

THE CULTIVATION OF CLASS IDENTITY IN MAX BECKMANN'S
WILHELMINE AND WEIMAR-ERA PORTRAITURE

by

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ABSTRACT

Modern German painter, Max Beckmann (b. 1884 -1950), painted almost eighty-five self-portraits throughout his life. His devotion to self-portraiture produced many testimonies to artistic and personal introspection. In 1914, at the age of thirty, Beckmann volunteered as a medical orderly in World War I and was later discharged after having a nervous breakdown. Because of Beckmann's involvement in WWI, many scholars have interpreted his self-portraiture according to the role WWI played in his art and identity, along with other prominent roles in Beckmann's self-portraits such as the circus, music, and masquerades. The scholarly emphasis on these themes has obscured the role that social-class may have played in Beckmann's self-portraiture. This paper examines how Beckmann used self-portraiture as a sophisticated vehicle to convey aspirational class-identity. The study set includes Beckmann's early self-portraiture from Wilhelmine, Germany (1890-1918) and the later Weimar-Era Germany (1919-1933) to interpret the function that social mobility played in Beckmann's self-portraiture. The paper uses a combination of primary sources, visual analysis, and recent scholarship to analyze Beckmann's self-portraits from the Wilhelmine- and Weimar-Eras and their appearance in his multi-figural works painted before the war to consider the role class identity played in his artistic *oeuvre*. Since he produced self-portraits both before and after the war, this may also help scholars establish a rare, but important continuity in Beckmann's artistic project and complicate our understanding of Beckmann in the New Objectivity Movement.

INTRODUCTION

Modern German painter Max Beckmann (b. 1884-1950) completed almost eighty self-portraits in his fifty-year-long career— just a few short of Rembrandt van Rijn.¹ Recent scholarship by Jill Lloyd, Carla Schulz-Hoffman, Sean Rainbird, and Wendy Beckett analyzes Beckmann’s self-portraits in terms of motifs, such as music, masquerade, circus, and spirituality; understood through the lens of his relentless search for self-knowledge and his cynical post-World War I worldview. However, the scholarly fascination with the impact of WWI on Beckmann’s canvases has obscured the central role that social mobility played in his self-portraits. Beckmann was not a figure isolated from the socio-economic class system of Wilhelmine or Weimar-era Germany. This paper shows that Beckmann used self-portraiture as a vehicle for constructing class identity both before and after the First World War. I examine Beckmann’s pre-war portraits in order to establish continuities with Beckmann’s artwork following the war. Ultimately, my alternative reading of Beckmann’s self-portraits may change how art historians understand him, especially his relationship to the *Die Neue Sachlichkeit* (The New Objectivity). Beckmann was as concerned with class identity and artistic success as he was with universal themes of terror, redemption, and the mysteries of eternity and fate that we often associate with his work. I use a combination of primary sources, visual analysis, and recent scholarship in order to analyze Beckmann’s self-portraits and their appearance in his multi-figure works in order to consider the role of class identity in his artistic *oeuvre*. Since he produced self-portraits both before and after the war, this may also help us look past his abrupt stylistic shifts in order to see the continuities of his practice more clearly.

¹ Sister Wendy Beckett, *Max Beckmann and The Self*, (Munich, New York: Prestel, 1997), 9

Art historians have had little to say about the social implications of Beckmann's pre-war canvases, focusing on World War I as a point of absolute rupture. In 1915, Max Beckmann volunteered in the First World War as a medical orderly. Scholars generally agree that his horrific wartime experience radically changed the style and content of his work from post-Impressionist scenes of romantic heroism to disturbing Expressionist depictions of human cruelty. For example, Peter Chametzky's recent publication states that Beckmann's pre-war painting, *The Sinking of the Titanic* (1912-1913), hangs outside the main Beckmann gallery in the St. Louis Art Museum, "presented as a singular work serving as a prelude to the artist's more mature achievements..."² Beckmann's more "mature achievements" are usually defined by scholars, like Chametzky, as his works completed after WWI. Whereas Beckmann was initially influenced by the traditional styles of Europe such as Impressionism, post-Impressionism, and Neo-Idealism as seen in *Three Women in the Studio*, 1908 (figure 1), during and after WWI, Beckman rejected perspective and classical proportion in favor of a more experimental objective art form known by many as the New Objectivity Movement that explored social, rather than visual, reality. The New Objectivity emerged as a style in Germany in the 1920s as a reaction to the dismal end to WWI and as a challenge to German Expressionism.³ Artists

² Peter Chametzky, *Objects as History in Twentieth-Century German Art: Beckmann to Beuys*, (University of California Press, 2010), 11.

³ Germany was one of the Central Powers that lost the First World War (1914-1918). Germany declared war along with Austria-Hungary in the summer of 1914. Popular sentiment across was enthusiastic towards the war, though this is being challenged in recent scholarship. After the war started, it became apparent that Germany was not prepared for a war lasting more than a few months. Instead of united the public behind the new German monarchy as she had hoped, as the war dragged on in the Allies favor, more people sided with the left with the social-democratic parties. Germany was blockaded by the British created famine and an economic crisis for Germany both at home and at the front and theories were created towards the end of the war that civilians in Germany were betrayed the men at the front, "stab-in-the-back" theory by the republicans groups that overthrew the monarchy. An Armistice was finally reached in 1918 leaving Germany sorely defeated and having to pay large reparation payments to the Allies, disarmament, and being withheld from peace-talks among other stipulations. Following WWI peace talks, hyperinflation ensued, the German Revolution from 1918-19 broke-out in the streets of Germany proclaiming a republic on 9 November 1918 and to the announcement of the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II and the foundation of the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) that would wield little power especially in controlling the right-wing and ex-military men who would try to overthrow their rule.

within the New Objectivity rendered an unsentimental view of political and social reality usually depicting urban scenes of war veterans, generals, and prostitutes. Artists of the New Objectivity focused on the objective world, as opposed to the more abstract, romantic, or emotional tendencies of German Expressionism. Beckmann's mature works also incorporated religious and/or modern and contemporary figures juxtaposed in shallow and cramped spaces using a vivid color palette. Arguably his most famous painting entitled *Die Nacht* (The Night), 1918, shows a family taken hostage in a cramped attic-like space embedded in a mysterious narrative of violence and social instability (figure 2). *Die Nacht* reveals a nightmare of murder and torture in a home taking place in post-WWI German society. Beckmann uses flattened, distorted forms and lines that give detail to the smallest human configurations of veins, wrinkles, and makeup. *Die Nacht*, along with *Self-Portrait with a Cigarette*, 1923, and *Here is Intellect*, 1921 followed similar stylistic patterns that solidified Beckmann's legacy in The New Objectivity alongside his contemporaries (figures 3 and 4). George Grosz and Otto Dix visually caricatured common German social "types" like, officers, prostitutes, and the bourgeoisie types, and Dix, the bitter cynic, whose fascination with the ugly and the violent forces of nature were continuously brought together to criticize both himself and post-WWI German society (figures 5 and 6).

Beckmann's less well-known artworks dating from his childhood through his time in the Weimar Ducal Art Academy from 1900-1903/04 and up to WWI in 1914 are considered to be disconnected from his later works, with the exception of Jay Clarke and

Expressionism is an art movement from Germany that began in the late 1800s with the art work of Edvard Munch beginning with his scandalous one-man exhibition at the Verein Berliner Künstler in 1892. Expressionism usually defined as art that is the result of the artist's unique inner or personal vision and that often has a motional dimension. Expressionism contrasts with art focused on visually describing the empirical world. Fred S. Kleiner *Gardner's Art through the Ages: A Global History*, Vol. II, Fourteenth Edition, (Boston: Wadsworth, 2013), 1085.

Karen Lang's recent articles.⁴ The shortage of literature related to Beckmann's early work is largely outdated and lacking vital new interpretation.⁵ Matthias Eberle's book *World War I and the Weimar Artists* is one of the most substantial interpretations of the New Objectivity artists prior to WWI, published in 1985. Eberle's interpretation took much from Ernst-Gerhard Güse's book *Max Beckmann, Das Frühwerk Max Beckmanns* (The Early Work of Max Beckmann) which described Beckmann's stylistic modes in relation to his philosophical worldview published almost ten years prior to Eberle in 1977. The most significant scholarship on Beckmann has come from Barbara Buenger. She has highlighted Beckmann's long career in articles such as, "Beckmann's Beginnings: *Junge Männer am Meer*" ("Young Men by the Sea") published in 1983 and "Max Beckmann's *Amazonenschlacht*": Tackling "die große Idee" (Battle of the Amazons: Tackling "The Big Idea") in 1984. Buenger published an English translation of Beckmann's journals, letters, and public statements entitled, *Max Beckmann: Self-Portrait in Words* in 1997 that has been cited by various new Beckmann scholars since no other English translation of Beckmann's journals exists. Beckmann's pre-war career has been the subject of other books, retrospectives, and articles, but most have considered his pre-war career--his large mythological and/or contemporary scenes of chaos and destruction in an Impressionistic and post-Impressionistic style—as an unfortunate prelude to the edgy, enigmatic work he made subsequent to WWI—the violently

⁴ Their articles can be seen in, *Of 'Truths Impossible to Put in Words': Max Beckmann Contextualized*, Eds. Rose-Carol Washington Long and Maria Makala, pp 45 and 81. (Peter Lang: Bern 2009).

⁵ Some notable publications are: *Max Beckmann: Die frühen Bilder*, ed. Ulrich Weisner and Klaus Gallwitz (Bielefeld: Kunsthalles Bielefeld, 1982); Charles Werner Haxthausen, 'Beckmann and the First World War', in *Max Beckmann: Retrospective*, ed. Carla Schulz-Hoffmann and Judith C. Weiss (St. Louis: St. Louis Art Museum in association with Prestel-Verlag, Munich, 1984); *Max Beckmann Frühe Tagebücher: 1903/04 und 1912/13*, Doris Schmidt, ed. (Munich, Zürich: Piper, 1985); *Die Bibliothek Max Beckmann: Unterstreichungen, Kommentare, Notizen und Skizzen in seinen Büchern*, ed. Peter Beckmann and Joachim Schaffer (Worms am Rhein: Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1992); Barbara Buenger, 'Max Beckmann in the First World War', *Ideological Crisis of Expressionism: The Literary and Artistic German War Colony in Belgium, 1914-1918*, ed. Rainer Rumold (Columbia, South Carolina: Camden House, 1990).

distorted forms that categorized him in the New Objectivity. These various pieces of scholarship have constructed Beckmann's persona, his true personal identity, and authentic style as developing after his wartime experience. However, my goal is to show how Beckmann's public persona and socio-political ideals largely manifested from the years before the war; and that his ideals of social class would follow him for many years after the war's end, potentially disrupting our understanding of Beckmann in relations to his peers in The New Objectivity Movement.

Before moving into the first chapter about Beckmann's early self-portraits, I would like to outline the class structure of Germany during the Wilhelmine (1890-1918) and Weimar-Eras (1919-1933) in which Beckmann produced a number of his self-portraits discussed in this paper. Unlike other industrialized countries, pre-industrial elites in Germany retained their predominant social and political position against the newly emerging industrial classes.⁶ In the closing years of the nineteenth-century, Germany transformed from a largely agrarian society into a mainly industrial society. Its social structure shifted from a society based on estates to one based on classes; however, the social stratification of the German Empire remained dominated by the old, pre-industrial aristocracy and the newly emerged upper bourgeoisie.⁷ In 1895, these two groups accounted for not more than one-percent of the German population.⁸ Together with the *Bildungsbürgertum* (educated bourgeoisie), that also accounted for up to one-percent of the population.⁹ Thus, nobility and upper bourgeoisie formed Imperial Germany's elite. Below the elite classes was a small group of entrepreneurs in industry, trade, and commerce, called the "propertied bourgeoisie" who accounted for three- to five-percent of

⁶ Hans-Georg Betz, *The Cambridge Companion to Modern German Culture*, eds. Eva Kolinsky and Wilfried van der Will, (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 67.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Betz, 69.

⁹ Ibid.

the population.¹⁰ Below this group was the middle-strata consisting of craftsmen, merchants, and peasants, who were constantly threatened by “proletarianisation” and thus remained defenders of the traditional order.¹¹ This is the group to which Beckmann belonged. The youngest of three children, Beckmann was born in the industrial town of Leipzig and shortly after moved to Braunschweig after his father’s death in 1895. His father, Carl Christian Heinrich Beckmann, was the son of an innkeeper and found work as a grain merchant.¹² Beckmann’s mother, Antoinette Henriette Bertha was born into a farming family and later died in 1906.¹³ Below this middle-class stratum was the lower-class that comprised of most the German population. Factory workers, rural laborers, servants, journeymen, and others made-up about seventy-percent of the population and were by far the largest class.

Despite industrialization and a new class of entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, political and social power still rested with the aristocracy whose pre-industrial cultural norms continued to inform German society, even in the arts, as this paper will later show. Even the nobility who gradually lost their formal privileges in the Weimar Republic retained their power in the upper rankings of ministerial bureaucracy, diplomacy, and military, even down to the local level.¹⁴ For example, the highly influential pre-industrial aristocrat, Harry Graf Kessler—a figure discussed in chapter two, largely controlled or created organizations and institutions for the arts in Germany after receiving his law degree to serve in the German Foreign Service. Recent studies have shown how limited the social-class assimilation in Germany was during the Wilhelmine-Era in comparison to other industrialized countries like Great Britain.¹⁵ Only a small majority of members

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Betz, 70.

¹² Reinhard Spieler, *Beckmann (25)* (Köln: Taschen, 2011), 195.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Betz, 70.

¹⁵ Betz, 71.

from the industrial or financial bourgeoisie were elevated to the ranks of aristocracy.¹⁶ After World War I eliminated the monarchy and most political power of the aristocracy, hyperinflation later bankrupted many of the capitalist class. Only the few who managed to take advantage of the financial situation rose to the new elite class in Germany during the Weimar-Era.¹⁷ Many of the new elite consisted of wealthy industrialists, bankers, and persons of cultural establishment. However, there was never a strong unity in the new elite of Weimar or a sense of purpose like the Wilhelmine-Era aristocracy. Many would later fragment off either into or out of the National Socialist Party. Eventually, the new elite were swept away by total defeat of Germany in World War II and the collapse of Hitler's regime.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Betz, 72.

BECKMANN'S EARLY SELF-PORTRAITS

Portraiture is a careful transaction between the sitter and the artist. John Klein describes this as transaction wherein both individuals have a great deal at stake because each comes to the portrait with the goal of further crafting his or her public identity.¹⁸ Beckmann's relationship to portraiture is no exception and his self-portraiture especially serves as a means of creating and manifesting personal identity. Beckmann began painting portraits at the young age of fourteen in 1898 and remained preoccupied throughout his career with the concept and representation of the self until his death in 1950. Several of his self-portraits show him in the costume of a clown, tightrope walker, actor, or musician, all aspirational images of himself as an ethereal artist and entertainer. Beckmann's adolescent self-portraits reflect his personal, intellectual, and emotional development. Beckmann painted *Self-Portrait with Soap Bubbles* in 1900 when he was sixteen, depicting himself in a chair whose earth brown colors bleed into the horizon perhaps signifying an attachment to home (figure 7).¹⁹ Beckmann's head lifts into lighter colors toward the escaping soap bubbles that suggest airy freedom and escape.²⁰ A year later, in *Self-Portrait*, 1901, Beckmann experimented with an Expressionist style made famous just six-years earlier by Edvard Munch in works such as *The Scream*, 1895 (figures 8 and 9). Reinhard Spieler described Beckmann's own version of *The Scream* as a radical act of self-assertion and an attempt to escape from isolation, similar to *The Scream*'s theme of modern alienation.²¹ Despite their stylistic inconsistencies, Beckmann's adolescent self-portraits convey a consistent sense of restlessness and growing ambition.

¹⁸ John Klein, *Matisse Portraits*, (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2001), 3.

¹⁹ Spieler, 11.

²⁰ Spieler, 11.

²¹ Spieler, 12.

