Obscenely Political: The Weimar Prosecution of George Grosz and *Ecce Homo*

Lee Ehler

A Thesis in The Department of Art History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Master of Arts

at Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

December 2025

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Lee Ehler

Entitled: Obscenely Political: The Weimar Prosecution of George Grosz and Ecce Homo

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (Art History)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the final examining committee:

Dr. John Potvin Examiner

Examiner

Dr. Nicola Pezolet Thesis Supervisor(s)

Thesis Supervisor(s)

Approved by

Dr. Rebecca Duclos Graduate Program Director

Dr. Annie Gérin Dean Faculty of Fine Arts

ABSTRACT

Obscenely Political: The Weimar Prosecution of George Grosz and *Ecce Homo*

Lee Ehler

German artist George Grosz (born 1893) was a prolific illustrator and painter, particularly renowned for satirical caricature. Artistically active from the early years of the twentieth century until his death in 1959, Grosz's leftist political activism and artistic production during the period of the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) made him a repeated target for the Weimar judiciary.

Although the 1919 Weimar constitution guaranteed freedom from artistic censorship, Grosz was prosecuted three times between 1921 and 1928. The second of these is the subject of my thesis: the 1923 accusation and subsequent trial of Grosz and his publishers for obscenity in the case of the 1922-23 portfolio *Ecce Homo*. Taking a multi-disciplinary approach complemented by a formal analysis of select portfolio images, I argue that while the portfolio's contents could be considered obscene under a broad interpretation of the Weimar criminal code, the obscenity charge itself was a "means to an end": Grosz's representation of the sexual acts and behaviours of the bourgeois elites challenged their moral authority and therefore their right to wield power. Recognizing themselves in the work, the obscenity charge was leveraged by these elites as a tool to protect their own political interests.

Ultimately, my research serves as both a case study and reminder that even in societies that provide constitutional guarantees for freedom of the arts, the legal system can be manipulated by special interests to silence artists who pose a threat to powerful elites.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"It takes a village" may be an overused adage, but it is nevertheless *a propos* in the case of this work. Representing a significant investment in both time and effort, it is reflective not only of the work of the author but also that of the scholars, friends, and family who have contributed in some way to its realization. A sincere expression of appreciation is most definitely in order.

I wish to begin with my supervisor, Dr. Nicola Pezolet, who has proven extremely patient as I worked through several iterations of my original thesis concept to arrive at the text that follows. I also wish to thank Dr. Pezolet for his patience and flexibility with deadlines as I balanced full-time work and studies, as well as his counsel on my thesis' structure, style, and constructive critique of its contents.

My appreciation is also extended to my thesis reader, Dr. John Potvin. His depth of knowledge on the history of sexuality and art in the long nineteenth century exposed areas in the text that benefitted from further exploration. I wish to thank Dr. Julia Skelly for her support and encouragement through both my undergraduate and graduate work, as well as her suggestions on scholars and articles that proved useful to my research.

Thanks also go to my daughters Katherine and Isabel, who were both working through their studies at the same time and with whom a friendly academic rivalry added levity to the occasional difficult moment. And finally, my heartfelt appreciation goes out to my wife Louise: my sounding board, muse, occasional therapist, and soulmate, without whom none of this would have been possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

George Grosz (1893-1959) was the most renowned and prolific practitioner of satirical caricature in Germany during the period of the Weimar Republic (1919-1933). With a notable penchant for political satire, much of Grosz's work during the Republic's early years was characterized by a pronounced critique of Weimar society, with Grosz regularly turning his paintbrush, pen, and charcoal on those wielding political influence—politicians, the military, the clergy, financiers and bourgeois capitalists, industrialists and aristocrats—with resounding impact and before a wide audience. His well-developed vocabulary of types was readily understood by contemporary viewers, and his protagonists easily identifiable as known Weimar figures or as members of the political elites he targeted.

Not surprisingly, Grosz's political activism caught the eye of those he set out to critique, and throughout the 1920s legal action against Grosz was recurrent, wide-ranging in its prosecutorial basis, and due to the artist's increasing renown, high-profile. The first prosecution against Grosz was in 1921 for insulting members of the *Reichswehr* (German Armed Forces) with the portfolio *Gott mitt uns* (*God with Us*). The second took place in 1923 for publishing obscene material (the *Ecce Homo* portfolio) and is the subject of my research.[1] The third was in 1928 for

1. The phrase *Ecce homo* ("Behold, [the] man!") has its origins in John 19:4-5. Spoken by Pontius Pilate of the scourged Christ, it was intended to highlight the human attributes (and diminish the divine aspect) of Jesus as he was brought forth for judgement and rejected by the people of Jerusalem. Yet it is arguably by virtue of his human aspect that Christ's divinity is simultaneously brought into focus for his believers. Representations of this scene—at times with the phrase inscribed on, or incorporated into, the work itself—have been a recurring subject for Western visual artists since the eighth century CE, either as part of a cycle of works or as singular devotional objects. In Friedrich Nietzsche's autobiographical *Ecce Homo*, his last essay written toward the end of the nineteenth century, the author suggests it is this very suffering—completely dissociated from any form of divinity—that makes us truly human. Along this spectrum of religious devotion through human egocentrism, Grosz's application of the term *Ecce homo* might be best summarized in a statement made in court during his trial for obscenity that serves as a riposte to both of these positions: that the entirety of the portfolio "was an expression of 'Behold, what men!', and that the title and the drawings taken together were the expressions of a moralist viewing the contemporary scene." See Beth Irwin Lewis, *George Grosz: Art and Politics in the Weimar Republic*, rev second ed. (Princeton University Press, 1991), 219. My reading of Grosz's comment is that

blasphemy against the institutions of the church, related to the *Hintergrund* (*Background*) portfolio: notably, the drawing titled *Maul halten und weiter dienen* (*Shut Up and Do Your Duty*), familiarly known as *Christ with a Gas Mask* (figure 1).[2]

Given the purported conditions of freedom from artistic censorship guaranteed by the Weimar constitution, it is legitimate to ask why so much investigative and judiciary time and effort were spent pursuing Grosz through three trials over a seven-year period. Focusing on the 1923 accusation brought against Grosz and his publishers in the case of *Ecce Homo*, I propose the corresponding legal action was politically motivated and that the charge of producing and disseminating obscene content under the pornography statute was a pretext for suppressing the artist's and publishers' political voices. My thesis will make a case that "obscene" images in the *Ecce Homo* portfolio were censored to suppress Grosz's critique of the private behaviour of the ruling elites and therefore any questions regarding their moral integrity and corresponding societal authority (or "right to rule"). Ultimately, an analysis of the 1924 trial will demonstrate how

---

those represented in the portfolio neither suffer (whether or not in dignity), nor can claim any type of divinity or moral high ground that can substantiate their implied right to rule by virtue of their social status and class. For background information on the significance of *Ecce homo* in the arts, see: Adrian Del Caro, "Towards a Genealogy of an Image: Nietzsche's Achievement According to Nietzsche," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (May 1, 1985): 234–50; John Lansdowne, "Narrative to Icon: The Inscriptive Origins of Christ Ecce Homo," *Word & Image* 40, no. 3 (2024): 201–19; Julian Meyrick, "Ecce Homo: A Radical Reframing of the Problem of Value in Arts & Culture" (unpublished manuscript, March 2019), typescript, https://www.uts.edu.au/globalassets/sites/default/files/2019-03/ACPH-EcceHomo-ARadicalReframingoftheProblemofValueinArtsandCulture.pdf.

2. Lewis refers to paragraph 166 of the 1871 German Criminal Code and references "the institutions of the church" rather than any specific Christian denomination. Lewis, *George Grosz: Art and Politics*, 220. Paragraph 166 of the January 1872 Code that describes the legal basis for blasphemy reads "Anyone who publicly blasphemes God in insulting statements, or who publicly insults one of the Christian churches or another religious society existing with corporate rights within the federal territory or their institutions or customs, as well as those who commit insulting mischief in a church or in another place intended for religious gatherings, shall be punished with imprisonment for up to three years." This suggests "blasphemy" applied not only to insult borne by all Christian churches and denominations but also extended to other religious organizations with corporate rights. "§ 166 StGB. Beschimpfung von Bekenntnissen, Religionsgesellschaften Und Weltanschauungsvereinigungen," accessed November 1, 2025, https://lexetius.com/StGB/166,7 - text-sign1.

established legal mechanisms were leveraged by conservative Weimar elites to censor Grosz and his publishers despite constitutional protections to the contrary, with the goal of protecting elite interests, influence, and power in the face of changing social and political realities. In the process, I will diverge from art historian and German studies professor Mary Kay Flavell's positioning of Grosz as a primarily social critic, aligning more with art historian Beth Irwin Lewis' proposal that Grosz's work cannot be viewed external to his political positioning and activism, while simultaneously building upon Lewis' work in light of later scholarship and with a greater emphasis on situating the trial against its broader socio-political background.[3] My investigation of the motives behind the trial is also informed by a cross-disciplinary approach to defining "obscenity" in the Weimar context, which is absent from the work of the Grosz scholars I have read and for which a clear legal definition was contemporaneously unavailable. To prove my hypothesis, my research relies primarily upon scholarly research on Grosz's life and work as well as Weimar politics and society; judicial records related to the investigation, criminal charge, trial and appeal from 1922 through 1925; and a visual analysis of select images from the portfolio.

I begin with several review sections that contextualize my hypothesis, starting with an exploration of Grosz's vocabulary of types and how he leveraged them to critique specific groups and segments of society in a manner that could be readily understood by a broad cross-section of Weimar citizens. I then turn to a discussion of Weimar's political, social, and financial elites as well as a brief exploration of class structure in Weimar society, which when combined with the artist's visual typology better situates the reader to understand *who* is represented in *Ecce Homo*.

The next section is essentially a chronological recounting of the events surrounding the *Ecce Homo* trial and relies heavily on primary sources referenced by Rosamunde Neugebauer von

3. M. Kay Flavell, "Über Alles Die Liebe: Food, Sex, and Money in the Work of George Grosz," *Journal of European Studies* 13, no. 4 (1983): 268. Lewis, *George Grosz*, 1991), 164.

der Schulenburg in her doctoral dissertation with some corroboration by key scholars in Grosz studies.[4] Based on my hypothesis that the statute against producing or disseminating obscene or pornographic materials was here used as a legal pretense to harass and prosecute a politically active artist, it is then important to understand the legal definition of obscenity in the Weimar Republic, its roots in Imperial Germany, and explore how it was applied in the Grosz trial. In addition to the "purely legal" aspects of the definition, I draw upon novel work by the German studies professor Erica Weitzman on long nineteenth-century German aesthetics and how artistic works could be labeled "obscene" as a result of their reception and interpretation by those whose morality was insulted or who were otherwise "shamed". The last of these introductory sections explores Weimar print culture, its potential for widespread and effective critique, and its relationship to the shaping of an individual's worldview (or *Weltanschauungs*).

With context established I develop several main themes in the discussion, backed by visual analyses of select drawings from the portfolio. Not only are Grosz's types widely (and readily) recognizable throughout *Ecce Homo*, but they are often represented in varying states of nudity as well as both implied and overt sexual activity. Therefore, a consideration of whether Grosz's images might be deemed pornographic or erotic is warranted, and by extension whether an obscenity charge could be justified in the face of constitutionally guaranteed artistic freedom of expression. Analyzing both censored and uncensored images from the portfolio, I demonstrate how seemingly mutable criteria were inconsistently applied to representations of sexuality in *Ecce Homo*. Furthermore, my observation that images containing violent acts (in most cases, against women and including *Lustmord* drawings) remained uncensored suggest that violence against

4. Rosamunde Neugebauer von der Schulenburg, *George Grosz: Macht Und Ohnmacht Satirischer Kunst Die Graphikfolgen »Gott Mit Uns«, Ecce Homo Und Hintergrund* (Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1993).

women was not considered "obscene" and leads to my consideration of how representations of women were leveraged by Grosz and the judiciary for different ends. Relatedly, I discuss the changing role of women in society in the Republic's early years, with its ties to male anxiety in the post-World War I environment and the rise of the *neue Frau* ("New Woman"), with her associated blurring of gender lines. This "blurring of lines" found a different form of expression with the appearance of the *Kocotte* (a sex worker who could represent herself as a "respectable" middle-class woman) and the *coquette* (a seemingly respectable woman who could look and act like a sex worker), thereby muddying previously clear class distinctions. As will be discussed, this lack of clarity was leveraged by Grosz as an effective weapon to criticize the elite types represented in *Ecce Homo* and challenge their moral authority.

In the face of changing social mores and ongoing evolution of the Republic's legal framework—supplemented by an exploding visual and print culture that carried the potential for wide dissemination of ideas—my discussion positions the portfolio, Grosz's trial, and resulting judgement between progressive elements trying to create a more open society and conservative or reactionary movements that were seeking a return to a pre-War *status quo*. This situates *Ecce Homo* and the events surrounding the trial against a broader socio-political landscape from which I am able to explore ideas of political, social, and moralistic critique: not only in the artist's intent, but also in the work's reception in Weimar society. This multi-disciplinary approach to analyzing Grosz's prosecution within its contemporary context ultimately reveals how a putative concern with obscenity in the portfolio was not only a reaction to evolving social and sexual mores, but also a prosecution to protect the interests and reputation of societal elites while suppressing the political (i.e., communist) beliefs of the artist, publishers, and their collaborators.

There are several key sources on Grosz's life and works that I have used to inform my research, including work by the American art historian Beth Irwin Lewis, German art historian Hans Hess (who had direct contact with many of Grosz's contemporaries and subjects), art historian and German studies professor Mary Kay Flavell, and American academic Maria Tatar. The doctoral dissertation of Rosamunde Neugebauer von der Schulenburg has also proven invaluable, notably with respect to her documentation of the trial and its outcomes using primary sources. I have relied on the Grove Press re-edition of the portfolio for the purpose of visual analysis, as well as Nora Hodge's translation of Grosz's autobiography and Alexander Dückers' *catalogue raisonné*.

George Grosz (christened Georg Ehrenfried Groß) was born into the family of a Berlin ale-house owner on July 26, 1893. Upon the death of his father in 1900 Grosz's mother moved the family to Stolp, where as early as 1907 he started painting and drawing "often late into the night".[5] In Stolp, his fascination with American culture was nourished by a steady stream of pulp adventure stories, penny dreadfuls, and other "trashy" literature written by authors such as the German Karl May and often set in America's "Wild West".[6] Artistically, Grosz was mentored by a local scenic painter by the name of Herr Grot and an Austrian artist later identified by Grosz in his autobiography as Herr Papst, the latter of whom encouraged Grosz to further develop his drawing skills after he was expelled from the *Oberrealschule* in 1908 for insubordination.[7]

Under Papst's tutelage, Grosz prepared for the entrance exam to the Dresden Royal Academy of Art, where he was accepted and attended from 1909 to 1911. It was during this time that Grosz started developing his skills as an illustrator and caricaturist, with his first published

5. Ralph Jentsch, *George Grosz: The Berlin Years* (Florence: Electa, 1997), 3.

6. George Grosz, *George Grosz: An Autobiography*, trans. Nora Hodges (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1983), 18. Jentsch, *George Grosz*, 11.

7. Grosz, *George Grosz*, 37. Jentsch, *George Grosz*, 5.

drawing appearing in the satirical magazine *Ulk* in 1910. Grosz then moved back to Berlin in 1912, where he attended the Berlin Arts and Crafts School until 1914. The years between 1912 and 1914 mark an important period in Grosz's artistic development, during which he refined his graphic style and started painting in oils, the former of which corresponded to a significant production of nudes and often explicit erotic and sexually charged scenes that included *Lustmord* ("sexual murder") images.

Upon the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Grosz enlisted as a volunteer in the military, although for medical reasons he was discharged in 1915 as unfit for active service. Called up a second time in 1917 into third-line troop service, he suffered a nervous breakdown and was committed to a military hospital where he violently attacked a medical orderly sergeant.[8] This act effectively marked the end of his military career, and although he was to be shot as a deserter the intervention of his influential benefactor Count (Graf) Harry von Kessler resulted in his discharge on probable mental health grounds as "permanently unfit for active service". As documented by the art historian Ralph Jentsch, Grosz saw in the war "a monstrously degenerated manifestation of the general struggle for property" wherein the masses "were dominated by the will of statesmen and generals".[9] He would later summarize his perspective of the war with the phrase "Men are swines [sic]".[10]

Grosz's artistic production during World War I rapidly moved beyond individual commissions for illustration and book jackets, and his "desire to become a celebrated illustrator" was realized with the release of the *Erste George Grosz-Mappe* (*First George Grosz Portfolio*) of

8. Most Grosz scholars agree the artist (unlike his contemporaries Otto Dix, Franz Marc, and Max Beckmann), never saw front-line service. However, Lewis draws from Grosz's early 1920s essay "Abwicklung" to conclude "Grosz claimed that his hospital experience was as horrible, hellish, and weird as active battle at the front would have been." Jentsch, *George Grosz*, 23. Lewis, *George Grosz*, 23.

9. Jentsch, *George Grosz*, 22.

10. Jentsch, *George Grosz*, 26.

1916/1917, and *Kleine Grosz Mappe* (*Small Grosz Portfolio*) of 1917, both of which were published by the leftist Malik-Verlag. These early collaborations with the Malik-Verlag's founders Wieland Herzfelde and John Hearfield reflect Grosz's rapid engagement with leftist and Communist causes, leading to his membership in the Sparticist League after the 1918 November Revolution (later renamed the German Communist Party [KPD] in 1919). He would also become a founder of the highly political Berlin Dada movement and key organizer of the "First International Dada-Fair" in 1920. Even after his six-month trip to the Soviet Union from 1922 through 1923 and resulting break with organized Communist movements, Grosz remained an activist artist expounding communist principles whose misanthropy and anger at political and societal elites found its fullest expression through his ongoing relationship with the Malik-Verlag. In 1933, Grosz emigrated from Germany for the United States, narrowly escaping the newly installed National Socialists' police apparatus that sought his arrest.

