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The Many Faces of Performative Politics: Satires of Statesman Bernhard von Bülow in Wilhelmine Germany

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ABSTRACT

While historical and contemporary thinkers have described politics as theater, this article moves beyond this representation of politics to understand how performance was central to politics around the turn of the twentieth century. It does so through an analysis of a large volume of hitherto unstudied caricatures of the German statesman Bernhard von Bülow. While historians usually describe satire merely in a complementary or illustrative manner, this article analyzes it in a structural manner. This analysis does not serve to understand Bülow personally nor his politics, but constitutes a case study that demonstrates broader changes in the nature of politics. The article argues that caricaturists used metaphors of different types of performances, which built on tradition and played into new lifestyles, to reflect on how mass communication became constitutive of modern politics. Moreover, this metaphorical stage on which politicians performed represented the platform of the mass press in politics itself.

KEYWORDS

Bernhard von Bülow; caricature; cartoon; imperial Germany; performative politics; satire

"'Illusion is everything!' says the poet. Now I have been persuading the people already for two years that this skeleton is alive," states Bernhard von Bülow in a cartoon in the satirical magazine *Ulk* in 1909. The German imperial chancellor is depicted as holding up a giant skeleton, which is held together by a bandage representing the unstable "bloc" of political parties that supported his government.[1] The cartoon thus reflected on how political reality was constructed, and raises the question of what constituted politics around the turn of the twentieth century.

The reference to illusion fits within a tradition of seeing politics as theater. It can be found in the works of historical thinkers and writers as varied as Plato, Shakespeare, Burke, and Foucault, as well as observers of the French Revolution and British Parliament.[2] The novelist Heinrich Mann, sociologist Max Weber, and industrialist Walter Rathenau—contemporaries of Bülow—even concluded that theatricality was the essence of the politics of Imperial Germany.[3] Modern scholars have similarly employed the notion of politics as theater—whether tragedy, comedy, or melodrama—as an analytical category in studying the history of (early) modern Europe, including the German Empire.[4] Some argue that the close interaction between these fields has resulted from their similar structures: both politics and theater demand dramatic actors, abstract representation, audiences, and a melodramatic division between good and evil.[5] Normatively, theatrical politics can be seen either as a regrettable replacement of a supposed former primacy of rationality in politics,[6] or as means to "sell" politics and engage the public, which can evaluate

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the political actors on stage.[7] However, the politics-as-theater concept remains too limited, and still fails to capture the complexity of the broader "performance" of politics. Specifically, this concept focusses on the representation of politics, whereas historians should move beyond this representation to understand how performance was constitutive of politics itself.

A historical source type that can shed light on this complexity is satire, in which artists reflected on what constituted politics in their time, and which itself was an important part of the growing mass press around 1900.[8] Here satire means the general humorous and moral reflection on contemporary social and political issues. Cartoons are a form of visual satire, and caricatures are a type of cartoons with exaggerated physical features.[9] Through their reflections, satirists constantly interacted with politics, particularly through the publication of special issues on current topics. Satire flourished with the advent of universal education and the consequent emergence of a mass press in the late nineteenth century, notably with satiricals such as *Punch* and *Tit-Bits* in Britain and *Le Journal Amusant* and *Le Rire* in France,[10] followed later by *Uilenspiegel* in the Netherlands—a small domestic market in which publishers still hesitated to invest in controversial content and expensive images.[11] By contrast, in the large press market of Germany, 2,150 new magazines appeared between 1888 and 1900. The traditional-liberal *Kladderadatsch* grew from a circulation of 50,000 in 1890 to 85,000 by 1911, the progressive-liberal *Simplicissimus* from 15,000 in 1898 to 86,000 by 1908, and the social-democratic *Wahre Jacob* from 230,000 in 1908 to 300,000 by 1911. During this Wilhelmine Period, similar satiricals such as *Fliegende Blätter, Jugend*, and *Ulk* (a supplement of *Berliner Tageblatt*) reached 20,000, 70,000, and 70,000 readers, respectively. Given these high circulations, the satiricals presumably played a greater role in shaping and representing German attitudes than most written periodicals, colportage novels, and even the widely popular picture postcards.[12] This popularity of satire partly resulted from the lack of alternative means for dissent in the authoritarian German political system, in which the elected parliament held no power to dismiss the cabinet and critical journalists could be censored.[13] It shows that Germans were politicized rather than deferential to authority as scholars traditionally believed.[14] This absence of means for political opposition also partially explains why German caricatures were more critical of politics than British caricatures.[15] Another reason for the popularity of satire was that technological innovations and increasingly artistic caricaturists transformed the genre, and that while caricature now had to compete with photography, it had the advantage that it was not dependent on reality and could employ greater creativity.[16]

Scholarship on satire remains diffuse,[17] and historians generally use caricatures as an additional, illustrative, source rather than studying this type of source systematically in itself to uncover its own dynamics and logics.[18] However, important here is that satire rendered political leaders, and politics more generally, increasingly visible to the public. Scholars argue that, following satirists' earlier use of emblems and allegories, this personalization process started in the seventeenth-century Netherlands, continued in eighteenth-century Britain, subsequently spread to other parts of Europe, and gained a greater scale in the nineteenth century. While initially cartoons generally exempted monarchs—focusing instead on national politicians such as William Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli in the UK—they were principal targets by 1900.[19] Consequently, a "transnational public satirical sphere" emerged already in the early twentieth century in which contemporaries—later followed by scholars—published collections and analyses of caricatures of monarchs such as

Wilhelm II, Edward VII, and Leopold II.[20] Less studied are satires of Wilhelm II's Chancellor Bülow,[21] whose politics were seen as particularly "theatrical"[22]—and thus attractive to caricaturists.

However, these Bülow satires reveal more about what constituted everyday politics around 1900 than caricatures of monarchical pomp. Moreover, investigating these satires does not in the first place serve to understand Bülow personally, nor his specific impact on German politics, but rather constitutes an insightful case study to discover the broader structural forces that affected politicians in his time. Based on an analysis of such satires of Bülow, this article will argue that caricaturists used metaphors of different types of performances, which both built on tradition and played into new lifestyles, to reflect on how mass communication became constitutive of modern politics. Moreover, this metaphorical stage on which politicians performed represented the platform of the mass press in politics itself. The politics-as-performance metaphor was negotiated between politicians' behavior, journalists playing into popular culture, and the public appropriating and recommunicating this trope.

Bülow and the Satirical Press

Bülow was a career diplomat who served as secretary of state for foreign affairs from 1897 until 1900, when he became Germany's fourth imperial chancellor after Otto von Bismarck, Leo von Caprivi, and Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst. While during Bülow's time in office he struggled in the public perception to fill the shoes of Bismarck, who had attained mythical status as founder of the German Empire after the young Wilhelm II deposed him for fear of being overshadowed, he later came to be seen as the most politically influential chancellor of the Wilhelmine Period (1890–1914). Bülow vigorously pursued a new policy of *Weltpolitik*: Germany was to become a mature industrial and imperial nation-state that could compete with the Great Powers—notably the British Empire—on the global stage. Bülow was relatively free to make such policy, as he was appointed by the emperor rather than responsible to parliament, which despite the introduction of universal male suffrage in 1871 exercised little power. This system meant that Bülow's position depended on Wilhelm II's favor, which he curried skillfully. However, after failing to protect Wilhelm II from the domestic and international backlash against a controversial interview with the emperor published in the *Daily Telegraph*, Bülow lost this favor and consequently his position.[23]

During Bülow's many years as secretary of state and chancellor, he became a favorite target of the proliferating transnational satirical press. Bülow carefully monitored these magazines, even instructing German embassies abroad to send all foreign cartoons of him to the Foreign Office, and he kept a collection of caricatures about himself [24]—a habit mocked in those same caricatures.[25] He repeatedly stated that he enjoyed the caricatures, and he was touched by a poem in his honor at the end of his career in the *Kladderadatsch*—the sub-editors of which he had been friends with. However, while Bülow prided himself on having a thick skin—notably in comparison to his successor Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg—contemporaries complained that he was hypersensitive to the press.[26]

This sensitivity translated into both formal and informal interventions in the satirical press. The nineteenth century was marked by a struggle over freedom of the press, and authorities particularly feared images including cartoons. While this freedom was established early in Britain and the United States, as well as the Nordic countries—notably

Sweden and Norway—press restrictions remained longer in central and southern European states, including Germany, Italy, Spain, and Portugal.[27] German state censorship consisted of a combination of observation, warnings, refusing journalists entry, removing journalists' status, and criminal prosecution.[28] The 1848–1849 Revolution temporarily bolstered press freedoms, but was followed by a shift from pre-publication to post-publication censorship, and a renewed repression of newspapers by Bismarck in the 1860s. The Imperial Press Law of 1874 included further protections for the press, but did not prevent ongoing press prosecutions. Notably, Bismarck waged his "culture struggle" against the Catholic press and his battle against social democratic publications through the Anti-Socialist Laws in the 1870s and 1880s. Lèse-majesté laws enabled the active suppression of anti-monarchist publications into the 1900s and led to the imprisonment of well-known journalists such as Ludwig Thoma and Maximilian Harden.[29] Given this broad interpretation and implementation of the laws by the authorities, German caricaturists—who often used symbolism and allegory to avoid censorship—experienced anxiety and suffered severely from prosecution, even putting their lives on the line.[30]

Bülow himself claimed that he opposed press censorship, and appealed to the press's own sense of responsibility.[31] Yet in practice, Bülow often censored—or attempted to censor—particular press content.[32] However, it was increasingly difficult to control the expanding mass press at the end of the nineteenth century. Court cases against publicists who had damaged the images of Bülow and Wilhelm II functioned counterproductively in that they only generated more publicity for these publicists and their offensive content, which especially Bülow was eager to avoid.[33]

The Historical Tradition of Public Performance

Satires of Bülow frequently played into longer histories of performing in front of audiences. They built on traditions ranging from ancient comedy and tragedy to early modern circus and theater. While former politics involved communication primarily targeted at elites, these cartoons suggested that Bülow's politics now constituted a form of mass communication. Their use of historical forms of public performances both illustrated this characteristic of politics and placed it within a broader time perspective.