The self-portraits Beckmann produced after attending the Weimar Ducal Art Academy from 1900-1903/4 vary less in style and begin to commemorate personal milestones. For instance, *Double-Portrait of Max Beckmann and Minna Beckmann-Tube*, (1909) marked his 1906 marriage to Minna Tube (figure 10). Beckmann painted *Double-Portrait* in a post-Impressionistic style taking formal cues from artists such as Vincent van Gogh and Edvard Munch as seen through the long and accentuated brushstrokes. Self-portraiture could also mark Beckmann's professional achievements, as in *Self-portrait in Florence*, (1907) which was painted after the artist received a scholarship to travel and study in Florence in 1907 in recognition of his painting, *Young Men by the Sea*, 1905 (figure 11). This latter painting had been acquired by the Weimar Museum and thus also served as an emblem of his early financial success that awarded Beckmann for his formal interpretations of post-Impressionism and Neo-Idealism.²² In *Self-Portrait in Florence*, Beckmann stands to scale as the central half-figure facing the viewer squarely, gracefully holding a cigarette in his right hand. This is the first time Beckmann depicts himself with a cigarette and at the young age of twenty-three; this is a motif that would reappear throughout his adult life as a trademark object.

This highly affected gesture of the cigarette in hand can also be found in many of his post-war self-portraits, such as *Self-Portrait as Medical Orderly*, 1915, *Self-Portrait*

²² “During the last decade of the nineteenth-century, as a newly unified Germany strove to define itself politically, economically, and culturally, critics invented a “national” style, Neo-Idealism, which remained influential and highly marketable for over a decade. Neo-Idealism was described primarily in contrast to the scientific supposedly documentary, emphasis of French Naturalism and Impressionism, which German audiences saw as connoting socialism and cultural degeneracy. German critics praised practitioners of Neo-Idealism because unlike the Naturalists and Impressionists, they preferred literary-based narrative; emphasized the imaginative, musical, mythical, and intellectual qualities of their work; and depicted their subjects in relatively detailed and tightly focused manner. Arnold Böcklin and Max Klinger were the torch-bearers of Neo-Idealism, and their art took on a patriotic significance for critics writing in the 1890s.” Jay A. Clarke, “Neo-Idealism, Expressionism, and the Writing of Art History”, *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies: Negotiating History: German Art and the Past*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2002). 24-37.

with Champagne Glass, 1919, *Self-Portrait in Tuxedo*, 1927, *Self-Portrait in Black*, 1944 (figures 12-15). In *Self-Portrait as Medical Orderly*, Beckmann paints himself in a realistic style as a Red Cross volunteer stationed on the Belgian Front during WWI. He positions himself at three-fourths view to the picture plane peering over his left shoulder making sure his hand fits within the confines of the frame that holds what appears to be a very small cigarette between his pointer and middle finger. In *Self-Portrait with Champagne Glass*, one of the very few paintings Beckmann produced after being discharged from the medical core for a serious nervous breakdown in 1915, he holds a cigar in a right hand that is flung across his shoulder. He is dressed in a sleek black and white suit while drinking champagne at a local pub. Even after a nervous breakdown and twelve-years after Beckmann's wartime experience he still fashioned himself with smoking device in *Self-Portrait in Tuxedo*, (1927) that shows a confident Beckmann having attained a professional teaching position at the Städelschule Art School in Frankfurt in 1925. Lastly, in 1944, after Beckmann and his wife moved to Amsterdam to escape the Nazis he painted *Self-Portrait in Black*. The painting was produced under a dire living situation. Beckmann contracted pneumonia, struggled with his continuing heart problems, and could no longer heat his studio.²³ Despite the grim conditions, Beckmann continued to fashion himself in a black and white suit flashing the silhouette of a cigar in his left hand. This very brief survey of Beckmann's self-portraits shows that while Beckmann's style changed radically after the war, his mannerisms had begun to solidify in his self-portraits as early as 1907.

²³ Spieler, 198.

FASHION AND BECKMANN'S MANNERISMS

Portraiture is a careful transaction between the sitter and the artist. John Klein In the early twentieth-century, cigarettes in Germany communicated powerful sub-texts that not only accented personal gestures but also underscored certain narratives. Other Beckmann scholars like Eberle and Spieler have noticed the recurrent gesture of a cigarette held in a languid hand as Beckmann's trademark. However, the rendering of the cigarette in Beckmann's self-portraiture has not yet been analyzed in terms of its polysemic social meaning. The mid-1880s marked the arrival of the mass-manufactured cigarette in Germany and led to a revolution in smoking patterns.²⁴ Frequently seen in the mouths of laborers in Europe, the cigarette in the nineteenth-century commercial hub of London, for instance, became a ritualistic communicator of the liberties that attended manhood. "The choice [of work] once made,... the boy very soon falls into the routine of work and in the first fortnight ages rapidly. Hitherto the smoking of cigarettes was a furtive prank, only delightful because forbidden; now it becomes a public exhibition, denoting manhood, independence, and wealth."²⁵ Manhood and independence by the cigarette could be seen in countries as far off as America. Lewis Hine's photograph, *Newsies at Skeeter Branch, St. Louis, Missouri, 11:00 am, May 9, 1910*, captures the essence of young manhood found in smoking cigarettes (figure 16). The *Newsies* captures three young boys, possibly orphans, who assume the role of manhood through their smoking habits. The boys' portrait was used to promote legislation protecting children from exploitation by the American industries.²⁶ Here, the trio shows self-possession

²⁴ Matthew Hilton, "Smoking and Sociability," *Smoke: A Global History of Smoking*, ed. Sander L. Gilman and Zhou Xun (Reaktion Books LTD: London, 2004),130.

²⁵ Hilton, 130.

²⁶ "Lewis W. Hine: Newsies at Skeeter Branch, St. Louis, Missouri, 11:00 am, May 9, 1910" (1970.727.1) In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/1970.727.1>. (October 2006)

through making their own living, and the cigarette is the prize they get for their hard work. Though read differently in terms of social class and age, the affectation of smoking is a shared link between of self-possession held by entitled men in places as far away as America and Britain. Recently unified Germany embedded these cultural norms into its society through its transnational gaze at the consumer societies of previously established colonial powers like the British Empire and the new capitalist markets in America. These countries supplied new marketing strategies to Germany's cultural dialogue and advertisement schemes. Many of Germany's social and commercial associations with colonized and commercialized goods like tobacco were first learned from places like Great Britain and America and later embedded in commercial German culture.²⁷ Born in 1884, Beckmann would have had easy access to mass-marketed cigarettes and been aware of the class-based connotations of smoking as a code for masculinity, precociousness, and independence.

Although mass-produced cigarettes and cigars were introduced to Europe in the nineteenth-century, it was only in twentieth-century art that the different sorts of smoking devices began to function as a distinct social code.²⁸ Beckmann developed his own public persona by using smoking as a nuanced marker of social identity. For example, *Self-Portrait with Champagne Glass*, (1919) shows Beckmann sitting at a bar in formal attire, drinking champagne in one hand, and smoking a cigar in the other. The portrait shows him sneering cynically, while flamboyantly flipping his wrist to display his cigar to the viewer. The lackadaisical figure is contrasted with the menacing and cartoonish male figure grinning in the background. *Self-Portrait in Front of a Red Curtain*, (1923), shows Beckmann dressed in a tuxedo and top hat staring directly at the viewer in a formal

²⁷ David Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire: Race and Visual Culture in Imperial Germany*, (Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 2011), 73.

²⁸ Benno Tempel, "Symbol and Image: Smoking in Art since the Seventeenth Century," *Smoke: A Global History of Smoking*, ed. Sander L. Gilman and Zhou Xun (Reaktion Books LTD: London, 2004), 214.

setting with a open-curtain in the background (figure 17). While the cigarette might connote boyish chicanery, the cigar connotes more aggressive self-possession and the control of others through wealth or violence, similar to George Grosz's various fat cat caricatures that indicated group affiliations through the fat, cigar-smoking bourgeois figures and businessmen (figures 18 and 19).²⁹ *Self-Portrait with Champagne Glass* and *Self-Portrait in Front of a Red Curtain* show Beckmann holding the cigar. Beckmann takes himself seriously, asserting himself as the figure with the power, wealth, and maturity similar to the middle-aged, male "fat cat."

As much as the cigarette became a defining ingredient in Beckmann's self-portraiture, so too did it in advertising. The 1890s saw the emergence of the *Markenartikel*, mass-produced commodities sold under a brand-name.³⁰ Printed newspapers and periodicals disseminated brand-names that sought to market their product using the latest fashion, most popular philosophies and psychology theories of their day. Newspapers and periodicals played a great role in German culture and they were more often than not read in public places.³¹ The *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* used advertising as their primary source of revenue, replacing subscription after the 1870s.³² The *Lokal-Anzeiger* was the most popular Berlin newspaper, where Beckmann moved in 1904, claiming a daily circulation of 213,500 in 1898.³³ The rise of the new mass-media was closely intertwined with advertising and the brand-name. The first and most prominent *Markenartikel* included luxury consumables like chocolate, cocoa, margarine, and tobacco, particularly cigarettes by Manoli.³⁴ The visuality of advertising played an

²⁹ Several of August Sander's photographs show the tobacco pipe with farmers, gardeners, blacksmiths, and other of the lower working class males. For images, see the Getty's online gallery of Sander's works at: <http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/artists/1750/august-sander-german-1876-1964/>.

³⁰ Ciarlo, 127.

³¹ Barbara Buenger, e-mail message to Jackie Meade, March 11, 2015.

³² Ciarlo, 126.

³³ Ciarlo, 127.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 127.

essential role in the brand name process in that its images would give new meanings to luxury items. Cigarettes in Germany, largely imported from Turkey and Egypt became massively popular in the years leading up to WWI. Enticing illustrated ads and new types of packaging meant the products themselves were made for visual pleasure just as much as the product gave physical pleasure. German journalist Rudolf Cronau noted about cigarette in 1890, “Many of them are so beautiful and endearing that one cheerfully buys the product merely because of its covering.”³⁵ Beckmann was no exception to this trend of buying cigarettes as a form of beauty and luxury, stating in a letter to his friend and publisher, Reinhard Piper, “...I like vermilion and violet a lot and also tobacco brown. Probably because I appreciate cigars so. Is there anything more beautiful than a good cigar? Perhaps a woman? Only it’s not possible to put her down again as easily.”³⁶ His statement of admiration towards cigars and women as objects of beauty brings to mind the commercial branding tropes of the German cigar company, “Zechbauer,” made in Germany beginning in 1830.³⁷ One of Zechbauer’s cigar advertisements that circulated in Germany circa 1905/6 shows a man at home nestled in his armchair (figure 20). The figure wears a black and white suit while holding up a cigar to his eye, scrutinizing its shape, color, form, and effects between puffs. The ad plays on the nonchalant nature of the newly emerged, entrepreneurial bourgeoisie class using the gesture of smoking with a powerful, fashionable, male character. The sleek, bold simplicity of the cigar advertisement targeted male consumers like Beckmann who were receptive to the idea of luxury, beauty, and a coolly dispassionate demeanor promoted by visual culture.

³⁵ Ciarlo, 128.

³⁶ The letter to Reinhard Piper was written and published in 1923. Barbara Copeland Buenger, ed. *Max Beckmann Self-Portrait in Words: Collected Writings and Statements, 1903-1950* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 274.

³⁷ Max Zechbauer Tabakwaren GmbH & Co. KG und Barff digitalagentur GmbH & Co. KG, <https://www.zechbauer.de>, accessed March, 2015.

The message of male confidence attained by smoking appeared in the form of a wealthy man as seen in many of the male-g geared cigarette ads. Famed German graphic designer, Hans Rudi Erdt, who most prominently made German poster art from 1906-1918 helped propagandize the Mahala's "Problem" cigarette brand. His 1912 poster shows a man of high-fashion staring confidently at a woman (figure 21). Self-presentation is portrayed as an art form as seen Erdt's poster along with the previous smoking ads. The man boldly peers through his monocle at the woman who he seems to have followed. As the man smokes a cigarette, a perfect circle of smoke forms in the foreground as the woman looks back around at the man, admiring his cigarette in the corner of his mouth. The cigarette is an emblem of seduction. The stylish mode of both the man and the woman encapsulated by the cigarette smoke, work together to produce a new meaning that those of wealth and poise use the cigarette where elegance defines age.

At the same time, Manoli released a cigarette ad in Germany for their "Dandy" cigarette (circa 1910 and 1913) using the famed Parisian Dandy of the 1810s as their model for fashionability (figure 22). Manoli's dandy ad is especially important to keep in mind when looking deeper into Beckmann's self-portraits because, like the dandy, Beckmann was a self-made man who strove to imitate an aristocratic lifestyle despite his coming from a middle-class background. Of particular importance to the dandy was his physical appearance when frequenting public spaces, such as cafés and restaurants, to elevate his existence as a high-class member of society. The dandy's mode of self-presentation was described by highly influential French art critic and poet, Charles Baudelaire who stated in his pamphlet entitled, "The Painter of Modern Life," (1863) that the dandy aspires not only to the high-class through fashion but also aspires to insensitivity to show his fabricated clout, "The dandy is *blasé* or pretends to be so, for reasons of policy and caste... the crowd is his element, as the air is that of birds and

water of fishes.”³⁸ The dandy understands appearances and is detached to reinforce social superiority. Manoli’s “Dandy” ad shows a dandy dressed in *haute-couture* fashion. The dandy peers into the viewer’s space with his monocle similar to the nobleman in Erdt’s “Problem” cigarette poster. The monocle, originally used in the 1720s in order to closely examine engravings and antique engraved gems, did not become an article of gentlemen’s apparel until the nineteenth-century when it was introduced by the dandy’s quizzing eyeglass as a sense of high fashion.³⁹ The peering monocle, now used as tool for modern societal inspection, not only gave elite or elite-looking men the right to gaze, but also conveyed the sub-text that proper men smoke. Manoli’s dandy wears a top hat and puffed-out white ascot, frequently associated with the pre-industrial aristocracy along with his walking stick to accentuate his code of masculinity, maturity, and wealth that comes along with smoking in the early 1900s. Cigarettes were cheap, but the image of smoking was an invaluable marker for elegance and class.

Even women felt the empowering effects of the cigarette in Germany during the 1900s. Visual advertisement ploys opened the door for class mobility for both the male and female. Manoli released its new “Gibson Girl” cigarette ad circulating circa 1911 as the companion their “Dandy” cigarette ad (figure 23). The Gibson Girl image appeared in the 1890s in America combining elements of a Caucasian female beauty, either as being a fragile lady and the voluptuous woman.⁴⁰ From the fragile lady, the Gibson Girl took basic slender lines, and a sense of respectability. The Gibson girl was also a member of upper-class society, always perfectly dressed in the latest fashionable attire appropriate

³⁸ Charles Baudelaire, “The Painter of Modern Life and other Essays” 1863, Trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne (Phaidon Press), http://www.columbia.edu/itc/architecture/ockman/pdfs/dossier_4/Baudelaire.pdf, accessed April 2015.

³⁹ “Monocles”, The College of Optometrists - Registered as a Charity no: 1060431, http://www.college-optometrists.org/en/college/museyeum/online_exhibitions/spectacles/monocles.cfm, accessed March 2015.

⁴⁰ “The Gibson Girl’s America: Drawings by Charles Dana Gibson, The Gibson Girl as the ‘New Woman,’” *Library of Congress*, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/gibson-girls-america/the-gibson-girl-as-the-new-woman.html>, accessed March 2015.

for the place and time of day. Manoli's ad shows the German version of the Gibson Girl dressed in a form-fitting black dress with bottom-lace frills. The girl takes a large step over an enormous Manoli cigarette, laying on the ground in front of her while her dainty high-heel shoe reveals another marker of high fashion. Jacob Mandelbaum, founder of the Manoli cigarette factory, originally named "Zigarettenfabrik Argos" wanted his product to not only have a class to it but also "[reach] in this way an exclusive clientele who preferred a higher quality but more expensive cigarette."⁴¹ The cigarette seems to also imply a transitional barrier for women who smoked in pre-war Germany as having crossed over into the domain traditionally enjoyed by men. Manoli's strategic advertising scheme portrays the iconic upper-class woman crossing barriers and setting the standard for the middle and lower classes of women. The Gibson Girl cigarette ad proves that even women could feel the social effects of smoking in terms of gender and class mobility.