Grosz's caricatures represent the continuation of a popular form of political and social critique widely distributed and available throughout late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Europe. An essentially visual means of communication requiring very little formal literacy to be understood, caricatures and cartoons spoke "directly to people's senses and emotions" and were therefore believed more likely to elicit a reaction in the viewer.[11] As important contributors to the shaping of political culture, these visual forms of critique have often been perceived by political and social elites as a greater threat to their power than the printed word.[12] Germany was no exception: as proposed by the historian Richard Scully, the emergence of a strong tradition of German caricature and political satire through the nineteenth century "underpinned a nascent

11. Robert Justin Goldstein, "The Debate over Censorship of Caricature in Nineteenth-Century France," *Art Journal* 48 (March 1989): 9.

12. Richard Scully, "Hindenburg: The Cartoon Titan of the Weimar Republic, 1918-1934," *German Studies Review* 35, no. 3 (2012): 543.

liberal-democratic culture that was resisted by successive phases of conservative rule", an observation that also remained pertinent throughout the first part of the twentieth.[13]

In part to address the perceived threat posed by caricature, formal mechanisms of censorship were developed across Europe throughout the nineteenth century, some of which carried forward into the early decades of the twentieth. These mechanisms fell into two main categories: prior censorship, whereby a work was submitted for review prior to publication; and *post facto* censorship that leveraged legal mechanisms to limit the distribution and availability of published works. In nineteenth-century Imperial Germany the press and visual arts were granted legal freedom, with only on stage theatrical productions (and later, cinematic presentations) subject to prior approval by the local police.[14] Therefore, caricature was—in principle—exempt from government censorship, and although passage of the Reich Press Law of 1874 permitted publication without prior censorship, German caricaturists could nevertheless be prosecuted through *post facto* mechanisms.[15] Furthermore, despite the formal abolition of all forms of censorship in the 1919 Weimar constitution under Articles 142 (the arts and sciences) and 118 (speech and of the press), there was nevertheless a qualifier in the latter specifying "within the limits of the general laws" (*innerhalb der Schranken der allgemeinen Gesetze*), thereby deferring constitutional rights to legal interpretations of the criminal code, including charges of obscenity.[16]

The battle between censorship and freedom of expression has been ongoing for hundreds of years, and in the face of ever-evolving modes of real-time digital media distribution that are

13. Scully, "Hindenburg," 543.

14. Peter Jelavich, "Metamorphoses of Censorship in Modern Germany," *German Politics & Society*, no. 27 (1992): 25–35.

15. Scully, "Hindenburg," 543-44.

16. "documentArchiv.de - Verfassung Des Deutschen Reichs ["Weimarer Reichsverfassung"] (11.08.1919)," accessed December 21, 2024, http://www.documentarchiv.de/wr/wrv.html#ERSTER_ABSCHNITT02.

often controlled by wealthy corporations or private individuals with their own political interests, this state of tension may arguably be of greater concern today than at any time in the past. An anthology of articles on censorship in the visual arts compiled and edited by the art historian Elizabeth C. Childs demonstrates how forms of censorship have served a variety of political and social ends across countries, continents, and over a period extending backward to at least the sixteenth century.[17] In her introduction to the anthology, Childs introduces professor of media and communication Sue Curry Jansen's model for constitutive censorship, an important concept defined as a "more covert or insidious form of censorship than the overt actions of regulatory censorship", the efficacy of which relies on "controlling the power of naming [an art object as] true, beautiful, natural, perverse, sacrilegious, seditious, and so forth" when it enters the public sphere. Jansen proposes that the constitutive model of censorship facilitates the expression of society's dominant ideology and its discourses by privileged elites, in the process deriding and marginalizing alternative viewpoints. This expression of the elite's power through constitutive censorship and via the act of naming proves an important consideration when contemplating the concept of "obscenity", its legal manipulation in the Weimar context, and when analyzing the outcomes of Grosz's *Ecce Homo* trial, as does Jansen's assertion that this censorial mode is an ongoing practice in liberal democracies that often manifests as a "manipulation of economic opportunity".[18] In the case of Grosz and the Malik-Verlag, this "manipulation of economic opportunity" was an attempt to suppress an artist's livelihood and a publisher's voice through fines and control of the distribution—or destruction—of their work product.

17. Elizabeth C. Childs, *Suspended License: Censorship and the Visual Arts* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998).

18. Childs, *Suspended License: Censorship and the Visual Arts*, 4-5.

In 2025, right-wing, often populist movements are increasing in power and influence throughout the world, whether in countries generally recognized as liberal democracies (e.g., the United States, South Korea, Italy, and Germany), or less liberal states that nevertheless support some form of democratic practice and its associated institutions (e.g., Israel and Hungary). As revealed throughout my thesis, the confluence of political, economic, and judicial elements that facilitated the wielding of censorship as a repressive tool in the constitutional, liberal democracy that one hundred years ago was Weimar Germany remains disturbingly pertinent today, especially when viewed through the lens of "left versus right" culture wars that currently plague a liberal democracy that occupies an important place in the Canadian and global psyches: the United States of America.

GROSZ'S LANGUAGE OF TYPES

Weimar's visual culture was replete with symbolic images, populated by an array of social and political types recognizable to the consumers of its vast, widely distributed print culture.[19] This very print culture was also inseparable from what the historian Bernhard Fulda refers to as "complex and heavily fragmented" communication flows, such that the "information [a Berliner] received depended on the kind of communication network in which he moved".[20] Described by the historian of twentieth-century German culture Kerry Wallach as an "iconography … of Weimar's social and political identities", this "iconographic framework" served to both construct and reinforce identities that played a role in an individual's decision to pursue membership in a

19. Kerry Wallach, "Visual Weimar: The Iconography of Social and Political Identities," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Weimar Republic*, ed. Nadine Rossol and Benjamin Ziemann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 723.

20. Bernhard Fulda, "The Berlin Press, 1918–32," in *Press and Politics in the Weimar Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 18.

particular social group or collective, or alternatively, to refute or act in opposition to the same.[21] Furthermore, Weimar imagery assumed its full potential in its representation, use, and perception in a world where Fulda's communication networks were all important, and therefore "the symbolic or iconographic potential of images was thus closely tied to their reception".[22] As a result, not only could the viewer see both themselves and others within this iconic framework, but their interpretation would be based on their own worldviews (*Weltanschauungs*).

In the early 1920s Grosz's drawings were not only populated by grotesque characterizations of known political figures (e.g., Minister of Defence Gustav Noske, second President of the Weimar Republic General Paul von Hindenburg, General Erich Ludendorff, and first President of the Weimar Republic Friedrich Ebert), but also by allegorical types.[23] These types were realized through the exaggeration of physiognomic traits, modes of dress, and situational context, although the readiness with which the artist's types are recognized cannot be reduced to a single governing principle. Historian of modern European history Christopher Clark ascribes Grosz's talent in creating recognizable types in part to his awareness and sensitivity to "the

21. Wallach, "Visual Weimar," 723.

22. Wallach, "Visual Weimar," 724.

23. Christopher Clark, "Weimar Politics and George Grosz," in *The Berlin of George Grosz: Drawings, Watercolours and Prints 1912-1930* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997), 24. Amongst these "known political figures", Gustav Noske was a member of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and served as Weimar's First Minister of Defence between 1919 and 1920. He was infamous at the time for suppressing leftist and Communist uprisings using regular military and *Freikorps* forces, as well as authorizing the murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. General Paul von Hindenburg was the leader of the German military in World War I and served as President of the Weimar Republic from 1925; upon the dissolution of the Republic, he remained President of Germany until his death in 1934. General Erich Ludendorff was, like Hindenburg, a military leader in World War I, and politically active in right-wing circles during the Weimar Republic. He was an early supporter of the National Socialists and participated in Hitler's Beer Hall putsch of 1923, although he had fallen out with the Nazis by the time they assumed power in 1933. Friedrich Ebert was the first President of the Weimar Republic, serving from 1919 to 1925. A close ally of Noske and member of the SPD, Ebert was also infamous for enlisting the support of nationalistic and Conservative elements that included the right-wing, paramilitary *Freikorps*. The conservative, right-wing, and reactionary leanings and actions of these characters made them an obvious target for Grosz, the Communist, activist artist.

performativeness of social roles" and the deployment of "keenly-observed detail [with] just enough material specificity".[24] In an introduction to the 1966 Grove Press edition of *Ecce Homo*, the American author Henry Miller suggests that despite the distortions and exaggerations found in Grosz's figures, "we recognize the subjects for the everyday figures which they are", and that the artist "saw them with X-ray eyes, penetrating not only the flesh but the mind and spirit as well".[25] German art historian Hans Hess bases his interpretation of Grosz's figures in sociology, psychology, and physiognomy, wherein one's social position affects one's physiognomy by way of psychological responses (a materials interpretation), or conversely that the character or spirit of the individual drives one's appearance and behaviour in their social position. Hess describes this melding of content and form as "moral, personal, political and social", reinforced by a "deliberately inartistic" style where the line is "neither beautiful nor personal, … reduced to its minimal function".[26] In many cases Grosz's drawings were complemented by titles that can be broadly interpreted in relation to the image's visual content, and these should also be considered when evaluating or trying to divine the artist's intent.[27]

The grotesque has often been a quality of caricature, and in Grosz's drawings the exaggeration of the physical also serves as a representation of the moral, informed by his own personal, political—and therefore highly subjective—perspective. As noted by the art historian Beth Irwin Lewis, Grosz was able to distill "the essential characteristics" of individuals within a class to build his vocabulary of types. Not only did Grosz's types serve to illuminate the worker but also to dehumanize the targets of his critique, rendering them "a less than human figure, one

24. Clark, "Weimar Politics," 25.
25. George Grosz, *Ecce Homo* (New York: Grove Press, 1966), xi.
26. Hans Hess, *George Grosz* (London: Studio Vista, 1974), 92-93.
27. Herbert Knust, "George Grosz: Literature and Caricature," *Comparative Literature Studies* 12, no. 3 (September 1975): 218–47.

who was worthy of contempt and hatred".[28] The capitalist's greed is reflected in his corpulence and burst veins from excessive eating and drinking, and his wealth in his high collars, cuffs, ties, and suits. Beyond these characteristics and accoutrements, his lack of inhibition and base behaviours is captured by Grosz's incorporation of animal-like physiognomic features that include porcine noses and profile treatments characterized by bald, unnaturally shaped skulls reminiscent of bestial heads (figure 2: *Landlord*, plate 29; figure 3: *Disrobing*, plate 9). While clothed, sex workers are recognizable by the transparency of garments that reveal their genitalia and breasts, often—like their clients—bearing suppurating sores and other visible markers of venereal diseases. The worker and veteran types are those most likely to elicit Grosz's empathy in representation, identifiable by their stoop-shouldered resignation, tattered clothes, war wounds, and lack of physiognomic exaggeration. Of particular importance for my research, the bourgeois male type is readily identifiable in his various manifestations despite our one-hundred-year distance from 1920s Berlin society and culture, and as explored in my discussion the sex worker and bourgeois female types are not so easily delineated: a lack of clarity leveraged by Grosz with striking effect.

WEIMAR'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ELITES

Grosz's worldview was strongly informed by the social and political milieus to which he was exposed. These influences would have extended from his local environment (i.e., Berlin, at the time *Ecce Homo* was published) to the larger Republic (based on his travels and consumption of media) and his experience of class as a boy growing up in rural Stolp, to name but a few. As a Communist artist critiquing the elite or ruling classes through his creation of types, it is therefore important to possess at least a rudimentary understanding of how these classes structured society

28. Lewis, *George Grosz: Art and Politics*, 137.

and politics in the early years of the Weimar Republic in order to read the content and intent of the artist's images.

Marxist historian David Abraham describes Weimar as a "bourgeois republic", in which the capitalist-class fractions (notably those involved in what the author refers to as heavy and export industries) were socially dominant. It also marked the first time the bourgeoisie ruled Germany as a political class.[29] However, the simple label "bourgeois republic" is not entirely revealing, as there existed other ruling elites with generally concordant (although occasionally differing) interests. Some of these groups are identified by the historian Larry Eugene Jones in his discussion of the German Right in the Weimar Republic, observing that the bourgeois industrial and financial elites were complemented by aristocratic (i.e., titled nobility) and academic elites. Although not explicitly identified by either author, the Protestant (and to a lesser extent, Roman Catholic) churches must also be considered in any discussion of Weimar elites, given their importance in pre-War German society and the former's strong connection to traditional German conservatism.[30]

Many of these heterogenous elites had strong roots in a pre-War, imperial form of conservatism and/or nationalism that often aligned with the German Right, thereby making them a natural target for Grosz, the Communist critic. Jones argues that bitterness over the outcome of the war, a profound distrust of democratic theories of governing, a generalized fear of the modern age and its "emancipatory impulses" that extended to workers' and women's rights, and a yearning for a return to the hierarchical pillars of the Second Empire ("crown, state, rank, church, and the

29. David Abraham, "State and Classes in Weimar Germany," *Politics & Society* 7, no. 3 (1977): 229, 239.

30. Larry Eugene Jones, "Introduction: The German Right in the Weimar Republic: New Directions, New Insights, New Challenges," in *The German Right in the Weimar Republic: Studies in the History of German Conservatism, Nationalism, and Antisemitism* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 6-7, 13, https://www.berghahnbooks.com/downloads/intros/JonesGerman_intro.pdf.

military") bolstered the conservative Right in the face of radical changes taking place in post-revolutionary German society.[31] This included the Junkers: landed aristocracy with eighteenth-century origins and substantial rural agricultural interests that operated along semi-feudal principles and to whom Grosz makes a clear reference in figure 4, (*Family*, 1916, plate 2). Identified by Abraham as a ruling class group with "disproportionate influence" to their economic weight, they constituted "a class in charge of the state and as a ruling class" (Chancellor Paul von Hindenburg was born into a wealthy Junkers family) while continuing to occupy critical positions in the judiciary, civil service, and the military.[32] Jones' description of the "displaced elite" as those with aristocratic backgrounds who had their traditional careers in the civil service or military blocked by the revolutionary events of 1918-1919 might be readily applied to the Junkers, and by extension his assertion that they began to gravitate towards leadership roles in patriotic Right organizations opposed to Weimar's new republican system.

In perhaps the clearest delineation of who could be considered bourgeois in the Weimar Republic, historian Moritz Föllmer writes that prior to World War I Germany was characterized by a single middle class associated with the term *Bürgertum*, a word that approximates—but is not the same as—the French *bourgeoisie* or English "upper middle class". Föllmer identifies its economic members as industrialists, bankers and financiers, lawyers, and physicians: those who had the means to live "a *bürgerliche* lifestyle free of manual labour".[33] Although without comparable economic means, those with "higher education and culturedness, the *Bildung*", (e.g., university professors, Protestant pastors, and senior civil servants), were also considered members

31. Jones, "Introduction: The German Right," 1-3, 13.
32. Abraham, "State and Classes," 238.
33. Moritz Föllmer, "The Middle Classes," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Weimar Republic*, ed. Nadine Rossol and Benjamin Ziemann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 455.

of the *Bürgertum*.[34] In this notion of *Bildung*, one finds an important, non-economic clue to understanding how the bourgeois viewed themselves: not only as economic principals, but also as particularly well-educated and highly cultured. Collectively, these characteristics set the *Bürgertum* (at least in their own perception) apart from the *Kleinbürgertum* (*petite bourgeoisie*) and *Mittelstand*—the former comprised of master artisans, shopkeepers, and small businessmen; the latter of shopkeepers, commodity producers, and salaried employees—while simultaneously reinforcing notions of their own exceptionalism and elite status.[35]

Although the elite groups discussed here likely constituted a maximum of five percent of the total population of Germany before and after 1918, Abraham notes that by the time *Ecce Homo* was published in 1922/1923:

> The defeat of the revolutionary working-class impulse had been completed […] local communist uprisings had been suppressed; previous concessions in the realm of wages and hours had been reversed in the context of the Ruhr occupation; the inflation facilitated liquidation of industrial debts; [and] the SPD had rid itself of most of its revolutionaries…[36]

While the alignment of bourgeois and aristocratic interests with specific parties was not without its exceptions and was at times variable, by 1924 the majority of votes in federal elections were obtained by the "main" bourgeois parties (primarily the DDP, DVP, and DNVP). Their alliances with a Catholic Zentrum party that was dominated by its right wing from 1924 onward guaranteed a disproportionate influence of bourgeois and aristocratic elites in all aspects of Weimar society, including politics, the economy—and of great significance for Grosz—culture and the judiciary.[37]

---

34. Föllmer, "The Middle Classes," 455.
35. Föllmer, "The Middle Classes," 456. Abraham, "State and Classes," 241.
36. Abraham, "State and Classes," 252.
37. Party abbreviations: DDP (German Democratic Party); DVP (German People's Party); DNVP (German National People's Party). For percentages of the vote during the Weimar years, see Abraham, "State and Classes," 246.

THE 1924 *ECCE HOMO* TRIAL

Published between December 1922 and early 1923 by publisher Wieland Herzfelde's Malik-Verlag, *Ecce Homo* is a large format (35.8 x 26.3 cm) portfolio of 84 black-and-white and 16 watercolor drawings printed as offset reproductions. It was released in five different editions totaling approximately 10,000 copies, and its contents span a period of seven years in the artist's production from 1915 to 1922.[38] It is unclear who was responsible for the selection of images included in the portfolio, but it seems likely it would have been made by principals of the Malik-Verlag (notably Herzfelde), with the collaboration and agreement of the artist.