The historical notions of "comedy" and "drama" were used in satire both descriptively to depict politics, and reflexively to show Bülow's own understanding of the comical or dramatic nature of politics. For instance, *Lustige Blätter*, a quality Berlin weekly that had earlier been a supplement of *Berliner Börsen-Courier* and printed many color pages, showed Bülow with his characteristic rounded physical features, mustache, and "superficial" smile on the side of a stage facing a politician dressed up as a lion, starring in "A Liberal Winter Night's Dream"—a "hilarious comedy" based on Shakespeare.[34] *Simplicissimus*, as a Munich publication catering to a Bavarian audience that was less culturally hierarchical than that in the capital (though it did support Germany's ascendance to international power[35]), had a reputation for audacity and went a step further. It used a similar descriptive format, but also inserted satire itself into the story and suggested a reversal of roles. Below a Bülow dressed as a clown, it wrote that "the satirical magazines make politics, and the politicians make jokes."[36] The reflective dimension was added in satires that depicted Bülow as noting the comedy of (mediated) politics himself. In an imaginary dialogue (presumably alluding to a famous quote of Karl Marx), the Russian Foreign Minister Mikhail Muravyov

referred to politics as a "drama," to which Bülow responded that it was "rather a comedy."[37] Moreover, the Jewish-democratic *Ulk*, which the major publisher Rudolf Mosse established as a Northern counterpart to the Southern *Fliegende Blätter* in 1872, included a fictional poem in which the German statesman called journalism "a comedy," "in contrast to diplomacy, which sometimes ends tragically."[38] The historical tropes of comedy and drama thus served to depict Bülow's politics, as well as his own reflection on how these forms of performance represented contemporary politics. For these tropes to work, the caricaturists relied on their readership's *Bildung*—the general humanistic education that included a study of the Greek classics, which became widespread both in Germany and elsewhere with the expansion of public education.

The performance trope also manifested itself in other traditional forms, such as the circus. An example was a 1907 cartoon in *Der Wahre Jacob*, the largest social-democratic satirical journal in Germany characterized by its political content, in which color illustrations including caricatures featured prominently as part of its critiques. As in similar socialist satiricals that were established across Europe in the late nineteenth century,[39] such critiques attacked the existing bourgeois political order from the outside rather than mocking politics jestingly for an audience of establishment insiders as liberal journals did. In the cartoon titled "To the Opening of the Imperial Circus," *Der Wahre Jacob* showed Bülow riding around a rink while standing on three horses that represented the conservatives, national liberals, and free thinkers. The caption warned that it was "a difficult performance." Striking is the large crowd of spectators in the background, thus reinforcing the idea that Bülow had to carefully orchestrate his politics in the public eye.[40] Of course, the inclusion of this crowd was natural given that the circus was a public event. However, this depiction merely underlines the point: the caricaturist could have depicted Bülow in any other setting, but by choosing the circus—with its spectators—he implicitly suggested that Bülow performed his politics in front of a large audience. *Kikeriki*, a Viennese satirical that had been liberal initially but turned antisemitic in the 1880s, published a similar cartoon in the same year. It depicted Wilhelm II holding the leash of a horse on which Germania, the mythical lady who embodied the German Empire, rode around the rink and would jump over the "colonial politics" hurdle that Bülow was holding—again in front of a large audience.[41] Thus, in addition to the national politics depicted in the previous cartoon, this depiction also applied the performance metaphor to the broader sphere of colonial politics. Striking was the combined use of the mythical Germania and the concrete figures of Wilhelm II and Bülow, which illustrates the general shift from fictional to real-life embodiments of politics in visual culture over time.

Music was another age-old performance that caricaturists employed to signify the publicness of Bülow's politics. At the dawn of the twentieth century, *Jugend*, a Bavarian art and literary journal that constituted the basis for the term *Jugendstil*[42] but that also included satire, used this trope to show how politics was now a performance on a world stage, here also enacted by a mix of abstract national representations and specific leaders. Depicting the intervention of a coalition of world powers in the Chinese Boxer Rebellion, the cartoon showed "Uncle Sam" and symbolic figures embodying Japan and Russia, led by Bülow and the British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain to play a Straussian waltz to march into China.[43] This musical performance trope subsequently reached a more international audience, as a British publication translated and republished the cartoon under the banner "History of the Month in Caricature."[44]

While a later article in the London *Times* noted that, internationally, few people read German newspapers and that British papers reporting on Bülow's speeches increased his audience "a hundredfold,"[45] the same applied to cartoons: depictions of Bülow "performing" politics had a greater reach when republished in the press of the vast British Empire.

The final "traditional" form of performance that caricaturists used to portray Bülow's politics was the well-known theater trope. It was a theme that the notorious German journalist Maximilian Harden used repeatedly to criticize Wilhelm II,[46] but was employed similarly against his chancellor.[47] The Viennese weekly *Floh* even published a special "theater issue," which featured Bülow walking on his head.[48] *Simplicissimus* also depicted Bülow walking upside down on a stage at a fair, while being advertised as "the German glory" of the past twenty years that spectators could come and see. For ten pennies, visitors could receive pink glasses that would make the theatrical spectacle appear even prettier.[49] The caricaturists thus clearly played into the broader public's familiarity with theater, and used it to bring politics—which had traditionally been a distant elite affair—closer to the people. Bülow as a theater performer became a tangible entity that the artists used to bring complex politics to the masses. Using a fair as the background for such theater, moreover, these artists played into the new popularity of this traveling venue among the public. By offering shows that combined entertainment, popular science, and novel technologies, as well as an increasing number of (steam-powered) mechanized rides, fairs attracted large audiences across Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century.[50]

In 1907, *Kladderadatsch, Simplicissimus*'s Prussian counterpart that had already been established in 1848 and advocated moderate National Liberalism, finally went a step further. It suggested that Bülow's politics were not merely theatrical, but that this theatricality negatively affected the Kaiser's politics. Under the title "Stage and Politics," its cartoon noted that since political meaning was given to the selection of theater pieces the Kaiser visited, the palace now informed the public of this selection through a flag. However, it indicated that a piece relating to Bülow was received with discomfort, thus suggesting that the chancellor had a negative impact on the political decisions of his imperial master.[51] Given the nature of theater—acting out a role and providing a public with an imagined reality—this traditional form of performance lent itself particularly well to satirists accusing a political actor like Bülow of disingenuous political behavior and masking societal problems.

However, these historical forms of performance were not depicted in a merely traditional manner, but already incorporated elements of the new mediated reality of the turn of the twentieth century. For example, playing into Richard Strauss's Salome opera with its morally shocking "Dance of the Seven Veils," which had premiered in 1905 and had first appeared in film in 1908, *Der Wahre Jacob* featured Bülow as a dancer. He performed a sword dance in front of the Kaiser dressed as a sultan—recognizable only by his characteristic pointy mustache and scepter—and three musicians embodying the liberal, conservative, and centrist factions in the Reichstag. Bülow navigated skillfully not only between swords representing different political positions and interests, but also those representing (press) "interviews."[52] The cartoon suggested that politics was performed no longer just before the immediate audience, but in front of a broader audience of newspaper readers. While such cartoons thus repeatedly employed metaphors of historical forms of

performance that people had been used to, such as comedy, tragedy, the circus, music, and the theater, they gradually also incorporated contemporary elements to show how mass communication was an essential element of Bülow's politics around 1900.

Performing in Modern Arenas

Cartoons of Bülow blended tradition and modernity in their appeal to the personal life experiences of the broader public. On the one hand, they played into the described historical forms of performance such as the theater and circus, which due to increasing disposable incomes and leisure time became available to the masses over the course of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the cartoons incorporated new social developments such as parliamentarism, sports, and celebrity culture, which the cartoons partially (re)shaped in the process. What distinguished this category from the former was a competitive element, in which Bülow's political performance was always featured in relation to those of others.

Parliament is "one of the indispensable political *dramatis personae*,"[53] and while in Bülow's time this still applied more to the British than the German parliament, the latter also gained increasing prominence in contemporary newspapers and satires. Parliament thus became one of the politically most relevant public stages on which caricaturists depicted Bülow. In 1905, *Lustige Blätter* joked that the Reichstag had been converted into a cabaret theater and that the chancellor was the "most serious representative of the German cabaret art."[54] The "Reichstag Theater" concept proved a recurring theme in which to place Bülow, not just in relation to domestic but also colonial matters.[55] Within this theme, Bülow even transcended partisan divides. In a 1907 satirical poem on "Bülow in the Reichstag," *Der Tag*—the first daily newspaper in Germany regularly featuring press photos that the powerful Scherl publishing house founded in 1900—quipped that friend and foe both had to acknowledge that Bülow was simply a great speaker, and that he performed well on the "podium" with his "flute."[56] Within the German political system in which the chancellor was appointed by the emperor, Bülow did not represent a political party, but the satire suggested in a general manner that political performance stood above partisanship. It gave the impression that what mattered for a political figure around 1900 was the ability to reach a broader audience, and that the parliamentary platform constituted the new "theater" through which this could be done. This notion of a novel style of politics was reinforced by *Simplicissimus*. Established in 1896 and run by young editors and cartoonists who used an innovative journalistic approach focused on images, this magazine itself embodied modernity.[57] In 1908, it published a satire in which it described Bülow as dancing rather than making a speech in the Reichstag, and how this made a great impression on his audience. At the end, it commented that it was Bülow's achievement "that he founded and performs a type of politics that really let's itself be danced."[58] The magazine thus suggested that Bülow had transformed politics into a performative, theatrical phenomenon.

The type of parliamentary performance that worked best in terms of reaching an audience, however, was a "duel" between two political heavy hitters. In particular, Bülow's verbal exchanges with the social democratic leader August Bebel became a favorite theme in satires. Conflict functioned well according to the new (mass) media logic that satirists eagerly adopted. They hinted that figures like Bülow and Bebel had internalized this logic themselves when they joked that the politicians would perform yet another "eagerly awaited" "speech duel" that the two had "rehearsed and staged."[59] Satires

thus used the increasingly well-known parliament at this time as a primary venue on which to stage the performance of politics—even that of the chancellor who was technically responsible to the Kaiser rather than to parliament. In fact, the theatricality of the situation was heightened by the fact that an unelected chancellor debated the elected leader of the political party that consistently won the popular vote (though not the most seats) throughout the 1890s and 1900s—who thus in a truly democratic system would have been the chancellor himself.[60] In such depictions, caricaturists both reflected and reinforced a growing parliamentary culture.

