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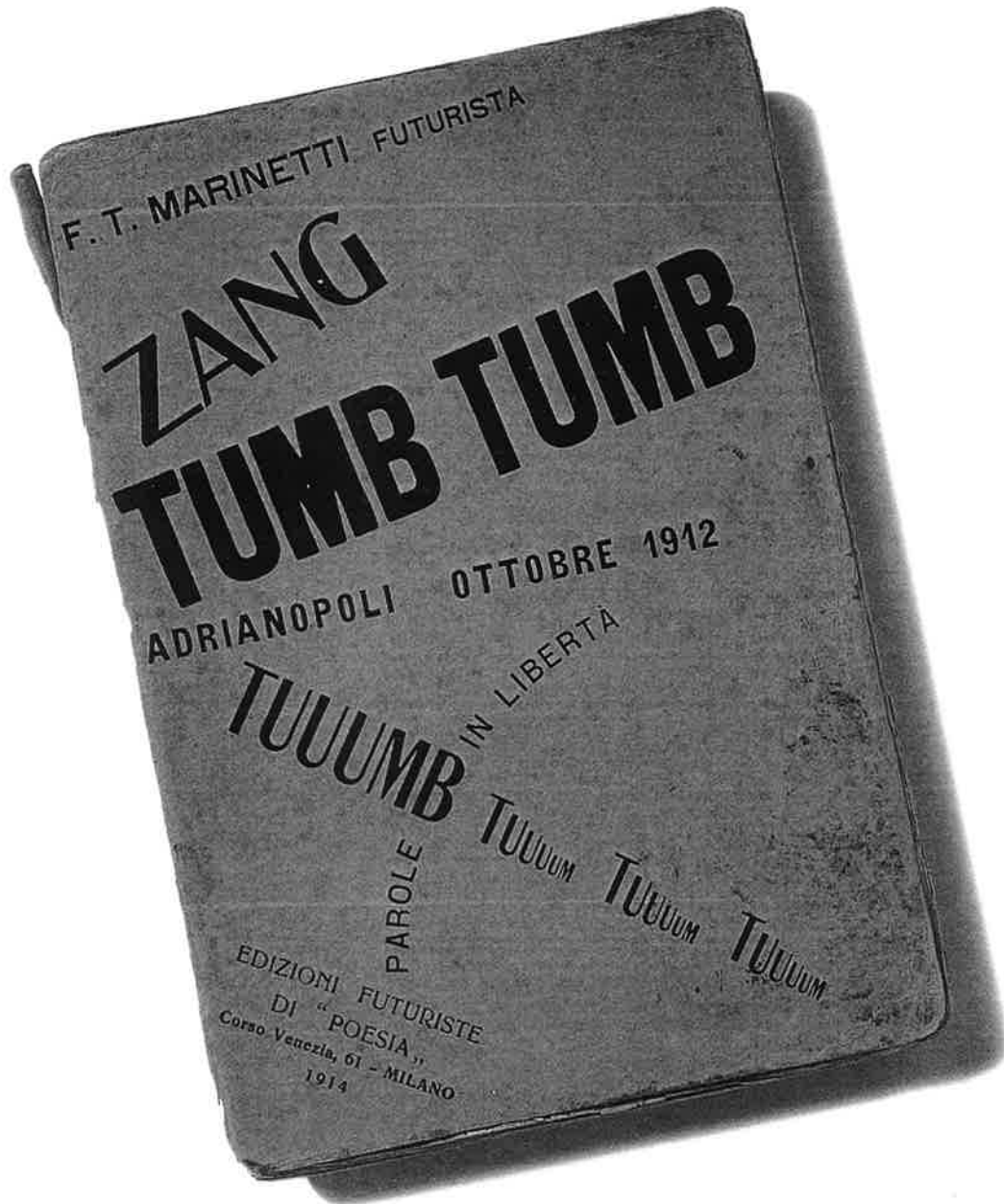
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3  
Filippo  
Tommaso  
Marinetti,  
*Zang Tumb  
Tumb*, 1914  
Private  
collection

Dada emerged – energetic and anarchic – in the middle of World War I. Its participants formed groups openly opposed to the establishment values that had helped to bring about mass slaughter. However, the roots of Dada's cultural protest lay in the prewar activities of those artists subsequently identified as 'modernists'. They introduced new materials and techniques and depicted subjects that reflected the rapidly changing conditions of modern life. The most radical of them came to be seen as the avant-garde, whose experimental methods reflected their fundamental questioning of the political and philosophical assumptions underlying art. A brief overview of some of the important issues arising from these prewar activities can provide the context from which Dada emerged. It serves to highlight Dada's roots in the experimentation and internationalism of avant-garde art, and touches upon the crucial philosophical, psychological and mystical ideas by which it was influenced.