As the cigarette ads circulating in Germany during the early 1900s have shown, cigarettes found their meaning from association with wealth, fashion, and masculinity. Cigarettes successfully produced these narratives and meanings by employing popular philosophical and psychological concepts in Germany at the turn-of-the-century to distribute their brand name. Before WWI, the highest aim for the brand name was to reveal a "psychosis of confidence."⁴² One of the main influences to market advertising in Europe came from the French physician Gustave Le Bon whose book, *The Crowd*, was originally published in 1895 and was translated into German in 1908.⁴³ Le Bon related his studies to the recent French riots in which he believed that individual thought was shamefully abandoned for an animalistic and instinctual drive inhibited by the masses.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Maria Galaz, "Manoli Cigarettes – A Hidden Memory", <https://mgalaz92.wordpress.com/2013/10/09/manoli-cigarettes-a-hidden-memory/>, accessed April 2015.

⁴² Friebe, 84.

⁴³ Friebe, 83.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Le Bon's thoughts on mass psychology were widely influential for the newly professionalized product design and advertising firms of Germany (i.e. *Die Werkbund*, The German Work Federation).⁴⁵ The repercussions of his studies sought to construct the psychosis of the individual as unique to society. Historian Dirk Reinhard pointed out that his studies fostered people's ambition to stand from the masses and to assert their means of superiority.⁴⁶ German cigarette ads have shown the aristocrat as an unique individual, standing out from the masses because of his or her fashion, confidence, and access to luxury goods that others in the middle-classes sought to attain for socio-economic reasons. According to the cigarette ads, the aristocrat was society's highly-cultivated individual, leading us to one of the possible reasons why Beckmann repeatedly established his identity in self-portraiture using the cigar or cigarette, because both these smoking devices conjured refinement and wealth from the elite classes.

Strong philosophical concepts popular in Germany lay behind the origins of the "psychosis of confidence" used in advertising in addition to Le Bon's *The Crowd*. The highly influential German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche (b. 1844 - 1900), valorized the individual as holding the only hope for a bright German future. Nietzschean ideals were of deep influence during the twentieth-century, especially in Continental Europe. Nietzsche was one of Beckmann's favorite and most frequently cited philosophers in his journals. Beckmann read Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883), *Beyond Good and Evil*, (1886) and *On the Genealogy of Morals, A Polemic* (1887) wherein Nietzsche wrote about his fears of mass society, especially those collectivized under the auspices of the Judeo-Christian doctrine. Nietzsche heralded the individual who practiced great courage

⁴⁵ *Die Deutscher Werkbund* (The German Work Federation) was a German association of artists, architects, designers, and industrialists. The Werkbund's purpose was to establish a partnership of product manufacturers with design professionals to improve the quality of German goods competitiveness in global markets. The Bauhaus Art School would later use this approach in their school's mission and class criterium.

⁴⁶ Friebe, 84.

and will in society, otherwise known as the *Übermensch*. These ideas fostered the cult of the individual disseminated throughout German culture from café conversation to periodical articles in the late 1800s to the First World War in 1914 where Nietzsche's books were the most popular war publication read by soldiers on the front. Both Beckmann and his contemporary Otto Dix brought copies of Nietzsche's books with them to the front. Nietzsche had already made observations about the nature of the crowd and the case for the individual to rise above the masses in the 1880s. His communicated ideas helped bring about the Le Bon's, *The Crowd*— that now serves as an indication of the prevalence of cultural attitudes toward individualism in both Germany and France. Nietzsche and Le Bon's popular theories ironically helped shape the modern look of the cigarette ads because they were the popular beliefs in Europe and Germany at that time. The Nietzschean *Übermensch*: powerful, assertive, modeled in the form of an aristocratic male, was visually dispersed to the masses in advertisement and became the cultural currency of wealth and independence in early twentieth-century Germany.

The cigarette as a device of wealth and independence can be seen in the cultivation of the cigarette in self-portraiture before Beckmann's *Self-portrait in Florence* (1907). In 1895, Edvard Munch painted his self-portrait entitled, *Self-Portrait with Burning Cigarette* (Figure 24). The scene is a smoky, dim-light room with cigarette smoke cloaking Munch. The hazy atmospheric mood frames Munch who stares into the mirror with a cigarette in hand. The cigarette is an important part of the self-portrait, even taking the place of the painter's paintbrush, but the cigarette is also fashioned after his teacher, Christian Krohg's portrait of his friend and colleague, Gerhard Munthe painted ten years earlier (Figure 25).⁴⁷ Krohg's portrait scene is a smoky café where artists and literati are sitting. Munthe stands wearing an elegant grey, black suit. Krohg's portrait

⁴⁷ Ulrich Bischoff, *Edvard Munch: 1863-1944*, (Köln: Benedikt Taschen, 2000), 8

focuses on a precise presentation of the *Bildungsbürgertum* milieu and of this mildly arrogant artistic dandy smoking a cigarette.⁴⁸ While the delicately held cigarette in Krohg's painting indicates a social milieu, Munch uses it to heighten the expressive effect of his face and hand. Munch brings smoking to the fore in his self-portrait and legitimizes the cigarette's use in portraiture. Beckmann admired Munch and his paintings continue much of Munch's stylistic traits as seen early on in *Self-Portrait*, (1901) and Munch's *The Scream*, (1895). Beckmann also continues the changing syntax of self-portraiture from holding a paintbrush to holding a cigarette; or, from associating with his occupation to associating with leisure. However, Beckmann stabilizes new meaning to the cigarette when he fashions himself wearing suits similar to the advertised cigarette ads while smoking and thereby associating himself with the elite entrepreneurial bourgeoisie and *Bildungsbürgertum* milieu's ideals of pleasure.

The cigarette functioned as a socially meaningful prop for Beckmann. Unlike a paintbrush, a cigarette could not be interpreted as utilitarian or trade object in self-portraiture but as an adopted social mannerism. It is important to note that before the modern-era, portraiture was associated with the worthy, virtuous, or high-born whose status was indicated by the use of props or genteel mannerisms. Having attained a formal art education from the conservative Weimar Art School in 1904, Beckmann would have been aware of the social history of portraiture and the use of objects for self-aggrandizement. A number of recent studies have called attention to the various portrait conventions employed by different social groups. For example, Angelika Linke's study states that aristocratic social relations were often conveyed through gesture and other

⁴⁸ Bischoff, 9.

non-verbal forms of action, suited to acknowledging and articulating social hierarchies as we see Beckmann mimicking in his self-portraiture.⁴⁹

If social class can be identified through non-verbal action and gesture, then Beckmann's frequently worn black and white suits seen throughout his pre- and post-war self-portraits also help communicate his social position. An important pre-industrial aristocratic figure in Berlin and Weimar at this time was Harry Graf Kessler. Kessler, a writer, diplomat, and collector and patron of modern arts, embodied everything Beckmann aspired to in terms of money and power. Beckmann, born into the middle-strata of a bourgeoisie family of a grain merchant, appears to have fashioned himself after Kessler in a few of his most eminent early self-portraits. Kessler, born into an aristocratic family of wealthy bankers and international businessmen, played a large role in the politics that attended the emergence of modernism in the visual arts at the turn-of-the-century Germany.⁵⁰ Kessler was cosmopolitan, born in Paris, his family vacationed in Germany next to the Kaiser.⁵¹ Kessler was later educated in Germany where he studied philosophy, Greek, and was an ardent promoter of Nietzsche— all areas of intellectual interest written about by Beckmann in his journals leading up to WWI.⁵² Kessler exercised power in the public sphere both during and after completing his law degree in

⁴⁹ Angelika Linke, "Zum Sprachgebrauch des Bürgertums im 19. Jahrhundert. Überlegungen zur kulturemiotischen Funktion des Sprachverhaltens" (The Linguistic Usage of the Bourgeois in 1900: Thoughts on Cultural Semiotics and the function of Linguistic Patterns) 458.

⁵⁰ Theodore Fiedler, "Weimar contra Berlin: Harry Graf Kessler and the Politics of Modernism", *Imagining Modern German Culture: 1889-1910*, (Hanover, London: University Press of New England, 1996), 107

⁵¹ Fiedler, 107.

⁵² Kessler recalls the impact on himself, and other members of his generation that came of age in the early 1890s of Nietzsche's related admonition in No. 253 of *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (Beyond Good and Evil): what was needed was "to *be* something new, to *mean* something new, to *represent* new values," a moral imperative, as he notes, that entailed a heroic attitude and strong individuals. Kessler is also believed to have known Nietzsche's sister since 1895 where she published some of her insane brother's excerpts in *Pan*. Fiedler, 109-110.

order to pursue a career in the German Foreign Service.⁵³ In 1893, Kessler moved to Berlin and became deeply involved in the artistic and intellectual life of the capital. Kessler helped establish and run one of the most lavish and prestigious German art periodicals, *Pan*, where he often published praises of Nietzsche's philosophies and where Beckmann and Franz Marc wrote sneering articles about art's objectivity and inner sprit in 1912.⁵⁴ Kessler was the director of the Weimar Art Academy while Beckmann attended from 1900-1903/4, and the founder of the *Künstlerbund*, which was the German Artists Association that later founded the residency prize for studio retreats to Villa Romana in Florence, with Beckmann as one of the first recipients in 1907. Lastly, Kessler collected and commissioned artwork from many modern artists including Munch and Beckmann.⁵⁵

In various ways, Kessler either created or controlled modern arts in Berlin and Weimar while Beckmann was making his career as an artist. Kessler embodied the ideals and traits of a powerful man in terms of his political power, wealth, cultural influence, education, and social class as a pre-industrial aristocrat. In 1907, Beckmann painted *Self-Portrait in Florence* and *Double-Portrait of Max Beckmann and Minna Beckmann-Tube*, 1909 that are highly evocative of Munch's portrait of Kessler entitled, *Portrait of Harry Graf Kessler*, produced just one year earlier in 1906 (figure 26). Munch's full-figure portrait captures an elegantly dressed Kessler, appearing self-confident and determined, similar to Beckmann's confident facial and body expression in *Self-Portrait in Florence*.

⁵³ Fiedler, 109. "The distinguishing feature of Germany's development in the nineteenth century was the fact that despite successful industrialization and despite the emergence of an entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, political power and social eminence rested with the aristocracy whose pre-industrial ethos continued to inform German society, obstructing social modernization and inhibiting the evolution of a democratic political culture. Even after unification, the nobility retained its dominant position in the upper echelons of the ministerial bureaucracy, diplomacy, the military, also on the local level. As late as 1913, noblemen were still vastly over-represented in the officer corps and civil servants." Betz, 71.

⁵⁴ Fiedler, 109.

⁵⁵ Fiedler, 109.

Similar to Kessler, Beckmann confidently stands straight, staring at the viewer. In both *Self-Portrait in Florence* and *Double-Portrait of Max Beckmann and Minna Beckmann-Tube*, Beckmann wears a black and white suit with a black necktie wrapped around the high-raised white collar that also resembles Kessler's ensemble. Photographs of Kessler also show him in elegant black and white attire, with a popped collar, periodically holding a cigarette, proving that his appearance was not tailored specifically for the Munch portrait. (figure 27 and 28). Conversely, a photo of Beckmann taken in 1906 shows him wearing a folded white collar and black bow-tie with a brown plaid suit before the portrait of Kessler was painted (figure 29). After 1906, Beckmann is seen in various photos wearing his newly adopted aristocratic fashion. (figure 30 and 31). Only in 1939, while in-exile in Amsterdam at his studio, and later in America does his style of the starched collar begin to change (figure 32 and 33). That Beckmann's fashion changed after 1906 and again after he left Germany shows that his fashionable choices were a learned and adapted visual syntax unique to German high-society possibly used to promote himself as an aristocrat.

Traditional German portraiture before Beckmann began his career in Berlin was widely defined by German Impressionist, Max Liebermann, who often fashioned his subjects in a manner not dissimilar from Kessler. Liebermann received numerous portrait commissions for the Kunsthalle of the newly emerged, entrepreneurial bourgeoisie and members of the Berlin cultural elite, such as: *Portrait of Eugen Gutmann* (1907), founder and Chief Executive the Dresden Bank, *Portrait of Wilhelm von Bode*, the creator and first curator of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum (1904), and *Der Hamburgische Professorenkonvent* (Assembly of Hamburg Professors), (1905), (figure 34-36). Their portraits convey powerful male figures within German society using a customary three-fourth-length portrait, dressed in an elegant three-piece suit like in, *Portrait of Eugen*

Gutmann. Liebermann portrayed von Bode also in a three-piece suit while sitting at his desk with his workbook in hand signifying his profession and status. Photos of von Bode also reveal him wearing a similar fashion of the three-piece suit and high neck-collar (figure 37). Von Bode's and Gutmann's fashion is similar to the professors in the *Bildungsbürgertum* milieu as seen in, *Der Hamburgische Professorenkonvent*, making the three-piece suit and high neck collar fashionable among the industrial and educated aristocrats in the Wilhemine period. Liebermann's portraits were often reproduced in the widely-read art journal, *Kunst und Künstler*, that seem not only to be the stylistic predecessor of Beckman's early self-portraiture and fashion but also foreshadow Beckmann's air of seriousness, pose, and quiet grandeur found in males portraiture before Beckmann became a professional artist.

Liebermann's own self-portraits show the fluidity of class-association in visual representation at this time. Liebermann came from a wealthy family; his father and uncles all became millionaires through various business ventures in Berlin. Prior to Beckmann, Liebermann studied at the Weimar Academy of Arts from 1868 to 1872. Liebermann painted self-portraits throughout his life; frequently portraying himself before the easel or in the studio, smartly dressed and in the act of painting in various different dresses. For example, Liebermann painted a *Self-Portrait*, in 1910 and again in 1911, both show how Liebermann dressed himself in casual attire while in front of the canvas (figure 38 and 39). However, a photo of Liebermann with the jury of the 1908 Berlin Secession exhibition shows him wearing *haute-couture* fashion expected of the upper echelon of bourgeoisie families at this time (figure 40). Liebermann appears on the far right of the photo sitting down in the foreground wearing a top hat and an elegant black suit. His fashion in the photo is starkly different from his self-portraits painted in the studio at this time and the others on the jury seen wearing Bowling and Homburg hats in the photo.

Liebermann continued to play with fashion after the war, dressing in straw-hat that demonstrates the fluidity of class identity through fashion and how one could manifest a particular class affiliation in Germany during Beckmann's time-period.

Beckmann's choice of fashion in his self-portraiture belonged to a vocabulary of particular classes for social and economic reasons. Typecasting and labeling mannerisms were popular ideological trends in twentieth-century Germany. These trends were largely used to establish class identity, and Beckmann's self-portraiture was no exception. In 1910, German photographer, August Sander began his major project entitled, *Menschen des zwanzigster Jahrhunderts* (People of the Twentieth-Century), documenting various types of people living in Germany from refined bourgeois types to gypsies to aristocratic figures. Sander began the project dividing the images into different segments of society based on profession and social standing.⁵⁶ Sander's artistic goal was to adopt a detached, scientific approach to his subjects, developing a standardized format for his images—typically full- or half-length portraits of his subjects posed with props or wearing clothing associated with their occupation.⁵⁷ Sander's *Retired Privy Counselor*, 1911-14, *Grand Duke*, 1930, and *Aristocrat*, 1928, consist of half-portrait of a man wearing a black and white suit with a black necktie laced around a high white neck collar while the bourgeois types such as *Attorney*, 1927, *Art Dealer [Sam Salz]*, 1927, *Dentist*, 1930, show a tie and bent white collar (Figures 41-46). Sander's collection of photos proves how social class came to be understood through fashion and embedded into various art forms like photography and painting at the time Beckmann was painting.