A culture with a less obvious political relevance than parliamentarism was sports. Sports had historical roots, but gained new prominence internationally around 1900. Within the broader context of a developing culture of "performance,"[61] in the sense of (often competitive) achievement, satirists played into the popular sub field of "athletic performance" to appeal to a mass readership. Fitting within the trend of Germany adopting British (notably elite) sports,[62] a cartoon in *Der Wahre Jacob* of 1904 showed Bülow—besides as a parliamentary speaker—as a car racer, horse jockey, and boat racer.[63] This depiction also placed Bülow within a new "arena of encounter": sports created venues for old and new elites to meet, both nationally and internationally. In this arena, there was a general shift from the "leisure" of the old aristocracy to the "pleasure-seeking" of the nouveau riche.[64] Within the sports theme, caricaturists also further capitalized on the popularity of the two-person contest. The Bülow-Bebel brawl was "taken out of" the parliamentary arena and into the wrestling arena. The sense that such an athletic performance was new was reinforced in a *Kladderadatsch* cartoon in 1907, which noted that "the era of wrestling has begun" under a depiction of Bülow knocking Bebel to the floor in front of a large audience.[65] This trope of the man-to-man contest was used to both explain, and make attractive, (international) politics. A noteworthy example were the boxing cartoons involving Bülow and the British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain, as well as a host of other political adversaries, in different international satirical magazines in 1902.[66] Cartoons of physical fights included journalists such as Harden, and thereby reflected on how the interaction between media and politics constituted another form of public performance that was played out in front of the mass public.[67]

A different form of popular sports performance that satirists exploited in their commentary on Bülow was the horse race. Already in 1897, three years before Bülow assumed the chancellorship, a cartoon joked that he was in pole position for the office. It described the choice for a new chancellor in terms of a derby in which spectators could bet on different contenders, and included a list of odds on the gambling market. However, it cautioned that it was still too early to tell, as much could still happen.[68] The cartoon suggests two points. First, politics was a constant "public contest" between different political contenders. Second, the attraction of portraying politics in athletic terms familiar to a public that now engaged in sports itself was so strong that satirists even applied it to the chancellorship. Yet even though the appointed chancellorship constituted a "contest" for the Kaiser's favor, it differed qualitatively from an elected position in which votes could be tallied in a virtual "horse race." Over a decade later, a similar satire also described German politics as a derby, the main prize of which was 100,000 marks and a "furnished chancellor residence." It noted that "the favorite Bülow led" on the first day and that the public's interest had "visibly" abated by the second of the four days.[69] This last detail provides an initial glimpse at the receiving side of the story: that of the audience. The public's loss of interest resulting from Bülow's clear lead suggests that

the public's attention span was limited and that the performance of politics should be spectacular enough to secure this attention. Moreover, it implies that the increasingly performative nature of politics possibly aggravated the problem of limited attention spans by flooding the public with an overabundance of political show.[70] Until the late nineteenth century, the pace of people's lives had been comparatively slow. Yet now they began to experience a world full of industrial activity and mass urban culture,[71] which they read about, often in multiple editions per day, in mass newspapers. These newspapers used a new journalistic style defined by catchy headlines and images and that blended politics, sports, and other forms of sensation[72]—all of which demanded their attention.

A final form of sports performance that satirists applied to Bülow's politics were team sports, which showed the dynamics between different political players. In June 1909, *Simplicissimus* depicted German national politics as a football game between Bülow and his "bloc team" on one side and the "reactionary team" on the other, thereby visualizing tax politics.[73] Its rival liberal magazine *Kladderadatsch* in the same week published a cartoon of "The Worldball Game" that was "similar to football." The "colossally experienced" British team, led by Edward VII, took on the German team that was "in best shape" and included Bülow and the Kaiser.[74] The team sports metaphor thus also worked on an international level, and effectively captured the dynamics of the colonial race in which a quickly expanding Germany began to challenge traditional British imperial power. These football caricatures brought the performance metaphor even closer to contemporary popular culture, and the depictions of teams rather than individuals gave them a stronger collective and thereby "nationalist" feel than the other depictions of Bülow as a performer. Overall, satires showed how sports had become part of everyday life in Wilhelmine society. It was a logical consequence that Bülow himself tried to play into that culture, and that caricaturists used it to portray his alleged style of performative politics. As *Kladderadatsch*, in a satire on how everything was about sports now, wrote: "even Bernhard [von Bülow] is learning how to fly."[75]

In addition to parliamentarism and sports, a third type of "modern" performance that caricaturists employed to reflect on Bülow and his new style of politics was celebrity culture. This celebrity culture flourished around 1900 due to the emerging mass press, which enabled the widespread diffusion of the names and images of public personae.[76] These public personae were not "real," but the "masks" or "roles" that individuals such as Bülow portrayed to the outside world. Being a celebrity meant acting out this role in public life and in the contemporary press, a process that was reinforced by satires that literally branded Bülow and others as "celebrities." In 1907, the Berlin-based *Dorfbarbier* (established in 1880) featured a cartoon of a "Carnival Procession of the Celebrities," which included a clownlike "Bülow the strong one."[77] Even though the cartoon clearly ridiculed Bülow, its characterization of him as a "celebrity" nevertheless reinforced his celebrity status and the notion that Bülow was someone who acted out a public role. This political celebrity culture blended with entertainment celebrity. The (then) weekly satirical journal *Nebelspalter*, which aspired to be the Swiss version of the British *Punch*, portrayed Bülow offering the "cigar" of Alsace-Lorraine to the French actress Sarah Bernhardt, with the caption: "Who knows! Bismarck had himself photographed with Paulina Lucca, perhaps we will still witness both Bernhards on a [photographic] plate...."[78] The focus in this cartoon was not celebrity culture, but an ongoing German-French territorial dispute, yet—similar to the former cartoon—it simultaneously strengthened the notion that Bülow was a "superficial" celebrity whose politics were more about performance than policy.

In all, important social domains in the rapidly "modernizing" societies of Western Europe around 1900 were parliament, which had an inherent political relevance, as well as sports and celebrity. As such, they were arenas that provided useful metaphors, which satirists could use to reflect on, and criticize, a political figure like Bülow. The press itself partially (re)constructed these domains, and even created a self-reinforcing dynamic: the more that satirists shaped and emphasized new cultures, the more popular these cultures became, and thus the more attractive the cultures became as contexts within which to stage their critiques of political figures. In contrast to the traditional forms of performance such as theater and the circus, these new arenas were marked by competition, in which parliamentary or athletic success or celebrity status came at the expense of others. These cultural environments in which Bülow functioned already suggest that it was the societal structure in which he operated rather than merely his own nature that defined his politics as being a "performance."

Puppet or Puppet Master?

"The perfect embodiment of Wilhelmine theatrical politics was Wilhelm's third chancellor, Bernhard von Bülow," argues Ann Allen. *Kladderadatsch* and *Simplicissimus* satirists depicted the mythical Bismarckian era as a time of "real politics" conducted by "real politicians," in contrast to Bismarck's "inauthentic" successors—principally Bülow who knew how to fake Bismarckian greatness but never lived up to its standards in reality.[79] Yet cartoons on Bülow simultaneously showed politics as a performance involving different actors, notably in the form of puppet theaters, which raises the question whether Bülow had much agency in performing politics or was merely an interchangeable cog in a wheel. Jost Rebentisch already notes that caricatures portrayed all chancellors after Bismarck as mere puppets,[80] but he only uses this description to highlight their relation to the emperor. However, the puppet metaphor also shows the changing nature of the structural field of performative politics in which chancellors after Bismarck had to operate.[81]

On the one hand, cartoons depicted contemporary politics as a collection of puppets who all acted out a specific role, which suggested that political figures were part of a larger "show" and were interchangeable. In *Lustige Blätter*'s "Christmas Puppet Revue" in 1900, Bülow was one of nine public figures jumping out and singing in front of the audience. Bülow sang about turning down a request for help from the president of the South African Republic, Paul Kruger, during the Boer War, but his depiction as a puppet suggested that he was being steered by external forces rather than steering himself in this political decision-making.[82] Within such puppet metaphors, the popular "personal fights" theme was also exploited. In May 1902, Bülow once again faced Bebel and another aggressor on stage in the form of puppets with clubs, with Bülow receiving blows in front of an engaged theater public like in a traditional Punch and Judy show.[83] The Bülow puppet thus functioned as a passive scapegoat that represented the establishment, guided by systemic forces "pulling his strings," and at the mercy of other forces pulling his opponents' strings. This puppet portrayal presumably resulted in part from the particular German political system, in which the chancellor was not elected and thus not "independent," but served rather at the will of the political elite. This nontransparent system in which politics still largely took place

behind the scenes provided rich food for the imagination of caricaturists and their new mass audience. The audience simultaneously began asserting itself democratically and demanding insight into the functioning of politics.

On the other hand, satirists suggested that Bülow himself was "pulling the strings" when they portrayed him as the puppet master rather than the puppet. Here they also played on both traditional and contemporary themes. Such a traditional theme was a scene of an ancient Roman procession of conquerors, notably the popular leader of the Colonial Office, Bernhard Dernburg, standing on a chariot pulled by hippopotamuses, in front of the elevated political leadership centered around a seated Bülow (behind him was Wilhelm II who was recognizable only by his eagle helmet, presumably for lingering fear of censorship).[84] By contrast, a contemporary theme was featured in *Süddeutscher Postillon*—a Munich-based socialist satirical that constituted the more agitational and less successful version of the Stuttgart-based *Wahre Jacob*. In 1906, it depicted Bülow as controlling two hand puppets of a Frenchman with saber and a Briton with warship. The puppet stand advertised "Today, and in the next days: The invasion of the French and the British." Bülow was flanked by the Navy Secretary Alfred von Tirpitz and the Minister of Finance Georg von Rheinbaben, who respectively played a music box and collected money from a frightened spectator. This cartoon appeared four days after the conclusion of the Algeciras Conference, which ended the First Moroccan Crisis in which Germany had challenged the French attempt to establish a protectorate over Morocco, and which further cemented the Anglo-French Entente Cordiale that was perceived as an increasing threat in German media and politics. The subscript that "the piece is not exactly new, but has always been a great success" satirized the idea that using supposed threats to national security for scaremongering was a time-tested method for political leaders to gain the (ideological and financial) support of the people.[85] Yet implicitly the cartoon also reinforced the notion that Bülow was in charge and that the public paid attention to his performance of politics.

