museum* wrestles with finding a way to navigate subjectivity which has been denied in institutions such as psychoanalysis, ethnography, and artistic circles. Höch’s practice is far from fixed or simple. It is ambiguous and ambivalent.
Chapter 3: “Ich möchte die festen Grenzen auswischen”: Colliding Cuts and Psychoanalytic Discourse

3.1 Psychoanalysis in Berlin

In 1907, Karl Abraham (1877-1925), a trained psychiatrist and Freud’s first disciple, opened the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society. In 1920, the society was renamed the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute (BPI). The BPI’s mission was to emphasize the political and social implications of psychoanalysis, its application to fields such as law, pedagogy, and medicine, as well as its desire to reach beyond the traditional wealthy clientele.\(^93\) Psychoanalysis in Berlin flourished as it found a receptive audience after the First World War. According to Johannes Cremerius, within the history of Freudian psychoanalysis, Berlin was the origin of dissent.\(^94\) Artist’s such as Richard Huelsenbeck (1892-1974) and Raoul Hausmann were more interested in the aspects about the BPI and its members that concerned “a revolution of the new against all that was tradition—the rebellion of the sons against the generation of their fathers.”\(^95\)

Her colleagues’ fascination with psychoanalysis was not lost on Höch. Extant correspondence between Hausmann and Höch highlights Hausmann’s attempts to psychoanalyze not only Höch’s relationship with her father, but also the topic of motherhood. Quoting psychoanalyst Otto Gross (1877-1920), Hausmann writes:

[D]er Mutterinstinkts gehört so sehr zum Wesen der Weiblichkeit, daß sich die innere Gegensatzstellung zu diesem Instinkt nur als Verneinung der eigenen Weiblichkeit selbst, als Wunsch nach Mannlichkeit manifestieren kann. (The maternal instinct is so much part

\(^{93}\) Feuchtner, Berlin Psychoanalytic, 11.
\(^{94}\) Ibid., 7.
of femininity’s nature that an inner opposition to this instinct can only manifest (itself) as a negation of one’s femininity, (i.e.) as a desire for masculinity.)

The topic of motherhood was contentious in Weimar Germany. The rise of National Socialist rhetoric around idealized “Aryan” mothers was surfacing at the same time as Freud was developing his theories on the Oedipus complex. Höch takes-up this complicated network of discourse concerning the figure and trope of the mother in her work Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum: Mutter (Fig. 13). How does Mutter bridge the network of discourses surrounding the figure of mother in Weimar Germany? What does it mean to place Mutter in the ethnographic museum series?

What was most unique about the Berlin Institute was its emphasis on the political and social implications of psychoanalysis and its strategy to popularize it through mass media. Psychoanalysis became part of a larger cultural system and a fashionable topic in Weimar films and novels. Berlin psychoanalyst Hanns Sachs (1881-1947), along with Abraham, wrote in a joint letter to Freud’s inner circles in Vienna, London, and Budapest: “We can report from Germany that the discussion of psychoanalysis in newspapers and magazines doesn’t rest. One finds it mentioned everywhere. Of course there is no lack of attacks. But without doubt the interest was never as strong as now.” Amongst several other popularizers of psychoanalysis was Heinrich Meng’s (1887-1972) 1928 manual of psychoanalysis Das Psychoanalytische Volksbuch (Popular Psychoanalytic Handbook), as well as Hanns Sachs’s 1920