One possible reason why Beckmann sought to model himself after the aristocratic class was that the cultural criticism of the late 1800s and early 1900s was based on the

⁵⁶ "August Sander", Museum of Modern Art, http://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/august-sander, accessed March 2015.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

belief that artistic and intellectual achievements could spring only from the elite-class.⁵⁸ Beckmann not only aspired to the elite social classes (i.e. the pre-industrial elites, an entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, and the *Bildungsbürgerum*) through self-fashioning in his self-portraiture but also through his written confessions. His journal entries from 1912-1913, show his hope for attaining the status of a successful artist that entailed wealth and power. His entries are filled with sales, prices, and expenses to the point where Beckmann becomes upset with himself stating, “Learn to control yourself and stop thinking about success, followers, prophetic status...”⁵⁹ His hope for achieving financial success and artistic achievement seem to be one and the same before and after the war when he wrote in a credo in 1927, “The Social Stance of the Artist.” The first two bullet points describe the artist’s need for self-promotion, and respect to money and power: “1. The talent for self-promotion is a prerequisite for those inclined to pursue the artistic calling 2. The budding genius must learn above all else to respect money and power.”⁶⁰ These statements, among others, conclude what Beckmann believed would ensure a “good life”.⁶¹ Beckmann’s credo shows how much he was caught up in image, money, and power over the real conditions of work, life, and creativity.

Philosophical Fads and the Artist as Individual

Beckmann wanted to be recognized as wealthy and successful, and this is also an attribute that sets Beckmann apart from his artistic predecessors and peers. Artists popular in Germany during the late 1800s and early 1900s like Arnold Böcklin, did not feel that artistic success came by way of wealth. Böcklin, a Swiss-born Symbolist painter

⁵⁸ Elizabeth Tumasonis, “Böcklin’s Reputation: Its Rise and Fall”, *Art Criticism*, Vol. 6 No. 2 1990, pp 48-71, 55.

⁵⁹ Buenger, ed. *Max Beckmann Self-Portrait in Words: Collected Writings and Statements, 1903-1950*, 120

⁶⁰ This statement was a contribution for a Prince Karl Anton von Rohan’s journal in 1927, though never published but post-humorously published by Peter Beckmann. Buenger, ed. *Max Beckmann Self-Portrait in Words: Collected Writings and Statements, 1903-1950*, 282.

⁶¹ Buenger, ed. *Max Beckmann Self-Portrait in Words: Collected Writings and Statements, 1903-1950*, 282.

who Beckmann deeply admired, acquired great fame in Germany during the early 1900s. However, Böcklin's fame occurred by happenstance. Most of his life he stayed away from aristocratic patrons, lived in poverty, and paid little attention to recognition and money that were of small importance to him.⁶² In contrast to Böcklin, Beckmann had money enough to live, but he believed he needed a higher social status to prove his artistic fitness. The constant chase to climb socially caused frustration for Beckmann in 1927 when he wrote "The Artist in the State." His utopian vision denounced wealth as an external factor of recognition: "We seek a kind of aristocratic Bolshevism. A social equalization...where workers, moreover, should likewise appear in tuxedo or tails. Which is to say: We seek the external sign of success in this state system that would no longer or secondarily consist in money."⁶³ Beckmann's utopian vision acknowledges that fashion and money are external factors of success and achievement. These elite standards frustrated him both before and after the war. Paradoxically, he conformed to the elite standards of fashionability, leisure, and luxury in his self-portraiture.

The constructions of the unique individual like Böcklin were *en vogue* during Beckmann's early career. This fact makes it difficult to discern Beckmann's personal artistic taste from "Nietzscheana" and the individuality promoted by German philosophers, writers, and art critics who either created or ruined an artist's reputation.⁶⁴ Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, published in 1886, became wildly popular at the end of the nineteenth-century while Beckmann began painting his self-portraits and multi-figure works, such as *The Prisoners*, *Scene from the Destruction of Messina*, *The Battle*, *The Flood*, and *The Sinking of the Titanic*, between 1906 and 1913. Periodicals such as

⁶² Tumasonis, 50.

⁶³ Buenger, ed. *Max Beckmann Self-Portrait in Words: Collected Writings and Statements, 1903-1950*, 289.

⁶⁴ The word, "Nietzscheana" was used by Fiedler in direct relation to the plethora of Nietzsche thought, publications, illustrations, and cliques in Germany at this time, Fiedler, 110.

Pan featured on their opening page of the journal's first issue a prelude titled, "Zarathustra vor dem Koenige" (Zarathustra before the King).⁶⁵ In 1913, 150,000 copies of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* were printed by the German government and issued as inspirational reading, along with the Bible, to the soldiers during WWI.⁶⁶ Nietzsche's ideas about the ills of German society and criticisms of German culture swept Germany to make previously unpopular artist Böcklin famous simply for his rejection of security, servitude to art academies and salons, and aristocratic patrons. Böcklin was compared by many writers not only to Nietzsche, but also to other German masterminds such as Goethe, Wagner, and Dürer. Pamphlets, articles, and other forms of public discourse were dedicated to Böcklin and Nietzsche. *Pan*, organized in part by German art critic, Julius Meier-Graefe, who was an important connection of Beckmann's since 1904, went so far as to name itself after Böcklin who had made the goat god into his own characteristic subject.⁶⁷ Writer and co-founder to *Pan*, Richard Dehmel, openly admired and wrote about Böcklin while the Berlin National Gallery director, Hugo von Tschudi, dedicated a special edition of *Kunst für Alle* (Art for All) to Böcklin. This is the environment in which Beckmann began painting, joined the art market, and became subject to art criticism that more often than not took sides with the popular German philosophies of their time. Beckmann greatly admired Böcklin specifically because of his vulgarity and individuality; and the fashionable theories of individuality made Böcklin famous and practically idolized by German art critics. Beckmann sought to attain such fame and wealth throughout his career, which hardly distinguishes Beckmann's early

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Robert Wicks, "Friedrich Nietzsche", Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nietzsche/#NieInfUpo20tCenTho>, accessed March 2015.

⁶⁷ In his *catalogue raisonne* of Böcklin's work, Rolf Andree lists 16 paintings on the subject of Pan and 13 more on the subject of fauns or satyrs, making these goat-footed creatures among the most frequently depicted subjects Böcklin's entire *oeuvre*. Andree, p 555. Tumasonis, 50.

artistic achievements and goals from his social aspirations affiliated with Nietzsche's philosophy of the individual.

Beckmann's personal confessions of individuality were by no means invented, but largely taken from popular culture that followed the writings espoused by Nietzsche that elevated the status of the individual from society. During the last decade of Nietzsche's life and the first decade of the twentieth century, his thoughts were particularly attractive to avant-garde artists who saw themselves on the periphery of established social fashion and practice.⁶⁸ Beckmann used these popular Nietzschean philosophies taken from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, one of his most popular books announcing a manifesto of personal self-overcoming to better fit in society. In a letter written to Reinhard Piper for publication in 1923, Beckmann spoke familiarly and freely stating openly his genius and well-known artistic reputation as a maturing artist, "I was successful in throwing off the fetters that suppressed my dainty genius. Besides, money is a truly embarrassing business... As a determined German youth I went to Paris in 1903. Rented myself a studio in the rue Notre Dame des Champs and painted huge pictures, twice as big as those with which I later aroused admiration and disdain among my respected peers. That was a good beginning."⁶⁹ Beckmann's jocular tone nonetheless indicates his intention and tacit admission to being a dandy and simultaneously, Nietzsche's idea of the "determined" individual standing out among his peers "with admiration and disdain." As we have seen, Beckmann's unwavering subscription to popular culture— whether through fashion or philosophy— allowed him to establish himself as a great artist, even a so-called genius, intended to earn himself a reputable artistic status within society. Beckmann's

⁶⁸ Wicks.

⁶⁹ Buenger, ed. *Max Beckmann Self-Portrait in Words: Collected Writings and Statements, 1903-1950*, 275.

endorsement to the cult of the individual cannot be misunderstood as original to Beckmann, but the cultural currency in Germany at this time.

Other German writers more closely aligned with the arts also propagated the cult of the individual. Julius Langbehn's 1890 publication entitled *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (Rembrandt as Teacher) held Rembrandt as the model for the future, believing that the Dutch painter was the most truly German of all artists from the past because of his powerful individualism.⁷⁰ *Rembrandt als Erzieher* was an instant success, published in periodicals like *Kunst für Alle*.⁷¹ Langbehn feared the masses and believed in powerful individuals who would not be worn down by the forces of society in order to secure Germany's future. Self-portraiture was central to the pursuit of individualization. Rembrandt embodied Langbehn's model of the powerful individual for various reasons, including his many self-portraits, painted throughout his life which Langbehn coined as, "Rembrandtesque individualism."⁷² Beckmann was certainly not isolated from the *Kulturkritiker* of his time, but absorbed these philosophies into his artwork. He made a career of producing self-portraits, almost eighty self-portraits in his fifty-year-long career just a few short of Rembrandt. In his public statement entitled, "On my Painting" written in 1938, Beckmann holds fast to the ideals of individualism, stating, "The greatest danger that threatens humanity is collectivism."⁷³ The German infatuation with the cult of the individual helped Beckmann establish himself as a recognized and *en vogue* artist within Germany society. Again, making it difficult to differentiate Beckmann's own artistic goals from the popular philosophical trends, that dominated Germany at this time.

⁷⁰ Tumasonis, 55.

⁷¹ Tumasonis, 55. *Kunst für Alle* often wrote reviews on the Secession including Beckmann's work whose editor Beckmann would later meet in 1909. Buenger, ed. *Max Beckmann Self-Portrait in Words: Collected Writings and Statements, 1903-1950*, 95.

⁷² Tumasonis, 56.

⁷³ Buenger, ed. *Max Beckmann Self-Portrait in Words: Collected Writings and Statements, 1903-1950*, 305.

The links between intellectual concepts and artistic impulses transformed the artist as an individual that demanded a higher-level of moral and social responsibility from the artist. This concern resulted in the proliferation of self-portraiture that accentuated the shift away from the previous immobility of Imperial Germany's political and cultural life for hundreds of years. In *Self-Portrait* (1924) German Impressionist, Lovis Corinth--who later succeeded Max Liebermann as the president of the Berlin Secession where Beckmann was the youngest elected member in 1906-- shows himself as both a member of the new elite class after the collapse of the social order in WWI and as its cultural prophet (figure 47). He portrays himself in a three-piece suit with a starched collar and cravat. This ensemble looks more like the working clothes of a prosperous banker than a painter, which informs the viewer about his social status as an artist in Germany in 1924. Corinth's fashion along with his concentration as the "artist prophet" is one that Beckmann emulated before the war and again after the war in his *Self-Portrait with a Cigarette* and *Self-Portrait in Tuxedo* using his new artistic style of flattened forms and sharp colorism in the New Objectivity.

Situating Beckmann within a larger comparison of portraiture after the war highlights Beckmann different ego ideals from other modern painters. Generally, post-war self-portraiture is a nasty and neurotic form of self-abuse. Portraiture's history comes from the Renaissance theorist, Alberti, who described Narcissus as the inventor of painting, an art that "embraced the surface of the pool."⁷⁴ However, for modern painters, narcissism is a solitary vice, the symptom of a sickly introversion. Austrian Expressionist, Egon Schiele, for example, portrayed himself compulsively masturbating while Mexican painter, Frida Kahlo, sliced open her chest to lay bare a bleeding heart,

⁷⁴ David Summers, *Vision, Reflection, and Desire in Western Painting*, (Chapel Hill: Press Books, 2007), 147.

while Otto Dix characterized himself as a malicious bourgeois prostitute murder. Beckmann's self-portraiture does not fit with these themes self-loathing and extremism. Though Beckmann was self-critical, his portraiture shows no violent acts against himself like the representations of Dix, Kahlo, or Shiele. Instead Beckmann's self-portraiture is silently critical and, at times, aspirational.

BECKMANN'S IDENTITY AND SOCIAL POLITICS IN
HIS MULTIFIGURAL WORKS

In an attempt to establish continuities between Beckmann's pre- and post-war artistic project, I have attempted to show that Beckmann used portraiture as a sophisticated vehicle for conveying, and thereby securing, an aspirational class identity. Beckmann's elite fashion and mannerisms may also help us to identify Beckmann's figure within his large multi-figure compositions. In 1909, Beckmann added his self-portrait into a large, group portrait entitled, *Resurrection* (figure 48). Beckmann had a conflicted relationship to religion. Born into a Protestant family, he set his own views of religious skepticism, if not opposition, against traditional notions of Christian justice and judgment.⁷⁵ In this curious painting, Beckmann's friends and family gather in a drawing-room to witness the resurrection of the dead as described by the Book of Revelations.⁷⁶ Eberle identified Beckmann as the figure that stands to the far left, facing the viewer.⁷⁷ Indeed it appears that Beckmann is holding a cigarette in his right hand in a manner not unlike his previous self-portraits. Also like his Florence portrait, Beckmann stands confidently, and this time next to the scene of souls ascending into heaven. Most of the crowd looks up into heaven or at the center of the painting where souls ascend upward, while Beckmann's figure appears unconcerned with the religious spectacle taking place around him. According to Güse, Beckmann stands outside the realm of earthly concern for redemption: "Beckmann assumes for the first time the role of 'director and stagehand.'" ⁷⁸ This directorial role is reinforced by his position at the edge of the

⁷⁵ Eberle, 82.

⁷⁶ Eberle, 76.

⁷⁷ Eberle, 77.

⁷⁸ Ernst-Gerhard Güse, Max Beckmann, *Das Frühwerk Max Beckmanns : zur Thematik seiner Bilder aus den Jahren 1904 - 1914* (Frankfurt/M: Peter Lang, 1977) 36.

painting, as he distances himself from emotional and spiritual liability and is also the disaffected tale of the dandy.

After *Resurrection*, Beckmann returned to the multi-figure composition in his *Sinking of the Titanic* (Figure 49). This large history painting depicts a contemporary disaster where over one thousand of the ship's passengers lost their lives after the ship struck an iceberg off the coast of Newfoundland on April 15th, 1912. After reading about the event in a Berlin newspaper, Beckmann recreated the scene on a monumental scale.⁷⁹ The large composition that measured approximately eight-feet-high and ten-feet-long. The sheer size of the painting conveys the importance Beckmann attributed to this canvas. Already known as the “German Delacroix,” because of his grandiose historical and mythological compositions, Beckmann hoped this composition would become another one of his statement pieces similar to his other large compositions of romantic heroism.⁸⁰

Previously, Eberle and Güse have interpreted Beckmann's pre-war paintings such as *Drama*, 1906, *The Battle*, 1907, *The Flood*, 1908, *Scene from the Destructions of Messina*, 1909 and *The Sinking of the Titanic*, 1912-13 in light of Nietzschean and Darwinian philosophies popular in the early 1900s. According to Güse, Beckmann read Nietzsche as young teenager and painted several scenes in a “Nietzschean spirit,” in which only the “fittest” characters survived natural chaos, though what precisely determined “fitness” had yet to be articulated.⁸¹ Here, for example is Eberle's analysis of *The Sinking of the Titanic*:

⁷⁹ The exact newspaper Beckmann read about the sinking of the Titanic is unknown. However, In *Leben in Berlin*, pp 54 n. 21, Kinkel identified and quoted a passage Beckman referred to in his December 31, 1908 journal entry about the earthquake in Messina, Italy. Beckmann stated, “I read still more in the newspapers about the terrible disaster in Messina. An account by a doctor— ad specifically the part where some half-naked prisoners, who had been set free in the tumult, attacked other people and their property— gave me the idea of a new pictures”, later rendered in 1909, *Scene from the Destruction of Messina*.

⁸⁰ Chametzky, 16.

⁸¹ Eberle, 77.