These prewar activities were seen in cities from Moscow to Munich and Milan, but above all in Paris. Here the Impressionists had emerged in the 1870s and an artistic avant-garde had established itself in a series of provocative and iconoclastic movements ranging from Symbolism in the 1880s and 1890s to Fauvism and Cubism in the decade leading up to the war. The avant-garde did not constitute a homogeneous body – indeed its members divided stylistically, philosophically and politically as each generation extended the achievements of the last. However, most avant-garde artists were individualistic and experimental in their work, believing that all arts needed to be renewed by a response to the times.

For some time official French culture had served conservative political ends. Governments of the late nineteenth century



4  
**Auguste Rodin,**  
*The Age of Bronze*, 1875-6.  
 Bronze.  
 h 175 cm, 71 in.  
 Victoria & Albert  
 Museum,  
 London

recognized culture and especially the visual arts as a means of sustaining foreign influence. They actively promoted the Academies of Art in Paris, which perpetuated the Classical Academic tradition handed down from the Renaissance and of which the sculptor Auguste Rodin (4) came to be regarded as a major exponent. The avant-garde formed among those promoting new ideas and offering a critique of the system. While working outside the culturally and politically conservative establishment, they also benefitted from the vitality of the arts in the city. Many artists, like the Impressionists, had revolted

to explore new subjects and techniques. Others embraced radical politics as an extension of their artistic radicalism, and the process of unmasking the hypocritical establishment came to be associated with the ideas of artistic experimentation.

This link was strengthened by the scandal of the Dreyfus Affair. In 1894, Alfred Dreyfus, a colonel in the French Army, was sent to the tropical penal colony of Devil's Island for selling secrets to the enemy. With the famous article 'J'Accuse' (1898), the novelist Émile Zola campaigned for his release, asserting that the innocent Dreyfus had been made a scapegoat because he was Jewish. The appeal, at which Dreyfus was exonerated, confirmed an institutionalized anti-Semitism at the very heart of the French establishment. The Dreyfus Affair divided a whole generation on pro- and anti-Dreyfus lines.

Although not all avant-garde artists supported Dreyfus, the outcome reinforced the perception of artists and intellectuals as defenders of ideals and moral positions irrespective of conventions. In social terms artists and intellectuals had little to lose. They were already outside the establishment and were associated with the 'demi-monde' of entertainment, like the artists of Giacomo Puccini's romantic opera *La Bohème* (1890).

While exhibitions of avant-garde art led to conflicts with the establishment in general and the middle classes in particular, avant-garde theatrical and musical performances provoked especially sharp hostility among audiences devoted to the 'divine' actress Sarah Bernhardt or the rising operatic tenor Enrico Caruso. When Alfred Jarry's satirical play *Ubu Roi* (1896) opened with an extended cry of 'Merdre' (shit; intentionally misspelled in the script and mispronounced to avoid censorship), it caused a riot of legendary vehemence. The new Russian and French music introduced through the performances of Serge Diaghilev's company, the Ballets Russes, was greeted with a similar response. The jagged power of Igor Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* (1913) and the sexuality of Nijinsky's dancing in Claude Debussy's *Prélude*

à l'après-midi d'un faune (1894; ballet, 1912) both provoked vocal first-night protests.