However, the notion that Bülow was the puppet master also projected responsibility onto him and opened him up to criticism. This could be seen in a 1904 *Lustige Blätter* caricature, which depicted him "behind the scenes of the Vienna Hofburg" as the "author of the drama 'The Trade Agreement'" between Germany and Austria. While the angry public was throwing eggs onto the stage, Bülow's actor complained to Bülow that Bülow needed to write better pieces if he wanted the actor to be more successful.[86] The image shows a form of democratization: a political puppet master did not have free reign, but even in the authoritarian German system he had to adapt his "script" to what "public opinion" found acceptable. That said, Bülow simultaneously continued to face pressures from above, from the political establishment, and thus ultimately functioned as neither a pure puppet nor puppet master. This dynamic was captured in the cartoon "Theater Rehearsal," which showed him as conducting the "ballet performance" of the Rhine and Elbe rivers policy. The director told Bülow that if his second performance would fall through, just like the first, he would lose his position.[87] Here Bülow was thus the "manager" rather than master of the show, which granted him agency but within the constraints of a system of politics based on performance.

Finally, caricaturists employed the puppet metaphor to capture the dynamics between politicians and themselves. Here Bülow was again featured as both puppet and puppet master. These opposite roles even occurred in the same magazine, as visible in *Lustige Blätter*. In January 1905, it portrayed Bülow as steering puppets that represented different

satirical journals such as *Simplicissimus, Kladderadatsch, Ulk*, and *Lustige Blätter* itself. The chancellor, in the form of "Don Bernardo," warned them against making fun of the Russian government, "or else you will have to deal with me!"[88] However, in November of the same year, it had reversed the power relationship: "for the 1000th time," a puppet master presumably representing *Lustige Blätter* bowed on stage to the audience, while holding a collection of string puppets in his hands that included Bülow and his black poodle dog Mohrchen.[89] One could argue that the magazine was simply boasting about its caricaturizations of political figures, but given that such caricaturization was a satirical magazine's raison d'être, it presumably wanted to make a grander statement about its relationship to politicians. In both cases, politics was shown as a show jointly performed by political and press actors, but the latter cartoon suggested that in this period, the roles were being reversed and that the press rather than the politicians was running this show.

In sum, while Allen attributes the theatricality of Wilhelmine politics largely to Bülow's personal style of politics, and Rebentisch classifies him and the other imperial chancellors as puppets compared to their predecessor Bismarck, contemporary cartoons suggest that notions of puppetry point rather to a changing field of politics around 1900, in which performance through an expanding mass press gained new relevance. Interpretations of this political show led satirists to classify Bülow as either the puppet or puppet master. Finally, Bülow's theatricality should be seen within the context of (informal) democratization: the continuous depictions of shows staged before audiences suggested that political actors had to legitimate themselves publicly.

The Participative Public

The audience itself was depicted as playing an active role in the performance of politics. Both cartoons and news articles suggested that this performance was shaped not solely through a top-down struggle, but also through the bottom-up participation of the public. The cartoons initially defined the image of Bülow, but this image was subsequently appropriated and recommunicated by citizens, who themselves were portrayed as gaining increasing power over the performance of politics.

An apparent impact of cartoon images and both their appropriation and recommunication could be seen in the German public's literal (re)construction of Bülow as a puppet in early 1907. Waiting in the hall of their union house in Berlin, a group of unemployed sculptors conceived of the idea to make a giant snowman of Bülow, photographs of which circulated in the press over the next months.[90] The effect that caricatures had on the public's image of its political leader could be seen in how the sculptors constructed the puppet using the same physical exaggerations with which caricaturists usually depicted him: a round face, polite smile, dimples, and accompanied by his poodle. However, this construction also suggested that these members of the public essentially made the notion of Bülow being a puppet their own. Moreover, with the snowman they reinforced this puppet image through recommunication on three levels. First, the physical structure, especially due to its novelty and great size, attracted the immediate presence of a local audience. Second, the circulating press photos of the snowman reached a far greater public of newspaper readers, and the "realistic reproduction" of the photograph gave the puppet image an aura of authenticity it had never enjoyed in the original caricatures. Third, the snowman photos were also featured in the satirical magazines themselves, and thereby legitimated the

caricaturists' original depictions of Bülow as a political puppet. While the sculptors presumably did not reinforce this puppet reputation on purpose, they grew increasingly aware of the value and power of images. Initially, a publisher who heard about the snowman sent two photographers to capture it, to which the sculptors responded enthusiastically and thus the image was placed in newspapers the next day. However, the sculptors later objected to this image use, as they wanted to distribute it themselves for economic gain. The publisher protested, but offered them fifty marks because they were unemployed. They refused this fee and sold their copyright to another publisher, who immediately sued the photographers. Yet the court declared the latter not guilty of illegally distributing the snow puppet image.[91] This case on copyright shows how different members of the public effectively "struggled" over the ownership of, and right to define, the image of a political figure like Bülow.[92] The chancellor's political "performance" thus involved the active participation of this public.

This participation went beyond solely portraying Bülow as a political puppet: satirists also showed the public as "performing the puppet show." This theme found a natural home in satires involving the education and play of children, who were "learning" how to "play the game" of political performance. For example, the 1908 cartoon "Our dear little ones" depicted nursery children in political scenes in different countries: playing "czar" in Bulgaria, playing "war" with soldier puppets in Serbia, playing "parliament" in Turkey, playing "with the new little dolls Bosnia and Herzegovina" in Austria, and playing "interview" with the German emperor in England. The last scene showed a child representing Bülow with the comment that "only in the German [nursery] you don't play anything, there you learn to read now"—thereby criticizing Bülow for his alleged failure to read a controversial Kaiser interview before publication in the British press.[93] While here, the children were thus portrayed as political actors themselves, other satires—following the distinction made between Bülow as puppet or puppet master—depicted them rather as the directors of the political performance. Within this context, *Kladderadatsch* joked in 1908 that "a favorite gift for children" was the "Puppet Parliament." It consisted of all the German parliamentarians, as well as Bülow and other government representatives. The journal explained that "with these little puppets the children can now play parliament and, for example, perform the entire imperial finance reform negotiations using the parliamentary news of the newspapers."[94] This satire suggests three points. First, it reinforced the idea that the public had a right to participate in steering politics. Second, it posited that this public could "learn" this steering in its process of democratic maturation. And third, by suggesting that the public base its steering on "the parliamentary news of the newspapers," it came full circle and inserted an important role for the mass press—to which satirical magazines belonged themselves—in modern politics.

In all, satirists suggested that the mass public around 1900 essentially "participated" in the construction of "political puppets" that represented politicians such as Bülow. This public appropriated and recommunicated caricatures of Bülow, and thereby reinforced his status in the satirical magazines as a "political performer." Moreover, cartoons insinuated that members of the public themselves starred as political puppets or puppet masters, and that—reinforcing the arguments of revisionist historians such as David Blackbourn, Geoff Eley, and Margaret Anderson[95]—the politics of Imperial Germany were therefore more "democratic" than usually perceived. Even if this participation that caricaturists portrayed sometimes constituted an implicit expectation rather than an empirical reality, precisely such normative portrayals publicly bolstered the notion that the citizenry had a right to play

a democratic role. Finally, the commercial success of such caricatures attests to their relevance. Satirical magazines were business enterprises that could only afford to continue depicting public participation in the performance of politics if this participation somehow resonated with their audiences.

Conclusion

"Whose eyes are they?" the publication *Arena* asked in April 1908. Portraying three sets of eyes, it invited the reader to guess who was "a well-known statesman," "a famous actress," and "a well-known publicist."[96] Starting with the French Revolution and in Britain around 1800, democratization and improving means of communication over the next century shaped politics into a publicized performance before a mass audience. By the start of the twentieth century, as the *Arena* image suggests, this process blurred the lines between politics, theater, and journalism. Satires of Bülow in particular show how caricaturists built on historical forms of performance such as comedy, tragedy, and the circus, but also played into new cultural phenomena like parliamentarism, sports, and celebrity, to reflect on how mass performance was now constitutive of politics. The fact that Bülow collected cartoons of himself from across Europe and even the US throughout his career shows that he was well aware of caricaturists' portrayals of him. He may even have used them as a mirror to evaluate his performance of politics. Indeed, satires joked that Bülow owed them gratitude for showcasing this political performance, and they in turn thanked him for his attractive theatrical politics.[97] While Bülow often starred as the master of this political theater, depictions of him as its puppet rather suggested that he operated within a new political field defined by other structural forces. One of these forces was the public, the growing power of which within a context of democratization in Western Europe—even in Imperial Germany—meant that citizens played an increasing role in appropriating and recommunicating the images of political actors and steering their performance of politics. Moreover, caricaturists' jokes about Bülow owing them gratitude point to the structural force of the media themselves. The possibilities and constraints of the new mass press defined how Bülow and other political figures could perform their politics in front of increasingly wide and transnational audiences. Yet while some cartoons showed Bülow's interaction with media explicitly,[98] it was their broader use of the performance metaphor that suggested the true magnitude of the media's new power around 1900. All the different forms of stages—ancient tragedy, early modern circus, and modern sports arena—symbolized the great new stage on which politicians like Bülow had to perform their politics: the stage of satirists' own mass media.

Notes

1. *Ulk*, April 23, 1909, 17.
2. Paul Hindson and Tim Gray, *Burke's Dramatic Theory of Politics* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1988), 6, 13; Stuart Elden, "Foucault and Shakespeare: Ceremony, Theatre, Politics," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 55 (2017): 153, 155; A. Goodden, "The Dramatising of Politics: Theatricality and the Revolutionary Assemblies," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* XX, no. 3 (1984): 193; Paul Friedland, *Political Actors: Representative Bodies and Theatricality in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002); and Henk te Velde, *Het Theater van de Politiek* (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 2003), 14.