The portfolio proved of interest to the authorities immediately upon its release, as the Public Prosecutor General at District Court 1 in Berlin requested an expert opinion on *Ecce Homo* from the Prussian Minister for Science, Art and National Education on December 18, 1922. On behalf of the Minister, the art historian Wilhelm Waetzoldt (a representative of the Ministry of Culture), communicated on March 7, 1923, that he had not succeeded in informing himself on the work and was therefore unable to comment. However, he remarked that "the illustrator Grosz is known as an artist who, especially for sharp satire, uses the means of a – *purely artistically speaking* – very remarkable graphic art."[39] A week later, on March 14, 1923, the Attorney General of the District Court placed a second request with the Minister for Science, Art and National Education to determine whether the collective nature of the *Ecce Homo* portfolio was "objectionable". Included with the request was a list of 27 black-and-white and seven watercolour drawings that—in the evaluation of the Attorney General—appeared to be grossly obscene (*grob*

38. Alexander Dückers, *George Grosz: Das Druckgraphische Werk / The Graphic Work* (San Francisco: Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 1996), 358-375. See Appendix A for additional detail on each edition.

39. "Der Illustrator Grosz ist bekannt als ein Künstler, der sich besonders für scharfe Satire des Mittelseiner – rein künstlerisch betrachtet – sehr beachtenswerten graphischen Kunst bedient." Rosamunde Neugebauer von der Schulenburg, *George Grosz: Macht Und Ohnmacht*, 111. Emphasis in the English translation is mine.

unzüchtig), obscene or indecent (*unzüchtig*), or for which certain doubts existed (*gewisse Zweifel bestehen*).[40] A reply from the Minister to the Attorney General dated April 6, 1923, states:

> As far as artistic aspects are concerned, the work 'Ecce Homo' by George Grosz, which was returned without further ado on 3 April this year, is to be regarded as a noteworthy achievement that testifies to artistic seriousness and gives the impression that *the motifs that drive George Grosz to sharply satirize certain contemporary phenomena arise from the desire for knowledge and clarification of social damage*.[41]

Nevertheless, a decision was taken on April 25, 1923, to confiscate from unsold copies of *Ecce Homo* those plates identified by the Attorney General.[42]

A report on the status of the investigation dated June 21, 1923, sent by the Berlin Chief of Police (Department II, German Central Office for Combating Indecent Images, Writings, and Advertisements in Berlin) to the Prussian Minister of the Interior reveals that two private individuals had filed criminal charges against Grosz and the Malik-Verlag.[43] Concurrent legal actions included the confiscation of the Grosz portfolio *Mit Pinsel und Schere* (*With Brush and Scissors*) from a Hanover bookshop on August 22, 1923, under § 184 of the German Criminal Code, (a prosecutorial action later dropped on September 15, 1923), and confiscation of Willi Wolfradt's first Grosz monograph in 1923 under the same statute.[44] While difficult to prove

---

40. I could not determine how the term "objectionable" was applied by the Attorney General, nor able to document the criteria applied by the Attorney General.

41. Neugebauer von der Schulenburg, *George Grosz: Macht Und Ohnmacht*, 111. Emphasis mine.

42. Lewis refers to the confiscation of "all unsold copies of the recently published *Ecce Homo*." Whether Lewis and Neugebauer von der Schulenburg are referencing the same action is unclear in the absence of a documentary reference in Lewis. Lewis, *George Grosz: Art and Politics*, 218. Neugebauer von der Schulenburg, *George Grosz: Macht Und Ohnmacht*, 111.

43. The identities of the plaintiffs are not recorded, and it is possible their complaints may have been filed anonymously. Later proceedings against Grosz in 1928 for blasphemy in *Hintergrund* were initiated by an anonymous complaint lodged with the district court in Berlin. Neugebauer von der Schulenburg, *George Grosz: Macht Und Ohnmacht*, 111. Lewis, *George Grosz: Art and Politics*, 219.

44. *Mit Pinsel und Schere* was a Dada publication whose seven images were primarily constructivist in nature. Although there was some limited nudity (refer to Figures 5 and 6), none of the images are as explicit as those in *Ecce Homo*, nor did Grosz represent explicit sexual contact. The

definitively, these actions collectively suggest a coordinated movement against Grosz, his work, and his proponents.

On December 23, 1923, the following indictment was lodged against Grosz and his publishers Wieland Herzfelde and Julian Gumperz in the case of *Ecce Homo*:

> …accused in Charlottenburg in 1922 of having offered for sale, sold, distributed, exhibited or posted in places accessible to the public or otherwise disseminated obscene images and depictions, having produced them for the purpose of distribution or having kept them in stock for the same purpose, having announced or advertised them. (§ 184 para. 1, number 1 StGB).[45]

Their trial was held before the 6th Criminal Chamber of District Court III, Berlin, on February 16, 1924, presided over by District Court Director (*Landgerichtsdirektor*) Ohnesorge. Lawyer Paul Levi represented the defence, and Public Prosecutor Peltzer sought a fine of 500 Marks for Grosz and 1000 Marks each for Herzfelde and Gumperz, along with confiscation of the entire portfolio.[46] The impressionist painter and president of the Berlin Academy of Art Max Liebermann, the art critic Dr. Max Osborn, and the journalist Maximilian Harden all testified for the defence.[47]

---

proceedings were dropped by the public prosecutor, "as the nature of the depiction completely overshadows the sensual or sexual aspect" ("da die Art der Darstellung das sinnliche bzw. geschlechtliche Moment völlig in den Hintergrund treten läßt"). Neugebauer von der Schulenburg, *George Grosz: Macht Und Ohnmacht*, 111.

45. Neugebauer von der Schulenburg, *George Grosz: Macht Und Ohnmacht*, 112. The wording of the statue under which they were charged (§ 184 para. 1, number 1 StGB) reads as "offers for sale, sells, distributes, exhibits or displays in places accessible to the public or otherwise disseminates obscene writings, images or depictions, produces them for the purpose of dissemination or keeps them in stock for the same purpose, announces or advertises them" ("*unzüchtige Schriften, Abbildungen oder Darstellungen feilhält, verkauft, vertheilt, an Orten, welche dem Publikum zugänglich sind, ausstellt oder anschlägt oder sonst verbreitet, sie zum Zwecke der Verbreitung herstellt oder zu demselben Zwecke vorräthig hält, ankündigt oder anpreist*"). Thomas Fuchs, "§ 184 StGB. Verbreitung Pornographischer Inhalte," accessed December 29, 2024, https://lexetius.com/StGB/184,17. Although the cited year 1922 would appear to pre-date the publication and sale of the portfolio (likely in December of 1922 or later), it is consistently reported by Neugebauer von der Schulenburg and Dückers.

46. Neugebauer von der Schulenburg, *George Grosz: Macht und Ohnmacht*, 112.

47. Both Neugebauer von der Schulenburg and Lewis also refer to Reichskunstwart Dr. Edwin Redslob as part of the proceedings. Lewis states Redslob participated in support of Grosz; however, Neugebauer von der Schulenburg's wording infers Redslob attended on behalf of the public prosecutor ("Reichkunstwart Edwin Redslob vom Staatsanwalt geladen"). As one of the Reichkunstwart's functions

Questioned on individual plates by Judge Ohnesorge, Grosz refused to recognize any overstepping of decency, arguing that he "portrayed people as he saw them", and when pressed to explain the titular colored plate *Ecce Homo* (figure 7: plate IV) explained that the entire portfolio was the expression of a moralist's view of contemporary Berlin: "Behold, what men!".[48]

Upon conclusion of the trial, Grosz, Herzfelde, and Gumperz were each fined 500 Marks, the 22 plates (17 drawings and 5 watercolors) deemed to contravene the law were confiscated from remaining copies of the portfolio, and no new editions were printed by the Malik-Verlag.[49] The publisher was also ordered to render the production plates and moulds for the censored images unusable and the sales brochure for the portfolio was ordered withdrawn, as it featured one of the illustrations (figure 5: *Disrobing*, plate 9) deemed a target of confiscation by the court.[50] A list of the confiscated black-and-white prints and watercolour reproductions has been included herein as Appendix B.

The defendants submitted an appeal in the spring of 1924, heard by Senate President Dr. Schmidt, presiding over the Second Criminal Senate of the Reich Court on June 2, 1924. Dr. Schmidt allowed the judgement of February 16, 1924, to stand, and the appellants were ordered to pay all costs associated with their appeal.[51]

---

was mediation between artists and regulators it is possible Redslob's role was more neutral than implied by either author but cannot be conclusively determined without access to primary legal sources associated with the trial. Neugebauer von der Schulenburg, *George Grosz: Macht Und Ohnmacht*, 112. Lewis, *George Grosz: Art and Politics*, 219.

48. Lewis, *George Grosz: Art and Politics*, 219.

49. Lewis, *George Grosz: Art and Politics*, 219. Neugebauer von der Schulenburg, *George Grosz: Macht Und Ohnmacht*, 112.

50. Neugebauer von der Schulenburg, *George Grosz: Macht Und Ohnmacht*, 112.

51. Neugebauer von der Schulenburg, *George Grosz: Macht Und Ohnmacht*, 112.

DEFINING OBSCENITY IN THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

An important current of thought in late nineteenth-century Germany believed a secure state and orderly society were built upon the adoption and expression of strong moral codes by individuals and families, rooted in a spirit of public obligation and lived as part of a greater societal morality. Therefore, transgressions of morality at the level of the individual or family represented a threat to social order.[52] One means by which individual morality could be compromised was by succumbing to the "sexual instinct", described by the German philosopher Fritz Schultze in 1897 as the "most important basic instinct of all" and linked to immorality by the Protestant theologian Friedrich Mahling in 1909: "morality is the primacy of the spirit in man over his instinctual drives: immorality is the primacy of man's instinctual drives over his spirit".[53] In the pursuit of one's own desires, pleasures, and egoistic interests at the expense of the "common good", carnal behaviour represented a significant threat to social life and order.[54] Therefore, materials whose objective was sexual arousal needed to be monitored and controlled by the state, including pornographic images, literature, and other media.

Of particular note in the statute under which Grosz, Herzfelde, and Gumpert were prosecuted (Section 184, dated July 14, 1900), is the statement "obscene images, or depictions", as the definition of obscene is neither explicitly stated in this section nor others in the Criminal Code. However, a review of nineteenth-century discourses around obscenity and aesthetics in Imperial Germany reveals a foundation for the legal interpretation and application of obscenity as a charge in the Weimar Republic. Section 184 of the January 1872 Reich Criminal Code

52. Gary D. Stark, "Pornography, Society, and the Law in Imperial Germany," *Central European History* 14, no. 3 (1981): 211. Edward Ross Dickinson, "The Men's Christian Morality Movement in Germany, 1880–1914: Some Reflections on Politics, Sex, and Sexual Politics," *The Journal of Modern History* 75, no. 1 (2003): 72.

53. Quoted in Dickinson, "The Men's Christian Morality Movement," 72.

54. Dickinson, "The Men's Christian Morality Movement," 72-73.

superseded state laws dealing with pornography and was initially concerned only with the sale or distribution of obscene material while excluding those who created or purchased it, proscribing:

> Whoever sells, distributes or otherwise disseminates lewd writings, images or depictions, or exhibits or displays them in places accessible to the public, shall be punished with a fine of up to one hundred thalers or with imprisonment for up to six months.[55]

A series of judgements issued by the Imperial Courts (*Reichsgericht*) between 1879 and 1883 further elaborated upon the definition of "obscene" to include "anything that offends the public's sense of modesty and morality (*Schamgefühl*) in a sexual sense".[56] This definition was not, however, subsequently made explicit in Section 184 of the Criminal Code.

In the late 1890s, the number of convictions for disseminating pornography was outpacing the growth of the population and also connected by some to a rise in the number of sex crimes. Therefore, conservative political forces successfully lobbied for more restrictive interpretations of Section 184, leading to a fundamental rewrite. The resulting *Lex Heinze* bill expanded Section 184 to include the creation, manufacture, storage, or advertising of obscene works, as well as facilitating their availability to individuals under sixteen years of age.[57] In the evaluation of the Prussian interior ministry, these revisions justified the pre-emptive seizure of potentially obscene works on the basis of previewed content prior to their public distribution. Furthermore, a work could now be considered obscene based on its effect on "the public at large" (including young

55. Stark, "Pornography, Society, and the Law," 213. The original German text is: "Wer unzüchtige Schriften, Abbildungen oder Darstellungen verkauft, vertheilt oder sonst verbreitet, oder an Orten, welche dem Publikum zugänglich sind, ausstellt oder anschlägt, wird mit Geldstrafe bis zu einhundert Thalern oder mit Gefängniß bis zu sechs Monaten bestraft." The statute text is taken from Thomas Fuchs, "§ 184 StGB. Verbreitung Pornographischer Inhalte," accessed December 29, 2024, https://lexetius.com/StGB/184,20.

56. Stark, "Pornography, Society, and the Law," 213.

57. Stark, "Pornography, Society, and the Law," 216.

people and the cognitively infirm), expanding upon previous criteria that it be "shown to be offensive or morally dangerous to the average adult".[58]

A 1902 *Reichsgericht* decision facilitated the prosecution of images under Section 184 by adding an interpretative nuance to cover the implication or meaning of a pictorial work. To demonstrate this concept (what I will term "implied obscenity"), professor of European History Gary D. Stark references a hypothetical series of drawings that begin with a man and a woman meeting in a park and ending in an image of a room throughout which a man and a woman's clothing is scattered. In this circumstance, he demonstrates how the image—even in the absence of explicitly sexual (or "immoral") acts—could be interpreted by the Weimar judiciary as obscene because "the meaning of that final scene was clear to the court".[59] In other words, legal interpretation of an image could consider not only what was "directly visible to the eye", but also any meaning or implication that could be associated with the image.[60] Combined with the previous definition of "public at large", the inherent subjectivity of this approach facilitates the declaration of a work as obscene: the number of potential triggers multiply and broaden in nature as the opinions and beliefs of a larger population are given consideration.

By 1911, the new Central Police Office for the Suppression of Obscene Materials had assumed as its function the suppression of "products that endanger public morality without, however, inhibiting the legitimate, free development of art and scholarship". Against a generalized judicial position that "true work of arts" were never obscene *per se*, a distinction was therefore introduced between "prurient interest" and a "more ethical purpose".[61] To ensure this potential loophole could not be abused by the creators and dealers of erotic or pornographic work, a legal

58. Stark, "Pornography, Society, and the Law," 217.
59. Stark, "Pornography, Society, and the Law," 218.
60. Stark, "Pornography, Society, and the Law," 217.
61. Stark, "Pornography, Society, and the Law," 222.

safeguard termed "relative obscenity" was brought into play.[62] This principle proposed that "obscenity was not something absolute or necessarily inherent in the content of a work", but was contextual and related to circumstances external to the work that could include manner of presentation, its application and use, or the intended audience. For example, images of male and female sexual organs might be considered obscene if displayed in a book visible to the public through a shop window, but not if the same book is perused by a medical student in an academic setting. Therefore, "relative" obscenity dictated that an image might be considered legally obscene under certain circumstances but not under others, and as proposed by Stark the qualifier of intended audience introduces profound elements of class prejudice tied to social standing: the same work could be considered artistic when consumed by educated, "serious" audiences, but obscene when viewed by those (notably the "lower audience", or *unterer Leserkreis*) that might only focus on the work's sexual dimension.[63]

With a greater focus on the relationship between affect and aesthetics, professor of German studies Erica Weitzman proposes the concept of obscenity in long nineteenth-century Germany must be understood in a manner that goes beyond a simple "aversion to the display of sexual, scatological, or otherwise *unseemly matters*" to include "questions of *representation*, interpretation, and ideology".[64] Weitzman posits that during this time German censorship law moves toward "an affective language of individual sensibility and personal harm", wherein images that may "cause offense through gross injury to modesty and morality" could be prosecutable

62. Stark, "Pornography, Society, and the Law," 223.

63. Stark, "Pornography, Society, and the Law," 224-25.

64. Erica Weitzman, "'An Injury to Shame': Obscenity and Affect in Nineteenth-Century German Aesthetics," *Orbis Litterarum* 74 (2019): 4. Emphasis is mine. Although Weitzman's article is primarily concerned with German literature of the period under consideration, her discussion and interpretation of applicable censorship laws and affective principles is readily transposed upon the visual arts and reflected in her incorporation of antique erotic art.

"without being indecent" (her titular "injury to shame").[65] As a result, modesty becomes a legally protected (although highly subjective) category and "the violation of modesty or propriety [becomes separated] from the content of that which causes it".[66] If interpreted literally, so long as an individual or group felt their modesty had been injured virtually anything could be identified as obscene and therefore a prosecutable cause, independent of representations of nudity or the depiction of sexual acts.

Referencing the contemporaneous legal scholar H. Josef Haubach and echoing elements of Stark's analysis (specifically in her identification of mode, context, and audience), Weitzman notes that while not all representations of nudity *de facto* violate modesty, not all violations of modesty *a priori* require representations of nudity, thereby aligning with Stark's observations on "relative obscenity" but with the aforementioned emphasis on affect.[67] Furthermore, Weitzman's discussion of German philosopher Karl Rosenkranz's *Ästhetik des Häßlichen* of 1853 leads her to observe that the "injury to shame" constitutes an affront to the idea of "wholeness" and the notion of a human being as a creature that "not only transcends its own creatureliness" (including, presumably, Schultze's "sexual instinct"), but also "enters into a larger spiritual or species destiny".[68] Ultimately, Weitzman's focus on aesthetics and affect effectively demonstrates how the *feeling* or *perception* of being the victim of obscenity or being shamed—even in the absence of graphic obscenity of a sexual nature—becomes a legal issue facilitating accusations of obscenity by the German legal apparatus.