In many cases professional critics opened the way to public ridicule. Louis Vauxcelles condemned the works of Henri Matisse (6), André Derain, Raoul Dufy and their associates who exhibited together in 1905 as those of 'fauves' (wild beasts). He took exception to their energetic use of unmixed colour taken straight from the tube to convey the intensity of sensual experience. Some four years later the same critic (actually echoing Matisse) dismissed Georges Braque's work as 'cubisme', a caricature of the painter's attempt to reconstruct reality on his canvas by using simplified planes (5). The painters, however, adopted such terms as Cubism as a proud acknowledgement of their radicalism. The Italian Futurists led by the poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti met such ridicule and bemusement head-on. Their exhibitions were accompanied by combative public performances or *soirées* in which the audience was deliberately provoked to the point



5  
Georges Braque  
*Mandarin*  
1909-10  
Oil on canvas,  
71.4 x 55.9 cm,  
28 x 22 in  
Tate Gallery,  
London



6  
Henri Matisse  
*Landscape at Collioure*, 1905  
Oil on canvas,  
46 x 55 cm,  
18 1/8 x 21 5/8 in  
Statens  
Museum for  
Kunst,  
Copenhagen

of riot. In some artistic circles the desire to *épater la bourgeoisie* (shock the bourgeoisie) became an end in itself, but as audiences became harder to shock, more controversial effects were required.

In the years immediately preceding the war, a greater understanding of the new art, and a better balance between shock and appreciation, was achieved as avant-garde critics infiltrated the ranks of the professionals. Articulate young poets – such as Guillaume Apollinaire, André Salmon and Max Jacob – were close to the painters and musicians of the new generation, and Apollinaire (7) in particular was a pivotal figure. Inspired and charismatic, he championed Cubism and counted the painters Braque, Pablo Picasso, Juan Gris and Fernand Léger among his friends. He also supported the Fauves, as well as younger artists such as Robert Delaunay, Alexander Archipenko, Giorgio de Chirico, Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia. The diversity of these artists, a list which reads like a roll-call of prewar modernism, shows that his wider purpose was to encourage innovation of all types. Apollinaire had an astonishingly eclectic experience of culture; of mixed Polish and Italian ancestry, he composed some of the most remarkable poems in the French language and also catalogued the Bibliothèque Nationale's collection of pornographic literature. He was also the only

from the Louvre in 1911. The fact that he could be suspected in this way speaks for the power of avant-garde propaganda against such symbols of tradition.

There were similar concentrations of experimental artists across Europe and further afield. A fertile exchange of ideas was established through an international network. Apollinaire had contacts in Prague; the poet Blaise Cendrars travelled to New York and Rio de Janeiro; Marinetti took Futurism on a tour of Europe. News of activities was quickly spread through periodicals such as Apollinaire's *Les Soirées de Paris*, Herwarth Walden's Berlin-based *Der Sturm* and Alfred Stieglitz's New York-based *Camera Work*.

The periodicals provided a platform for new writers, just as independent exhibiting organizations allowed artists to show their work without submitting to the rules of the official Salons. In Paris, the springtime Salon des Indépendants and the Salon d'Automne had selection committees made up of modernists, and the impetus towards freedom of expression was repeated across Europe. The suppression of an exhibition of Edvard Munch's work in 1892 because of the charged eroticism of the paintings led to the formation of the Berlin Secession by artists determined to break away from the academic establishment. The Vienna Secession was formed by Gustav Klimt, Carl Moll and others who likewise rejected the conservative attitude of the official establishment, favouring a more modern experimental approach. Die Brücke (The Bridge) was formed in Dresden in 1905 around Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and others, who saw their highly coloured and energetic art, later dubbed Expressionist, as a bridge to the future. However, even such progressive groups splintered. In 1912 Wassily Kandinsky felt bound to resign from the Neue Künstler Vereinigung (New Artists' Association), which he had founded in Munich in 1909, because of attempts by fellow-artists to restrict his showing of abstract works. As a result he founded a new group called Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider), named

7  
Louis  
Marcoussis,  
*Portrait of  
Guillaume  
Apollinaire*,  
1912. Drypoint  
engraving,  
49 x 27 cm,  
19½ x 10¾ in.  
Philadelphia  
Museum of Art



after one of his paintings. With Franz Marc, Kandinsky edited *Der Blaue Reiter Almanach* (1912), a publication that promoted the avant-garde and their own near abstraction.