3. Johannes Paulmann, "Peripatetische Herrschaft, Deutungskontrolle und Konsum: Zur Theatralität in der Europäischen Politik vor 1914," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 53 (2002): 444–61; and Eberhard Demm, "'Sic volo sic jubilo': Das 25. Regierungsjubiläum Wilhelms II. im Juni 1913," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 93, no. 1 (2011): 201–205.
4. Peter Yeandle and Katherine Newey, "Introduction: The Politics of Performance and the Performance of Politics," in *Politics, Performance and Popular Culture: Theater and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Peter Yeandle, Katherine Newey, and Jeffrey Richards (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 1–20; Alan Finlayson, "'What Is the Point of Parliamentary Debate?': Deliberation, Oratory, Opposition and Spectacle in the British House of Commons," *Redescriptions: Political Thought, Conceptual History and Feminist Theory* 20, no. 1 (2017): 11–31; Elaine Hadley, *Melodramatic Tactics: Theatricalized Dissent in the English Marketplace, 1800–1885* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995); Julia Swindells, *Glorious Causes: The Grand Theater of Political Change, 1789 to 1833* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Lynn Voskuil, *Acting Naturally: Victorian Theatricality and Authenticity* (Charlottesville: Virginia University Press, 2004); Sally Charnow, *Theater, Politics, and Markets in Fin-de-Siècle Paris: Staging Modernity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Ann Allen, *Satire and Society in Wilhelmine Germany: Kladderadatsch and Simplicissimus, 1890–1914* (Lexington: Kentucky University Press, 1984), 48–102; on the use of pathos in Belgian parliamentary debates: Marnix Beyen and Henk te Velde, "Passion and Reason: Modern Parliaments in the Low Countries," in *Parliaments and Parliamentarism: A Comparative History of Disputes about a European Concept*, ed. Pasi Ihalainen, Cornelia Ilie, and Kari Palonen (New York: Berghahn, 2018), 81–96.
5. Friedland, *Political Actors*; Shirin Rai and Janelle G. Reinelt, ed. *The Grammar of Politics and Performance* (London: Routledge, 2014); James Lehning, *The Melodramatic Thread: Spectacle and Political Culture in Modern France* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007); and Glynne Wickham, "Gladstone, Oratory and the Theatre," in *Gladstone*, ed. P. J. Jagger (London: Hambledon, 1998), 1–32.
6. E. G. M. Elchardus, *De Dramademocratie* (Tielt: Terra Lannoo, 2002).
7. Johannes Paulmann, *Pomp und Politik: Monarchenbegegnungen in Europa zwischen Ancien Régime und Erstem Weltkrieg* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 2000), 12; Susan Maslan, *Revolutionary Acts: Theater, Democracy, and the French Revolution* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); te Velde, *Het Theater van de Politiek*; Finlayson, "'What Is the Point of Parliamentary Debate?'" 25–26; and Jeffrey Green, *The Eyes of the People: Democracy in an Age of Spectatorship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
8. On the broader merits of studying humor for historians, see also the Forum discussion on "Humour," *German History* 33, no. 4 (2015): 609–23.
9. See also William Feaver and Ann Gould, *Masters of Caricature: From Hogarth and Gillray to Scarfe and Levine* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981), 5; James Sherry, "Four Modes of Caricature: Reflections upon a Genre," *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities* 18, no. 1 (1986–7): 29–62; Constance McPhee and Nadine Orenstein, *Infinite Jest: Caricature and Satire from Leonardo to Levine* (New York: Yale University Press, 2011), 3–4; Zazil Reyes García, "Political Cartoons," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), https://oxfordre.com/communication/abstract/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228613-e-213.
10. Feaver and Gould, *Masters of Caricature*, 28.
11. Remieg Aerts, "Besloten Openbaarheid: De Representatie van het Nederlandse Parlement in de Negentiende Eeuw," in *Erich Salomon & Het Ideale Parlement: Fotograaf in Berlijn en Den Haag, 1928–1940*, ed. Andreas Biefang and Marij Leenders (Amsterdam: Boom, 2014), 154; and Remieg Aerts, "Iemand Moet het Doen: Tweehonderd Jaar Beeld en Zelfbeeld van de Tweede Kamer," in *In Dit Huis: Twee Eeuwen Tweede Kamer*, ed. Remieg Aerts et al. (Amsterdam: Boom, 2015), 446–47.
12. W. A. Coupe, "Kaiser Wilhelm II and the Cartoonists," *History Today* 30, no. 11 (1980): 22; Allen, *Satire and Society in Wilhelmine Germany*, 3–4, 11, 48–102; Kurt Feyaerts and Anke Gilleir, "'Die Revolution Findet Wegen Schlechten Wetters im Saale Statt': Duitse Politieke

Satire in Tijdschrift en Cabaret," in *Humor met een Verleden*, ed. Marnix Beyen and Johan Verberckmoes (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2006), 53–86; James D. Steakley and Jost Hermand, *Die Freunde des Kaisers: Die Eulenburg-Affäre im Spiegel Zeitgenössischer Karikaturen* (Hamburg: MännerschwarmSkript Verlag, 2004); colportage novels were novels that salesmen distributed door-to-door.

13. Allen, *Satire and Society in Wilhelmine Germany*, 1–13, 53; see also *German History*, "Humour," 613–16.
14. Mary Lee Townsend, *Forbidden Laughter: Popular Humor and the Limits of Repression in Nineteenth-Century Prussia* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1992); see also Ralph Shikes, *The Indignant Eye: The Artist as Social Critic in Prints and Drawings from the Fifteenth Century to Picasso* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976); more generally, on the early politicization of German society: David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); Margaret Anderson, *Practicing Democracy: Elections and Political Culture in Imperial Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); however, this early democratization was still limited and shaped by elites to control the masses: Thomas Kühne, "Demokratisierung und Parlamentarisierung: Neue Forschungen zur Politischen Entwicklungsfähigkeit Deutschlands vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 31, no. 2 (2005): 293–316; James N. Retallack, *Red Saxony: Election Battles and the Specter of Democracy in Germany, 1860–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Hedwig Richter, *Moderne Wahlen: Eine Geschichte der Demokratie in Preußen und den USA im 19. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2017); in general, see also Larry E. Jones and James N. Retallack, ed. *Elections, Mass Politics, and Social Change in Modern Germany: New Perspectives* (Washington: German Historical Institute, 1992).
15. Feaver and Gould, *Masters of Caricature*, 30.
16. Georg Hermann, "Moderne Deutsche Karikaturisten," *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* 10, no. 11 (1901); Feaver and Gould, *Masters of Caricature*, 29.
17. Khin W. Chen, Robert Phiddian, and Ronald Stewart, "Towards a Discipline of Political Cartoon Studies: Mapping the Field," in *Satire and Politics: The Interplay of Heritage and Practice*, ed. Jessica M. Davis (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 125–62.
18. A notable exception is Joris Gijsenbergh and Harm Kaal, "Kritiek op de Parlementaire Democratie in Nederlandse Spotprenten," in Biefang and Leenders, *Erich Salomon & Het Ideale Parlement*, 201–20.
19. McPhee and Orenstein, *Infinite Jest*, 154; Henry Miller, *Politics Personified: Portraiture, Caricature and Visual Culture in Britain, c.1830–80* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), in particular 13, 198–224; Andrew Roberts, *Salisbury: Victorian Titan* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1999), 167; and Coupe, "Kaiser Wilhelm II and the Cartoonists," 17.
20. John Grand-Carteret, *Les Célébrités Vues par L'image: "Lui" Devant l'Objectif Caricatural* (Paris: Librairie Nilsson, 1905); John Grand-Carteret, *Les Célébrités Vues par l'Image: "L'Oncle de l'Europe" Devant l'Objectif Caricatural* (Paris: Louis-Michaud, 1906); Gustav Kahn, *Europas Fürsten im Sittenspiegel der Karikatur* (Berlin: Schmidt, 1907); John Grand-Carteret, *Les Célébrités Vues par l'Image: Popold II, Roi des Belges et des Belles Devant l'Objectif Caricatural* (Paris: Louis-Michaud, 1908); for later collections and analyses: Coupe, "Kaiser Wilhelm II and the Cartoonists"; Allen, *Satire and Society in Wilhelmine Germany*, 48–102; Jost Rebentisch, *Die Vielen Gesichter des Kaisers: Wilhelm II. in der Deutschen und Britischen Karikatur (1888–1918)* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2000); Steakley and Hermand, *Die Freunde des Kaisers*; and Laurence van Ypersele, "Leopold II in Potloodtrekken (1865–1909)," in *Leopold II: Ongegeneerd Genie? Buitenlandse Politiek en Kolonisatie*, ed. Vincent Dujardin et al. (Tielt: Lannoo, 2009), 195–218.
21. An important exception is the pioneering work of Jürgen Wilke, "Medialisierung der Politik? Reichskanzler von Bülow als Vorläufer," in *Von der Politisierung der Medien zur Medialisierung des Politischen? Zum Verhältnis von Medien, Öffentlichkeiten und Politik im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Arnold Klaus et al. (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2010), 97–120; see also Betto van Waarden, "Public Politics: The Coming of Age of the Media

Politician in a Transnational Communicative Space, 1880s-1910s" (PhD Dissertation, KU Leuven, 2019). However, both of these studies focus specifically on Bülow's engagement with media.