... Beckmann shows the survivors in the foreground fighting for a place in the lifeboat while the great ship floats unharmed on the horizon. It is not the failure of technology... but the struggle for survival. In painting his images of catastrophe, Beckmann seems to have remained outside and above the action, directing it and bringing order into its chaos. No evidence has yet turned up that he depicted himself in any of the figures in these paintings. Chaos and struggle, he believed, served to select the fittest, the best, the 'exceptional man' and Beckmann indeed appears to have identified only with those who had emerged superior out of history.⁸²

Though Beckmann includes himself in a number of multi-figural works after the war, only in the religious, pre-war scene of *Resurrection* has Beckman's presence been identified. Identifying Beckmann's presence or absence in his own painting would certainly impact Eberle's claims and his insistence on the importance of physical and psychological fitness in Beckmann's worldview.⁸³

In 1913, just upon completing the *Titanic*, Beckmann posed for a picture of himself beside the painting (figure 50) Eberle argued for the importance of *Titanic* to Beckmann because of this carefully orchestrated photo. Beckmann chose to seat himself adjacent to a figure in the painting who sits in the lower right corner of the painting casually smoking a cigarette as the figures around him struggle for their lives. As Eberle described it, "The scene was composed for the photographer with great care... [furthest] left stands an empty easel, draped with the artist's hat and coat. Beckmann is seated before the lower right corner of the catastrophe— at the very point where a man is attempting to clamber into an already overcrowded lifeboat."⁸⁴ The hat and coat Beckmann placed on the empty easel to the left of *Titanic*, are a reasonable match for the hat and coat worn by the figure in the painting. Beckmann sits before the lower right

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Physical as related to Darwinian thought and psychological in relation to Nietzschean thought.

⁸⁴ Eberle, 21.

corner of the painting— in a similar seated position to the figure smoking the cigarette in the painting. I believe that he is seated at this point in front of the painting, not to bring attention to the man attempting to clamber into the lifeboat— an act commonly seen throughout the entire composition, but to bring attention to this other, more aloof observer, who languorously smokes a cigarette in a scene of earthly catastrophe and human survival.

Beckmann's presence has remained undetected in his various renditions of religious mythological disasters and apocalyptic scenes. Beckmann has not appeared in his other contemporary destruction scene, *Scene from the Destructions of Messina* (figure 51). The image depicts an enormous earthquake that destroyed the port of Messina in Southern Italy, killing 80,000 people in 1908.⁸⁵ Beckmann focused on an account of escaped convicts struggling with one another in the aftermath of the quake. A single uniformed police officer in the middle-ground points a gun in an attempt to maintain order. Prisoners escaped the jail raping the women of the town. Beckmann wrote in his journal on December 31, 1908 about the painting, "I then read still more in the newspapers about the terrible disaster in Messina. An account by a doctor— and specifically the part where some half-naked prisoners, who had been set free in the tumult, attacked other people and their property— gave me the idea for a new picture."⁸⁶ Beckmann's painting shows his fascination with class conflict, a violent and imagined idea of what happens when the social order collapses.

⁸⁵ St. Louis Art Museum, <http://www.slam.org:8080/emuseum/view/objects/asitem/2492/190/displayDate-asc?t:state:flow=8fc3cefc-f915-438d-9e0d-480bc29159be>, accessed April 2015.

⁸⁶ Buenger, ed. *Max Beckmann Self-Portrait in Words: Collected Writings and Statements, 1903-1950*, 93.

Because his early paintings seem to follow a similar intention, style, and narrative of destruction and survival, scholars like Güse, Eberle, and Chametzky analyzed *Titanic* in a similar narrative vein that seemed to embody Beckmann's Nietzschean worldview. However, proof that Beckmann inserted a portrait of himself into *The Sinking of the Titanic*, a scene of earthly destruction tightly interlaced with themes of social-class inequality, opens a new area of interpretation to Beckmann's pre-war canvases.

In a business letter addressed to the St. Louis art collector, Morton D. May, concerning the sale and transportation of Beckmann's paintings from Germany to St. Louis, Beckmann's son Peter revealed that Beckmann painted himself into the scene of *Titanic* despite the fact Beckmann was not actually present at the sinking of the ship: *Im übrigen ist auf der "Titanik" auch ein Portrait von Max Beckmann und ein solches meiner Mutter.* (By the way in "Titanic" there is a portrait of Max Beckmann and my mother).⁸⁷ Unlike Beckmann's previous self-portrait in *Resurrection*, he sits with his back to the viewer, seen at the bottom right hand side of the painting. This figure, whom I have identified as Beckmann, sits calmly on the boat as the scene of human calamity unfolds before his eyes. The figure is consistent with other details we know to be true about Beckmann's self-portraiture. As I have noted, Beckmann used his personal motif of the cigarette in hand often in portraiture since 1907. The figure in *Titanic* recalls the calm and confident Beckmann depicted in *Self-Portrait in Florence*, 1907, *Self-Portrait as a Medical Orderly*, 1915, and *Self-Portrait in Tuxedo*, 1927 and the position of Beckmann's self-portrait in *Resurrection* since both figures flank the center of action and appear near the border of the painting's frame. Most importantly, the figure plays the role

⁸⁷ Morton D. May Papers, File 46, "Beckmann, Dr. Peter 1956-1975", Saint Louis Art Museum Archives.

of director and audience to an apocalyptic moment just as he did to the redemption of souls into heaven in *Resurrection*.

The figure I believe to be Beckmann is identified through his gesture of the cigarette in hand. However, the figure is not consistent with the other fashion attributes we have associated with Beckmann of his popped neck-collar and the aristocratic fashion of the suit. Instead, Beckmann is wearing what appears to be a Homburg hat in the painting. Other Berlin artists and persons of cultural establishment wore the Homburg hat as seen in photo of the 1908 Berlin Secession exhibition jury. Their hats serve as identifiable fashion and social marker in Germany at this time. Up to 1914, the Homburg hat was considered a soft and flexible alternative to the top hat. England's Edward VII helped make the hat popular when he bought one on his trip to the Bad Homburg in 1882 (a spa destination visited by the wealthy and famous like Kessler and Kaiser Wilhelm II).⁸⁸ Kaiser Wilhelm II, Edward VII's cousin, previously hunted in a green hunting hat that is remarkably similar in appearance to the Homburg hat (figure 52).⁸⁹ By 1910, royalty were often seen wearing different styles of the Homburg hat like King Konstantin of Greece, Prince Friedrich Karl von Hessen and Prince Constantin von Schaumburg-Lippe (both princes of German duchies), and figures on the Berlin Secession jury (figure 53). The Homburg could often be worn when strolling in town or in place of a boater hat, similar to how Beckmann wears it *Titanic*.⁹⁰ Overtime, the style and connotation of the Homburg hat changed, but in 1912, the hat served a marker for stylish and subtle elite

⁸⁸ Sven Raphael Schneider, "Homburg Hat- Past, Present, and Future", *Gentleman's Gazette* <http://www.gentlemansgazette.com/homburg-hat-history-style/>, accessed April 2015.

⁸⁹ Schneider.

⁹⁰ Schneider.

class identity that also proves the expectations of this figure in lifeboat who expected to face the open seas.

Peter's letter also states there is a portrait of his mother, Minna Tube, Max Beckmann's first wife. However, her figure is more difficult to identify than the portrait of Max and further research is necessary to conclusively attribute her identity to a figure in *Titanic*. In part, this is because Beckmann is not working in a naturalistic style, so perspective, realistic form, and color are not paramount to this painting.⁹¹ The small boy standing in front of Beckmann in the painting might be Peter—born in 1908, he would have been four at the time -- but, the figure behind this boy does not appear to be Minna. If we compare the *Titanic* figure to one of Beckmann's early double portraits painted three years earlier it seems likely that the figure sitting to Beckmann's right in *Titanic* is Minna. She wears a violet shawl that resembles the violet shawl she wore in a portrait painted just two years earlier, *Minna Beckmann-Tube with Violet Shawl*, 1910 (figure 54) This figure also mirrors Max's seated position near the border of the painting. Their figures create unity through symmetry formed from the space between their figures as both look up at a scene of action while others around them move awkwardly to save their life or the lives of others.

Assuming my attribution of Max and Minna Beckmann-Tube is correct, then the careful positioning of their dual portrait could add a new layer to Eberle's claims that Beckmann painted in a "Nietzschean spirit" before WWI. Given the tendency we have seen for Beckmann to cultivate an aspirational class identity within his self-portraits, we

⁹¹ See for example, the figure at the lower left corner depicted with a green face and the woman across from the figure presumed to be Beckmann with purple hair.

find the presence of similar tropes within this history painting: I believe that Beckmann's inclusion within *Titanic* was a clever and cynical way to announce his social ambitions. In *Titanic*, Beckmann depicted the social status to which he aspired, by placing his and Minna's figures securely in a lifeboat. The Titanic is notorious for having been equipped with fewer lifeboats than was necessary to save all its passengers and crew. Beckmann chose a real historical example in which psychological or physical strength were not the only factors in human survival, as Eberle would claim, but survival as it is attached to social status. Wayne Barlett has shown that survival of the shipwreck heavily depended upon the class of passengers stating, "The first-class stewards were in charge of only a few cabins, while those responsible for the second- and third-class passengers had to manage large numbers of people. In the third-class, passengers were largely left to their own devices after being informed of need to come on deck."⁹² This fact caused widespread outrage regarding the social inequalities that accompanied the evacuation of the Titanic following the disaster. Despite the chaos of the passengers drowning in the foreground of Beckmann's canvas, the Titanic itself is not shown sinking but is positioned quite stably on the horizon. The Titanic embodied technological and material advancement that fostered wealth in the modern-era. Understood in this context, *The Sinking of the Titanic* becomes about more than just Darwinian survival but class struggle, survival through attaining wealth, and Beckmann's social aspirations even before the social collapse that attended WWI.

⁹² Wayne Barlett, *Titanic: 9 Hours to Hell: The Survivor's Story* (Great Britain: Amberley Publishing, 2011), 121.

The figure that I believe to be Beckmann appears invulnerable, supporting Eberle's claim that Beckmann painted in a "Nietzschean spirit." Yet, this scene also reveals that security in modernity is associated with the elite and fashionable social classes. As was the case in Berlin where figures of the entrepreneurial bourgeois such as, leading bankers, industrialists, and wealthy persons of cultural establishment, financially supported the arts. The Berlin Secession, where Beckmann frequently showed his artwork including *Titanic* in 1913,⁹³ attracted financial backers, including Paul and Bruno Cassirer.⁹⁴ Founded under the financial backing of the Cassirer's, The Secession was understood as elitist, aristocratic, and cosmopolitan in its tastes. Some Secessionist artists, like Beckmann, practiced painting like those of the French Impressionists with strong brushwork and colors, exactly like what is seen in *Titanic* and his early mythological and historical paintings. Not born into the aristocratic or upper-bourgeois classes that funded the Secession, Beckmann associated with the fashionable classes through his choice of personal style and his professional associations. For example Paul Cassirer served as the Secession's business director, voting member of the board, and president.⁹⁵ His actions and decisions at the Secession were explicitly self-interested and often concerned with the outdated Impressionistic and post-Impressionistic style of painting from outside Germany. As noted about Cassirer, West observes: "In exchange

⁹³ Particularly, Wilhelm von Bode and Hugo von Tschudi. Robert Jensen, *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-siècle Europe* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 188. Barbara Buenger, "Some Portraits from Weimar-Era Frankfurt," *Of 'Truths Impossible to Put in Words' : Max Beckmann Contextualized* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 241.

⁹⁴ Beckmann began exhibiting work with the Berlin Secession in 1906, became the youngest elected member of the Secession committee in 1910, and remained involved with the group until its fissure in 1913 Neue Gallery, "Max Beckmann," <http://www.neuegalerie.org/collection/artist-profiles/max-beckmann>, 2011. Opened to sell artwork 51, Jay Clark

⁹⁵ Ibid.

for their financial generosity, they demanded an unprecedented voice in the artistic affairs of the group...[The Secession] devoted exhibitions to Munch, Toulouse-Lautrec and Cézanne... These choices were due in no small part to the shrewdness of the Cassirers...”⁹⁶

Beckmann’s style certainly took much from Munch, as mentioned previously in his early self-portraits, and Cézanne, whose work Beckmann saw while visiting France in 1904 after finishing his studies at the Weimar Art Academy.⁹⁷ Beckmann became close with Paul Cassirer. Following the success of Beckmann’s post-Impressionistic piece entitled, *Young Men by the Sea*, Cassirer offered Beckmann his first Berlin show in January 1907. Beckmann clearly understood the connection between art criticism and monetary gain writing in diary in 1912, “...it’s no use being a total klutz and turning down the chance of living a richer life when it’s on offer. Even so, it’s terribly hard to know where to draw the line between professional relationships and one’s personal sense of honor. Especially so in our case, with the firm of C.”⁹⁸ Beckmann later visited the Cassirers over holiday, which helped solidify his friendship and later shows with the Cassirer Gallery after the demise of the Berlin Secession.⁹⁹ In 1913, for example,

⁹⁶ West 24, 25.

⁹⁷ “Max Beckmann.”

⁹⁸ “C” refers to the Paul Cassirer Firm. The full paragraph reads: December 31th, 1912: “...Mink has invited Cassirer around to look at paintings. My feelings are very mixed. But we’ve probably got a few more years of suffering ahead of us. Then we’ll be free. Tonight is New Year’s Eve. My year is ending on a nervous note, more jittery than last year. In some ways success is harder to take than failure. The prospect of losing all you’ve gained is unsettling. Just as in some ways the poor man is happier than the rich man. Yet it’s no use being a total klutz and turning down the chance of living a richer life when it’s on offer. Even so, it’s terribly hard to know where to draw the line between professional relationships and one’s personal sense of honor. Especially so in our case, with the firm of C.” Buenger, *Max Beckmann Self-Portrait in Words*, 121.

⁹⁹ Cassirer and Beckmann maintained an on and off again friendship. Because of Cassirer controlled many of the exhibitions, artists, and styles seen at the Berlin Secession, Beckmann along with his fellow artists, Waldmar Rösler and Wilhelm Schocken hoped to establish a the ‘New Secession.’ However, Beckmann,

Cassirer staged a retrospective of forty-seven of Beckmann's paintings in his Berlin gallery. Despite Beckmann's cultivated friendships with Berlin's elite made possible through his Impressionistic style, post-Impressionism could be understood as outdated and cosmopolitan in style especially when compared to other contemporary German Expressionist artists like Franz Marc, Paul Klee, and August Macke who were creating radically different pieces of Expressionist artwork in Germany during this time.¹⁰⁰

However, Beckmann's conservative style was popular with the Berlin elite who controlled the Secession. In fact, Ernst-Gerhard Güse claimed that Beckmann deliberately combined aspects his academic learning and Impressionism in a calculated attempt to win the favor of the *Künstlerbund* jury—founded by Harry Graf Kessler— when showing his *Junge Männer am Meer* in 1905.¹⁰¹ The jury included German Impressionist Max Liebermann who was also a founding member of the Berlin Secession before Beckmann joined and who was a practicing Impressionist.¹⁰² These interpretations by scholars and calculated actions by Beckmann demonstrate that very little separates Beckmann's anachronistic artistic style from his move to establish wealthy social connections and artistic success in Berlin during the early 1900s.

Beckmann also acknowledged the importance of financial security often in his journal entries before and after the war, writing in 1912, “The more secure I become, in

upon realizing the large sums of money needed to start a new Secession Beckmann and his friends let go of the idea stating the impossibility of the task unless, ‘that of finding some noble money man,’ as stated in his journal. Buenger, *Max Beckmann Self-Portrait in Words*, 90.

¹⁰⁰ Historian Hans-Georg Betz has written that, instead of challenging the aristocracy's power, the industrial bourgeoisie drew increasingly close to it in style and aspirations. Betz, 72.

¹⁰¹ Barbara Buenger, “Beckmann's Beginnings: ‘*Junge Männer am Meer*’”, *Pantheon*, Vol. 41 Issue 2, 1983, pp 134.