This upsurge of international avant-garde experimentation coincided with a revolution in political and philosophical ideas and social changes brought about by rapid urbanization and developments in science and technology. The writings of the Communists Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and the Anarchists Mikhail Bakunin and Petr Kropotkin challenged the view of progress fostered by industrial capitalism. The radical works of such writers and playwrights as Oscar Wilde and Henrik Ibsen, Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoyevsky exposed the social and moral dilemmas associated with materialism. The French Symbolist poets, including Stéphane Mallarmé and Arthur Rimbaud, concentrated on the 'idea in art' at the expense of realism, establishing a pattern from which the world of the imagination became a source of spiritual renewal.

Friedrich Nietzsche in his masterpiece *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883–5) proclaimed the coming of a superman, mentally and physically more evolved than was then imaginable. The consequences of such propositions – and Nietzsche never shrank from the unacceptable – were to be seen in the bastardization of his ideas in Nazi Germany in the 1930s. Most widely read especially among artists was his philosophical autobiography *Ecce Homo* (1888, published 1908), because it summarized the course of his thought in an easily digestible form. Nietzsche initially relied on Arthur Schopenhauer's proposition that the true nature of things lay behind surface reality. Such metaphysical ideas were distinct from the positivist view of progress gained through observation. However, Nietzsche soon developed his own world-view of a 'Will to Power', emphasizing that every expression of this Will strove to increase its power.

Richard Wagner's intense music, performed with dramatic staging and near-religious effects, captured a massive audience. He was also important for his development of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* or

total art work. Wagner believed that art should aspire to an all-encompassing experience, in which music, costumes, sets, lighting, even the design of the theatre should be integrated. Musicians, notably Alexander Scriabin in St Petersburg in 1910, attempted to link the arts quite literally by building 'light pianos', so that when the keyboard was played the music was accompanied by projected coloured lights each attuned to a note. Kandinsky and his colleagues in *Der Blaue Reiter* were also concerned with the potential role of painting in the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Calligraphic forms and strong saturated colours filled canvases, such as Kandinsky's *Painting with Black Arch* (8), which retained only vestiges of a subject. These artists sought a visual equivalent to the power of music and in the process established the validity of pictorial abstraction, often using musical analogies, as in Marc's *Composition III* (9).

In Paris the ideas of the philosopher Henri Bergson were especially influential. He proposed that the nature of experience was in a constant state of flux, and that this was perceived by the individual not as a series of rational moments selected by the conscious mind but as a multiplicity of perceptions and memories. His lectures at the Sorbonne on the 'simultaneity of experience' were attended by some Cubist painters in the 1910s, and his *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1903) was widely read. The theory seemed to confirm the new urban reality, which was cacophonous and complex in its impact on the senses. It fitted the results of technological progress experienced on the streets, and promoted the idea of the 'living city', with a rhythm and life of its own.

For many artists this Bergsonian instability was a stimulant, offering a new challenge. The fact that it could be a subject for art was a measure of how far artists had broken with traditional forms and notions of reality. The fragmentary perception of contemporary existence was exemplified in the work of Delaunay, who celebrated the Eiffel Tower (10) as a symbol of modern technological achievement. (Constructed for the 1889 Universal Exposition, the Eiffel Tower remained until 1910 the highest