65. Weitzman, "'An Injury to Shame'," 4.
66. Weitzman, "'An Injury to Shame'," 5.
67. Weitzman, "'An Injury to Shame'," 5.
68. Weitzman, "'An Injury to Shame'," 9.

WEIMAR PRINT CULTURE

Ecce Homo was published into a vibrant and expansive print culture that—despite post-war paper shortages associated with rampant price increases and supply chain challenges—catered to a wide range of consumers across the socioeconomic and political spectrums.[69] By the mid-1920s, the number of regularly published daily newspapers, illustrated papers and magazines, weeklies, and tabloids numbered over four thousand titles serving a highly-literate population.[70] There were forty-five morning newspapers, two midday papers, and fourteen evening papers in Berlin alone, firmly establishing it as the center of German media.[71] Some weeklies exceeded circulation numbers of one million copies, and hundreds of illustrated papers and magazines served a broad array of readers interested in everything from fashion through sports, health, nudism, occultism, and automobiles.[72] Gossip and entertainment-oriented tabloids—with their lavish use of illustration and photography—became increasingly popular through the decade, constituting eighty percent of the Berlin newspaper market by 1930.[73] Also in the realm of entertainment, *Kolporteur* detective serials at ten Pfennig an issue (also known as "dime" detective novels) were extremely popular, sold door-to-door, and were accessible to those with relatively basic literacy levels. As subscriptions, serial novels had a lower "buy-in" price and were therefore accessible to a larger audience, and that they could also be shared with others increased their potential for

69. Heidi J. S. Tworek, "The Death of News? The Problem of Paper in the Weimar Republic," *Central European History* 50, no. 3 (September 2017): 328–46.

70. Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg, eds., "Visual Culture: Illustrated Press and Photography," in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1994), 641.

71. Jaap van Ginneken, "1919-1933: The Weimar Republic and the Mass Press," in *Kurt Baschwitz: A Pioneer of Communication Studies and Social Psychology* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 127. The author notes total circulation figures of three million copies daily, but it is unclear whether he is limiting his calculation to Berlin and its outskirts, or the totality of the three thousand newspapers published throughout Germany. Note that newspaper circulation numbers vary significantly between cited sources.

72. van Ginneken, "1919-1933: The Weimar Republic and the Mass Press," 127.

73. van Ginneken, "1919-1933: The Weimar Republic and the Mass Press," 127.

distribution. Given the simple and occasionally lurid nature of their story lines, however, they were often the target of conservative elements concerned with the effect they might have upon German youth.[74]

In alignment with Fulda's observation on communication flows, Jaap van Ginneken describes the early 1920s press environment as *Weltanschauungs* or *Gesinnungspresse* (that is, a worldview or ideological press), with the former term also used by Fulda.[75] As many as five media empires directed public opinion, serving up liberal, conservative, and communist viewpoints.[76] Outside of these expansive media empires, each major political party had its own newspaper with associated regional editions and smaller, independent presses and publishers were often aligned with political causes or movements and therefore promoters of left, right, or centrist worldviews.[77] One of these was the left-wing, anti-fascist Malik-Verlag, which had its roots in the takeover of a small publishing venture, the *Neue Jugend* (*New Youth*) by Wieland Herzfelde, his brother Helmut (who later anglicized his name to John Heartfield), and George Grosz in 1916.[78] Formally established in 1917 by the Herzfeldes, the Malik-Verlag evolved from its beginnings as a newspaper publisher (one notable example being *Die Pleite*, or *Bankruptcy*) to incorporate the publishing of books, portfolios, and pamphlets into its media reach. The Malik-Verlag *imprimeur* eventually included nine portfolios of Grosz's work, including the publication of *Ecce Homo*

74. Peter S. Fisher, "Colportage: Harmless Pleasure or Dangerous Diversion?," in *Weimar Controversies: Explorations in Popular Culture with Siegfried Kracauer* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2020), 73, 76, 79.

75. van Ginneken, "1919-1933: The Weimar Republic and the Mass Press," 127. Fulda, "The Berlin Press," 18.

76. Kaes, ed., "Visual Culture: Illustrated Press and Photography," 641.

77. These included *Die Rote Fahne* (Communist), *Völkischer Beobachter* (National Socialist), *Vorwärts* (Social Democratic), and *Die Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (the nationalist, right-wing movement). Kaes, ed., "Visual Culture: Illustrated Press and Photography," 641.

78. W.L. Guttsman, *Art for the Workers: Ideology and the Visual Arts in Weimar Germany* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 102.

during the period of hyperinflation between 1921 and 1923 and in the face of physical and financial limitations on the availability of paper.[79] While the scholarly literature on Weimar print culture focuses primarily on newspapers, tabloids, magazines, and *Kolporteur* novels, research on small, independent presses publishing books, pamphlets, and flyers appears somewhat limited. Therefore, it is very difficult to draw any conclusions on their preponderance, financing, editorial practices, production, and reach, and although these details are not critical to the core of my thesis, they may nevertheless constitute an interesting avenue for future scholarly inquiry.

DISCUSSION

Prior to the charges of December 23, 1923, the artistic merit of both Grosz and *Ecce Homo* were acknowledged by government ministries and their experts. Correspondence directed to the Attorney General from the art historian William Waetzoldt on March 7, 1923, (on behalf of the Ministry of Culture), was favourable toward Grosz's work generally, while the Minister for Science, Art and National Education specifically recognized the portfolio's artistic merit in their communication of April 6, 1923. Taken together these testimonials suggest that Grosz, *Ecce Homo*, and the publishers would normally be exempt from censorship under Article 142 of the Weimar constitution that guaranteed full freedom of expression to the visual arts: however, as with Grosz's previous prosecution for insulting members of the *Reichswehr* in 1921, it was the Criminal Code that was leveraged by the state in an effort to suppress the artist's work.

79. Dückers catalogues seven portfolios and two collections, the latter of which include *Ecce Homo* and *Interregnum* (1936). Although not explicitly stated, it appears the difference is related to the years attributed to individual drawings: if the drawings were not purpose made for the portfolio or when spanning a broader period of production (e.g., twelve years in the case of *Interregnum*), Dückers categorizes the work as a collection even when bound as a portfolio. Throughout my thesis *Ecce Homo* is referred to as a portfolio.

At face value, many of the images in *Ecce Homo* could have been deemed obscene if applying Imperial Court judgements of 1879 through 1883 that defined obscenity as "anything that offends the public's sense of modesty and morality (*Schamgefühl*) in a *sexual* sense" (my emphasis). The portfolio is rife with sexual references that include nudity, renderings of genitalia, representations of sexual touching, and brothel, cabaret, or nightclub scenes with multiple participants in "immodest" or "immoral" situations. Several drawings also contain scenes suggestive of eventual sexual acts or outcomes, thereby rendering them obscene by implication per *Reichsgericht* rulings of 1902. However, while the subject matter could have been considered sexual and/or offensive for that reason, Grosz's linear style of drawing and frequent use of exaggerated caricature creates a sharp separation between what is being represented and the quotidian reality of the viewer, especially given the rise of photographic technologies and increased availability of photorealistic images such as cabinet and postcards, magazines (including nudist publications), and stereoscopes (figure 8).

Whether the *Ecce Homo* images can be categorized as erotic or pornographic is an interesting factor in determining whether they could have been deemed legally obscene. From a strictly etymological perspective some of Grosz's drawings could be considered pornographic (based on an interpretation of the Greek *pornographos*, or "writing about prostitutes"). Applying a loose, modern definition to the distinction, however, one might associate erotica with an aesthetic component to the image, with the aim of pornography being the solicitation or provocation of sexual arousal independent of aesthetic concerns.[80] As Grosz's work has an important (and previously acknowledged) aesthetic character, one might conclude that the banned drawings could be deemed primarily "erotic": however, some also contain more graphic representations of sexual

80. Childs, *Suspended License: Censorship and the Visual Arts*, 20.

acts and more detailed (most often female) genitalia (e.g., figure 9: *Rapture*, plate 16). Therefore, one might *also* accuse the artist of an attempt to elicit sexual arousal, and the artist and publisher could subsequently be charged with creating and distributing pornography.

Taken as a whole, it is doubtful Grosz and his publishers intended to titillate or arouse the viewer with the *Ecce Homo* drawings. A primary consideration is the portfolio was not published as a pornographic collection, but rather leveraged representations of sexuality and sexual behaviour as a critique of Weimar elites by a leftist publisher and artist.[81] Although Grosz was actively soliciting people in his circle (notably, the graphic artist Otto Schmalhausen) for pornographic materials prior to the publication of *Ecce Homo*, (a period when most of the confiscated drawings were created), it is impossible to make a definitive connection between Grosz's collecting of pornography and his drawings in the portfolio.[82] In fact, some of Grosz's earlier works (e.g., figure 10, Grosz's drawing *Erotic Scene* of 1912/13, for which he was never prosecuted) are clearly far more explicit in their sexual content and without equivalent in the portfolio.

The *Ecce Homo* images are populated almost exclusively by men occupying both interior and exterior spaces with women, and a small number of images are occupied exclusively by unaccompanied women. In most cases the men are dressed, but the women are either completely nude, partially dressed, or only the outline of clothing is indicated, oftentimes with their sexual organs visible: the whole inferring an uneven power relationship. Unlike some of Grosz's earlier work (figure 10), in those portfolio drawings where men and women are touching each other the contact is strongly suggested but not graphically explicit (e.g., a man's hand reaching up under a

81. I have been unable to definitively ascertain who was ultimately responsible for compiling the contents of the portfolio, and so in the absence of documentation assume it was the Editor (Herzefelde) with Grosz's collaboration and approval.

82. Hess, *George Grosz*, 92.

woman's corset), and overt representations of interactions between male and female genitalia are absent from the images. The one instance where a man and a woman are in a sexual embrace (figure 11: plate V from the original watercolour, *Daddy and Mommy*, 1922) is so stylistic in its presentation that it is difficult to interpret as either erotica or pornography given its almost comic aspect. While some drawings are detailed in their rendering of female genitalia (refer to the previously referenced *Rapture*, 1922) and do appear to capture a sexual moment, Grosz's approach results in an image that can be read as both anatomical and erotic: whether the viewer's sexual arousal is intended or even conceivable is arguable, given the artist's highly stylized rendering of those involved. This is not to suggest sex, sexuality, and lust have been completely exorcised from the portfolio and its images are to be read exclusively as political or social critique: as central motifs behind the artist's messaging their representation needs to be clear. As elements of a greater whole, however, the reception and reading of individual images as sexual, erotic, or pornographic would be contingent upon the viewer's personal morality, worldview, and potentially their access to—and consumption of—other sexually-explicit materials.

Nevertheless, despite constitutional guarantees protecting freedom of artistic expression, charges were eventually brought against Grosz and his publishers under Section 184 of the Criminal Code (the pornography, or obscenity statute). Notably, the court charges were brought six months after the filing of criminal charges by two private (and unidentified) individuals and almost eight months after 27 plates identified by the Attorney General had already been confiscated from unsold copies of *Ecce Homo*, with the objective of confiscating the entire portfolio. Citing a critique written for *Die Aktion* by the Expressionist writer Max Herrmann-Neisse on June 15, 1923, Lewis draws upon the April 1923 confiscation order that states "a significant portion of the drawings offend the modesty and moral sense of the viewer in respect to sexual matters,

consequently the whole work has an obscene character", to expose the logic behind the Attorney General's attempt to confiscate the entire portfolio.[83] Assuming that copies of the portfolio sold between its initial release in December 1922 or early 1923 and the confiscation order of April 25, 1923 would be considered irrecoverable, any editions sold after that date would by definition be devoid of the content originally deemed grossly obscene, obscene or indecent, or for which doubts existed. Therefore, the private individuals responsible for filing the criminal complaint may have had access to a complete, pre-confiscation edition that led to their complaint, or they may have been prompted to do so by those with other objectives in mind.[84] As by the end of April 1923 the Attorney General was not receiving the support or justification they sought from government ministries to move forward with legal action against Grosz, the timing of the anonymous criminal complaints is interesting.[85] It is also notable that Grosz's later 1928 trial for blasphemy in the case of *Hintergrund* was initiated by an "anonymous denunciation", suggesting a common mechanism for manipulating the Weimar legal system to achieve political objectives against artists and publishers despite constitutionally guaranteed freedom of expression.[86]

Analyzing the portfolio in the context of the post-1911 legal concept of relative obscenity is a complex undertaking. As a critical determination of relative obscenity is based on *who* can access the portfolio (and by extension, how they might respond to it), the publication's cost and availability are important considerations. By 1923 Grosz was already an established artist and caricaturist and given his renown there would have been significant demand for a new portfolio.

83. Lewis, *George Grosz: Art and Politics*, 219.

84. It would be interesting to have documented circulation figures to better understand the likelihood of encountering a full edition of the portfolio prior to April 25, 1923.

85. Whether the timing of the private individuals' complaints could be tied to manipulation of the legal system by those targeted in the portfolio would prove particularly suspect if the confiscation order had an end date. Unfortunately, I was unable to document whether this was the case.

86. Lewis, *George Grosz: Art and Politics*, 219.

According to Dückers, the advertising prospectus listed base prices ranging from 600 Marks for the deluxe, complete, edition A, through 20 Marks for (the incomplete) edition D. The only other complete edition (edition C) was priced at 45 Marks in the prospectus. Pricing was managed dynamically through the period of hyperinflation, settling in 1924 upon 300 and 45 Marks for editions A and C respectively, although Dückers notes it is unclear whether these prices correspond to original (complete) or censored editions.[87] While the less expensive edition C may have been accessible to both skilled and unskilled workers whose earning averaged 18.6 or 16 Mk per week, it would nevertheless have been a challenge to save that amount of money given other competing priorities such as food and lodging.[88] Therefore, the portfolio's main market was likely those with significant financial means, including the upper bourgeoisie and other societal elites who were the very target of *Ecce Homo*'s critique. Despite its relatively large run of 10,000 copies (larger than many of the smaller contemporaneous newspapers), its pricing made it inaccessible to the majority of Berlin's population, and as a potential source of sexual stimulation the average worker (presumably a member of the "lower audience", or *unterer Leserkreis* referenced by Stark), would have enjoyed a much greater "return on investment" by pursuing other, less expensive (and more explicit) forms of pornography.

Prior to investigating another important aspect of obscenity (shame, or *Schamgefühl*) and its relationship to the portfolio, it is important to analyze *who* is represented in the portfolio by drawing upon Grosz's vocabulary of types and contemporary understanding of who wielded power and authority. Grosz's types are readily identifiable throughout *Ecce Homo*. With few exceptions (i.e., plates 55, 86, 71, and 84), the portfolio's images are largely devoid of military, working class,

87. Dückers, *George Grosz: Das Druckgraphische Werk*, 360.

88. U.S. Department of Labor, *Monthly Labor Review*, 18, no. 3 (Government Printing Office, 1924), 83, http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS806.

political, and clerical or religious types. When included, they are immediately recognizable by their uniforms (or vestments) and bearing, and in the case of plate 54 (figure 12, *Ledebour*, 1919) the leftist politician and member of the *Reichstag* Georg Ledebour would have been readily identifiable to Weimar contemporaries, with or without the image's accompanying title. Representations of male figures can be categorized as predominantly bourgeois or aristocratic in appearance, appearing in small, mixed groups of an average of two to five individuals and distinguished from those "not of their status" primarily by their physiognomy, clothing and accessories. Furthermore, Grosz cleverly uses these elements (e.g., pocket watch chains, ties, collars, and waistcoats), to make connections between fully dressed, recognizably bourgeois male figures and those who are in various states of undress while engaging in libidinous and/or drunken behaviours. Grosz's delineation of types leaves no doubt that these men—independent of the activity captured in the drawing—are drawn from Weimar elites. Given the financial means required to acquire the portfolio, it is highly likely these same elites would have had access to—and would have recognized themselves in—Grosz's drawings.

The corpulent capitalist smokes his cigars with a bottle of alcohol near at hand, his rich accoutrements suggestive of money, position, and power (figure 13: *Beauty, Thee I Praise*, plate III). His facial conformation (notably, its animalistic traits), burst capillaries, and the often-compromising situations or settings in which he finds himself (whether gambling, drinking, or engaging in explicit or implied sexual activity) all attest to his uninhibited pursuit of earthly pleasures. Strikingly, despite a distance of one hundred years and an associated social, historical, and cultural divide, Hess' observation that "the recognition of the figure, and then knowing his thoughts, his past, his actions … stand out so clearly in a drawing by Grosz" holds true today.[89]

89. Hess, *George Grosz*, 107.

Not only would the contemporaneous subject recognized himself, but he would have also been recognized by others. In most cases where women are present (and notably in the banned drawings), their identity as either the "respectable wife" of the male figure or as sex worker is both subjective and contextual. At times the connection and act are explicit (e.g., the threesome depicted in figure 14: *Chicken in the Basket*, plate 30), while at other times it is less overt (e.g., figure 15: *Cosy Chat*, plate 36) yet nevertheless subject to the principle of implied obscenity elaborated by Stark.[90] In other cases, the potentially ironic title of an image (e.g., figure 16: *Silver Wedding Anniversary*, plate 75), obliges the viewer to take a closer look at the image to make the distinction between wife and sex worker. In short, while identification of the portfolio's male types is relatively straight-forward, differentiating between female types is considerably more complicated.