96 Hausmann quoted in Thater-Schulz, Hannah Höch, Eine Lebenscollage, 1889-1918, volume 1, book 1, 222.
97 In Berlin Psychoanalytic, Feuchtner notes such novels as: Yvan Goll’s Sodom Berlin (1929), Richard Huelsenbeck’s Doctor Billig am Ende (Doctor Billig at the End) (1921), Salomo Friedlaender/Mynona’s Graue Magie (Grey Magic) (1922), Georg Groddeck’s Der Seelensucher (The Seeker of Souls) (1921) and Briefe über das Es (The Book of the It) (1929). Movies include G.W. Pabst’s 1926 Geheimnisse einer Seele (Secrets of a Soul), and The Movie of the Unconscious (1923) produced by the German-American Film Union.
98 Feuchtner, Berlin Psychoanalytic, 12.
Psychoanalytische Liebesregeln (Psychoanalytic Love Rules). Georg Groddeck (1866-1934), the self-declared “wild psychoanalyst” to the Berlin psychoanalytic Institute, also aimed to popularize psychoanalysis by synthesizing it with modernist aesthetics, philosophy, and social thought. Groddeck’s lectures appeared more like dada performances. At one of the lectures he gave at the Lessing-Hochschule in 1925, he revealed details of his private life and shocked the audience by sharing his violent fantasies about death, and his experiences with masturbation and impotence. Wolfgang Martynkewicz, an audience attendee, pointed out how Groddeck’s improvisations were carefully planned and performed, right down to the honking of a car, and scripted weeks prior to the lecture.

In some ways the performance is comparable to Huelsenbeck, Hausmann, and Grosz’s 1918 evening of lectures, poetry readings, and performances staged at the Berlin Sezession. Huelsenbeck recited from his book of poems Phantastische Gebete and presented his lecture “Dadaismus im Leben und in der Kunst” (Dadaism in Life and Art), Hausmann delivered a dada manifesto, and Grosz rehearsed his poems and danced to jazz music. Newspapers described the evening events as nearly riotous, with one reviewer even writing that “the threat of violence hung in the air.” Providing both imagery and theory, psychoanalysis afforded plenty of material for dadaists to engage with. Berlin dadaist Hans Richter (1888-1976) describes the unconscious as a central category in the relationship between dada and psychoanalysis: “[O]f course we had heard already at the time, about 1916, somehow of the ideas of Freud, and some of us also of Jung and

99 Ibid., 11.
100 Ibid., 65.
101 Ibid., 77.
102 Ibid.
Adler, but what we meant with the unconscious was not a clinical dimension but our personal and new discovery of unheard possibilities for creative expression.”

Hausmann, also known as the “dadasoph,” was particularly taken by one psychoanalytic figure: Otto Gross.

Gross was of the opinion that psychoanalysis could transform society itself. His first publication was in the expressionist journal Die Aktion, wherein he stated the importance of the new psychology of the unconscious as outlined by Freud for revolutionary change, and he believed that Weimar society had to undermine its authoritarian patriarchy. Gross declared that the coming revolution would be for matriarchy. He supplied this rebellion with a foundation of psychoanalytic theory. One of his most famous slogans rang: “The psychology of the unconscious is the philosophy of the revolution. It is called upon to enable an inner freedom, called upon as preparation for the revolution.”

Gross, like Hausmann and Huelsenbeck, strongly believed that any revolution had to start by changing the authoritarian/patriarchal structures within oneself, internalized during one’s upbringing.

In 1915, along with other psychoanalysts and dadaists, Gross started the magazine Die Freie Strasse. It found broad readership among artists, and Hausmann and Höch were subscribers. Within Die Freie Strasse, psychoanalytic concepts and theories were discussed, but the journal functioned primarily as a place for literary radicals and expressionist artists to meet. Gross wrote a lot about the differences between men and women, but unlike Freud, he did not believe there was an innate difference that accounted for the dominant-sadistic character