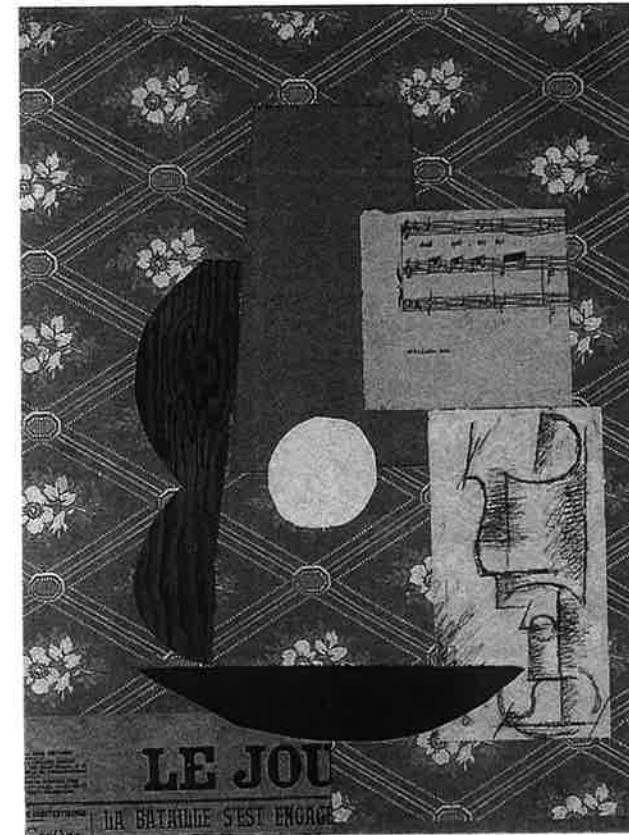


11  
**Umberto Boccioni,**  
*States of Mind II: Those Who Go*, 1911  
 Oil on canvas,  
 70.8 x 95.9 cm,  
 27 7/8 x 37 3/4 in.  
 Museum of Modern Art,  
 New York

structure in the world.) In a series of canvases, it buckles in writhing angular forms and kaleidoscopic colour.

For the Futurists in Milan, simultaneity was inextricable from modern urban life, and mechanization was a marvellous intervention into Italian cities embalmed for the benefit of tourists. In a manifesto, showered on Venice from the top of the Campanile of San Marco, they proposed filling in the city's canals, both as an objection to its genteel decay and as an expression of faith in the new culture of the motor car. Umberto Boccioni's paintings of Milan railway station, for example *States of Mind II: Those Who Go* (11), celebrated this new industrial and technological Italy, just as Marinetti's *Manifesto of Futurism* (1909) famously alluded to a Greek sculpture in the Louvre when proclaiming the motor car to be 'more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace*'. Perhaps their ultimate expression of optimism was Luigi Russolo's transformation of music through his manifesto *Art of Noises (Arte dei rumori)* (1913). With specially built machines called *intonarumori* (noise intoners), he created whistles, hisses and sirens which enacted a mechanized utopia in such orchestrated pieces as *The Awakening of a Great City* (1913). These were given – to varied success – in concerts across Europe.

The idea of simultaneity brought two startling innovations in the poetry of Apollinaire. He was enthusiastic about Delaunay's work (one of the *Eiffel Tower* series was dedicated to him; 10) and the more rigorous Cubist paintings of Picasso and Braque. In his poem *Lundi rue Christine* (1913) he captured the simultaneity of experience simply by using fragments of overheard conversation, thus rejecting the role of the versifier and becoming a reporter of the poetry of the street. The effect is comparable to the unexpected conjunctions of commercial material in Cubist collages, where slices of reality – ranging from newspapers to wallpapers – were served up together to demonstrate the diversity of experience (12). The poet was to push this idea even further with the invention of 'Calligrammes'. Undoubtedly indebted to Marinetti's *Words in Freedom* ('parole in libertà', 1912), in which free-form typographic innovations enhanced the impact of the words, the Calligrammes set words in pictorial



12  
**Pablo Picasso,**  
*Le Jeu*, 1913  
 Charcoal, gouache and collage  
 121.9 x 91.4 cm,  
 48 x 36 in.  
 McNay Art Institute, San Antonio

form. The simplest were literal, such as the tumbling letters of 'Il pleut' (1914). However in 'Lettre-Océan' (1914), in the guise of a letter to his brother in Mexico, Apollinaire conveyed complex ideas of telegraphic transmission, journeying, and Old and New Worlds in the rotating structures of words.