This uncertainty can be tied to contemporaneous anxiety about the bi-directional "blurring" of lines between "respectable" and "non-respectable" women. On one hand, the character of the *Kocotte* (or "hen", the German-language variant of the French term *cocotte*) is defined by German studies scholar Jill Suzanne Smith as "a prostitute who looks and acts like a respectable woman" and by Joanna Catherine Wendel in her doctoral thesis as "a prostitute whose elegant dress and manners made her difficult to distinguish from a 'respectable' woman". Conversely, the term *coquette* (defined by Smith as "a seemingly respectable woman who looks and acts like a prostitute"), was often associated with the freedom of style, expression, sexuality, and independent action enjoyed by the *neue Frau* (or New Woman), whose increasing presence in urban public spaces and life brought her shoulder-to-shoulder with both traditional bourgeois women during the

90. English-language titles and dates for drawings and watercolors included in *Ecce Homo* are taken from the 1966 Grove Press re-edition of the portfolio. George Grosz, *Ecce Homo* (New York: Grove Press, 1966), v-vi. Dückers, *George Grosz: Das Druckgraphische Werk*, 358-375. When the dates do not concord, the latter source has been given precedence.

day and sex workers at night. This blurring of clear delineations between female types and classes represented an almost existential threat to the conservative elements of Weimar society, and this anxiety is partially reflected in the construct of the "criminal femme fatale", which became closely linked to society's perception of—and reaction to—the *neue Frau*.[91]

Historian Barbara Hales' work on the Weimar construct of the "criminal *femme fatale*" ties sexuality, biology, and criminality to the newly independent woman, the most obvious manifestation of which was the *neue Frau*. Hales demonstrates how Weimar constructs of the criminal woman had their origins in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century European debates on women's "nature", and how the German scientific community arrived at the not uncommon pre-War determination that women were driven by instinct rather than reason and analytical thinking.[92] Compounded by their potential to "develop an excess of sexuality" (considered unregulated biological imperatives) and "innate vanity", those who were reluctant—or opted not—to take their place in the home and uphold traditional familial and reproductive duties could be considered "unnatural", or deviant.[93] Therefore, the independent, sexually liberated post-War woman is painted as inherently dangerous (and promoted by Weimar's mass media as such): a psychotic, predatory being with an unregulated biology who not only provokes sex to get what she desires but is also responsible for both the crimes she commits herself *and* those she motivates.[94]

---

91. Jill Suzanne Smith, "Naughty Berlin?: New Women, New Spaces, and Erotic Confusion," in *Berlin Coquette: Prostitution and the New German Woman, 1890-1933* (Cornell University Press, 2013), 114, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt32b611.8. Joanna Catherine Wendel, "Cocottes, Garçonnes, and Cowboys: Gender and Figuration in the Work of George Grosz, Karl Hubbuch, and Hanna Nagel, 1915-1935" (Doctoral, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, 2019), 19, https://www.proquest.com/docview/2513257385?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true&sourcetype=Dissertations%20&%20Theses.

92. Barbara Hales, "Woman as Sexual Criminal: Weimar Constructions of the Criminal Femme Fatale," *Women in German Yearbook* 12 (1996): 102–103.

93. Hales, "Woman as Sexual Criminal," 104, 107.

94. Hales, "Woman as Sexual Criminal," 102, 105.

Furthermore, the *femme fatale* represents a danger to the bourgeoisie, as while their "disturbed state of mind" separated them from the "honest bourgeois individual" they might also be drawn—at least in the case of the *neue Frau*—from the bourgeoisie itself.[95]

Therefore, the integrity of any woman appearing in the portfolio is immediately brought into question, compounded by an inability at times to clearly determine whether the setting is in the bourgeois' home or that of a sex worker and whether or not the female character is the man's wife. The question of "who is using whom" comes to the fore, but if every woman is believed to have the potential for criminal acts and thoughts, then males of the ruling elite are *de facto* criminal or corrupt not only through their association with the criminal type of the sex worker but potentially with their own respectable, bourgeois partners: especially in the absence of any clear distinction between the two. As a result, the sex act itself becomes a source of shame by being made publicly consumable, and according to Weitzman's reasoning, potentially obscene. Whether they are represented in their "respectable" home, a club, or brothel, the presence of *any* woman in Grosz's *Ecce Homo* drawings may be interpreted as a commentary on the elite male's baseness and deviance by his association with the criminal *femme fatale*: in *Ecce Homo*, *all* women are potentially disreputable and the drawings assume a critical voice that transcends—in a limited manner—class and gender boundaries.

In his study of men's Christian morality movements in Germany between 1880 and 1914, historian Edward Ross Dickinson explores how "authority and morality were inextricably linked" in conservative Christian thought, and how authority in particular was tied to "sexual and bodily self-discipline" and the mastery of one's own selfish and carnal instincts.[96] Although relatively small in number, the social composition of these movements (the majority membership of which

95. Hales, "Woman as Sexual Criminal," 106, 107.
96. Dickinson, "The Men's Christian Morality Movement," 73.

is identified by Dickinson as clergymen and church officials, government officials and military officers, businessmen, teachers, doctors, artisans, and members of the nobility) provides insight into how morality, sexuality, and authority were perceived by those pre-War elites who would nevertheless retain significant power and influence in the post-War Republic.[97]

In this line of reasoning spiritual, political, and social authorities were placed on earth to act as agents of God's will, and by enforcing moral laws and acting as moral guides an orderly society and community could be guaranteed. As the average individual's moral sense was necessarily imperfect, it was important that they defer to their "superiors" (those with authority) and accept their guidance on related matters. There was also an expectation of self-control over the sexual instinct, which while expected from all members of society was yet more important for those in positions of moral authority. In the *absence* of sexual discipline and respect for authority the moral fabric of the community and nation could disintegrate, manifested in the collapse of Christian marriages, the corrosion of Christianity as the "origin and embodiment of moral law", and even rebellion amongst the lower classes that could lead to a socialist revolution.[98] Clearly demonstrated in this latter case, any threat to sexual morality and order also constituted a threat to the political order: sexual immorality and disorder become political issues.[99]

Returning to Weitzman's discussion of *Schamgefühl*, Grosz's drawings can now be read with additional depth. An expression of shame could have been experienced by the elites targeted by the artist, based on his often-grotesque representation of sexual acts (the "carnal instinct") and the elite's recognition of self within the allegorical type, thereby rendering the images legally obscene. There is also an implicit challenge to their moral authority and right to lead: Grosz reveals

97. Dickinson, "The Men's Christian Morality Movement," 65.
98. Dickinson, "The Men's Christian Morality Movement," 73-75.
99. Dickinson, "The Men's Christian Morality Movement," 61.

the hypocrisy of those wielding authority by exposing shameful acts that contravene the very nature of that authority, thereby conjoining Weitzman's criteria of representation and ideology. Unable to transcend their own "creatureliness" (an observation reinforced by Grosz's incorporation of animalistic physiognomy) and thereby abrogating claims to "wholeness" or integrity, Grosz's exposure of spiritual lacuna and lack of moral integrity amongst the ruling elite disproves any claim to be acting upon God's will, and therefore any associated moral authority. In select instances this hypocrisy is highlighted by the incorporation of Christian motifs that include cross and anchor-cross (the Mariner's cross) symbols into the images, worn by both men and women alike and primarily in "compromising" circumstances (figures 3, 11, and 16). Christian association of the cross with self-sacrifice and Mariner's cross with hope, security, or steadfastness may have been used ironically by Grosz to reveal his own lack of optimism in the course being charted for the Republic by self-interested and "soulless" ruling elites, and although unclear whether Grosz intentionally leveraged such religious or philosophical concepts in the *Ecce Homo* drawings, he effectively uses sexuality and offense as tools to reinforce and critique connections between politics and morality amongst Weimar's elites.[100]

As the original intent of the *Ecce Homo* prosecution was the complete destruction of the portfolio, it can be revealing to analyze what remained in the censored, post-trial iterations and the implications of these judicial choices.[101] Representations of violence—both overt and implied—are frequent throughout the *Ecce Homo* images, represented by death's heads, hearses, menacing figures with or without weapons, and physical violence perpetrated both in the street and interior settings visible through windows. The Republic itself was born in blood: rising from the ashes of

100. Hebrews 6:19 (Revised Standard Version) reads "We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain".

101. Neugebauer von der Schulenburg, *George Grosz: Macht Und Ohnmacht*, 112.

World War I, it was preceded by the various actions of the 1918-19 revolution and followed by repeated incidents of violent unrest (e.g., the Silesian uprisings of 1919-1921, Kapp-Lüttwitz Putsch and Ruhr uprising of 1920, amongst many others) in the years leading up to political stabilization in 1924. Early Weimar was also marked by frequent political assassinations on both the left and right, in the latter case often conducted by right-aligned paramilitary groups such as the *Freikorps* ("Free" or "Volunteer" Corps) and *Der Stahlhelm* (Steel Helmets). State-sanctioned violence also remained in the censored portfolio, including the highly political plates 68 (figure 17: *Cross-Section*, 1920) that includes the execution of blindfolded citizens by *Freikorps* soldiers, and 84 (figure 18: *The Lord's Prayer*, 1921) with its imminent execution of an everyman at the hands of the judiciary, church, capitalism, and the profiteer.

As Hess proposes, Grosz's mastery of line, form, and shadow were leveraged by the artist to communicate movement, violence, and menace in a highly effective manner throughout the portfolio, with concomitant effects on the viewer's reception of its message and content. This observation extends to the inclusion of two *Lustmord* ("sexual murder") images, both from Grosz's 1916 *oeuvre* (figure 19: *Sex Murder on Ackerstrasse*, plate 32; figure 20: *Apaches*, plate 58). These images—not unique to Grosz's work and notably also produced by Otto Dix (figure 21: *Lust Murder I*, 1922)—are explored extensively by Maria Tatar, who proposes *Lustmord* drawings represent an artistic response to male anxiety around the increasing role and importance of women in society and their newly-acquired status as full citizens of the Republic with corresponding legal rights.[102] While Grosz's images are not coincident with the years of the Republic, one might nevertheless imply violence against women was of limited concern to the judiciary at the time of the trial: only one image of male toward female violence (figure 22: *Dr. S. and Wife*, plate 44,

102. Maria Tatar, *Lustmord: Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995).

1921) was censored, potentially because the title references a *Bürgertum* doctor rather than as a larger indictment of male aggression against women.

Overall, the representation of violent acts did not appear to be a critical factor in the court's decision on which plates were to be removed from the portfolio. Rather, the persistence of these images suggest violence was a normalized condition (despite Hales' observation that crime rates were declining in Germany after World War I), implicitly including violence against women.[103] Furthermore, the retention of these images confirms sex and sexuality were the focus of the judiciary's application of Section 184 to *Ecce Homo*. As it is unlikely chaos and disorder would be considered tolerable conditions by conservative and reactionary elements, it is interesting such representations were retained in the portfolio unless these same conservative elements saw value in retaining images of violence against women as a warning to more progressive elements in society.

Occurrences of sexual touching or detailed views of sexual organs were nearly eliminated from the censored portfolio, however, representations of sexuality and some nudity remained, as does the lack of clarity whether women in the images are the male protagonists' wife or a sex worker. At times it can be difficult to understand why an uncensored image (e.g., figure 23: *Youth Remembered*, plate 3, 1922) was retained despite its stylistic similarities with one that was removed (e.g., figure 24: *Athlete*, plate 82, 1922): both are similar in composition (with a foregrounded male figure and partially or fully nude woman in the background), and key differences being the dress of the male figure (the "athlete" wears fewer clothes and assumes a less formal pose), while the female figure in *Youth Remembered* wears half stockings and shoes, compared with the complete nudity of the woman in *Athlete* and slightly more open arrangement

103. Hales, "Woman as Sexual Criminal," 106.

of her legs to highlight her genitals. While the titles may serve as indicators allowing for the application of implicit obscenity in determining whether the images are sexually obscene, it is unclear whether this was a factor in the court's decision.[104] Figure 25 (*The Visit*, plate 11, 1920), combines female nudity with the figure of a man whose facial characteristics (notably the conformation of his eyebrows, moustache and goatee, which give him a satanic or demonic air), combined with his seemingly hairy left hand and peculiar nails suggest an animalism that—when combined with the look and conformation of the female figure on the sofa—readily allows for a determination on the outcome of the scene and therefore qualifies the whole as implicitly obscene. Overall, one might reasonably suggest the application of the court's own standards to determine whether images were—or were not—obscene was inconsistent at best or was applied to achieve undocumented aims at worst.

I have already documented how Grosz's types in *Ecce Homo* are drawn from a relatively narrow cross-section of Weimar society (specifically, bourgeois and other elite males, female sex workers, and potentially bourgeois females), raising the question of whether the portfolio's contents can be categorized as social or political critique. As a starting point one might differentiate social from political critique as commentary or discourse (in this case, leveraging visual culture) on society's classes, genders, and their interrelations.[105] On the other hand, political critique might also be defined as that which is leveled primarily at a society's institutions and their leaders, whether named (for example, the politician Georg Ledebour in figure 12), or allegorical (e.g., politicians, industrialists, financiers, the clergy, military leaders, and academics). Grosz scholar M. Kay Flavell positions Grosz's work from his Weimar years primarily as social critique, despite

104. Grosz's images were repeatedly used (and reused) across publications, and the titles frequently changed to suit the message the publisher wished to convey.

105. Although not applicable to the work being discussed, one might also extend this definition to include ethnicity, sexuality, and other factors.

the artist's stated belief in the years preceding the publication of *Ecce Homo* that the value of art lay in its potential for political critique and as a form of propaganda leading to social action (and political consequences that are inferred by the author).[106] Lewis observes that the portfolio excludes caricatures of the working class-type while focusing on societal elites, and thereby argues that if Grosz wished to reveal the nature of man more generally (based on the portfolio's title "Behold the man"), he would have included a broader range of caricatures.[107] Extending this logic, by maintaining a targeted focus on those individuals and classes *who hold political and institutional power*, one might propose the portfolio assumes a primarily political nature. Combined, Flavell's and Lewis' interpretations can be leveraged to define a potential framework for analyzing the political and social aspects of *Ecce Homo*: political critique may be differentiated by its specificity (e.g., to expose the corruption of a political or economic class, mismanagement of institutions, or other failures of leaders that wield significant power and/or influence in society), whereas social critique *crosses* class, is less focused on institutions in its exposure of class differences and injustices, and is broader (i.e., less specific) in its scope.

Based on these criteria, *Ecce Homo* may reasonably be deemed both a political and social critique. Although it is unclear to what extent Grosz was involved in selecting the final portfolio images from his extensive *oeuvre*, both the artist and publisher were nevertheless aligned with the KPD, and the Malik-Verlag was known for its Marxist publications. Furthermore, the selection of one hundred images from a collection of thousands was necessarily curated and intentional: an inference substantiated by the portfolio's title and its revelation of a *specific type* of man. Narrowly defined as a group and treated by the artist in isolation from other groups (e.g., the worker type),

106. M. Kay Flavell, "Über Alles Die Liebe: Food, Sex, and Money in the Work of George Grosz," *Journal of European Studies* 13, no. 4 (1983): 269.

107. Lewis, *George Grosz: Art and* Politics, 167.

Grosz's subjects are here in most cases compared to no one but themselves: as they also wield significant financial and political power the proposed criteria for political critique are met.

As noted, there are relatively few images of institutional elites or their proxies (e.g., generals, officers, or clergymen), or of working-class types: the majority of Grosz's *Ecce Homo* drawings are focused on a powerful subset of male societal elites. However, despite the blurring of bourgeois female and sex worker identities, the sex workers with whom these men are represented were likely not from the same class, thereby establishing two premises that position the work as social critique: the exploitation of women and sex work generally in society, and the observation those being exploited were likely from a different (that is, lower) socioeconomic class. As a result, previously established criteria for categorizing the work as social critique (i.e., it crosses classes and highlights social and/or economic injustices) are also satisfied.

Hess writes "the ugliness Grosz depicts is moral, personal, political and social", and so infers one must also remain sensitive to the personal and moral background and positioning of the artist.[108] The artist's purported moralism and effect on his politics have been discussed at length by many authors, including Hess, Flavell, and Lewis, without arriving at any real consensus on what drove the artist to create, the subject matter he chose, and why he assumed leftist political positions despite a seemingly aspirational, bourgeois-inspired worldview. This is in part because Grosz the man is so difficult to pin down: reading his autobiography one notes a selective revision (at times, through omission) of his own history that simultaneously casts doubt upon the strength of his political beliefs at different points throughout his career and is complicated more generally by an apparent misanthropy (noted by many Grosz scholars) that seems to have characterized much of his life. His early *Mittelstand* background, appreciation and enjoyment (one might even suggest

108. Hess, *George Grosz*, 93.

gluttony) for food and wine expressed in his autobiography, and even his well-dressed early *flâneur*-type alter egos (the bourgeois "Merchant from Holland" and the aristocratic "Count Ehrenfried") all suggest aspirations that did not always concord with the scathing critique of those same elites revealed in his artistic output. The patronage he accepted from Count Henry Kessler and his ability to be "acceptable above and below" suggests an adaptability inconsistent with any single hard-line political position or a consistent worldview.[109] As Hess observes:

> Everything Grosz hated and loathed, he was himself. He drank too much; he was the vicious small-town bourgeois whom he understood so well in his own inner self. The impulses and ferocities were also his own. Though he hated his subjects, he was also in love with them.[110]

In short, one might suggest the social and political were inextricably intertwined in Grosz's life, much like in *Ecce Homo*.