22. Allen, *Satire and Society in Wilhelmine Germany*, 100, more generally 48–102.
23. See notably Katharine Lerman, *The Chancellor as Courtier: Bernhard von Bülow and the Governance of Germany, 1900–1909* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Gerd Fesser, *Reichskanzler Fürst von Bülow: Architekt der Deutschen Weltpolitik* (Leipzig: Militzke, 2003); Peter Winzen, *Bülows Weltmachtkonzept: Untersuchungen zur Frühphase Seiner Aussenpolitik 1897–1901* (Boppard a.Rh.: Harald Boldt, 1977); and Peter Winzen, *Reichskanzler Bernhard von Bülow: Mit Weltmachtphantasien in den Ersten Weltkrieg: Eine Politische Biographie* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 2013).
24. Bülow's collection of twenty-nine volumes of cartoons of himself still exists: Fürst Bülow in der Karikatur, N 1016/187-215, Bundesarchiv.
25. *Ulk*, April 18, 1902; "Es Lebe das Kleben," *Lustige Blätter*, May 14, 1902; and "Der Sammlungspolitiker," *Ulk*, May 2, 1902.
26. "Fürst Bülow und die Presse: Persönliche Erinnerungen von Dr. A. v. Wilke," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, October 29, 1929; Otto Hötzsch, ed. *Fürst Bülows Reden: Nebst Urkundlichen Beiträgen zu Seiner Politik*, 3 vols., 3 (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1909), 332–35; Prince von Bülow, *Memoirs: From Appointment as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Morocco Crisis, 1897–1903*, 4 vols., 1 (London: Putnam, 1931), 186, 188; Prince von Bülow, *Memoirs: The World War and the Collapse of Germany, 1909–1919*, 4 vols., 3 (London: Putnam, 1931), 120, 197; and Lerman, *The Chancellor as Courtier*, 118–19, 122–23.
27. Robert Goldstein, "Introduction," in *The War for the Public Mind: Political Censorship in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Robert Goldstein (London: Praeger, 2000), 1–34; Jürgen Wilke et al., "Struggles over 'Press Freedom' and 'Public Spheres': Competing Conceptualizations, Values, Norms," in *The Handbook of European Communication History*, ed. Klaus Arnold, Paschal Preston, and Susanne Kinnebrock (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2019), 23–42; and Jörg Requate, *Journalismus als Beruf: Entstehung und Entwicklung des Journalistenberufs im 19. Jahrhundert: Deutschland im Internationalen Vergleich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 393–407.
28. Gunda Stöber, *Pressepolitik als Notwendigkeit: Zum Verhältnis von Staat und Öffentlichkeit im Wilhelminischen Deutschland 1890–1914* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2000), 71–77; see also Ute Daniel and Wolfram Siemann, "Historische Dimensionen der Propaganda," in *Propaganda: Meinungskampf, Verführung und politische Sinnstiftung 1789–1989*, ed. Ute Daniel and Wolfram Siemann (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1994), 13–14; and Robin Lenman, "Germany," in Goldstein, *The War for the Public Mind*, 35–80.
29. Wolfgang Piereth, "Propaganda im 19. Jahrhundert: Die Anfänge Aktiver Staatlicher Pressepolitik in Deutschland (1800–1871)," in Daniel and Siemann, *Propaganda*, 32, 37; Eva Giloi, *Monarchy, Myth, and Material Culture in Germany 1750–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Ute Daniel, "Die Politik der Propaganda: Zur Praxis Gouvernementaler Selbstrepräsentation vom Kaiserreich bis zur Bundesrepublik," in Daniel and Siemann, *Propaganda*, 49–51; Ludwig Thoma, "Die Reden Kaiser Wilhelm II.: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Unserer Zeit," 1907, in *Samt und Stahl: Kaiser Wilhelm II. im Urteil Seiner Zeitgenossen*, ed. Martin Kohlrausch (Berlin: Landtverlag, 2006), 126.
30. Allen, *Satire and Society in Wilhelmine Germany*, 1–13, 54, 65.
31. Fesser, *Reichskanzler Fürst von Bülow*, 48; Otto Hammann, *Bilder aus der Letzten Kaiserzeit* (Berlin, 1922), 42; and Fritz Walz, *Die Presse und die Deutsche Weltpolitik: Von einem Ausland-Deutschen* (Zurich: Zürcher & Furrer, 1906), 24–25.
32. Bülow, *Memoirs*, 1: 356–57, 561–62; Prince von Bülow, *Memoirs: From the Morocco Crisis to Resignation 1903–1909*, 4 vols., 2 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1931), 416–17; and Lerman, *The Chancellor as Courtier*, 118–19.
33. Martin Kohlrausch, "Die Hofische Gesellschaft und ihre Feinde: Monarchie und Öffentlichkeit in Großbritannien und Deutschland um 1900," *Neue Politische Literatur* 47 (2002): 450–66; Frank Bösch, "Volkstribune und Intellektuelle: W. T. Stead, Harden und die Transformation des Politischen Journalismus in Großbritannien und Deutschland," in *Politischer Journalismus,*

Öffentlichkeiten, und Medien im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, ed. Clemens Zimmermann (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2006), 99–120; Peter Winzen, *Das Kaiserreich am Abgrund: Die Daily-Telegraph-Affäre und das Hale-Interview von 1908. Darstellung und Dokumentation* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2002), 43, 260–61; Frank Bösch, "Katalysator der Demokratisierung? Presse, Politik und Gesellschaft vor 1914," in *Medialisierung und Demokratie im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Frank Bösch and Norbert Frei (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006), 25–47; for more on Bülow's sensitivity to, and attempts to control, the press, see also van Waarden, "Public Politics," 42–113.

34. "Ein Liberaler Winternachtstraum," *Lustige Blätter*, February 4, 1908, 6; similar to Bülow's characteristic features, the press and notably satirical depictions of Wilhelm II's pointy "W" mustache, eagle helmet, and boots made the latter also into a type of political "brand," see Rebentisch, *Die Vielen Gesichter des Kaisers*; Martin Kohlrausch, "Der Mann mit dem Adlerhelm: Wilhelm II.—Medienstar um 1900," in *Das Jahrhundert der Bilder: 1900 bis 1949*, ed. Gerhard Paul (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 70.
35. Peter Hugill, "German Great-Power Relations in the Pages of 'Simplicissimus,' 1896–1914," *Geographical Review* 98, no. 1 (2008): 1–23.
36. "Alles das hat der Simplicissimus Verschuldet und Mehr Noch," *Simplicissimus*, April 4, 1905.
37. "At Potsdam," *Punch*, November 15, 1899.
38. "Und Bülow Sprach," *Ulk*, April 15, 1907, 16.
39. See e.g. Remieg Aerts, "Besloten Openbaarheid," 156.
40. "Zur Eröffnung des Reichszirkus," *Der Wahre Jacob*, November 11, 1907, 556.
41. "Aus Seinem Zirkus," *Kikeriki*, February 17, 1907, 14.
42. *Jugendstil* was a German Art Nouveau artistic movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
43. "Trau—Schau—Wem!," *Jugend*, July 23, 1900, 30.
44. "History of the Month in Caricature," *publication unknown*, October 15, 1900. The journal may have been the *Review of Reviews*, which regularly republished cartoons from other journals under its section "Current History in Caricature."
45. "Count von Bülow's Speech," *Times*, January 10, 1902.
46. Allen, *Satire and Society in Wilhelmine Germany*, 54.
47. E.g. "Theater-Repertoire," *Lustige Blätter*, April 1, 1903, 14; "Reichstheater-Spielplan," *Ulk*, January 11, 1907, 2.
48. "Rund um den Roland von Berlin," *Floh*, December, 1904, Theater-Nummer.
49. "Im Deutschen Raritätenkabinett," *Simplicissimus*, October 8, 1906, 28.
50. University of Sheffield, "History of the Fairground," https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/nfca/researcharticles/historyfairs; and Nele Wynants, "Wetenschap op de Kermis: De Verspreiding van Technologie, Kennis en Spektakel in Belgische Provinciesteden Tijdens het Fin-de-Siècle," *Volkskunde*, no. 1 (2020): 1–33.
51. "Bühne und Politik," *Kladderadatsch*, May 12, 1907.
52. "Ein Schwertertanz, der die Sittlichkeit Nicht Gefährdet," *Der Wahre Jacob*, December 19, 1908, 585.
53. A description originally used for political parties by Frank Ankersmit, but subsequently applied to the British parliament in Finlayson, "'What Is the Point of Parliamentary Debate?'" 24.
54. "'Kabarett Reichstag,'" *Lustige Blätter*, October 25, 1905, 43.
55. "Reichstags-Theater," *Kladderadatsch*, December 30, 1906, 52.
56. "Bülow im Reichstag," *Tag*, December 1, 1907, 608.
57. Allen, *Satire and Society in Wilhelmine Germany*, 48–102.
58. "Reichstagsbericht," *Simplicissimus*, April 20, 1908, 3.
59. "Deutscher Reichstag," *Berliner Blaueste Nachrichten*, 1906, Fasvhingsnummer.
60. The author thanks one of the anonymous reviewers for highlighting this point.
61. Nina Verheyen, *Die Erfindung der Leistung* (München: Hanser Berlin, 2018).
62. Christiane Eisenberg, "*English Sports" und Deutsche Bürger: Eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte 1800–1939* (Paderborn: Schoningh, 1999).
63. "Der Reichskanzler im Umherziehen," *Der Wahre Jacob*, July 26, 1904, 470.