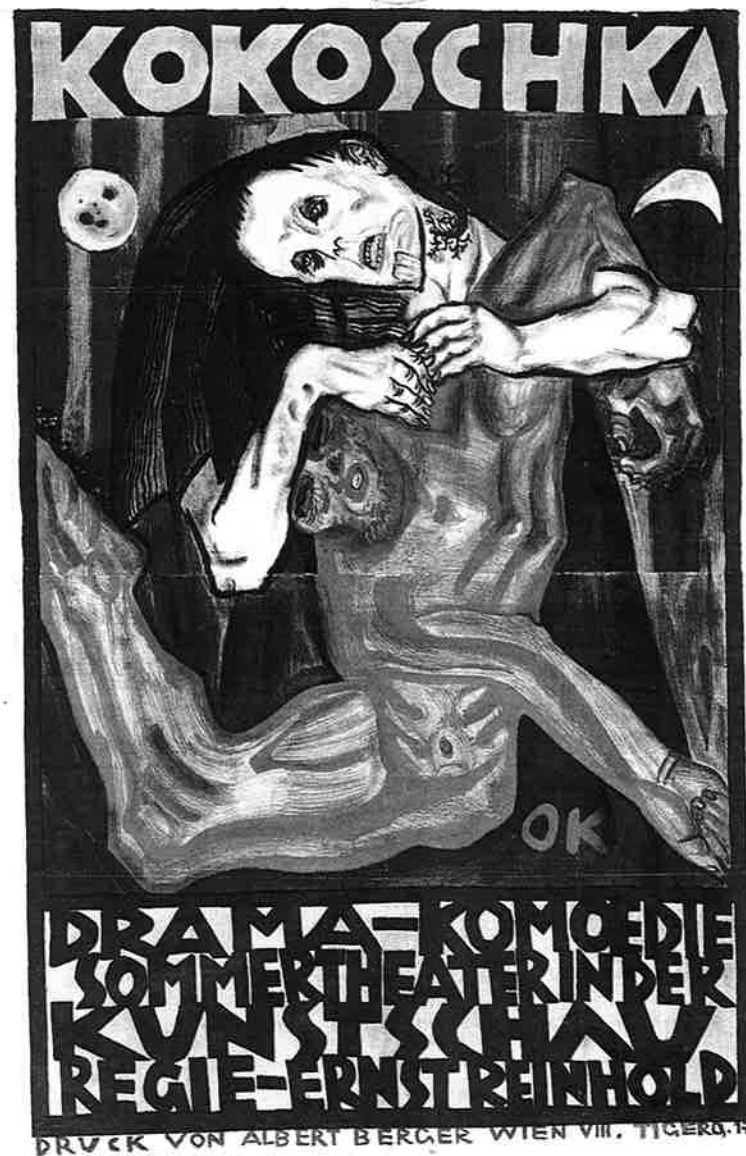
Artists in Central Europe appeared to have a greater distrust of scientific and technological progress. They nurtured a concern with the relationship between nature and emotion. In Dresden, the Expressionist artists of Die Brücke, including Kirchner (13), had retreated periodically into the countryside where they made energetically worked and coloured paintings suggesting a return

13  
Ernst Ludwig  
Kirchner  
*Balbes*  
*Flussing Reeds*,  
1910 Coloured  
woodcut,  
40.2 x 54.1 cm,  
16 x 21 in.,  
Sprongel  
Museum,  
Hanover



to savagery. In Munich, Marc's recurring depictions of animals were concerned with the relation of the spirit to natural forces. The anxieties about loss of contact with nature reflected wider concerns, which also stimulated an interest in the irrational. In the Viennese theatre, Arthur Schnitzler showed that sexuality united all strata of society in the chain of lovers in his controversial *Reigen* ('The Roundelay', 1896), while the Swedish dramatist August Strindberg exposed the repressed forces in the human psyche in such plays as *Miss Julie* (1888). This delving into the irrational power of the imagination and sexual drive achieved particular

14  
Oskar  
Kokoschka  
*Kokoschka*  
in Vienna,  
1897  
oil on paper,  
28.1 x 26.2 cm,  
11 x 10 in.  
Hessner of  
Walters Art  
Inc. Inc.







15  
**Alfred Kubin,**  
*Death the*  
*Reaper,* 1918.  
 Ink on paper,  
 28 x 21 cm,  
 11 x 8 1/4 in.,  
 Städtische  
 Galerie im  
 Lenbachhaus,  
 Munich

force among the Expressionists. Of these, the play by the Austrian painter Oskar Kokoschka, *Murderer, Hope of Women* (14), in which brutal rape and murder are treated mesmerically, epitomized the frenzy and violence that could be unleashed.

These works drew support from scientific propositions, of which the most persuasive study was Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). He proposed that unacceptable desires were repressed and lodged in the unconscious mind. In a few people these desires received their outlet in irrational behaviour, but in all they were expressed in dreams. This theoretical text transformed the general understanding of human behaviour as it suggested that behind all rational façades lurked suppressed insecurities and desires determining every response – the world of nineteenth-century propriety thus was exposed as a sham. The establishment greeted these ideas with scepticism not least because, like Schnitzler's play, they proposed that such desires knew no class boundaries. It was not until 1911 that Freud's theories began to reach a wider German-reading public. *The Interpretation of Dreams* was translated into English in 1913 but, significantly, not into French for another decade.