¹⁰² Buenger, “Beckmann's Beginnings: ‘*Junge Männer am Meer*’”, 134.

financial terms, the more my passion for painting will become sure, untroubled, and free... it'll work out, I won't be beaten. I am going to create all that I want to. It will and must work out."¹⁰³ In a letter to his second-wife, Quappi, written in 1925, Max's interest in forming a network of loose ties are apparent in the way that he writes about his wealthy Frankfurt friend and the former director of the Mannheim Kunsthalle, Prince Karl Anton von Rohan.¹⁰⁴ Beckmann seems to have courted Rohan because he thought Rohan could latter be useful to him. Beckmann was intrigued by the workings of high society, welcomed its benefits and support, and thought that it would prove indispensable to his success.¹⁰⁵ Beckmann stated that, Rohan and his "clique" "might be useful to us." and that he could be "quite useful. . . because this man gets around quite a bit..."¹⁰⁶ This passage attests to the well-connectedness of von Rohan and the financial motives Beckmann continued to have following the war even after receiving a permanent teaching appointment at the Städel Art School in 1925.

¹⁰³ Barbara Buenger, "Some Portraits from Weimar-Era Frankfurt," *Of 'Truths Impossible to Put in Words' : Max Beckmann Contextualized* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 120.

¹⁰⁴ Buenger, *Max Beckmann Self-Portrait in Words*, 280.

¹⁰⁵ Buenger, *Max Beckmann Self-Portrait in Words*, 281.

¹⁰⁶ Buenger, *Max Beckmann Self-Portrait in Words*, 280.

BECKMANN AND THE NEW OBJECTIVITY

Beckmann's pre-war self-portraits show Beckmann using self-portraiture as a vehicle for class identity along with using commercial items to express class aspiration. Beckmann's post-war portraiture continues this trend in Weimar-Era Germany (1919-1933) with the artistic movement known as *Die Neue Sachlichkeit* (The New Objectivity Movement). Gustav Friedrich Hartlaub, who was an art historian and the director of the Städtische Kunsthalle in Mannheim, Germany, coined the term *Neue Sachlichkeit*. The Kunst-halle opened a groundbreaking exhibition titled, *Die neue Sachlichkeit Deutsche Malerei seit dem Expressionismus* (The New Objectivity: German Painting since Expressionism) in 1925.¹⁰⁷ Hartlaub split the New Objectivity into two movements.¹⁰⁸ The classicist—the right wing and Verist movement, which made up the left wing, represented by artists such as George Grosz, Rudolf Schlichter, and Christian Schad in Berlin, Max Beckmann in Frankfurt, Otto Dix and Conrad Felixmüller in Dresden, and Karl Hubbuch, Georg Scholz, and Wilhelm Schnarrenberger in Karlsruhe.¹⁰⁹ Their paintings could be described as shocking, violently caricatured, and exaggerated using razor-sharp perspectives and forms that forcefully commentated on their post-war economic and social struggles and miseries. The economic duress felt around Germany after WWI sided many of the New Objectivity artists with the left (i.e. SPD, Social Democratic Party of Germany) as many of them came from lower and middle-class working families. This trend is seen in their renderings of homeless and wounded war

¹⁰⁷ Stefanie Gommel, "Art Dictionary: New Objectivity" *Hatje Cantz*, <http://www.hatjecantz.de/new-objectivity-5631-1.html>, accessed March 2015.

¹⁰⁸ Gommel.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

vets and contrasts between wealth and poverty. Since its conception, Dix and Beckmann have been considered by critics and scholars as the movement's key figures within the New Objectivity.¹¹⁰ The artists are similar in age, social class, and devotion to portraiture, but Dix serves as a point of contrast in this section to the social aspirations, ego ideals, and political sentiments held by Beckmann in his post-war portraiture.

The New Objectivity continues to be a fascination of art historians and the public today. Most recently, Stephanie Barron, senior curator and head the Modern Art department at the Los Angeles Contemporary Museum of Art and Sabine Eckmann, director and chief curator of the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum in St. Louis, Missouri—that holds largest Beckmann collection in the world— organized an exhibition and catalogue entitled, “New Objectivity: Modern German Art in the Weimar Republic, 1919–1933” set to release at the Los Angeles Museum of Modern Art (LACMA) in October 2015.¹¹¹ According to Barron and Eckmann, this show is the first comprehensive exhibition in the United States to explore the dominant artistic trends of New Objectivity featuring, “key figures...Otto Dix and Max Beckmann.”¹¹² Other popular museums like the Guggenheim describe Dix and Beckmann as having the same politics and social criticisms within the New Objectivity stating, “The so-called Verists, including Otto Dix and George Grosz, aggressively attacked and satirized the evils of society and those in power and demonstrated in harsh terms the devastating effects of World War I and the

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ LACMA, “New Objectivity: Modern German Art in the Weimar Republic, 1919-1933, <http://www.lacma.org/art/exhibition/new-objectivity-modern-german-art-weimar-republic>, accessed March 2015.

¹¹² LACMA.

economic climate upon individuals. Max Beckmann was connected with these artists.”¹¹³

Though some of Beckmann’s post-war artworks support this description, I argue in this section that Beckmann’s persona, mannerisms, and characteristics established before the war reveal other, under-examined, points of contrasts between Beckmann and Dix within the New Objectivity.

Both Beckmann and Dix served in the First World War and were born into working, middle-class families in the industrial towns of Leipzig and Gera respectively. Dix born in 1891, was seven years younger than Dix. Dix spent his childhood in Gera where his father was a mold-maker at an iron foundry and his mother a seamstress.¹¹⁴ Beckmann, the youngest of three children, was born in Leipzig. His father, Carl Christian Heinrich Beckmann, was the son of an innkeeper and found work as a grain merchant.¹¹⁵ Beckmann’s mother, Antoinette Henriette Bertha, was born into a farming family and later died in 1906.¹¹⁶ Dix, unlike Beckmann, seems to have embraced his working-class roots throughout his career. His painting entitled *Portrait of Parents* (1921) pictured in an empathic portrait of his mother and father in a dark, unadorned room, sitting on a damaged couch (figure 55). The portrait shows Dix’s two hard-working, proletarian parents old and worn-out, but Dix then portrayed lovingly. Dix presents his parents as everyday folk and members of a lower class and Dix re-visited this motif in 1924 in *The Artist’s Parents II* (figure 56). This second portrait shows his parents simply dressed

¹¹³ “Neue Sachlichkeit New objectivity; Germany, late 1910s,” Guggenheim, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, <http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/collections/collection-online/movements/195224>, accessed March 2015.

¹¹⁴ “Otto Dix”, The Art Story, <http://www.theartstory.org/artist-dix-otto.htm>, accessed March 2015.

¹¹⁵ Spieler, 195.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

responding to the gaze of their son with tiredness in their eyes. Neither of the portraits valorizes his parents but show their social status with a verist insistence on everyday appearance and clothing. Both portraits were the result of a lengthy work process. Dix made various visits to Gera, and created numerous detailed studies of his parents' hands and faces.¹¹⁷ This process along with the paintings themselves prove, that Dix cared to take observations and memories from his proletariat upbringing to help cultivate his own identity and artistic *oeuvre*.

In contrast, Beckmann tried to downplay his middle-class bourgeoisie roots to elevate his social status as an artist. Beckmann's father died when Beckmann was only eleven-years-old and his mother when he was twenty-two, making it difficult to portray his parents as Dix did in *The Artist's Parents/II*. His two paintings that commemorate the passing of his mother, painted in 1906 entitled, *Large Death Scene*, and *Small Death Scene* remain the only paintings that pay tribute to his parents, and more specifically his mother. Beckmann never painted a family portrait of his mother, father, and siblings (he had two elder sisters). Neither did Beckmann talk highly about his proletariat roots in his writing. In a letter to his friend, Reinhard Piper, Beckmann stated his dismal thoughts about his childhood, "That I was born on February 12, 1884, near Schwansee in Leipzig is something I cannot suppress. However, I do not consider my birthplace an essential one... In general I find it embarrassing to be reminded of one's birth... So, right now I live in Frankfurt am Main at Schweizer Straße 3, in my studio..."¹¹⁸ Beckmann seems embarrassed by money and only alluded to his childhood roots in Leipzig only briefly

¹¹⁷ Kerstin Stremmel and Uta Grosenik, *Realism*, (Köln: Taschen, 2004), 45.

¹¹⁸ Buenger, ed. *Max Beckmann Self-Portrait in Words: Collected Writings and Statements, 1903-1950*, 274.

until quickly moving to the more prestigious parts of his life located in Frankfurt am Main where he made various connections with the new Frankfurt elite who rose in social-class rank after the social collapse of WWI such as: Heinrich Simon editor-in-chief of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (Frankfurt Newspaper), and his wife Irma Simon, Prince Karl Anton von Rohan who was in wide control over various facets of cultural and political discourse in Frankfurt and Germany, along with von Rohan's mistress, Lilly von Schnitzler, who was known for hosting large parties receiving and prominent figures from industry, culture, and politics that helped propel Beckmann's career in post-war Germany.¹¹⁹

Despite Beckmann and Dix's varying behavior toward their working-class roots, the genre of portraiture is an area that both Beckmann and Dix used often to reveal their ego ideals and political sentiments. Dix injected sharp caricatures into his depictions of some of the leading figures in Germany along with his family and himself. Dix's family portrait entitled, *The Artist's Family*, 1927 shows Dix purposely rendering himself in a satirical and demeaning manner despite his traditional use of materials and subject matter (figure 57). Dix employed the old-master technique of glaze painting on wood making reference to the old altarpieces of Northern Europe that influenced his work.¹²⁰ Dix also organized his subjects in a pyramid scheme made popular in the Renaissance period with

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 282. "Shortly after Beckmann first met Rohan at the von Schitzlers', he wrote his fiancée, Quappi, that he had begun a painting of Frankfurt society. Quappi had heard much about the circle in letters and conversations. Quappi (Mathilde von Kaulbach) the daughter to a Viennese aristocrat and painter, Friedrich August von Kaulbach, was introduced to Beckmann through Lily von Schnitzler. The origins of the painting lay in the regular intellectual, political, and social exchange of the gatherings at the von Schnitzlers'. They invited many of the same individuals who frequented the Simons' *Herrenrunde*, (male circles), the von Schnitzlers entertained far larger numbers of artists, university professors, executives, governmental figures, and friends extending up the aristocratic ladder to royalty." See more in Barbara Buenger's "Some Portraits from Weimar-Era Frankfurt", *Of 'truths impossible to put in words': Max Beckmann Contextualized* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 191.

¹²⁰ "Otto Dix, *The Artist's Family*, 1927", Städel Museum, <http://www.staedelmuseum.de/en/collection/artists-family-1927>, accessed March 2015.

artists like Leonardo de Vinci and Raphael. His wife, Martha, presides over the scene like the Virgin Mary. She bends intimately over the newborn boy who, like a Christ Child, forms the center of the scene. From the background, his sister Nelly pushes forward a symbolic carnation.¹²¹ Within this Renaissance-inspired piece of a perfect, holy family, Dix's son, is oddly painted with a satanic smirk. Even more incongruous to this scene is Dix's head forcing its way in from the right side of the picture frame to smile joyfully at the baby. Dix does not paint himself in a flattering manner, but crudely. He applies to his depiction of himself unkempt hair and beard, a severe under-bite, and crossed-eyes, despite the fact Dix did not hold these characteristics in reality. Dix's fascination with the ugly sets his family portrait apart from the traditional means of somber and serious portraiture. Dix opened himself up to judgment by fashioning himself in a demeaning manner that purposefully downplayed his artistic ability and identity as an artist.

In sharp contrast, Beckmann painted himself as the apathetic judge to his less than perfect family. Beckmann's *Family Picture*, (1920), is an ironic visual play on the notion that families function in a respectful and rational manner (figure 58). Beckmann's family members are shown in a dark, cramped room. Beckmann is positioned to the far left of the scene staring solemnly, almost directorially over the scene of his family members who he seems to have characterized according to their personalities and emotions. Beginning in the lower left foreground, Beckmann's open-palmed hand seems to signal to the viewer approach. Next to Beckmann is a woman, Beckmann's then wife, Minna Tube-Beckmann, holding a mirror to her face in a sign of vanity. Since the time they met at the Weimar Ducal Art Academy, Beckmann had adamantly urged Tube not to work,

¹²¹ "Otto Dix."

but in 1918 she pursued her career as an opera singer in Graz, Austria, where she received considerable success on stage and remained distant from Beckmann and her daughter, Anni.¹²² Beckmann and Tube-Beckmann would later divorce in 1925.¹²³ Next to Tube is an elderly lady, Beckmann's mother-in-law, Frau Tube, whose unshakeable Protestant faith often clashed with Beckmann's orientation to Nietzsche.¹²⁴ She holds up a large hand covering her entire face as if signaling despair. Eberle has stated the possibility of Frau Tube in Beckmann's *Resurrection* standing just before the right and behind him in the painting, as if waiting for her name to be called.¹²⁵ Next to her is Beckmann's sister-in-law, Anni, sitting with her head resting on her hand while she gazes emotionlessly at her mother, Tube-Beckmann, who seems largely to ignore her.¹²⁶ Next to Anni is a servant holding a newspaper, possibly a symbol of the violent revolutions taking place in Germany when this painting was produced.¹²⁷ Lastly, on the floor lies Peter, Beckmann's son, reading a book unaware of the events taking place outside the home.¹²⁸ Though these figures are largely isolated from one another, there are a wide range of emotions and stories behind the figures: vanity, despair, boredom, curiosity, innocence. Except for Beckmann, who seems to fashion himself as the nonchalant presider over the chaos of emotional family tumult. Playing once again the directorial

¹²² Peter Selz, *Max Beckmann*. (New York, London, Paris: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1996), 24.

¹²³ Selz, *Max Beckmann*, 29.

¹²⁴ Eberle, 81.

¹²⁵ Eberle, 80.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid. The German Revolution, also known as the November Revolution was the politically driven civil conflict in the German Empire that largely transpired from events related First World War, which resulted in the replacement of Germany's Imperial government with a republic. Violent mobs representing the left and right wings fought across the country in the streets until the revolutionary period that lasted from November 1918 establishment a Republic (The Weimar Republic) in 1919.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

role reinforced by his position at the edge of the painting, he distances himself from emotional and spiritual liability.

The most significant point of comparison between Beckmann and Dix, however, is their self-portraiture and how they wielded as a means to fashion themselves according to a particular social class. As described in the previous section, Beckmann seems to have modeled himself after important German aristocrats like Harry Graf Kessler. Beckmann's association with the new elite classes continues through fashion and mannerisms in the New Objectivity. In *Self-Portrait with a Cigarette*, Beckmann presents himself as a self-assured man and apathetic member of society. He sits in an austere decorated room, dressed to impress, wearing an impeccable blue-gray suit that refers to the business ties many of the new elite cultivated to achieve financial success in post-war Germany, along with a cocked neck collar. Beckmann's attribute, the cigarette, is in his right hand. Beckmann's self-portrait does not lend itself to the New Objectivity's social commentary of the shock of war, struggle to survive the post-war economic crisis, or even skepticism and disillusionment. Neither does Beckmann try to criticize or disassociate from the new elite classes in Germany through his serious and well-kept persona but instead identifies with the straight-laced burgher whom Grosz and Dix despised.¹²⁹ Especially Grosz, who portrayed the representatives of the ruling class—press publishers, nationalists,

¹²⁹ "Großbürger" (Grand Burgher) male, and "Burgheress", female, were members of class within the patrician ruling elite, the Grand Burgher was a type of urban citizen and social order of highest rank. A Grand Burgher was defined within the upper-social class of affluent individuals. After the German Revolution in 1918-19, Following the German Revolution of 1918-19, the "Großbürger" along with German nobility as a legally defined class was abolished on August 11, 1919. Their titles, however, continued merely as part of the family name and heritage. The Grand Burghers would nevertheless continue to retain their powerful economic significance, political authority and influence, as well as their personal status and importance in society, beyond the Weimar Constitution. The term "burgher" then became slang for upper-class citizenry.

monarchists and clerics—as a class of brainless and amoral people wearing the popped-collar and tie with unwavering seriousness, as seen in *Pillars of Society*, 1926.