Against contemporary challenges to pre-World War I Wilhelmine morality which strongly associated sex with sin, the exposure of sexual impropriety amongst the elite classes (with their purportedly "higher" morals), constitutes one of Grosz's most important critical tools in *Ecce Homo*. To arrive at this determination, however, he needed to *a priori* pass moral judgement upon his subjects. Although more generally his representations of the working classes tended to be sympathetic, Grosz in *Ecce Homo* did not hesitate to leverage contemporary fears and negativity around sex workers, sex work, and their connection to physical and moral hygiene and disease as a tool to achieve political ends, even if many of those same women came from the lower, proletarian or working classes with whom his politics supposedly allied. This implies a conscious decision was made by the editor, publisher, and artist to downplay any aspect of social critique in the portfolio, thereby reinforcing its political aspect.

109. Hess, *George Grosz*, 121.
110. Hess, *George Grosz*, 108.

Grosz's use of sex and sexuality as a critical tool reveals a moralism that may have leveraged a form of personal, Protestant-inspired conservatism. Hess describes Grosz as a devoted husband and father, preferentially assuming the traditional role of provider for his family. Many biographers and scholars note that aside from his earlier flaneur-inspired alter egos, Grosz prided himself on a traditional masculinity that he expressed through his dress, interest in boxing, convivial drinking and *bonhommie*, and general comportment in the world. He was avowedly heterosexual, and as if to prove this point, one of the early chapters in his autobiography recounts in detail his first, youthful exposure to the naked female form—in this case, illicitly through a window at night—and how it both confirmed his sexual orientation and (by inference) his early identification of women as sexual objects.[111] Despite the sexually graphic nature of some of his pre-War drawings (figure 10), what we know of Grosz's personal life and public conduct suggest he would have readily passed as a typical member of conservative, patriarchal, pre-World War I Wilhelmine society.

Based on these observations one might posit Grosz was sexually conservative, and acts of "unconventional" heterosexuality—which in the pre-World War I German context would have included sex outside of marriage, participation in group sex, and paying for sex with sex workers (especially in the context of marital infidelity)—are replete throughout *Ecce Homo*.[112] Grosz here demonstrates a willingness to objectify sex workers and women generally to achieve his goal of

111. Grosz, *An Autobiography*, 21-29.

112. Despite ongoing discourse around the legalization of homosexuality that continued throughout the time of the Weimar Republic, the portfolio is completely devoid of sexual acts between males, as was the case in most all of Grosz's work. While difficult to ascertain Grosz's views on homosexuality from the sources cited in my bibliography, the point to be made is that independent of whether he had a positive, negative, or neutral view of same sex relations Grosz did not use it as a critical tool in *Ecce Homo*. In a work whose main tool of critique was sexuality writ large, it nevertheless remained firmly grounded in heterosexuality. See James A. Van Dyke, "Torture and Masculinity in George Grosz's 'Interregnum'," *New German Critique*, no. 119 (2013): 137–65.

condemning elite males, leveraging (whether consciously or otherwise) the cultural idea of the "femme fatale" and reflecting the same objectification of which his bourgeois male targets are also guilty. This principle extends even to an illustration of his publisher's sister-in-law (figure plate 26, *Louise*, 1919), wherein he applies the same transparent clothing motif used to highlight female sexuality elsewhere in the portfolio. In Grosz's drawings for *Ecce Homo*, his illustration of the bourgeois male's moral failures relies in part on a premise that *all* women are tainted by sexual immorality, potentially reflecting a bias grounded in his own sexual conservatism and personal morality.

Flavell observes that cultural innovation is tied to time and place, while Knust proposes that the impact of Grosz's work was closely tied to his milieu and time.[113] Societal change occurred at a remarkable pace in the Weimar Republic, and so cultural, political and legal trends should be considered in any evaluation of cultural production. These include the sexual revolution that was in the forefront of Weimar society, often received negatively by conservative elements: these included the increasing prominence and independence of women in society generally (including the appearance of the sexually liberated *neue Fraue*), efforts to legalize both female prostitution and homosexuality, the increase in production and availability of erotic and pornographic materials, and efforts to establish scientific principles for the study of sexology (including what we might now refer to as LGBTQ and Queer populations) by trailblazers such as the Berlin-based physician Magnus Hirschfeld. Birgit Lang's article on the Great Police Exhibition of 1926 demonstrates how legal and police apparatuses were constantly adapting to evolving sexual mores and the advancement of "sexological knowledge", serving as an indicator of how the censorship of visual culture became less restrictive over time and better aligned with constitutionally

113. M. Kay Flavell, *George Grosz: A Biography* (Yale University Press, 1988), 7. Knust, "George Grosz," 220, 225.

guaranteed protections. In the process, she provides significant insight into adaptive approaches to policing prostitution, sexual activity, and censorship in the Weimar Republic.[114] However, Laurie Marhoefer's argument that the legalization of female prostitution and passage of the VD Law in 1927 were motivated by a form of political morality suggests a pre-existing inclination to mix obscenity prosecutions with political objectives. Rather than an effort to legalize and monitor prostitution by replacing existing local police control with seemingly progressive statutes, Marhoefer suggests these laws constituted a new form of legal control founded in moral judgement.[115] In other words, one may question whether the legal entities of the Republic were truly adapting to evolving societal mores or reformulating legal statutes to disguise existing—and persistent—reactionary conservative agendas that sought a return to pre-Weimar societal and class structures. In this light, representations of sex work could—both before and after 1927—be considered obscene and therefore subject to prosecution.

As documented by both Fisher and Lang, the protection of Weimar youth from seditious influence was a long-standing societal priority, and it was perceived this danger was facilitated by the availability of widely distributed and inexpensive cultural products.[116] This concern was also extended to that part of the *Volk* considered immature, effectively an expression of bourgeois and upper-class elitism toward members of the working class that led—in part—to the passing of 1926's *Schund* law (*Gesetz zur Bewahrung der Jugend vor Schund- und Schmutzschriften*, or "Law to Protect Youth from Trashy and Filthy Publications").[117] While nominally targeted at written works, the law could nevertheless be extended to visual works despite constitutional guarantees

114. Birgit Lang, "Censorship in Flux: Sex and Sexological Knowledge at the Great Police Exhibition of 1926 in Weimar Germany," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 33, no. 1 (2024): 102–29.

115. Laurie Marhoefer, "Degeneration, Sexual Freedom, and the Politics of the Weimar Republic, 1918-1933," *German Studies Review* 34, no. 3 (2011): 529–49.

116. Fisher, *Weimar Controversies*, 99-141. Lang, "Censorship in Flux," 110, 127.

117. Fisher, *Weimar Controversies*, 13, 99, 103, 108-109.

against artistic censorship, and although passed nearly four years after the publication of *Ecce Homo* and two years after Grosz's trial, it reflects a concurrent ruling class concern whose roots can be traced back to products of popular cultural such as colporteur serials, detective pulp fiction, and cinematic work. In the specific case of *Ecce Homo* it is conceivable that plate 61 (figure 27: *Genre Scene*, 1922) was censored due to its representation of a young male observing a sexual encounter while maintaining direct eye contact with one of the female participants, although as another example of censorial inconsistency the potentially more scandalous *Spring Awakening* (figure 28: plate 26, 1922) was not. As part of a larger threat to Weimar youth, however, the portfolio's cost (notably in the inflationary period of 1921-23) and format were not conducive to widespread availability amongst young people, rendering this concern suspect in the case of *Ecce Homo* while simultaneously confirming that those most likely to have been offended were also those who saw themselves represented therein.

Even assuming the prosecution was legitimate under expansive interpretations of Weimar's obscenity laws, why were Grosz and his publishers singled out? As discussed, a reading of the portfolio both pre- and post-censorship reveals the criteria used to justify an obscenity charge were applied inconsistently: nudity remained in the censored portfolio, and the principle of implied obscenity could still be applied to many of the remaining works. One might therefore argue that obscenity pertaining to representations of nudity and/or sexual acts was not the sole or even primary motivation for prosecution, thereby placing a greater emphasis on its political aspect. As a member of the KPD and a left-wing activist working with a communist publisher to criticize conservative, reactionary, and capitalist elements of society, prosecution of the *Ecce Homo* portfolio had the potential to silence Grosz, his publisher, and his underlying politics. If for no other reason, this would be sufficient cause to label the prosecution as political.

It is interesting to contrast Grosz's trial with another obscenity trial from 1923: that of the artist Otto Dix in the case of his work from 1921, *Das Mädchen vor dem Spiegel* (*Girl Before a Mirror*, figure 29). A creator of *Lustmord* images and working frequently with graphic erotic themes, Dix's *Das Mädchen* depicts a prostitute washing herself in front of a mirror, with the backside of a young person facing the viewer but that of an old woman with her vagina exposed captured in the mirror's reflection. The painting was confiscated from Berlin's *Juryfreie Kunstschau* exhibition on October 30, 1922, and Dix was brought to trial in June 1923.

As the painting's subject was sexuality and sex work and the subject is represented in a semi-nude state, the work might be deemed *de facto* obscene. This was compounded by Dix's depiction of an old woman in a compromised state, thereby stripping her of dignity and introducing an element of shame. Furthermore, its display in an art show meant young people or those considered otherwise "immature" may have viewed the work, all of which may have justified the painting's seizure and potentially destruction. Unlike Grosz, however, Dix successfully argued for a moral purpose behind the work, having "created the painting to warn of the risks of prostitution".[118] Whereas Grosz the moralist argued that he drew people as he saw them and thereby unapologetically confirmed the intentional obscenity of which he was accused, the court's acceptance of Dix's defence confirmed that alignment with conservative interests (here, the societal threat of sex work), could result in a favourable legal outcome for the artist. It was not necessarily the subject matter or representation that was *a priori* offensive, but rather the messaging that could be inferred by the viewing parties.[119]

118. Philipp Gutbrod, *Otto Dix: The Art of Life* (Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 54.

119. Although Dix was also a member of the highly political Berlin-Dada movement, his political profile and activism were less prominent than that of Grosz by 1923. Unlike Grosz, Dix was active on the front lines during World War I, and so it is interesting to posit these factors may have played a role in the favourable outcome of Dix's trial.

Although I was unable to uncover specific examples, it is interesting to reflect on how Grosz's representations of sexual acts between sex workers and male figures might have otherwise played into the social agenda of reactionary and conservative elements if they had been created by a more centrist or right-leaning artist and targeted at the working class. This is reminiscent of Goldstein's suggestion that caricature and satire can serve the purposes of both the political left and right, depending upon how groups are "typed" and targeted.[120] The figure of the prostitute—and her criminal association—could have been used against the working classes with equal or greater effectiveness by another artist, and in this scenario it is interesting to consider whether obscenity charges would have been brought by those in power, thereby confirming the political nature of the legal action.

Finally, Jelavich observes that reactionary elements in any evolving society have a vested interest in suppressing negative representations or commentary.[121] Although successive Weimar governments were generally resistant to the prosecution of writers and artists, "conservative and far-right groups were willing to force the issue because prosecution of offensive art could serve a useful political function".[122] This despite the fact Weimar cases had little financial impact on those prosecuted (Grosz's fine was 500 Marks), rarely resulted in jail time, and ran the risk of bringing additional renown to the artist.[123] Building upon Jelavich's observation, Grosz's Communist activism, his association with the German Communist Party (KPD), and the propensity of Herzfelde's leftist Malik-Verlag to publish revolutionary materials would have made each, individually, a target of reactionary or conservative interests: together, the perceived threat to the elite classes would be compounded. Add a collection of drawings that reveal the hypocrisy of those

120. Goldstein, "The Debate Over Censorship," 9.
121. Jelavich, "Metamorphoses," 25-27.
122. Jelavich, "Metamorphoses," 27.
123. Jelavich, "Metamorphoses," 27.

wielding power and authority through the exercise of "double standards [that] have tacitly allowed the group with the most power to define what constitutes permissible behaviour and to exercise sexual rights that they have explicitly denied to others", and prosecutorial action would appear inevitable.[124]

Throughout this thesis I have demonstrated how a case can be made that Grosz's work in *Ecce Homo* may have been driven by political belief, a moralistic stance (potentially informed by an innate misanthropy), social commentary, or some combination thereof, but the association between Grosz's savage critique of the elite classes and Herzfelde's dedication to Communist causes would nevertheless be sufficient to encourage a response from the judiciary. As Grosz and Herzfelde had previously been tried together for *Gott mit uns*, it is reasonable to suggest they would have already been in the sights of the legal apparatus and societal elites that controlled the Republic. A political basis for prosecution existed *a priori*, and as documented herein legal statutes may have been manipulated to support it.

CONCLUSION

Under the Weimar Constitution, Grosz and his publishers should have been exempt from prosecution in the case of *Ecce Homo*, an observation further supported by the recognition granted by government agencies and experts to Grosz for his artistic talent, achievement, and merit. However, they were nevertheless prosecuted under the pornography statute of the Criminal Code, found guilty, fined, and the portfolio censored.

As a result of the judiciary's interpretation of legal obscenity, several images were censored and permanently removed from the portfolio. Although they could be categorized as obscene or

124. Mark Fenemore, "The Recent Historiography of Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Germany," *The Historical Journal* 52, no. 3 (2009): 763.

pornographic according to an expansive—and subjective—application of Weimar statutes, when compared with other, widely available forms of pornography facilitated by technological advances and an expansive print culture, it is curious that an artistic portfolio with a somewhat limited reach would be targeted by the legal apparatus. Nevertheless, application of the obscenity statute as a useful judicial tool could be legally justified based on the portfolio's contents. While *Ecce Homo* can be interpreted as both a social and political critique, its focus on elite classes that hold significant political power in ways that challenge their moral authority makes it political: the fact it was published by a Communist press and consisted of images created by a Communist-allied artist further confirms its political intent.

Justifications for a politically motivated prosecution have been outlined throughout this thesis, and despite the risks associated with prosecuting a high-profile artist and drawing greater attention to his work (the censored version of which still contained substantial critique of the targeted elite), the opportunity to negatively impact the cultural output and political activities of the left may have justified the risk. The timing was also opportune, as the stabilization of the Mark in 1923 helped to consolidate the elite's hold on the financial and political reins of Weimar society in a period when leftist agitation and the threat of socialist revolution was evaporating. In short, the charges and trial reflect political opportunism in the interest of economic, societal, and political power and influence: charges of obscenity were a premise to pursue political objectives and reinforce the elite's moral "right" to rule. Finally, it also represented an opportunity for conservative and reactionary elites to further stem the tide of liberal thought and change against the backdrop of a rapidly evolving society and mores.

While it is unlikely definitive conclusions will ever be possible on the motivations for the *Ecce Homo* trial from a distance of one hundred years and the extensive loss of records over the

course of World War II, it is my hope this research may nevertheless generate additional discourse and research opportunities into Grosz, his work, and the cultural, social, and political backdrop of the Weimar Republic and its capital, Berlin. Furthermore, consideration of the trial and its outcomes serve as a valuable warning of how the manipulation of law and mechanisms of censorship can be leveraged by influential parties and interests to achieve political ends, even in a free and democratic society with constitutional guarantees protecting the arts, artists, and freedom of expression.

APPENDIX A: *ECCE HOMO* EDITION HISTORY, 1922-1924 (MALIK-VERLAG)

Edition (*Ausgabe*)	Publication run	Edition numbering	Contents
Deluxe portfolio edition A: issued loose (unbound) in publisher's clamshell portfolio box (buff coloured silk on boards, stamped in gold).	50	Numbered I-L	100 offset print reproductions of 16 watercolors and 84 black-and-white drawings on vellum. Each print hand-signed by the artist in the lower right margin.
Deluxe portfolio edition B I: velum half-binding, issued loose in a half-parchment portfolio, brown-printed title and cover illustration.	100	Numbered 1-100	Limited to offset print reproductions of the 16 watercolors on rag paper. Each print hand-signed by the artist.
Regular portfolio edition B II: issued loose in a *Bütten* (white hand-made board)-covered portfolio, brown-printed title and cover illustration.	Unknown	None	Limited to offset print reproductions of the 16 watercolors on rag paper. Unsigned.
Regular book edition C: issued in a *Bütten*-covered board binding, brown-printed title and cover illustration.	6,000-8,000 (approx.)	None	All 100 offset print reproductions of watercolors and drawings on rag paper. Unsigned.
Regular book edition D: issued in a white chromo board binding, grey-printed title and cover illustration.	Unknown	None	Limited to reproductions of the 84 black-and-white drawings on woody paper. Unsigned.

APPENDIX B: LIST OF IMAGES ORDERED CONFISCATED FROM THE *ECCE HOMO* PORTFOLIO UPON CONCLUSION OF THE 1924 TRIAL[125]

Plate identifier	German title	English translation	Date
9	*Entkleidung*	*Disrobing*	1921
16	*Verzückung*	*Rapture*	1922
28	*Promenade*	*Promenade*	1922
30	*Hahn im Korbe*	*Cock of the Walk*	1921
38	*Aenne*	*Aenne*	1921
42	*Rudi S.*	*Rudi S.*	1921
44	*Dr. S. und Frau*	*Dr. S. and Wife*	1921
48	*Kommenzienrats Töchterlein*	*The Industrialist's Dear Little Daughter*	1921
57	*Ungleiches Paar*	*Dissimilar Pair*	1922
61	*Genreszene*	*Genre Scene*	1922
64	*An der Grenze*	*On the Verge*	1920
67	*Allein*	*Alone*	1922
70	*Ständchen*	*Serenade*	1922
75	*Silberne Hochzeit*	*Silver Wedding Anniversary*	1922
78	*Sonntag früh*	*Sunday Morning*	1922
79	*Dr. Benn's Nachtcafé*	*Dr. Benn's Night Café*	1918
82	*Athlet*	*Athlete*	1922
V	*Pappi und Mammi*	*Daddy and Mommy*	1922
VI	*Niederkunft*	*Lying-In*	1916
XI	*Professor Freud gewidmet*	*Dedicated to Professor Freud*	1922
XIII	*Walzertraum*	*Waltz Dream*	1921
XV	*Vor Sonnenaufgang*	*Before Sunrise*	1922

Plate identifiers in numeric format are reproductions of black-and-white drawings. Roman numerals indicate reproductions of watercolour images.