These ideas gained currency in a period in which emotional expression in art had generally gained ascendancy over realism. Representation had, in any case, been taken over by mechanical reproduction: photography, moving pictures, gramophone recordings and Guglielmo Marconi's wireless transmission were facilitated by the arrival of electricity. In place of these lost utilitarian functions for painting and theatre, Expressionist artists experimented with more hallucinatory approaches, such as found in the draughtsmanship of the Munich-based artists Paul Klee or Alfred Kubin (15). They explored a fusion of myth and dream comparable with the dark writings of Franz Kafka and the more humorous and mystifying poems of Christian Morgenstern, whose *Gallows Songs* (*Galgenlieder*, 1905) included a composition made up of dots and dashes.

These approaches also contributed to the simultaneous development of abstract painting in different centres: by the Russians Kandinsky in Munich and Kasimir Malevich in Moscow, the Czech František Kupka in Paris, and the Dutchman Piet Mondrian. In his study of culture *Abstraction and Empathy* (1907) Wilhelm Worringer had discussed the abstract in contrast with the empathetic. However, painters turned to other sources. Kandinsky and Mondrian were among those attracted by the mystical doctrines of the Theosophical Society and Annie Besant and C W Leadbetter's book *Thought Forms* (1905). With notions of a world scheme of balanced polarities (male/female, vertical/horizontal, etc.) and a belief that initiates could perceive coloured auras or 'thought forms' that reflected states of mind, these theories offered an anti-materialist counterpoint to European positivism.

Mixed in with such mystical notions was an interest in the so-called 'Fourth Dimension', derived through serious studies such as Henri Poincaré's *Science and Hypothesis* (1902) and Elie Jouffret's *Elementary Treatise on Fourth Dimensional Geometry* (1903), and which gained popularity through writings such as Gaston de Pawloski's *Journey to the Land of the Fourth Dimension* (1912).

The French artist and theorist Marcel Duchamp speculated that if a three-dimensional object cast a two-dimensional shadow, that object could be considered the three-dimensional 'shadow' of a four-dimensional object. Such arguments had little connection with Albert Einstein's contemporary *Theory of Relativity* (1905; in which time is regarded as the fourth dimension), but they generated widespread mystical speculations, from the writings of Rudolf Steiner in Germany to *Tertium Organum: A Key to the Enigmas of the World* (1911) published by Petr Uspensky in Petrograd. In conjunction with technological developments, such as the X-ray which allowed an actual glimpse of the unseen, these ideas vastly enriched avant-garde pictorial experiments.

The mysticism of Theosophy and related systems encouraged aspirations toward a morally and socially responsible art. Avant-garde theorists sought precedents in the art of the so-called



16  
Mask made by  
the Fang  
people of  
Gabon. Wood,  
h 48 cm, 18 7/8 in.  
Musée National  
d'Art Moderne,  
Centre  
Georges  
Pompidou,  
Paris.



17  
Henri  
Rousseau  
*Soyeur-Chasseur*,  
1907  
Oil on canvas,  
31 1/2 x 19 1/2 cm,  
12 3/8 x 7 1/4 in.  
Musée d'Orsay,  
Paris.

'Italian primitives' of the fourteenth century, such as Giotto, whose work responded to the emotional demands of their audience in a way matched in the twentieth century only by folk art or the art of untutored painters such as the 'Douanier' Henri Rousseau (17). Such work, with its simple drawing and lively colour, offered a direct emotional response to the subject untainted by high culture. A similar honesty was also found in arts outside the European tradition, such as African masks (16) and Oceanic sculptures – grouped as 'L'Art Nègre' (Negro art) – and the ancient arts of Egypt and Cycladic Greece. The study of these cultures became a means of liberation from conventions and drew an explicit equation between the avant-garde and those exploited by contemporary civilization.

This tendency encouraged some – like the Expressionists – to follow the painter Paul Gauguin's retreat from civilization in order to find a moral basis for the production of art that rejected established codes and the contamination of money and power. The setting up of independent artists' colonies, often associated with radical politics, became a viable proposition.

At Monte Verità near Ascona in Switzerland, for example, artists from across the continent established an intellectual anarchistic colony, to which the Zurich Dadas also retreated to regain strength for their assault on contemporary values.