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104 Feuchtner, Berlin Psychoanalytic, 151.
106 Heuer, Freud’s ‘Outstanding’ Colleague/Jung’s ‘Twin Brother’, 64.
107 Ibid.
109 Ibid.
he attributed to men and the passive-masochistic character he attributed to women.\textsuperscript{110} Gross attributed differences between the sexes to a deformation of instinct by the existing organization of society—namely, patriarchy as the instrument of male domination.\textsuperscript{111} He did however agree with Freud that males were \textit{characteristically} aggressive, and females passive.\textsuperscript{112} Regarding motherhood, he believed in a social Darwinist explanation, noting: “Natural selection is repressed and replaced by another new process of breeding, whose tendencies and effects are precisely opposed to the natural selection of the strongest and most fit and result in a situation where a by nature abnormal and inferior (feminine) type has in the course of time become the norm.”\textsuperscript{113} Stated otherwise, Gross believed the struggle of one’s so-called “nature” is against the internalized values of society. Furthermore, Gross does not believe there is a “will to power” or mastery over others expressed in the ego-drive in that it is an innate characteristic comprised of an aggressive-violating tendency.\textsuperscript{114} Essentially, Gross developed a theory of sado-masochism in which aggressive male character types and submissive female character types were rooted not in natural instinct, but rather in the deformation of instinct by the social organization of the family.\textsuperscript{115} Thus, turning to Höch’s \textit{Mutter}, it is not only within the context of Freudian psychoanalytics from which it can be read, but more so the ways in which tropes of the mother crossed boundaries between scientific, political, racial, and social discourse. At a time when the figure of the mother tended to be a monolithic symbol of woman, \textit{Mutter} acts as the point from

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\textsuperscript{110} Mitzman, “Anarchy, Expressionism and Psychoanalysis,” 91.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 92.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 94.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 96.
\end{flushleft}
which discourses converge and collide, and no single fixed meaning of maternity can be pinned down.

### 3.2 Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum: Mutter

In *Mutter*, posed in front of a vibrant watercoloured background, a woman’s torso and head fill the surface. Her face is covered by a Kwakiutl tribe mask. Peering through the left side of the mask is an eye belonging to a white female. Höch makes this visible, in similar fashion as *Die Süße*, by purposefully leaving the white skin around the eye exposed. The figure’s left eye (on the right side of the mask) belongs to the mask and remains intact, with only the bottom section below the eye removed in a half moon, allowing the watercolour background to show through. Höch cuts a large shape out of the bottom half of the mask and leaves the woman’s mouth and chin uncovered, making it appear as though the mask is much too large for the woman’s face. The most striking aspect of the work is the body of the woman; her entire stomach is missing and only her breasts remain. To better understand the significance of this gesture, turning towards the source from which Höch extracted the photograph provides insight; namely, John Heartfield’s (1891-1968) 1930 photomontage *Zwangsiezlerantin von Menschenmaterial Nur Mut! Der Staat braucht Arbeitslose und Soldaten!* (Forced Supplier of Human Ammunition Take Courage! The State Needs Unemployed and Soldiers!) (Fig. 14).

Heartfield, otherwise known as Helmut Herzfelde, published his collage in the newspaper *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* in 1930. Depicted in the black and white photomontage is the

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116 Plisnier “Non-Western art in Dada photography and photomontage,” in *Dada Africa: Dialogue with the Other*, 195.
body of a young pregnant woman. She sits with her hands clasped in her lap and stares directly into the camera lens. Above (and behind) her, lies the body of a young boy who appears to be dead. A shotgun rests next to his lifeless body. The scene in the photomontage suggests the child in the woman’s belly will suffer a similar fate as the boy above. This is further stated in the caption that accompanies the work: the mother produces the ammunitions for the war—future soldiers—and their fate is death. The figure of the mother and maternity in general were contentious subjects in Weimar Germany. Upon completion, in similar fashion to Max Ernst, Heartfield photographs his photomontages to give them a seamless appearance.

Compared to Hearfiled’s relatively seamless ‘cuts’ in his photomontage, Höch’s are jagged and rough. Although it might appear as though Höch, by placing a tribal mask onto the woman’s face, is drawing alarming parallels between woman and ‘primitive’ person, this would be far too easy of a reading. Instead, the interjection of the ‘cut’ conjures a more complex and contradictory understanding. That is, in removing the source of what identifies this figure as a mother (the pregnant belly), yet titling the work “Mutter,” alludes not only to the increasing phenomenon of abortion at the time, but moreover plays with the very notion of “contradiction” itself—both embodying and contesting the overlapping discourses surrounding maternity. Mutter responds to how the figure of the mother in the Weimar era became a bearer of several political and social meanings that were often inconsistent, and it is impossible to extract one idea of motherhood that Höch is responding to. During the years of the Weimar Republic, the image of the mother was appropriated by both the political left as a tool to engage with social and political issues, and by the right to promote a nationalist cultural agenda.  