125. English-language titles and dates for drawings and watercolors included in *Ecce Homo* are taken from Alexander Dückers' *catalogue raisonné*. Dückers, *George Grosz: Das Druckgraphische Werk*, 358-375.

ANNEX OF IMAGES

Figure 1: George Grosz, *Maul halten und weiter dienen* (*Shut Up and Do Your Duty*, also familiarly known as *Christ with a Gas Mask*) from *Hintergrund* 1928, one of 17 photogravures from a book, 16.9 x 26.0 cm (page), Spencer Museum of Art, accessed July 7, 2025, https://spencerart.ku.edu/art/collections-online/object/41554.

Figure 2: George Grosz, *Hausherr* (*Head of the Household* or *Landlord*, plate, folio 29) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1919), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed August 31, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151561?association=illustratedbooks&page=1&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

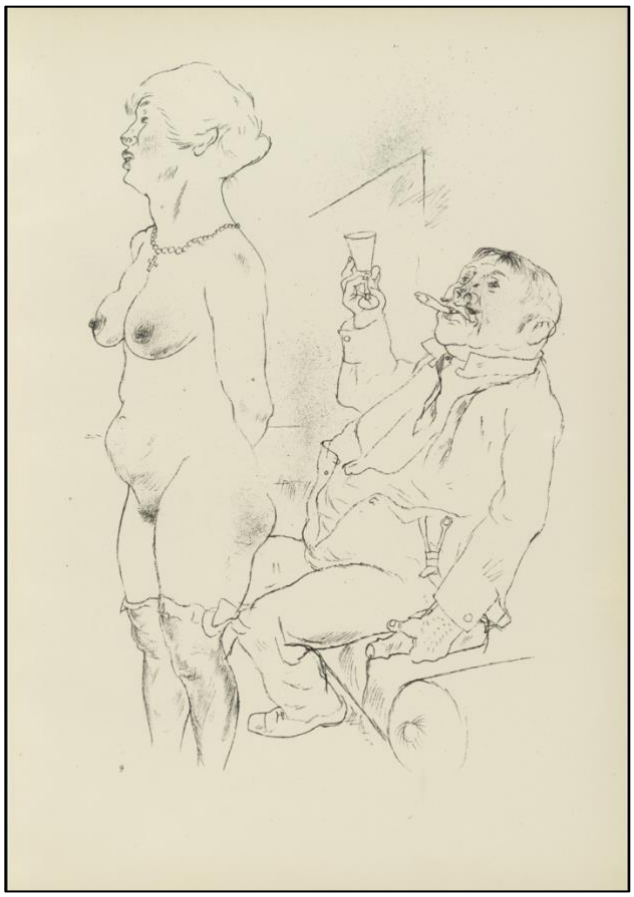

Figure 3: George Grosz, *Entkleidung* (*Disrobing*, plate, folio 9) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1921), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed August 31, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151541?association=illustratedbooks&page=1&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

Figure 4: George Grosz, *Familie* (*Family*, plate, folio 2) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1916), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed November 29, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/67053.

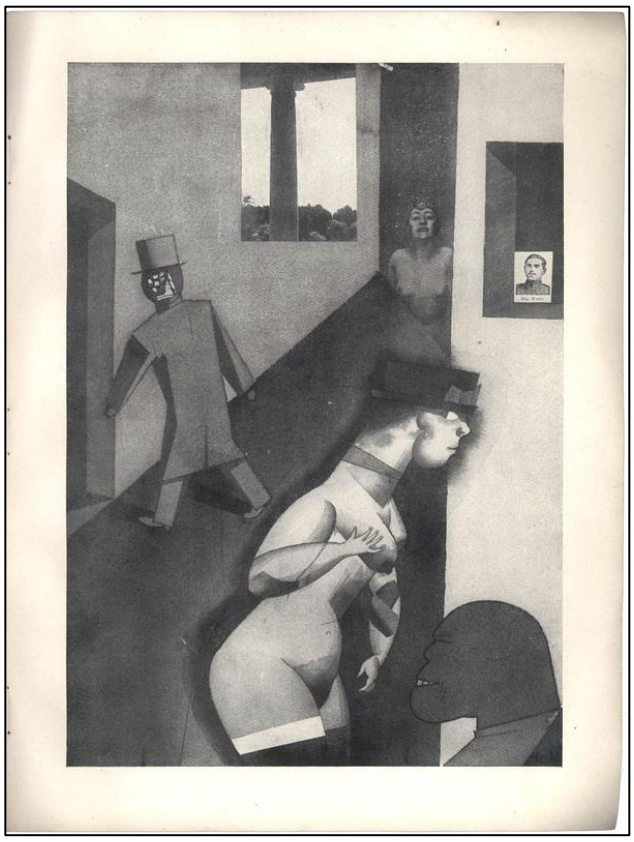

Figure 5: George Grosz, *Mit Pinsel und Schere: 7 Materialisationen* (*With Brush and Scissors: 7 Materialisations*), Malik-Verlag, 1922, one of seven black-and-white panels (autotype) from a book, 31.5 x 24 cm (page), The International Dada Archive, accessed October 24, 2025, https://dada.lib.uiowa.edu/files/show/11365.

Figure 6: George Grosz, *Mit Pinsel und Schere: 7 Materialisationen* (*With Brush and Scissors: 7 Materialisations*), Malik-Verlag, 1922, one of seven black-and-white panels (autotype) from a book, 31.5 x 24 cm (page), The International Dada Archive, accessed October 24, 2025, https://dada.lib.uiowa.edu/files/show/11367.

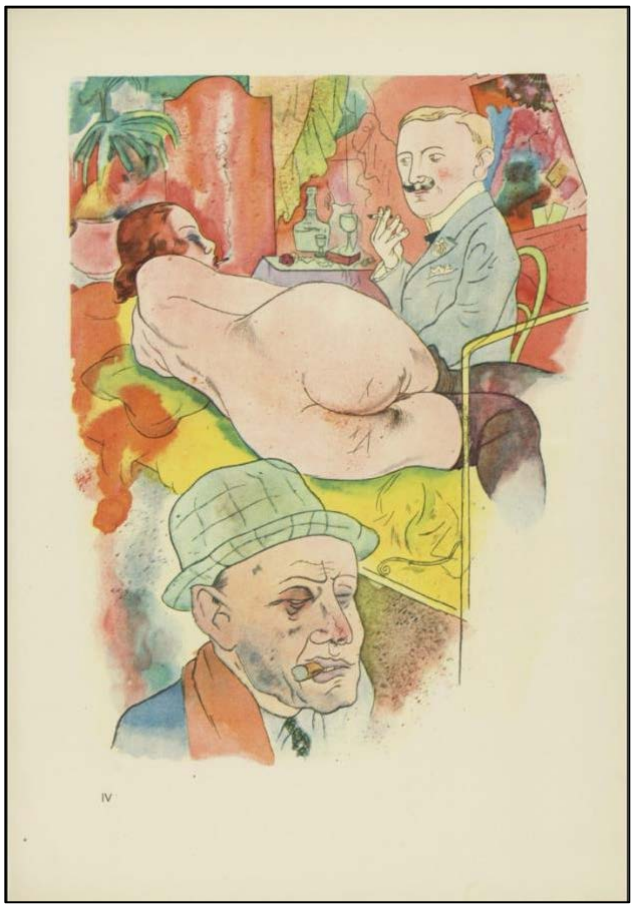

Figure 7: George Grosz, *Ecce Homo* (*Ecce Homo*, plate, folio IV) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1921), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed August 31, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151620?association=illustratedbooks&page=3&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

Figure 8: Weimar-era nude stereograms, Genevieve Ference, “Nudes from the Weimar Republic: Guest Post by Stacey Doyle Ference,” *Brooklyn Stereography*, July 8, 2020, accessed August 31, 2025, https://brooklynstereography.com/2020/07/08/nudes-from-the-weimar-republic-guest-post-by-stacey-doyle-ference/.

Figure 9: George Grosz, *Verzückung* (*Rapture*, plate, folio 16) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1922), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed June 1, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151548?association=illustratedbooks&page=1&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

Figure 10: George Grosz, *Erotische Zsene* (*Erotic Scene*), 1912, pen and ink and ink wash on paper, 21 x 30.2 cm, from the Collection of Gordon Shwayder Rosenblum, accessed June 1, 2025, https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2019/impressionist-and-modern-art-online/george-grosz-erotische-szene-erotic-scene.

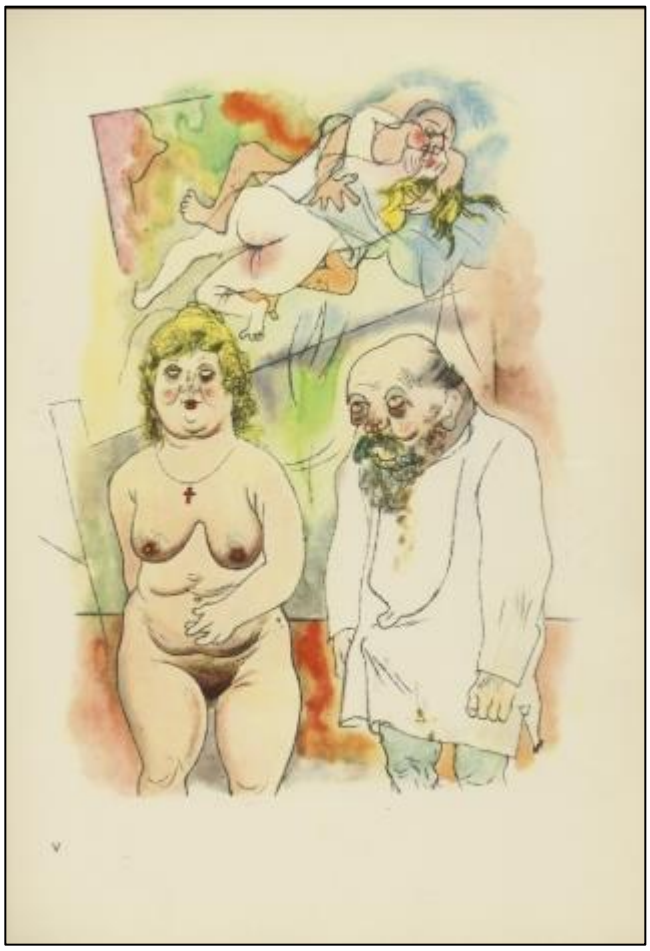

Figure 11: George Grosz, *Pappi und Mammi* (*Daddy and Mommy*, plate, folio V) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1922), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed June 1, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151621?association=illustratedbooks&page=3&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

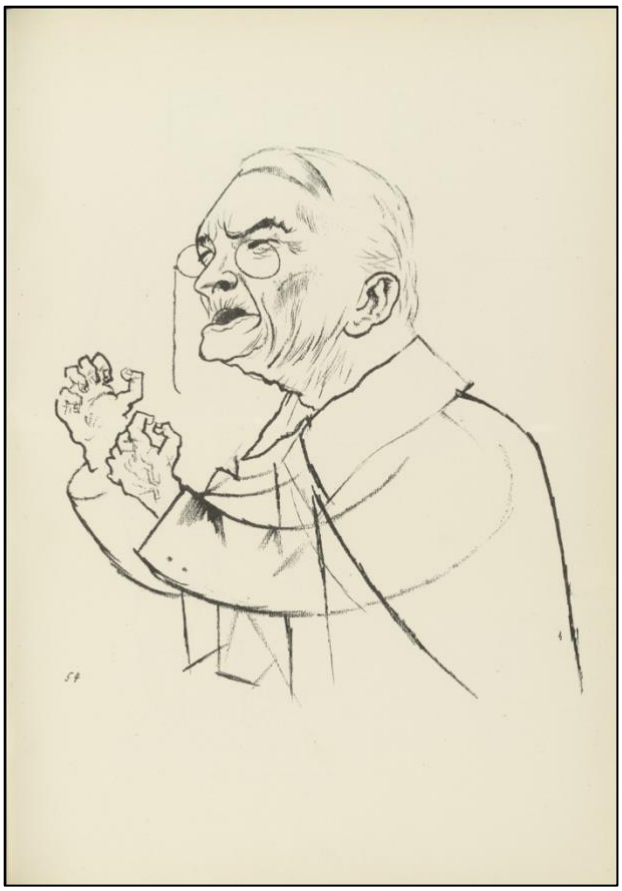

Figure 12: George Grosz, *Ledebour* (*Ledebour*, plate, folio 54) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1919), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed November 29, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151586.

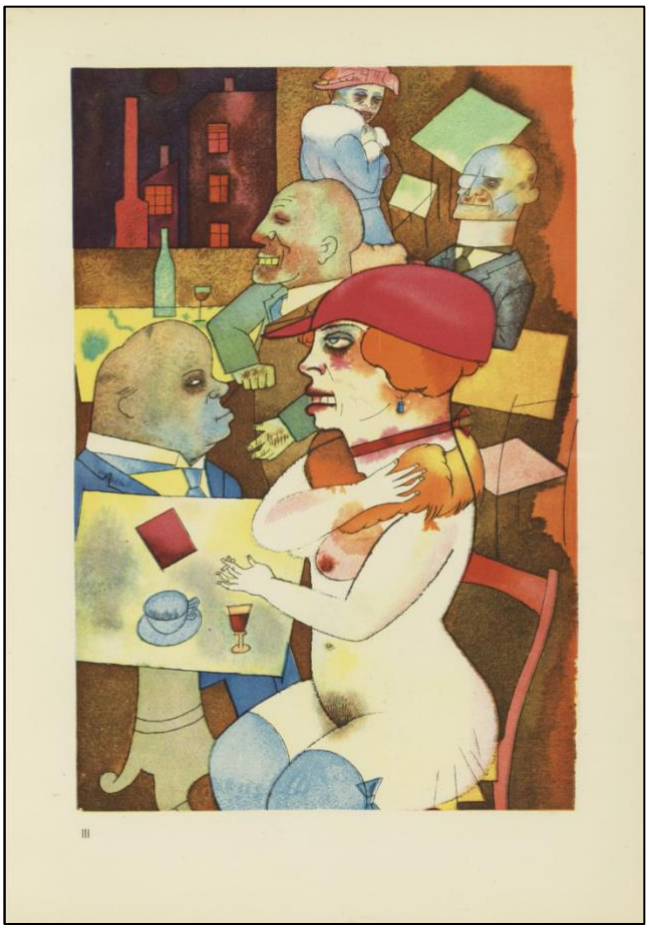

Figure 13: George Grosz, *Schönheit, dich will ich preisen* (*Beauty, Thee I Praise*, plate, folio III) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1920), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed August 31, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151621?association=illustratedbooks&page=3&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

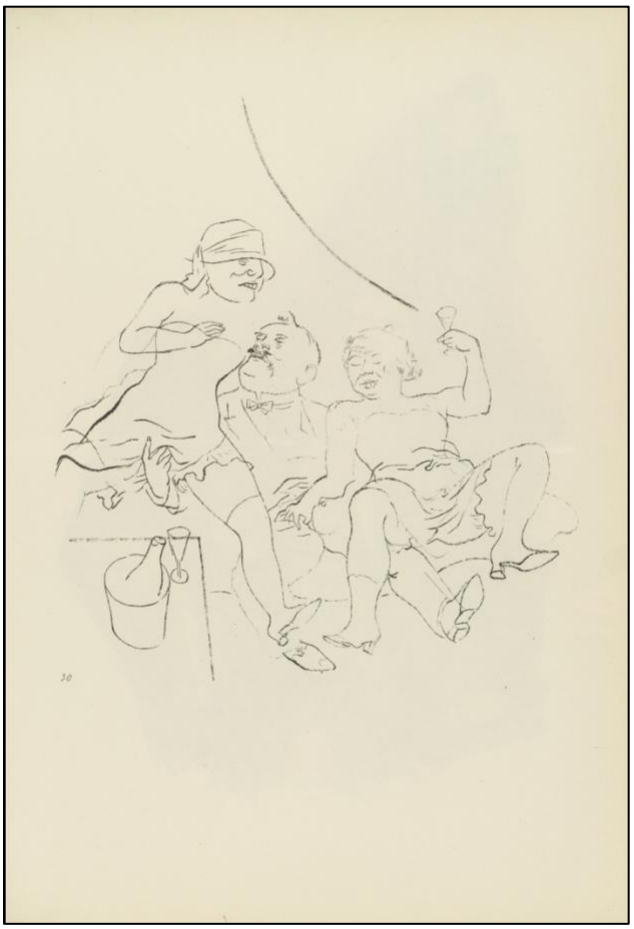

Figure 14: George Grosz, *Hahn im Korbe* (*Cock of the Walk*, plate, folio 30) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1921), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed August 31, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151562?association=illustratedbooks&page=1&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

Figure 15: George Grosz, *Plauderstunde* (*Cosy Chat*, plate, folio 36) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1922), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed June 1, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151568?association=illustratedbooks&page=1&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

Figure 16: George Grosz, *Silberne Hochzeit* (*Silver Wedding Anniversary*, plate, folio 75) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1922), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed June 1, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151607?association=illustratedbooks&page=2&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

Figure 17: George Grosz, *Querschnitt* (*Cross-Section*, plate, folio 68) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1920), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed June 1, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151600?association=illustratedbooks&page=2&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

Figure 18: George Grosz, *Das Vaterunser* (*The Lord's Prayer*, plate, folio 84) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1921), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed June 1, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151616?association=illustratedbooks&page=3&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

Figure 19: George Grosz, *Lustmord in der Ackerstraße* (*Sex Murder in the Ackerstrasse*, plate, folio 32) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1916), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed August 31, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151564?association=illustratedbooks&page=1&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

Figure 20: George Grosz, *Apachen* (*Apaches*, plate, folio 58) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1916), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed August 31, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151590?association=illustratedbooks&page=2&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

Figure 21: Otto Dix, *Lust Murder I* (1922), drypoint on wove cream paper, 44 x 49.8 cm (sheet), National Gallery of Art, accessed August 31, 2025, https://www.nga.gov/artworks/153578-lust-murder-i.