The euphoria of the revolution in the arts between 1900 and 1914 disguised the seriousness of the European political crisis precipitated by the increasing industrial power and ambition of Germany. United as an empire in 1871 at the end of the Franco-Prussian War, Germany gained Alsace-Lorraine from France as a result, and subsequently sought 'spheres of influence' in North Africa and the Near East at the expense of the crumbling Ottoman Empire. To strengthen this position it formed alliances with Austria-Hungary and Italy. Ranged against them were France, Britain and Russia, who sought to defend their own interests and those of smaller states such as Belgium and Serbia.

These alliances were formed in the mistaken belief that any war would be geographically contained and short-lived. In retrospect, the 'Agadir Crisis' of 1911 can be seen as the first slip towards the wider conflict. The Germans objected to the French annexation of Spanish Morocco and sent a gunship to protect the one German citizen in Agadir. An arms race followed British support for the French. Under cover of these distractions the Italians invaded Libya – then still nominally part of the Ottoman Empire – accompanied by a diversionary attack on Turkey itself in the following year (1912). The Balkan nations saw their opportunity to free fellow nationals ruled by Turkey. Greece, Montenegro, Serbia and Bulgaria united and, with unparalleled carnage, swept to within hailing distance of Constantinople itself. When these allies fell out, and Bulgaria attempted to claim more territory in 1913, Serbia and Greece united with Romania in a brief, punitive campaign.

The apparently closed world of the avant-garde looked on the exceptionally bloody Balkan wars and invasion of Libya with a horror and amazement. Somewhat bizarrely, Marinetti signed up as a journalist for the Parisian newspaper *L'Intransigeant* (of

18  
Raoul Dufy.  
*The End of the  
Great War, 1915*  
ink and gouache  
on paper  
43.3x35cm,  
17x21 in  
Museum  
of Modern  
Art, New York  
City  
The National  
Museum, Paris



These events were the preamble to the wider European conflict. The establishment of stronger Balkan states made Austria-Hungary, with its closely related national minorities, understandably nervous. On a good-will tour of Sarajevo in June 1914, the heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was assassinated by a Serbian anarchist. Austria-Hungary refused to accept calming diplomatic efforts and mobilization brought a reciprocal move from Russia, Serbia's traditional protector; German mobilization followed, with France and Britain drawn in within days. Of the major powers

which Apollinaire was the art critic) on the Libyan campaign in order to grasp this ultimate modern experience. In 1912 he witnessed the Bulgarian siege of the Turks at Adrianople, later producing his extraordinary onomatopoeic text *Zang Tumb Tuum* (3) which conveyed the crashing conflict with the use of revolutionary typography. His celebration of war now seems tasteless, but his courage in putting theory into practice is unquestionable. A quite different response appeared in Picasso's use of newspaper cuttings of Balkan war reports in his collages (12). They relate invariably to the human cost of the conflict and offer an open criticism of its inhumanity.

only Italy remained neutral in August 1914. With the difficult terrain and the massive inefficiency of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian armies, the crucial encounters took place far from the trigger of the conflict. In August and September the German armies swept through Belgium, outflanking France's border defences and coming within artillery range of Paris. The expectation of a brief campaign foundered as the troops dug in for the first of four winters of systematized killing in unimaginable squalor (20).

Propaganda in France characterized the war effort as a defence of French – and therefore European – culture against 'barbarism' (18). Conservative elements seized the opportunity to attack the internationalist avant-garde by linking Cubism to German culture, making all aspects of modernism effectively 'consorting with the enemy'. Under the pressure of patriotism, such ploys proved effective: the 45-year-old Matisse attempted to join up, as did the tubercular Amedeo Modigliani. Among others who felt the call of patriotism were French and German artists who had shared tables in Parisian cafés. Many took up arms for a system they had been opposing from within and, although the issues and motives were far more complex, it is clear that this commitment had a divisive effect over the ensuing years. Of the artists from all sides who went to the trenches, most experienced a rapid disillusionment at the profligate waste of human life and the power of the military to crush the spirit of the survivors. Some turned to Dada, in which they found an expression of disgust with cultural nationalism and an attempt at a radical revision of all conventions.