Otto Dix fashioned himself as a part of the German working class. In 1912, Dix painted, *Self-Portrait with Carnation*, rendering himself as a twenty-one-year-old art student in Dresden (figure 59). Dix wears corduroy, a durable fabric used for trousers, jackets, and shirts worn by the working class. Dix's corduroy can be traced back to the shirt of father and dress of his mother in *Portrait of Parents*, 1921 and *Portrait of Parents II*, 1924. Conversely, Beckman fashioned himself with the elite German classes wearing a cocked neck collar in *Self-Portrait with a Cigarette* and *Self-portrait in Florence*, 1907 painted just after his academy days when he was twenty-three. Dix continues to associate with the proletariat through fashion in his later self-portraits. *Self-Portrait*, (1923) shows Dix in a formal white shirt, with bent collar, and necktie assembled not dissimilar from the working-class subjects portrayed by August Sander (figure 60). His face appears worn and embellished with wrinkles, alluding to the appearances of his proletariat parents and the time spent he at the front. In another mode of self-portraiture, Dix associates himself directly with his trade of work as an artist, a theme Beckmann rarely showed straightforwardly, if ever. In *Self-Portrait with Easel*, Dix shows himself in an artist apron in the midst of painting (figure 61). Dix confidently stares straight at the viewer with paintbrush in hand. His confidence is similar to the self-assured look Beckmann endows himself using the motif of the cigarette in hand. While Dix in some ways modeled his parents through their working-class identity, Beckmann's father died when he was still young, leaving a void of a father figure that pop-culture easily filled with

visually enticing cigarette ads that showed confident and wealthy men smoking. The fact that Dix did not render himself in close relation to the newly established elite of post-war Germany classes but through various modes of working-class dress means that Beckmann's fashion comportment and pretentiousness signaled with the cigarette were a learned and adapted visual lexicon to promote himself as a social elite despite the fact he, like Dix, came from a working, middle-classes family.

Dix not only avoided fashioning himself as a part of a German new elite but he also made fun of the elite population Beckmann was trying to assimilate to. In *Here is Intellect*, (1921), Beckmann seems to characterize and satirize those of high society. Beckmann's print focuses on the deficiencies of post-war society, in true Neue Sachlichkeit style, however similar to his *Family Picture*, Beckmann applies an ironic title to the scene taking place in the nightclub. The man on the left side of the print, dressed in *haute-couture*, appears to have had a bit too much champagne. He drunkenly points at the place where his brain should be, while his equally well-fashioned companions laughingly look on. However, the meaning of print becomes more complicated if considering that the intoxicated man on the left resembles Beckmann himself. A cigarette falls from the corner of mouth while his wide and circular facial structure recalls portraits like, *Self-Portrait with a Cigarette*, 1923, and *Self-Portrait in Front of a Red Curtain*, 1923. Though Beckmann pokes fun at himself like Dix in *The Artist's Family*, Dix often exaggerated his figures' features to the point of tiredness, hideousness, or with a malicious intent while Beckmann caricatured himself according to wealth and success even in satire.

Dix mocks the straight-laced burghers of society that Beckmann often fashioned himself after. In his *The Sex-Murderer: Self-Portrait*, (1920) Dix plays the cosmopolitan dandy. *Lustmord* or sex-murder was a popular narrative in Weimar Germany that was closely aligned with the manifestation of the new and liberated woman (figure 62).¹³⁰ The scene shows Dix fully clothed in a highly-ornamented dotted suit wearing high-heeled boots and caps. Dix wildly waves a bloody knife and a detached leg; pieces of a gigantic woman litter the room; her decapitated head is still screaming; blood gushes from the limbs and from his mouth. Dix also placed his handprints all over the body parts in a move to show his identity within the death scene. Dix integrated the stereotypical male-character of high society with the sadistic practices of *lustmord* in a unified scene of violent murder that confuses the viewer's expectations of social class. While it is obvious that Dix was drawn to erotic and violent allegories in a move to dethrone elite stereotypes, Beckmann never completed a *lustmord* painting. Beckmann's social conscience had not been aroused by fragmenting well-to-do aristocratic archetypes, but instead stabilizing elite identity and their referential meaning.

Dix mocked the conventions that Beckmann took from popular culture to establish his marker of confidence and wealth. Weimar-era Germany cigarette ads continued portraying the New Woman as being socially and sexually emancipated through her smoking habit. The female cigarette ads enhanced the modern female

¹³⁰ The New Woman in Germany is characterized by the various women that entered the workplace during WWI, along with the German Revolution allowing for women to vote and open new doors to higher education. Sexually liberated women turned to prostitution where they would contract and spread sexually transmitted diseases. With the woman's new morality and ability to work, Germany family structure soon came under duress and men felt threatened by the new power invested in women thereby challenging their superior role in society.

appearance just as much as the male cigar ads enhanced the modern male figure. An ad designed for the cigarette brand Waldorf Astoria in 1925 expresses elegance and urbanity much like the Zechbauer's cigar and Manoli cigarette advertisements that circulated circa 1905/6 (figure 63). The swirl of the smoke signifies the sleek, sensual curve of the arm and a sense of luxury is presented to the female viewer. The ad is in the style of the New Objectivity, mixing geometric forms in an austere setting. The woman supports the stylish pageboy hair *duo* while wearing gems and stones.¹³¹ Her mastery of the smoking object intimated a mastery of the man, while projecting the ideal, fashionable, woman in society, and the perfect companion to an equally fashionable and powerful man.¹³² In an inversion of this modern German convention, Dix often painted his prostitutes holding cigarettes or cigars in a crass manner. Dix's *Brothel Matron/Puffmutter*, for instance shows an old, washed-up woman, detailed with wrinkles, whose makeup is tastelessly smeared on her face like clown, puffing on a cigarette that droops outside her mouth (figure 64). This is depiction best explained by a citation from Bertold Brecht: '*Ein grosser Geist bleibt in 'ner Hure stecken*' (A mighty genius, stuck on prostitution): the power of these women over men was so great and destructive that they plunged their weak clients into misfortune.¹³³ Dix's depiction of popular culture is both boorish and pessimistic and exactly the opposite of Beckmann's self-presentation as an art form.

The glaring parodies of Dix's depictions of the upper-class citizenry and their conventions that identified them with worthy, virtuous, or the high-born brings me to my

¹³¹ Barbara Kosta, "Cigarettes, Advertising, and the Weimar Republic's Modern Woman", *Visual Culture in Twentieth-Century Germany: Text as Spectacle*, ed. Gail Finney, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 143.

¹³² Kosta, 147.

¹³³ Tempel, 214.

last example, Dix's *The Art Dealer Johanna Ey*, 1924 (figure 65 and 66). Dix depicts Johanna Ey, the owner of a small gallery in Düsseldorf, sometimes nicknamed *Mutter Ey* (Mother Egg).¹³⁴ Ey was certainly no beauty but after Dix became familiar with her, she sat for his portrait.¹³⁵ Dix transforms the status of Ey in his portrait that shows Ey wrapped in an imperial purple robe posing in front of a stone column and voluminous red curtain—a background usually enjoyed by aristocratic and royal patrons.¹³⁶ The awkwardly placed crown on top her head, evokes a grand-old fashion as she stares seriously into the viewer's eye much like a high-ranking general, queen, or king. Though Beckmann never fashioned himself as a king, he did compare himself to Caesar and Napoleon in a love letter to Quappi in 1925.¹³⁷ And as an artist who studied in Paris, Beckmann would have seen numerous depictions of the French heroes like Napoleon, an obvious model for the traditional use of portraiture and employment of props to signal a virtuous identity that Beckmann adapted in the modern context.¹³⁸ Dix, himself, seems not to have established a traceable attribute within his self-portraiture as Beckmann did, but instead lampoons the conventional use of portraiture and its genteel mannerisms that identifies the sitter as an immaculate figure in society.

The contrast between Dix and Beckmann is an important manifestation of the polarities that has dogged the New Objectivity from the beginning; and this section has tried to show how Beckmann could have fashioned himself like Dix but chose not to.

¹³⁴ Sabine Rewald, *Glitter and Doom: German Portraits from the 1920s* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 114.

¹³⁵ Rewald, 114.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Barbara Buenger, "Some Portraits from Weimar-Era Frankfurt," *Of 'Truths Impossible to Put in Words': Max Beckmann Contextualized*, 174, n22.

¹³⁸ Buenger, ed. *Max Beckmann Self-Portrait in Words: Collected Writings and Statements, 1903-1950*, 370 n. 34.

While Beckmann has come to be associated with the New Objectivity since the 1920s that often depicted the repulsive traits of the ruling classes— decadence, perversity, and hypocrisy— contrasted to the suffering and degraded proletarian workers, we see Beckmann as the antithesis to many of the attitudes. The portraiture of Beckmann and Dix especially played a large role in projecting their ideas of German politics, cultivated personas, and ego ideals. While Dix portrayed himself amongst the proletariat as an isolated and threatened individual, Beckmann fashioned himself with superiority and aristocratic decadence which was itself a social-class hypocrisy.

As I hope this paper has shown, wealth and social status may have been more important to Beckmann and his artistic development than previously thought. Beckmann's post-war self-portraits still have ideological ties to his pre-war self-portraits. This interpretation has been understood within the complexity of German society that included figures like Nietzsche, Kessler, Cassirer, and the various visual ploys of popular culture that shaped Beckmann's identity while highlighting the important roles that self-promotion, social networking, and wealth played in defining Beckmann's idea of artistic fitness. Beckmann was not isolated from the socio-economic class system of Wilhelmine or Weimar-Era Germany, but continued using self-portraiture as a vehicle for social class identity both before and after the First World War establishing a rare but important continuity in Beckmann's artistic catalogue.



Figure 1: Max Beckmann, *Three Women in the Studio*, 1908



Figure 2: Max Beckmann, *Die Nacht*, 1918



Figure 3: Max Beckmann, *Self-Portrait with a Cigarette*, 1923



Figure 4: Max Beckmann, *Here is Intellect*, 1921



Figure 5: George Grosz, *Pillars of Society*, 1926



Figure 6: Otto Dix, *Skat Players*, 1920



Figure 7: Max Beckmann, *Self-Portrait with Soap Bubbles*, 1900



Figure 8: Max Beckmann, *Self-Portrait*, 1901

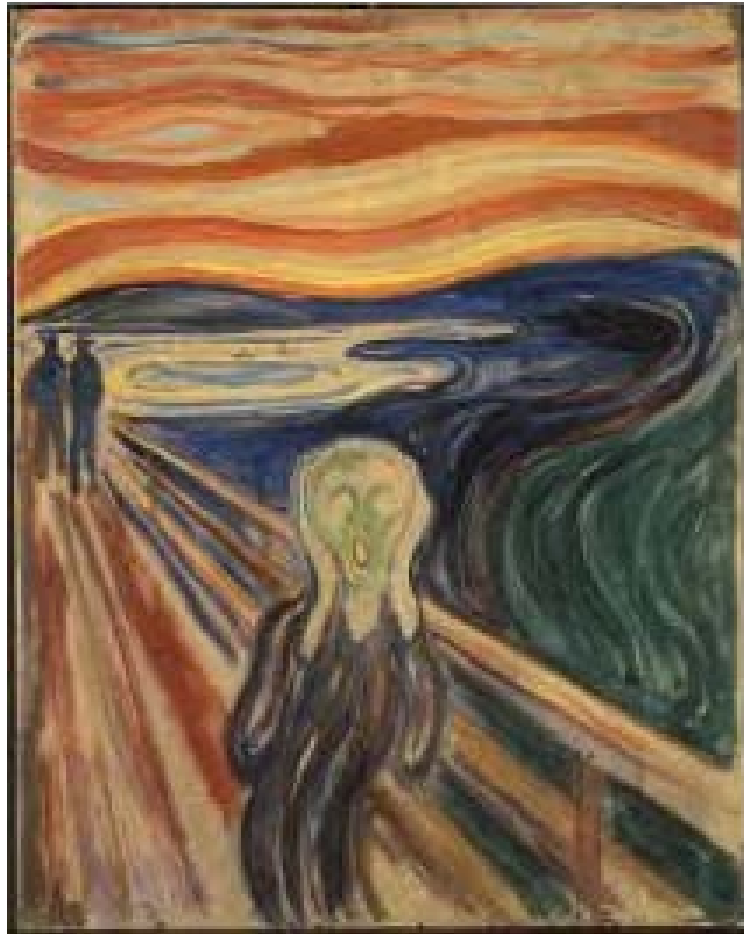


Figure 9: Edvard Munch, *The Scream*, 1895



Figure 10: Max Beckmann *Double-Portrait of Max Beckmann and Minna Beckmann-Tube*, 1909



Figure 11: *Self-portrait in Florence, 1907*



Figure 12: *Self-Portrait as Medical Orderly*, 1915



Figure 13: *Self-Portrait with Champagne Glass*, 1919



Figure 14: *Self-Portrait in Tuxedo*, 1927



Figure 15: *Self-Portrait in Black*, 1944



Figure 16: Lewis W. Hine, *Newsies at Skeeter Branch, St. Louis, Missouri, 11:00 am, May 9, 1910*



Figure 17: Max Beckmann, *Self-Portrait in Front of a Red Curtain*, 1923



Figure 18: George Grosz, Title and date unknown



Figure 19: George Grosz, *Fat Cats*, 1920



Figure 20: Otto Lupw Naegele “Zechbauer 1905”



Figure 21: Hans Rudi Erdt, Mahala, "Problem Cigarettes," 1912



Figure 22: Lucian Bernhard, Manoli, “Dandy,” 1913



Figure 23: Lucian Bernhard, Manoli, “Gibson Girl” ca. 1911



Figure 24: Edvard Munch, *Self-Portrait with Burning Cigarette*, 1895



Figure 25: Christian Krohg, *Portrait of Gerhard Munthe*, 1885



Figure 26: Edvard Munch, *Portrait of Harry Graf Kessler*, 1906



Figure 27: Hugo Erfurth, Harry Graf Kessler, date unknown



Figure 28: Artist Unknown, Harry Graf Kessler (left)



Figure 29: Max Beckmann in 1906



Figure 30: Max Beckmann in 1908



Figure 31: Max Beckmann in 1923

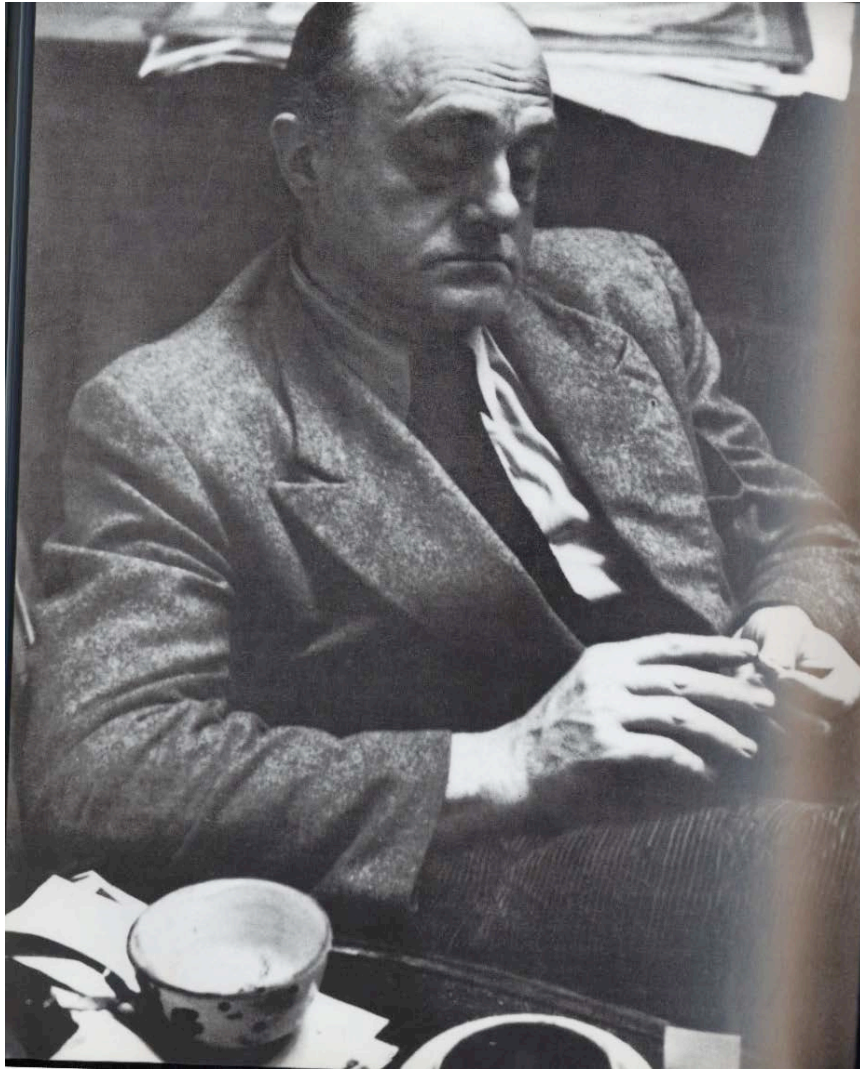


Figure 32: Max Beckmann in his studio, 1938.
Courtesy of Reinhard Spieler's *Max Beckmann: From Path to Myth*. Taschen 2011