Figure 22: George Grosz, *Dr. S. und Frau* (*Dr. S. and Wife*, plate, folio 44) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1921), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed June 1, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151576?association=illustratedbooks&page=2&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

Figure 23: George Grosz, *Aus der Jugendzeit* (*Youth Remembered*, plate, folio 3) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1922), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed June 1, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151535?association=illustratedbooks&page=1&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

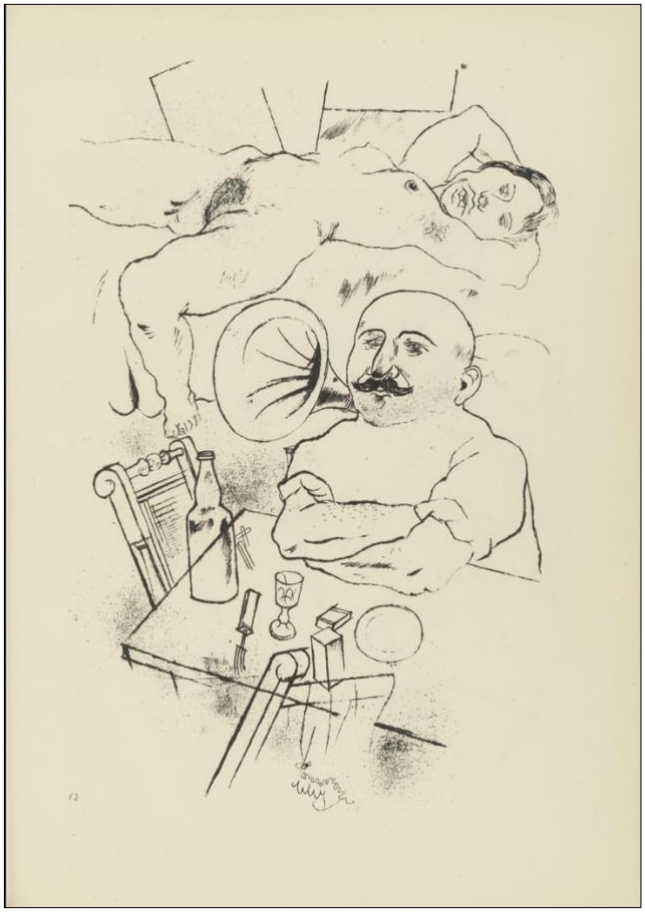

Figure 24: George Grosz, *Athlet* (*Athlete*, plate, folio 82) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1922), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed August 31, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151614?association=illustratedbooks&page=3&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

Figure 25: George Grosz, *Der Besuch* (*The Visit*, plate, folio 11) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1920), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed August 31, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151543?association=illustratedbooks&page=1&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

Figure 26: George Grosz, *Louise* (plate, folio 20) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1919), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed August 31, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151552?association=illustratedbooks&page=1&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

Figure 27: George Grosz, *Genreszene* (*Genre Scene*, plate, folio 61) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1922), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed June 1, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151593?association=illustratedbooks&page=2&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

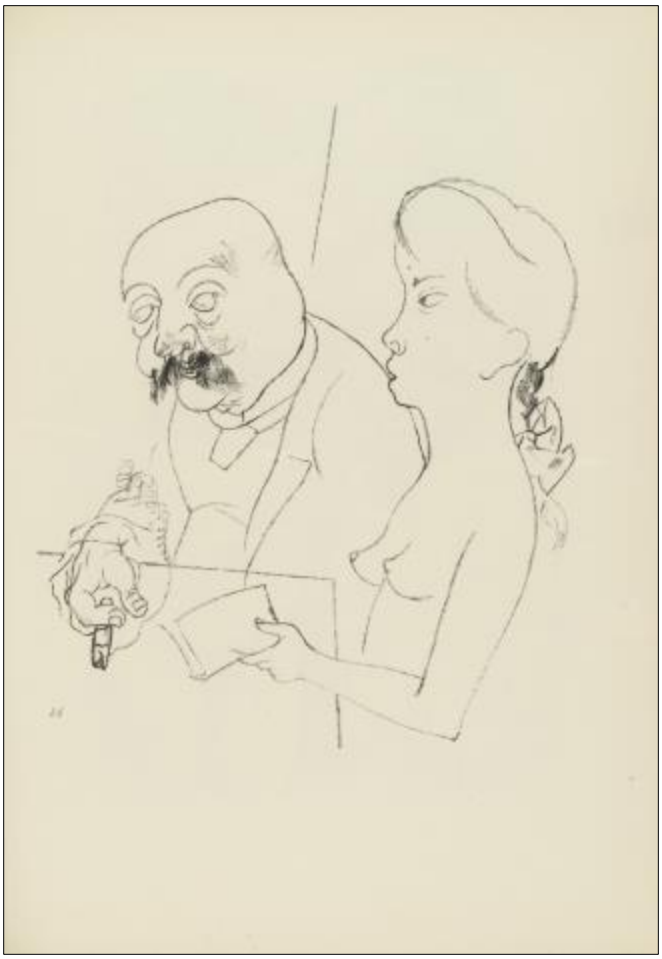

Figure 28: George Grosz, *Frühlings Erwachen* (*Spring's Awakening*, plate, folio 26) from *Ecce Homo* 1922–23 (original executed in 1922), one of 100 offset lithographs from a book, 34.8 x 25 cm (page), The Museum of Modern Art, accessed June 1, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/151558?association=illustratedbooks&page=1&parent_id=26538&sov_referrer=association.

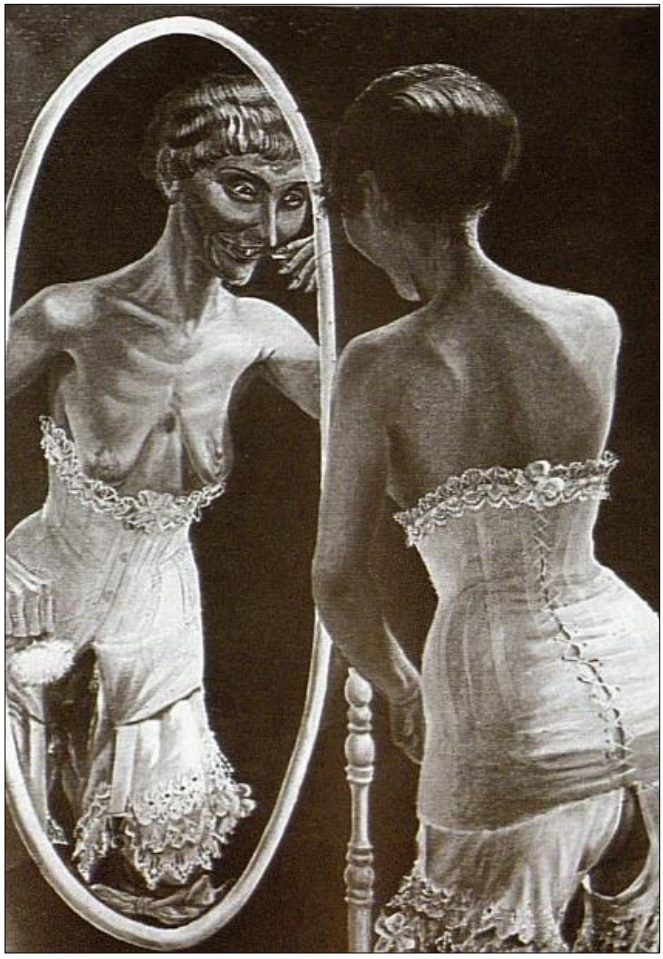

Figure 29: Otto Dix, *Mädchen Vor dem Spiegel* (*Girl Before a Mirror*), painting, medium and dimensions unknown, Beauty Bellezza Beauté, accessed October 26, 2025, https://beautybellezzabeaute.wordpress.com/2017/01/31/madchen-vor-dem-spiegel/.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources:

"§ 166 StGB. Beschimpfung von Bekenntnissen, Religionsgesellschaften Und Weltanschauungsvereinigungen," accessed November 1, 2025, https://lexetius.com/StGB/166,7#text-sign1.

"§ 184 StGB. Verbreitung Pornographischer Inhalte." Accessed December 29, 2024. https://lexetius.com/StGB/184,17.

"documentArchiv.de - Verfassung Des Deutschen Reichs ["Weimarer Reichsverfassung"] (11.08.1919)." Accessed May 19, 2025. http://www.documentarchiv.de/wr/wrv.html#ERSTER_ABSCHNITT02.

"International Dada Archive." Accessed July 21, 2025. https://dada.lib.uiowa.edu/files/show/11367.

Grosz, George. *Ecce Homo*. New York: Grove Press, 1966.

Grosz, George. *George Grosz: An Autobiography*. Translated by Nora Hodges. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1983.

Kessler, Harry. *In the Twenties: The Diaries of Harry Kessler*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971.

U.S. Department of Labor. *Monthly Labor Review* 18, no. 3 (1924). http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS806.

Secondary sources:

Abraham, David. "State and Classes in Weimar Germany." *Politics & Society* 7, no. 3 (1977): 229–66. https://doi.org/10.1177/003232927700700301.

Bender, Stephanie. "Lady Killers and Lust-Murderers: The Lustmord Paintings of Weimar Germany." *Athanor* 29 (2011): 77–83.

Birgel, Franz A. "Kuhle Wampe, Leftist Cinema, and the Politics of Film Censorship in Weimar Germany." *Historical Reflections / Réflexions historiques* 35, no. 2 (2009): 40–62.

Childs, Elizabeth C. *Suspended License: Censorship and the Visual Arts*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998.

Clark, Christopher. "Weimar Politics and George Grosz." In *The Berlin of George Grosz: Drawings, Watercolours and Prints 1912-1930*, 21–27. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1997.

Del Caro, Adrian. "Towards a Genealogy of an Image: Nietzsche's Achievement According to Nietzsche." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (May 1, 1985): 234–50. https://doi.org/10.3138/utq.54.3.234.

Dickinson, Edward Ross. "The Men's Christian Morality Movement in Germany, 1880–1914: Some Reflections on Politics, Sex, and Sexual Politics." *The Journal of Modern History* 75, no. 1 (2003): 59–110. https://doi.org/10.1086/377749.

Dückers, Alexander. *George Grosz: Das Druckgraphische Werk / The Graphic Work*. San Francisco: Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 1996.

Eksteins, Modris. "The Press In the Weimar Republic." In *The Limits of Reason: The German Democratic Press and the Collapse of Weimar Democracy*, 70–103. London: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Fenemore, Mark. "The Recent Historiography of Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Germany." *The Historical Journal* 52, no. 3 (2009): 763–79.

Fingesten, Peter. "Delimitating the Concept of the Grotesque." *Journal of Aesthetics & Art Criticism* 42, (June 1984):419–26. https://doi.org/10.2307/430215.

Fisher, Peter S. *Weimar Controversies: Explorations in Popular Culture with Siegfried Kracauer*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2020.

Flavell, M. Kay. *George Grosz: A Biography*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1988.

Flavell, M. Kay. "Über Alles Die Liebe: Food, Sex, and Money in the Work of George Grosz" *Journal of European Studies* 13, no. 4 (December 1, 1983): 268–88.

Föllmer, Moritz. "The Middle Classes." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Weimar Republic*, edited by Nadine Rossol and Benjamin Ziemann, 454-474. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022.

Fulda, Bernhard. "The Berlin Press, 1918–32." In *Press and Politics in the Weimar Republic*, 13–44. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199547784.003.0002.

Gardes, Jean-Claude. "Satire Allemande et (Auto)Censure." *Ethnologie française* 36, no. 1 (2006): 83–90.

Gay, Peter. *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*. Penguin / Peregrine, 1988.

Ginneken, Jaap van. "1919-1933: The Weimar Republic and the Mass Press." In *Kurt Baschwitz: A Pioneer of Communication Studies and Social Psychology*, 115–48. Amsterdam University Press, 2017.

Goldstein, Robert Justin. "The Debate over Censorship of Caricature in Nineteenth-Century France." *Art Journal* 48 (March 1989): 9–15.

Gutbrod, Philipp. *Otto Dix: The Art of Life*. Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2010.

Guttsman, W.L. *Art for the Workers: Ideology and the Visual Arts in Weimar Germany*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997.

Hales, Barbara. "Woman as Sexual Criminal: Weimar Constructions of the Criminal Femme Fatale." *Women in German Yearbook* 12 (1996): 101–21.

Hess, Hans. *George Grosz*. London: Studio Vista, 1974.

Jelavich, Peter. "Metamorphoses of Censorship in Modern Germany." *German Politics & Society*, no. 27 (1992): 25–35.

Jentsch, Ralph. *George Grosz: The Berlin Years*. Florence: Electa, 1997.

Jones, Larry Eugene. “Introduction: The German Right in the Weimar Republic: New Directions, New Insights, New Challenges.” In *The German Right in the Weimar Republic: Studies in the History of German Conservatism, Nationalism, and Antisemitism*. Berghahn Books, 2014. https://www.berghahnbooks.com/downloads/intros/JonesGerman_intro.pdf.

Kaes, Anton, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg, eds. *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1994.

Knust, Herbert. “George Grosz: Literature and Caricature.” *Comparative Literature Studies* 12, no. 3 (September 1975): 218–47.

Kolb, Eberhard. *The Weimar Republic*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2004. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203341667.

Lansdowne, John. “Narrative to Icon: The Inscriptive Origins of Christ Ecce Homo.” *Word & Image* 40, no. 3 (2024): 201–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/02666286.2020.1758886.

Lang, Birgit. “Censorship in Flux: Sex and Sexological Knowledge at the Great Police Exhibition of 1926 in Weimar Germany.” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 33, no. 1 (January 2024): 102–29.

Lewis, Beth Irwin. *George Grosz: Art and Politics in the Weimar Republic*. Revised second edition, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Marhoefer, Laurie. “Degeneration, Sexual Freedom, and the Politics of the Weimar Republic, 1918-1933.” *German Studies Review* 34, no. 3 (2011): 529–49.

Meyrick, Julian. “Ecce Homo: A Radical Reframing of the Problem of Value in Arts & Culture.” Unpublished manuscript, March 2019, typescript. https://www.uts.edu.au/globalassets/sites/default/files/2019-03/ACPH-EcceHomo-ARadicalReframingoftheProblemofValueinArtsandCulture.pdf.

Neugebauer von der Schulenburg, Rosamunde. *George Grosz: Macht Und Ohnmacht Satirischer Kunst Die Graphikfolgen »Gott Mit Uns«, Ecce Homo Und Hintergrund*. Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1993.

Scully, Richard. “Hindenburg: The Cartoon Titan of the Weimar Republic, 1918-1934.” *German Studies Review* 35, no. 3 (2012): 541–65.

Smith, Jill Suzanne. *Berlin Coquette: Prostitution and the New German Woman, 1890-1933*. Cornell University Press, 2013.

Springman, Luke. “Poisoned Hearts, Diseased Minds, and American Pimps: The Language of Censorship in the Schund Und Schmutz Debates.” *The German Quarterly* 68, 4 (1995): 408–29. https://doi.org/10.2307/407798.

Stark, Gary D. “Pornography, Society, and the Law in Imperial Germany.” *Central European History* 14, no. 3 (1981): 200–229.

Tatar, Maria. *Lustmord: Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995.

Tellini, Ute L. “Images of Women during the Weimar Republic in Germany.” PhD diss., Rutgers University, 1991.

https://www.proquest.com/arts/docview/1426995454/5AFC0C6820924901PQ/4?sourcetype=Dissertations%20&%20Theses.

Tellini, Ute L. “Syphilis in Weimar: Prostitution, Disease and Retribution in the Art of Otto Dix and George Grosz: Southeastern College Art Conference Review.” *Southeastern College Art Conference Review* 13, 4 (1999): 364–72.

Tworek, Heidi J. S. “The Death of News? The Problem of Paper in the Weimar Republic.” *Central European History* 50, no. 3 (September 2017): 328–46. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008938917000619.

Van Dyke, James A. “Torture and Masculinity in George Grosz’s ‘Interregnum.’” *New German Critique*, no. 119 (2013): 137–65.

Von Ankum, Katharina, ed. *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*. University of California Press, 1997.

Wallach, Kerry. “Visual Weimar: The Iconography of Social and Political Identities.” In *The Oxford Handbook of the Weimar Republic*, by Kerry Wallach, 723–49. edited by Nadine Rossol and Benjamin Ziemann. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198845775.013.31.

Weitzman, Erica. “‘An Injury to Shame’: Obscenity and Affect in Nineteenth-Century German Aesthetics.” *Orbis Litterarum* 74 (2019): 3-17. https://doi.org/10.1111/oli.12205.

Wendel, Joanna Catherine. “Cocottes, Garçonnes, and Cowboys: Gender and Figuration in the Work of George Grosz, Karl Hubbuch, and Hanna Nagel, 1915-1935.” Doctoral, Harvard University, 2019. https://www.proquest.com/docview/2513257385?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true&sourcetype=Dissertations%20&%20Theses.