64. Martin Kohlrausch, Peter Heyrman, and Jan de Maeyer, "Elites and Leisure: Arenas of Encounter in Europe, 1815–1914: An Introduction," in *Leisure and Elite Formation: Arenas of Encounter in Continental Europe, 1815–1914*, ed. Peter Heyrman, Martin Kohlrausch, and Jan de Maeyer (München: De Gruyter, 2020), 1–18.
65. "Der Reichskanzler im Umherziehen," *Der Wahre Jacob*, July 26, 1904, 470.
66. E.g. *Chicago Record-Herald*, January 11, 1902; *Jugend*, "Ein Grosses Internationales Boxer-Turnier," March 11, 1902; see also Betto van Waarden, "Demands of a Transnational Public Sphere: The Diplomatic Conflict Between Joseph Chamberlain and Bernhard von Bülow and How the Mass Press Shaped Expectations for Mediatized Politics Around the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'Histoire* 26, no. 3 (2019): 476–504.
67. "Der Sensations-Zirkus," *Lustige Blätter*, November 19, 1907, 47.
68. "Sportliches," *Kladderadatsch*, July 18, 1897, 29.
69. "Parlamentsbericht," *Kladderadatsch*, June 27, 1909, 26.
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72. Frank Bösch, *Mass Media and Historical Change: Germany in International Perspective, 1400 to the Present* (New York: Berghahn, 2015), 79; Jane Chapman, *Comparative Media History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), 75–81.
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74. "Das Erdball-Spiel," *Kladderadatsch*, June 27, 1909, 26.
75. *Kladderadatsch*, June 27, 1909, 26.
76. C. L. Ponce de Leon, *Self-Exposure: Human-Interest Journalism and the Emergence of Celebrity in America, 1890–1940* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 2002); Edward Berenson and Eva Giloi, ed. *Constructing Charisma: Celebrity, Fame, and Power in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Robert van Krieken, *Celebrity Society* (London: Routledge, 2012), 40–61, 98–118; Antoine Lilti, *The Invention of Celebrity: 1750–1850* (Cambridge: Polity, 2017), 257–66; Michael Garval, *Cléo de Mérode and the Rise of Modern Celebrity Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2017); Betto van Waarden, "A Colonial Celebrity in the New Attention Economy: Cecil Rhodes's Cape-to-Cairo Telegraph and Railway Negotiations in 1899," *English Historical Review* 136, no. 582 (2021): 1193–1223; Betto van Waarden and Martin Kohlrausch, "The Mediatization of Political Personae, 1880s-1930s: Introduction," *Media History* 28, no. 1 (2022): 1–12; and Betto van Waarden, "'His Political Life Story Told in Pictures': The Visual Construction of the Political Persona of Joseph Chamberlain," *Media History* 28, no. 1 (2022): 27–59
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78. "'Zigarre Gefällig?' (Ein Zukunfts-Momentbild)," *Nebelspalter*, March 7, 1908, 10.
79. Allen, *Satire and Society in Wilhelmine Germany*, 100, more generally 48–102.
80. Rebentisch, *Die Vielen Gesichter des Kaisers*, 248–52.
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83. "Im Reichskasperletheater," *Der Wahre Jacob*, May 20, 1902.
84. "Dernburg der Afrikaner," *Der Wahre Jacob*, March 5, 1907, 538.
85. *[Süddeutscher] Postillon*, April 11, 1906, 8.
86. "Hinter den Kulissen der Wiener Hofburg," *Lustige Blätter*, December 21, 1904, 51.
87. "Theaterprobe," *Lustige Blätter*, 8, 1901.

88. "Letztes Kapitel, Worin die Lustige Geschichte mit dem Puppenspiel Berichtet Wird," *Lustige Blätter*, January 4, 1905, 1.
89. "'Auf Wiedersehen Nächsten Mittwoch!'" *Lustige Blätter*, November 15, 1905, 46.
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About the Author

Betto van Waarden holds a Marie Curie Individual Fellowship at Lund University, and is conducting research for his new project "Presenting Parliament: Parliamentarians' Visions of the Communication and Role of Parliament within the Mediated Democracies of Britain, Belgium, and the Netherlands, 1844-1995." Previously, he received postdoctoral fellowships from the KU Leuven and Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History, where he explored new digital methods for analyzing large corpora of press and parliamentary data. Van Waarden obtained his Ph.D. also at the KU Leuven, after successfully defending his dissertation on "Public Politics: The Coming of Age of the Media Politician in a Transnational Communicative Space, 1880s-1910s." He holds an M.Phil. in political thought and intellectual history from the University of Cambridge, and a B.A. in liberal arts and sciences from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, USA. Van Waarden has a background in politics and media, having worked for the European Commission in Brussels, the World Affairs Council, United Nations Information Center, and Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, and the news magazine *De Groene Amsterdammer* in Amsterdam. Based on his scholarship and experiences, he has written on media and politics in numerous academic journals, as well as in *The Conversation, Le Monde Diplomatique, De Volkskrant, Het Financieele Dagblad*, and *De Morgen*. Van Waarden's research is aided by his knowledge of Dutch, English, German, Portuguese, Spanish, and French.

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Fig. 1: "Zur Eröffnung des Reichszirkus," *Wahre Jacob*, November 11, 1907, 556.

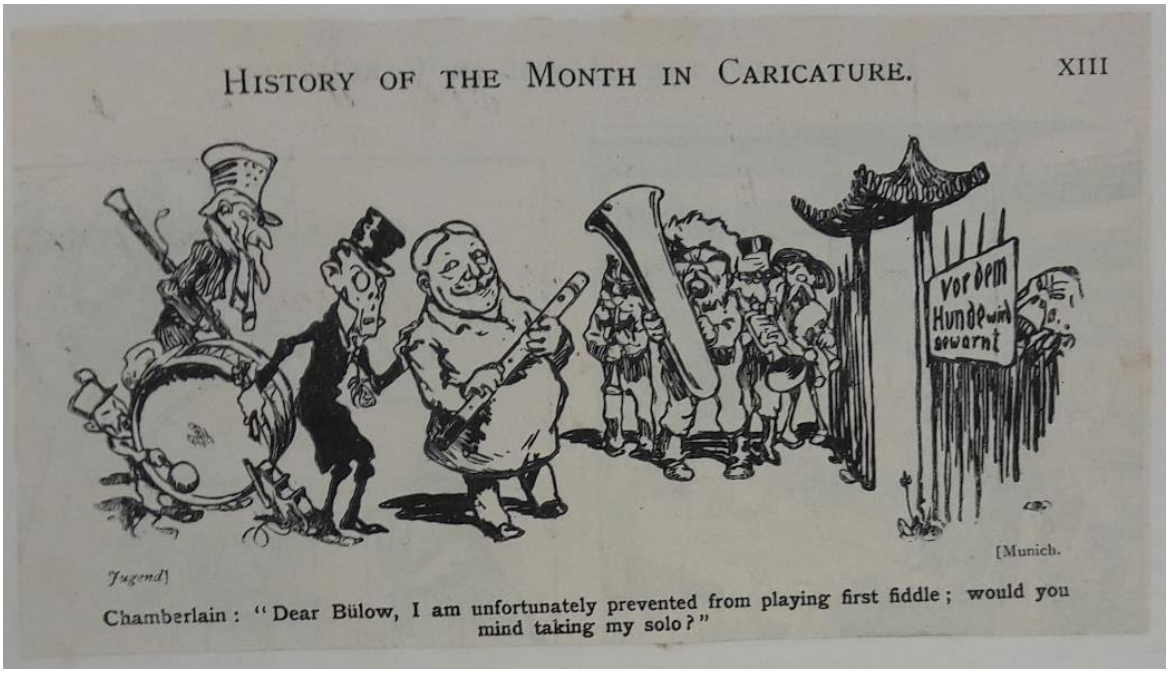


Fig. 2: "Trau - schau - wem!," *Jugend*, July 23, 1900, 30; "History of the Month in Caricature," publication unknown, October 15, 1900.

Fig. 3: "Der Reichskanzler im Umherziehen," *Wahre Jacob*, July 26, 1904, 470.