Figure 33: Max Beckmann at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, 1948.
Courtesy of Reinhard Spieler's *Max Beckmann: From Path to Myth*. Taschen 2011

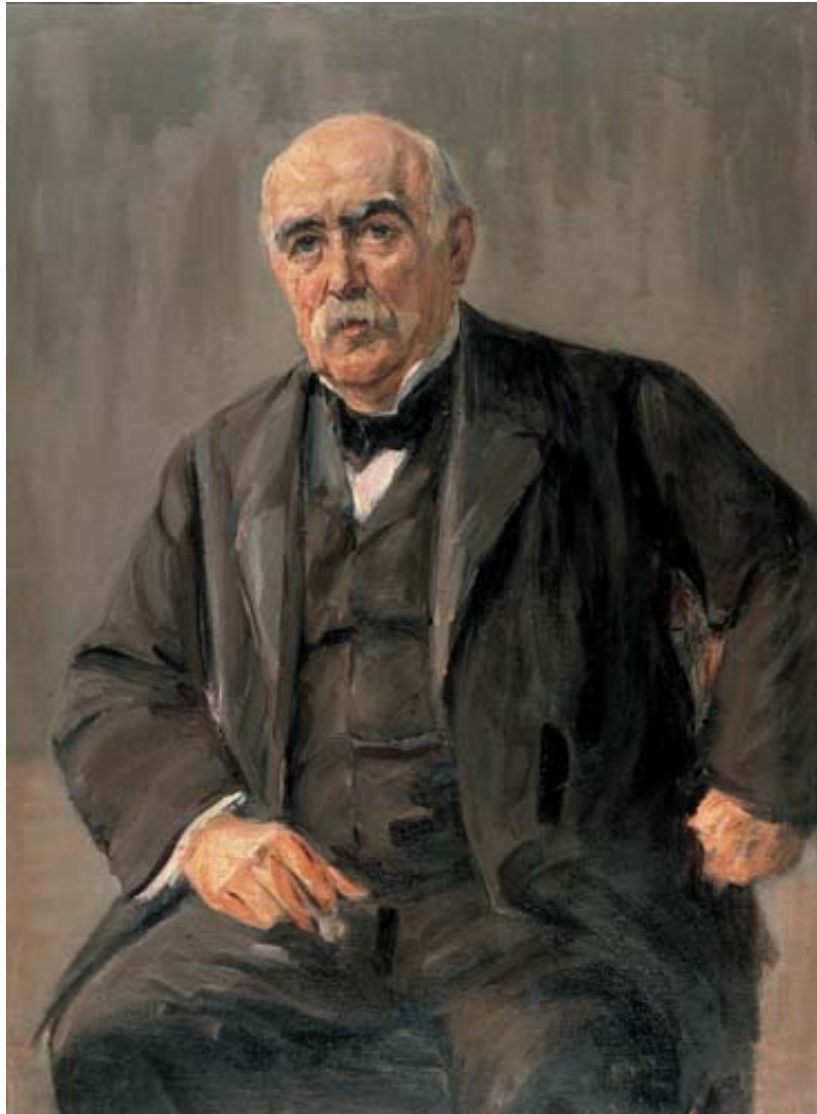


Figure 34: Max Lieberman, *Portrait of Eugen Gutmann*, 1907



Figure 35: Max Lieberman, *Portrait of Wilhelm von Bode*, 1904



Figure 36: Max Lieberman, *Der Hamburgische Professorenkonvent*, 1905

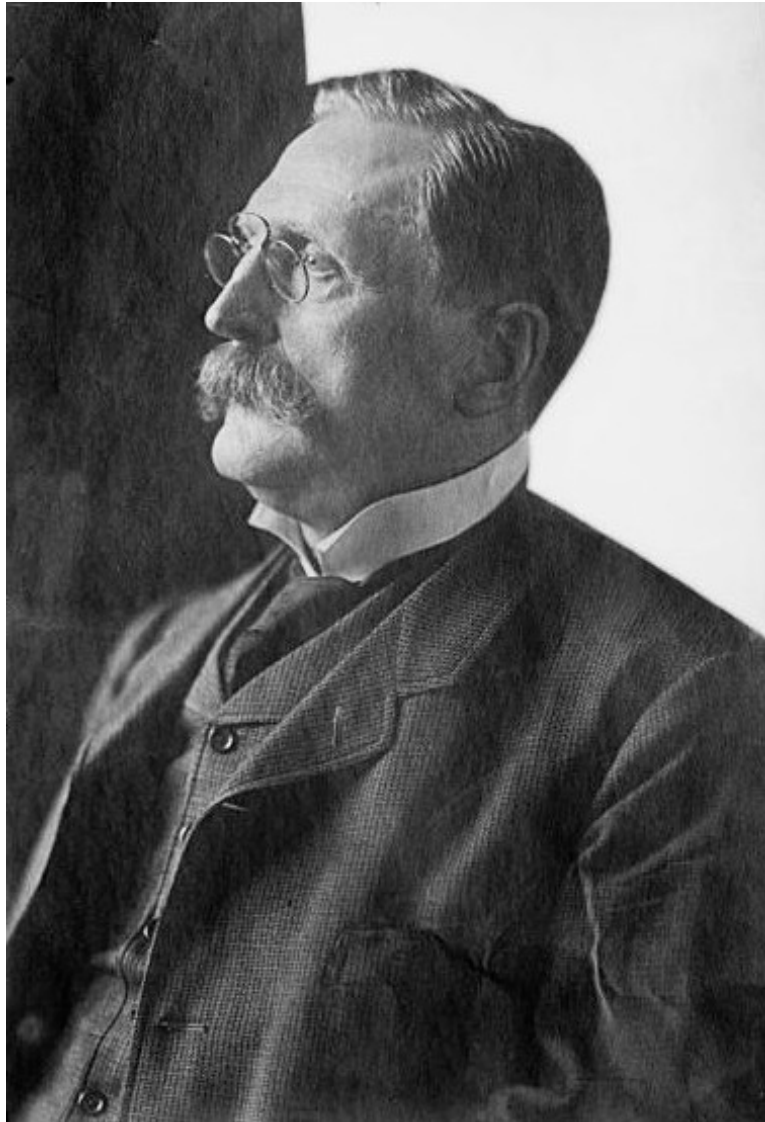


Figure 37: Wilhelm von Bode, 1909



Figure 38: Max Liebermann, *Self-Portrait*, 1910



Figure 39: Max Liebermann, *Self-Portrait*, 1911



Figure 40: Jury for the Berlin Secession 1908 exhibition. From the left: sculptors Fritz Klimsch and August Gaul, painters Walter Leistikow and Hans Baluschek, art dealer Paul Cassirer, painters Max Slevogt (sitting) and George Mosson(standing), sculptor Max Kruse, painters [Max Liebermann](#) (sitting), Emil Rudolf Weiß and Lovis Corinth.



Figure 41: August Sander, *Retired Privy Councilo*, 1911-1914



Figure 42: August Sander, *Grand Duke [Ernst Ludwig von Hessen und bei Rhein]*, 1930



Figure 43: August Sander, *Aristocrat*, 1928



Figure 44: August Sander, *Attorney*, 1927



Figure 45: *Art Dealer* [Sam Salz], 1927



Figure 46: August Sander, *Dentist*, c. 1930



Figure 47: Lovis Corinth, *Self-Portrait*, 1924



Figure 48: Max Beckmann, *Resurrection*, 1909. Staatsgalerie Stuttgart © Foto: Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.



Figure 49: Max Beckmann, *The Sinking of the Titanic*, 1912-13



Figure 50: Max Beckmann, *Titanic*, 1913



Figure 51: Max Beckmann, *Scene from the Destruction of Messina*, 1909



Figure 52: Photographer Unknown, *Kaiser Wilhelm II with Hunting Homburg Hat*



Figure 53: Photographer Unknown, *Homburg Hat and Boater in 1910*,



Figure 54: Max Beckmann, *Minna Beckmann-Tube with a Violet Shawl*, 1910



Figure 55: Otto Dix, *Portrait of Parents*, 1921

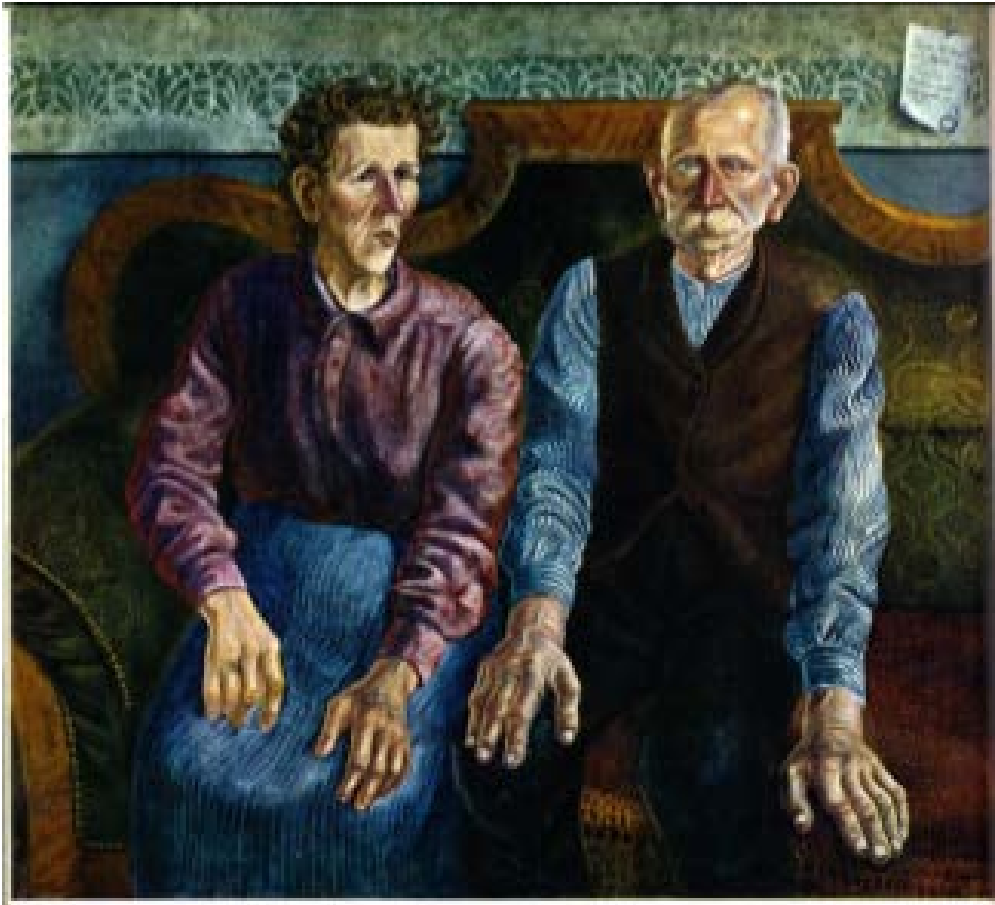


Figure 56: Otto Dix, *Portrait of Parents II*, 1924

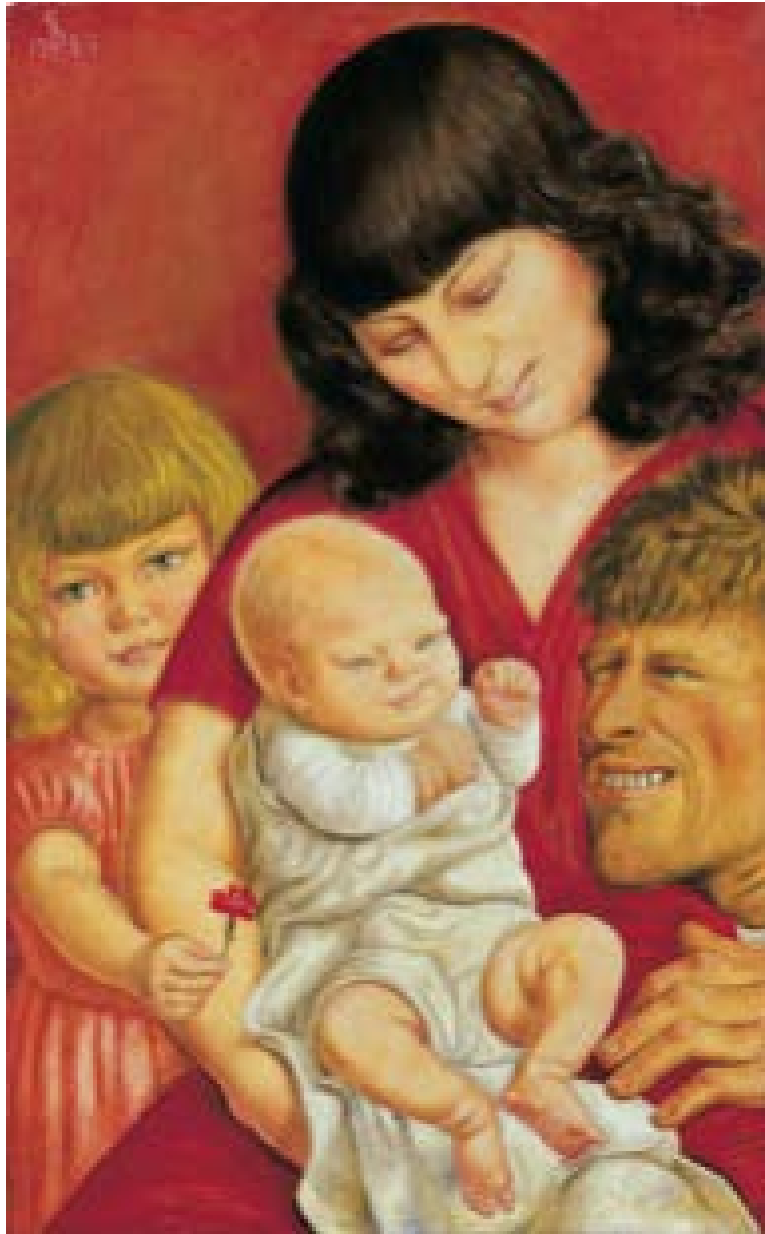


Figure 57: Otto Dix, *The Artist's Family*, 1927



Figure 58: Max Beckmann, *Family Picture*, 1921



Figure 59: Otto Dix, *Self-Portrait with Carnation*, 1912



Figure 60: Otto Dix, *Self-Portrait*, 1923



Figure 61: Otto Dix, *Self-Portrait with Easel*, 1923



Figure 62: Otto Dix, *The Sex-Murderer: Self-Portrait*, 1920. Destroyed. Reproduced by permission of Otto Dix Stiftung, Vaduz, Liechtenstein



Figure 63: "Waldorf Astoria" cigarettes, 1925



Figure 64: Otto Dix, *Brothel Matron/Puffmutter*, 1923



Figure 65: Artist Unknown, Johanna Ey, 1929



Figure 66: Otto Dix, *The Art Dealer Johanna Ey*, 1924

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