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3.3 The Topic of Motherhood in Weimar Germany

In 1920’s Weimar Germany, representations of mothers and motherhood were prevalent, particularly when using the figure of the mother to address a variety of issues. As noted by art historian Michelle Vangen, “[T]he focus on motherhood during the opening decades of the twentieth century was in part the result of an upsurge of nationalistic sentiment following Germany's unification in 1871. Entwined with this sense of nationalism was the concept of the “health of the nation” which depended in large part upon a steady production of newborns to increase the population.”

Furthermore, women’s increasing public presence called into question the traditional domestic order wherein women were placed in the roles of wife and mother. As women began to advocate their belief that motherhood was a choice and not their natural purpose, there was widespread public reaction and debate. As artists, politicians, and critics explored the subject of motherhood in visual culture, the trope of the mother became the bearer of multiple meanings. The trend continued into the National Socialist era, when Nazi art depicted blond-haired and blue-eyed mothers with their children as symbols of Aryan racial superiority.

As the May 1939 cover of the Nazi Party magazine NS Frauen Warte shows, the National Socialists, favoring Aryan mother and child portraits, used a sentimental picture of a mother and her children to capture their völkisch ideal. Nazi leaders called on German women to bear children for the “Aryan” population. This racial hygiene discourse centered itself around women as being either hailed as “mothers of the race” or vilified as being guilty of “racial

\[^{118}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{119}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{120}\text{Ibid., 29.}\]
Because of the complex connection between sexism and racism in Nazi German ideology regarding motherhood, it was “Aryan” women considered ethnically and socially superior who were encouraged to have children (even if they did not want them), and ethnically not German who were considered inferior, and banned them from having children through forced sterilization.122

Although not a part of the ethnographic museum series, one of Höch’s other collages captures the meeting of the “mothers of the race” and “racial degeneration” discourse in her 1924 collage Liebe im Busch (Love in the Bush) (Fig. 15). In the collage, a smiling white woman with a Bubikopf haircut is being embraced by a black male. The work openly references the discourse at the time which believed that people who were not white were said to be “polluting” German blood with Mischlingskinder (children of mixed races).123 This was especially prevalent after the First World War, when the French army sent indigenous troops from overseas territories to occupy the Rhineland, which was known in Weimar German propaganda as the ‘Black Horror on the Rhine.’124 It was deemed inconceivable that a German woman would voluntarily engage sexually with any of the members of the troops, and thus any sexual engagement between them was automatically considered rape.125 Paralleling this concern were psychoanalytic debates taking place in Berlin around motherhood.

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122 Ibid., 420.
123 Peter Bosworth and Maria Makela, The Photomontages of Hannah Höch (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1996), 70.
125 Ibid., 302.
The Berlin psychoanalyst Georg Groddeck believed that women ruled the future of the population, and her task was to assume the mother’s role by “giving birth to and educating her children, in whom she would instill a sense of duty to the state and the population, as well as the consciousness that man was a tool of God’s nature.”126 Other psychoanalysts, such as Otto Gross, believed society should shift to a matriarchal social order and return to a primitive “golden age” of sorts without patriarchy.127 Gross understood this as an ideal shift towards “innate eternal values” in motherhood. Moreover, Freud’s theorizations such as the Oedipus complex, saw the figure of the mother as the son’s object of sexual desire. As these examples show, the figure of the mother “remains the very definition of psychoanalytic primitivity, representing the site of ontological origins as the primitive represents the site of phylogenetic origins.”128 Höch’s representational strategies insert themselves into this dialogue particularly by revealing the maternal Weimar icon for women of the day as a faceless (or masked), barren figure, thus marking an intervention into the discourse. She effectively transforms the trope of the mother by concealing her under a mask. As an avid reader of Carl Einstein, and owning a personalized copy of Negerplastik, one can assume Höch was well-aware of the following excerpt on masks and ideas behind metamorphosis and transformation of the wearer. Einstein writes:

Metamorphosis is his means of balancing out the destructive act of adoration; […] he transforms himself through the mask into the tribe and the god. This transformation offers him the most powerful comprehension of objectivity; he incarnates it within himself, and he himself is this objectivity, in which all individuality is annihilated. Consequently, the mask has meaning only when it is inhuman, impersonal, which is to say constructive, free

from the lived experience of the individual [...] 129

As noted by art historian Joyce Cheng, Einstein’s interest in African masks is strictly oriented towards its artistic dimension; that is, “he is interested in the mask as an instrument designed to facilitate immanent physical and psychic metamorphosis.” 130 Reading Höch’s work with the knowledge of Einstein’s theorizations of tribal masks allows for an understanding of how the figure in Mutter is transformed and set apart from being read as having any political agenda. In a sense, through the addition of the mask, she becomes depersonalized. Her state transforms from being a mother into becoming an object. Thus, she is relegated to an ethnographic collection, where she is contained, categorized, and serves as a vessel for discourse. In addition, African masks in general served as the privileged sculptural form that garnered the fascination of primitivist artists, as well as the metaphor and object onto which primitivist fantasies projected itself (recall the works of Janco and Kassák). 131 Most notably, by inserting one open eye, Höch raises the question of who the person on the other side of the mask might be, thereby not completely defacing the figure, but arresting the viewer’s attention and prompting a critical reflection on the many contradictions functioning simultaneously in the trope of the mother in Weimar Germany.

131 Dittrich, “Primitivism, Photomontage, Ethnography,” 251.
Conclusions

In the preface to a catalogue accompanying Höch’s 1929 exhibition at Galerie de Bron in the Hague, Höch writes:

Ich möchte die festen Grenzen auswischen, die wir Menschen, mit einer eigensinnigen Sicherheit um alles, was in unseren Bereich kam, gezogen haben. Ich male, um diesem Wunsch Form zu geben und um ihn anschaulich zu machen. (I want to erase the firm boundaries that we humans draw with a stubborn self-assuredness around everything that has come into our realm. I paint because I want to provide a form to this wish and make it visible.)

Höch’s quote reveals the artist’s interest in breaking fixed meanings; something which I have argued can be located in From an Ethnographic Museum through the overlapping and meeting of disparate image fragments. Particularly, her work reveals the inseparability of primitivism and ethnography from the psychoanalytic discourse.

While this thesis is in many ways indebted to Lavin and Toussaint’s work, their scholarship does not acknowledge the foundational role psychoanalysis played in Höch’s series. Although Lavin’s Cut with the Kitchen Knife has become standard reading for any Höch or dada scholar, the author only describes Die Süße as being a “phallus-shaped psycho-sexual fetish,” for which she provides little further explanation. Toussaint’s primary argument in Dem kolonialen Blick begegnen is that Höch is engaging in a postcolonial critique, yet there proves to be a gap in Toussaint’s argument by not recognizing how inextricably bound psychoanalytic discourse is to

133 After describing the work Denkmal, Lavin writes “Höch reminds us of the function of a monument as a psychosexual fetish. And in a work such as Die Süße (The Sweet), c. 1926, a woman seems transformed, playfully, into an ethnographic object and a phallus-shaped fetish. According to Freud’s definition of fetishism, the psychosexual fetish is both an object of the male gaze and a figure of denial.” In Cut with the Kitchen Knife, 179.
the colonial project at the time. As Ranjana Khanna’s *Dark Continents* shows, the psychoanalytic as well as the colonial project of the early twentieth century are inextricably bound to each other. Moreover, Freud’s use of the “dark continent” metaphor is an expression of colonialist language. Khanna writes: “[P]erhaps fearing her difference, he makes her other, obliterating the specificity and difference of her body by turning it into a fetishized metaphor of the unknown: ‘dark continent,’ and it is defined as lack.”\(^{134}\) The male European subject is the prime interlocutor against which the feminine and primitive other is measured.