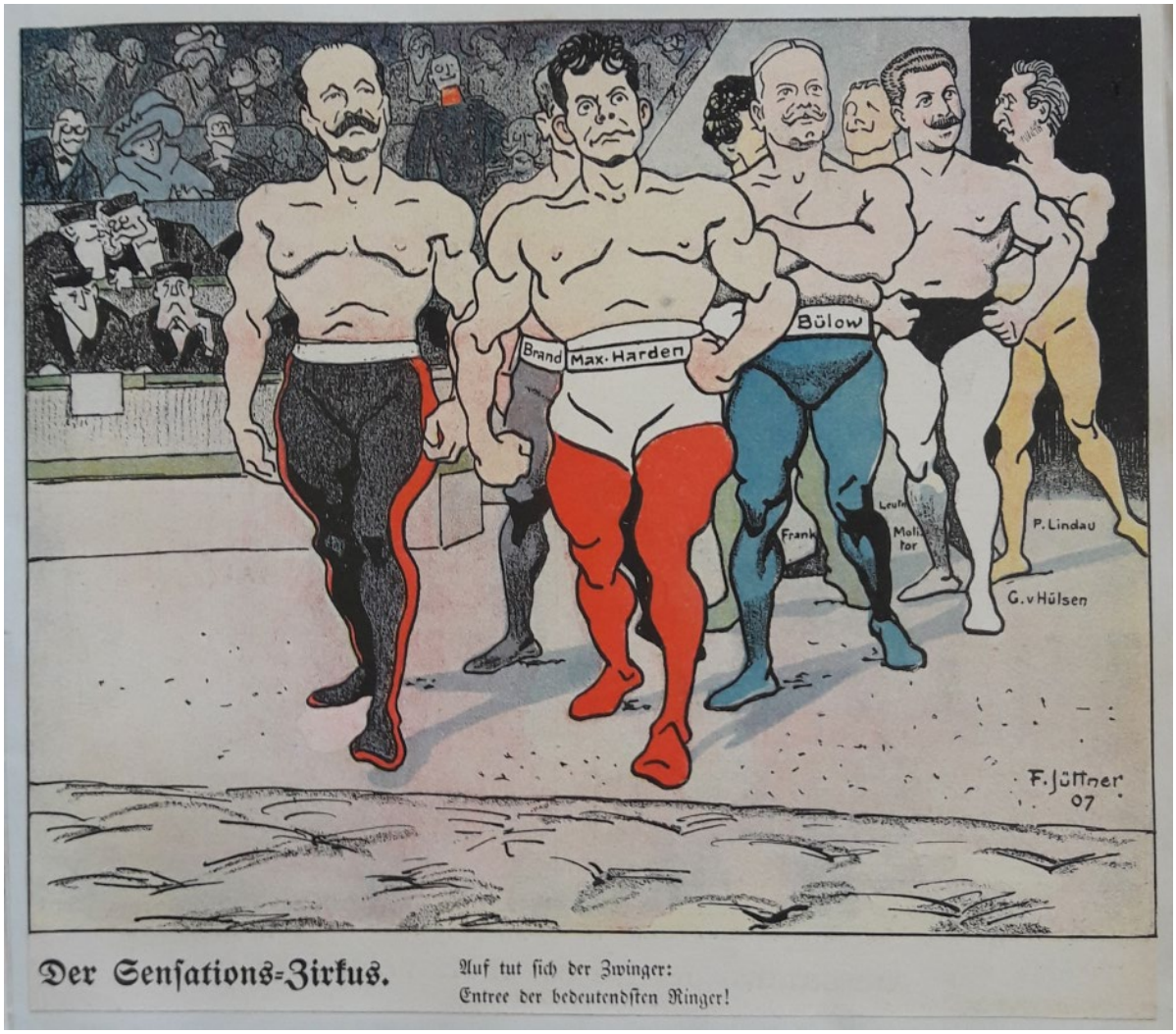


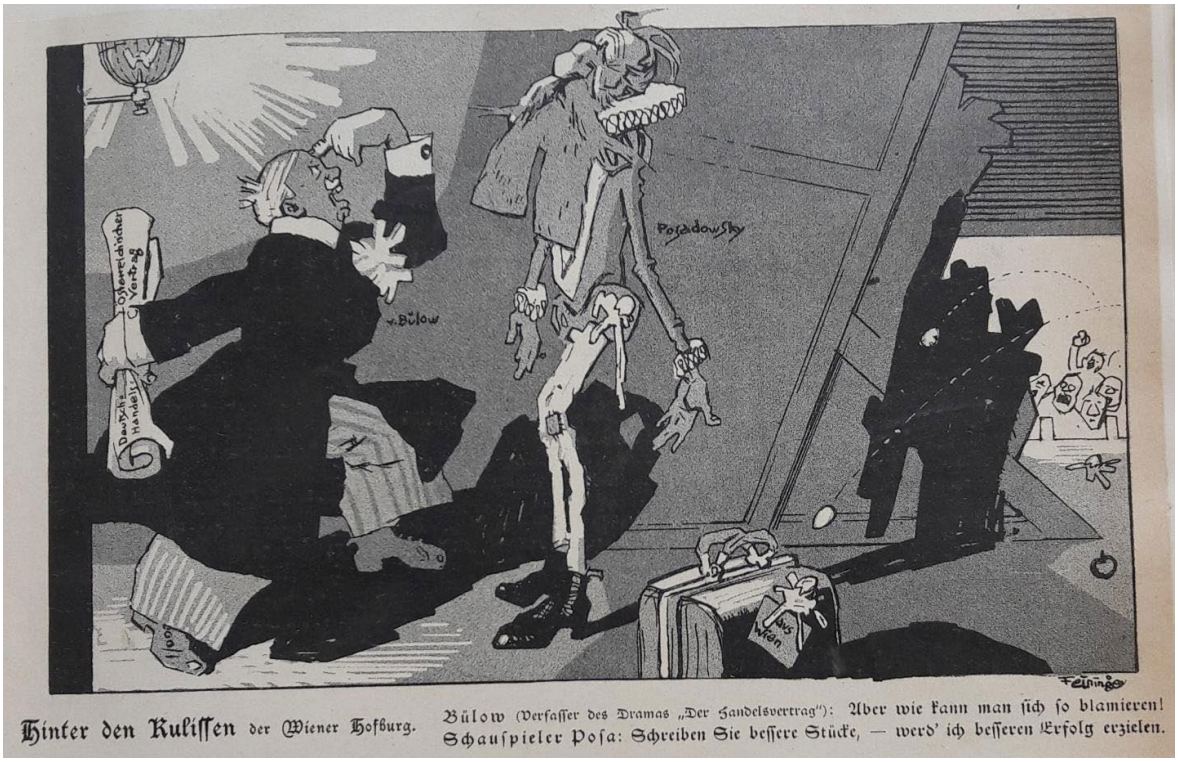
Fig. 4: "Der Sensations-Zirkus," *Lustige Blätter*, November 19, 1907, 47.

Fig. 5: "Das Erdball-Spiel," *Kladderadatsch*, June 27, 1909, 26.

Fig. 6: “‘Zigarre gefällig?,’” *Nebelspalter*, March 7, 1908, 10.

Fig. 7: "Im Reichskasperletheater," *Wahre Jacob*, May 20, 1902.

Fig. 8: *[Süddeutscher] Postillon*, April 11, 1906, 8.

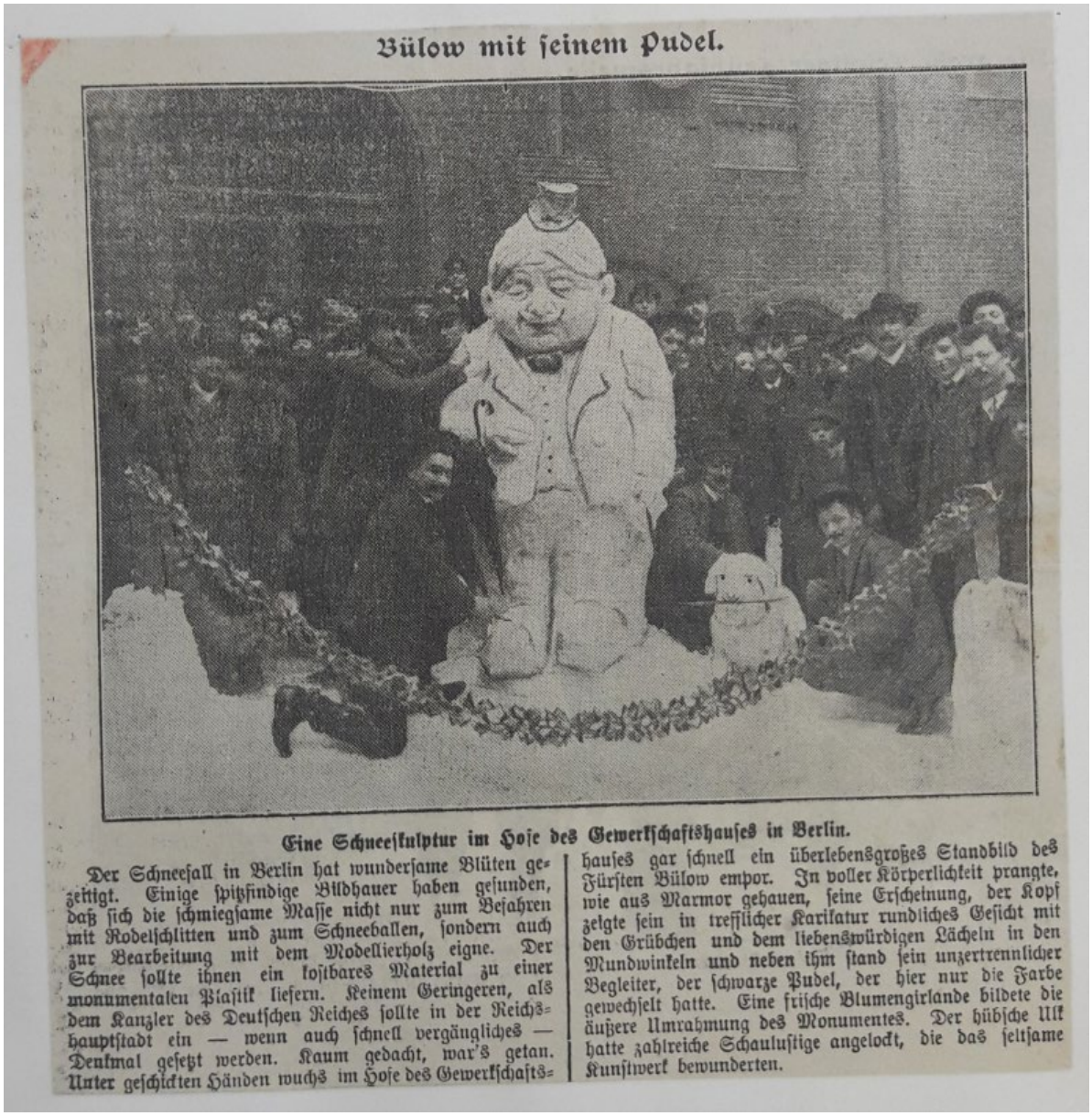


Hinter den Kulissen der Wiener Hofburg.

Bülow (Verfasser des Dramas „Der Handelsvertrag"): Aber wie kann man sich so blamieren!
Schauspieler Posa: Schreiben Sie bessere Stücke, — werd' ich besseren Erfolg erzielen.

Fig. 9: "Hinter den Kulissen der Wiener Hofburg," *Lustige Blätter*, December 21, 1904, 51.

Fig. 10: "Letztes Kapitel, worin die lustige Geschichte mit dem Puppenspiel berichtet wird," *Lustige Blätter*, January 4, 1905, 1.



Bülow mit seinem Pudel.

Eine Schneeskulptur im Hofe des Gewerkschaftshauses in Berlin.

Der Schneefall in Berlin hat wundersame Blüten gezeitigt. Einige spitzfindige Bildhauer haben gefunden, daß sich die schmiegsame Masse nicht nur zum Befahren mit Rodelschlitten und zum Schneeballen, sondern auch zur Bearbeitung mit dem Modellierholz eigne. Der Schnee sollte ihnen ein kostbares Material zu einer monumentalen Plastik liefern. Keinem Geringeren, als dem Kanzler des Deutschen Reiches sollte in der Reichshauptstadt ein — wenn auch schnell vergängliches — Denkmal gesetzt werden. Kaum gedacht, war's getan. Unter geschickten Händen wuchs im Hofe des Gewerkschaftshauses gar schnell ein überlebensgroßes Standbild des Fürsten Bülow empor. In voller Körperlichkeit prangte, wie aus Marmor gehauen, seine Erscheinung, der Kopf zeigte sein in trefflicher Karikatur rundliches Gesicht mit den Grübchen und dem liebenswürdigen Lächeln in den Mundwinkeln und neben ihm stand sein unzertrennlicher Begleiter, der schwarze Pudel, der hier nur die Farbe gewechselt hatte. Eine frische Blumengirlande bildete die äußere Umrahmung des Monumentes. Der hübsche Ulk hatte zahlreiche Schaulustige angelockt, die das seltsame Kunstwerk bewunderten.

Fig. 11: "Bülow mit seinem Pudel," *Deutsche Warte*, March 6, 1909.

Fig. 12: "Wessen Augen sind's?," *Arena,* April, 1908.