

## abstract

“Berlin Dada” is an art movement that started in the middle of a political change in Germany and right after the defeat in World War I. The people of that time did not take the movement seriously and they thought of it as merely joke (Ulk), bluff, and advertising (Reklame). But this way of evaluation changed drastically later on. By the end of 1930s, when Nazism dominated almost all of Europe, the “avant-garde” movement in 1920s together with Berlin Dada was blamed and held responsible for fighting against the Nazi violent acts. However, in 1970 Peter Buerger thought that the importance of this movement lies in being “anti-bourgeois art” and he also considered Berlin Dada as one of the historical avant-garde of 1920s.

However, the aim of this study, regardless of the value of this movement in art-history, is to clarify why it occurred in Berlin in 1918. For that reason, the focus is on the art technique called “photomontage” which was invented by Berlin Dada. The study suggests that the “photomontage” of “Berlin Dada” is not “montage” but “collage”.

The initial premise of this thesis is to show that “political montage” of John Heartfield is “montage” and not “collage”, even though both of them are thought to be “photomontage” of “Berlin Dada” until now. Here the study depends mainly on two documents. While the first one explains the gap of time where Heartfield began to use “political montage” right after the end of “Berlin Dada” activity, the other document proceeded to analyze a lecture given by Raoul Hausmann in 1931 at “the photomontage exhibition” where he argued that the original characteristics of “photomontage” had been essentially changed after the period of Berlin Dada. These documents show that “political montage” and “photomontage” come from the same technique. Therefore the essential difference lies in the way this technique has been used by artists.

Hence the first chapter shows the difference between the “application of collage” and “application of montage” as well as it explains the characteristics of “collage” as “self-control towards art to combination” after the time of Hans Burckhard Schlichting. In order to know how Berlin Dada wanted to make use of collage, the thesis focuses on the work of Raoul Hausmann who preserved “self-control over art combination” in his art works during his long career.

The second chapter focuses on the satire of Berlin Dada in order to clarify what Raoul Hausmann meant by self-control. His satirical book, *Hurra!Hurra!Hurra!*, is full of ridicule. However, his ridicule was not only directed against the people who believed in God’s blessing and the salvation of their mother country, Germany, but it was also directed against himself. In other words, he tried to aim a satire at the subject of ridicule itself. This does not mean that he did not use sarcasm but he denied the existence of only one absolute justice. Thus he succeeded in impeaching all of his “justifications”, which he realized with the help of “self-control”. Such interpretation of Hausmann’s satire will question the general understanding of satire of “Berlin Dada,” especially the satire of George Grosz, because his drawings were treated as simply impeaching a social evil until now.

The third chapter analyzes how the “photomontage-technique” was represented in the work of artists of Dada’s movement. The first section focuses on the collaboration between both Hausmann and Hannah Hoeh’s work, in order to show how they intended to use gender gap as a main theme for their works. The second section focuses on the poetry of Hausmann, which was developed from the “visual

*sound poetry*” to the concept of “*optophone*” and also to dance performance. Through such analysis, which is based on gender in the first section and word in the second, it becomes clear that the work of “Berlin Dada” was proposed to provide a permanent “moving image”. This fact can also explain the existence of “photomontage” as a principle to create the works of movement.

The fourth chapter focuses on “*Hyle*”, an unpublished work of Hausmann, in which he kept working for 20 years like writing a diary from 1926 in order to show how he applied the principle “photomontage” to ontology of human being. The background of this study mainly refers to the development of visual technology during 1920s and 1930s especially from camera to film, and it shows that Hausmann considered this technological development a chance to create a “look” reflected from the objects themselves, which he intends to picture with his camera. Therefore it was possible for him to change the world view that had always been human being oriented. *Hyle* can also be considered one of Hausmann’s tests to create such a “look”. This new perspective is a vision of human being with which natural objects inseparably exist in this world. That is why Hausmann titled his book “*Hyle*” which means in Greek “material”, in order to apply the principle of “photomontage”, namely “moving image”, and also to describe his own life. In other words “*Hyle*” can be understood as an experiment to produce a new myths, which depends on the principle “photomontage”.

The fifth chapter deals with Hausmann’s work *Change*, which he started to write in 1963 and it was published in 1993. The first section focuses on his own way of writing in this book and it tries to clarify the meaning of the title “*Change*”. The second section also clarifies the intention of this book and it shows how this “*change*” was meant to be for the people of that time. Here the focus of the thesis is also on the voice of Hausmann which is written at the end of *Change*: “Hands off from the notion of avant-garde!”. Here I could understand two main objectives of Hausmann’s voice. The first one is to question the authenticity of the “neo avant-garde” movement, which occurred in 1960s, so that he appealed for universal existence of avant-garde which is independent of any specific time. The second one is to turn this question also to himself. He tried to say that he, himself, should be changed and should also be denied by the new generation of the movement. For instance, “*REQUIEM*”, one of Hausmann’s last works in 1968, was made of broken images of himself. At this stage, it will be clarified that the principle “photomontage” became a “law” that is able to judge him. Because of obeying this “law” he was forced to have “ethics” and be free from any justice. That is why he decided to reject the prize of national glories from Austria only one year before his death.

In the last chapter, the thesis concludes that the surveys done on the aim of Berlin Dada movement in 1918 in Berlin can be deduced from the results in chapter five, which explained in detail the whole development of the technique “photomontage” to the “law” of Hausmann. Under this movement, there existed a strong intention from many of its artists who denies any reliability of justice. And the technique “photomontage” made it possible to manifest this intention directly to the people of that time. The target of this movement was the ground where only one justice exists. That is to say that such a place is where “ethics” have self-control over “art to combination”, has been given up. The significance of this movement of 1918 in Berlin, in the middle of a climate of a political change, is to show how one justice fights against the other one. Therefore, the target of this movement at that time did not suit the way it had been evaluated as being only “joke” and at the same time it was far from any other historical evaluation in different times and by different generations.