I have attempted in this thesis to address the gap in extant literature concerning Höch’s engagement with psychoanalysis, and to show how *From an Ethnographic Museum* reflects the pervasive psychoanalytic discourse in Weimar Germany. Although beyond the scope of this project, a closer examination of the artist’s engagement with psychoanalysis throughout her entire oeuvre warrants further attention. In particular, it should be further explored how the gestures of the cut in her collages function to unite psychoanalytic discourse with the social and political landscape of not only the Weimar era, but also of the Germany after the Second World War.

*From an Ethnographic Museum* simultaneously contributes to and complicates the colonial projects of ethnography and psychoanalysis as well as the multiplicity of discourses they are connected to. Through the method of collage, the cuts incised act as fault lines that the works inhabit. They do not allow for the colliding image fragments to remain in any fixed interpretation, but rather expose a complex set of contradictions which meet on the surface of the page.

\(^{134}\) Khanna, *Dark Continents*, 49.
Figures

Figure 1 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a collage of a woman’s body and a tribal object. Hannah Höch, *Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum: Die Süße*, 1926, Photomontage with watercolour on paper, Museum Folkwang, Essen.

Figure 2 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a collage of a woman’s body and a tribal object. Hannah Höch, *Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum: Fremde Schönheit*, 1929, Photomontage with watercolour on paper, Jean-Paul Kahn Collection, Paris.

Figure 3 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a collage of a woman’s body and a tribal object. Hannah Höch, *Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum: Denkmal I*, 1924, Photomontage with watercolour on paper, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin. [http://sammlung-online.berlinischegalerie.de/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=485&viewType=detailView](http://sammlung-online.berlinischegalerie.de/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=485&viewType=detailView)

Figure 4 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a black and white photograph of Hugo Ball at Cabaret Voltaire in 1916. [https://www.theartstory.org/artist-ball-hugo-artworks.htm](https://www.theartstory.org/artist-ball-hugo-artworks.htm)
Figure 5 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a collage of a man at a desk with tribal objects. Lajos Kassák, *Montage-Autoportrait 1923-1965*, 1966, Photomontage and collage, Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum, Budapest.

Figure 6 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a mask. Marcel Janco, *Mask*, 1919, assemblage with paper, cardboard, string, gouache, and pastel, Musée national d'art moderne, Centres Georges Pompidou, Paris. https://www.centrepompidou.fr/cpv/resource/cejBaXy/rdL8Mn0

Figure 7 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a painting of two men. Max Ernst, *Pietà ou La révolution la nuit*, 1923, Oil on canvas, Tate, London. https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/ernst-pieta-or-revolution-by-night-t03252

Figure 8 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a painting of a hand and a walnut. Max Ernst, *Oedipus Rex*, 1922, Oil on canvas, Private Collection. http://www.max-ernst.com/oedipus-rex.jsp
Figure 9 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a collage of a bird-like figure and a woman. Max Ernst, plate from Oedipe, 1934, Collage for Une semaine de bonté, Private Collection.

Figure 10 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a collage of an Easter Island sculptural figure at a dressing table. Max Ernst, plate from Le Rire du coq, L’Ile de Pâques, 1934, Collage for Une semaine de bonté, Private Collection.

Figure 11 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a collage of four figures on a tribal object. Hannah Höch, Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum: Entführung, 1925, Photomontage, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

Figure 12 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a painting depicting the mythic scene of the rape of Europa. Titian, The Rape of Europa, 1562, Oil on canvas, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston. https://www.gardnermuseum.org/experience/collection/10978
Figure 13 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a collage of a woman’s body and a tribal object. Hannah Höch, Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum: Mutter, 1930, Photomontage with watercolour on paper, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris. https://www.centrepompidou.fr/cpv/resource/cbjkKj/rGE6a6L

Figure 14 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a photomontage of a woman and child. John Heartfield, Zwangslieferantin von Menschennmaterial Nur Mut! Der Staat braucht Arbeitslose und Soldaten!, Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung 9, no 10, 1930, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Figure 15 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a collage of a man and woman. Hannah Höch, Liebe im Busch, 1924, Photomontage, Collection of Modern Art, Museum of Fort Worth.
Bibliography


