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A GROUP OF SATIRICAL SCULPTURES EXAMINING
SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PARADOXES
IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Documentation and commentary on the body of practical work submitted for the degree of Master
of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town

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For my parents.

2. **PROPOSAL**

My proposal was to produce a group of satirical sculptures thematically embracing paradoxes within the broad South African context.

My intention was to work within the tradition of social and political satire. Strict definitions of satire were to be expanded to include both comedy and tragedy. By satirising particular stupidities, abuses and "evils of all kind" within South African society, I hoped to address the same in a broader context by implication.

By discussing some artists who have worked within this tradition my intention was to determine an art-historical context within which to place my work, to extract elements of a shared experience and to attempt to define the nature of satire.

3. INTRODUCTION: THE NATURE OF SATIRE

"It is very plain that considering the defectiveness of our laws, the weakness of the prerogative, or the cunning of ill-designing men, it is possible that many great abuses may be visibly committed which cannot be legally punished ... I am apt to think it was to supply such defects as these that satire was first introduced into the work, whereby those whom neither religion nor natural virtue nor fear of punishment were able to keep within the bounds of their duty, might be withheld by the shame of having their crimes exposed to open view in the strongest colours, and themselves rendered odious to mankind." Jonathan Swift.(1)

"All facts in world history occur, as it were, twice - the first time as tragedy, the second as farce." Karl Marx.(2)

"I want to tell the truth, laughing." Horace.(3)

"What the Dutch stories somewhere relate, that a great part of their provinces was once overflow'd by a small opening made in one of their dykes by a single water rat" Alexander Pope.(4)

Satire is a convenient broad term describing similarities between *inter alia* artists, writers, dramatists and film-makers in their attempts to wittily ridicule perceived hypocrisies. Tragedy, comedy and the grotesque are other such generic terms and will be discussed briefly in relation to a definition of the parameters of satire, and again where elements of these genres are incorporated in the body of work.

Satire is concerned with exposing and denouncing abuses, follies, stupidities and "evils of all kind" through wit, sarcasm, irony, ridicule and the like. A concise definition of satire would be *that which critically entertains*. The subject matter of satire includes the pathetic and the profound, the sacred and the profane. It touches on all aspects of the human condition and uses all means at its disposal to perform its function of delightful and instructive derision. Pun, parody, inversion, allegory and obscenity all form part of the satirist's armoury. Colloquial references share platforms with literary references in an eclectic hotch-potch of interconnecting fantasies, symbols and metaphors. Northrop Frye, in *The Anatomy of Criticism* defines the conditions of satire. "Satire demands (at least a token) fantasy, a content recognised as grotesque, moral judgements (at least implicit) and a militant attitude to experience."(5)

Satirists shock in order to encourage reaction. Variety and surprising comic inversions form part of this strategy. Incongruities are described when amusement and entertainment are combined with the overriding contempt with which satirists view the world. Anger is the kernel of most satire, and satirists are often caught in the irony of immortalising what they would prefer buried; but by exposing hypocrisies for all to see, they hope to shift opinion and rally support around a common cause. "That the satirist should laugh mankind out of its favourite follies and vices, is a creative paradox; one panders to triviality in order to expose it".(6)

The potential for satire to persuade and influence public opinions is essentially political. Ian Jack, a literary critic, states that "Satire is born of the instinct to protest, it is protest become art".(7) The rich history of satirical antagonisms demonstrates the political impact that can be made by satire. During the Reformation, Protestants and Catholics fought political battles in which satirical prints played an active part. During the First and Second World Wars satire was used in opposing propaganda campaigns, while contemporary editorial cartoons in newspapers defend and attack conflicting ideologies. The history of political satire is, in a sense, a history of opposition and a reflection of discontent outside the conventions of formal government. In his book on 18th century English printmakers, Atherton explains that "the norms of political satire play a definite anti-court, anti-ministerial character. Government is the focus of all political activity. Because it means wealth, power and responsibility, government appears to the cynical eye the prime mover of evil in the political world: a corrupting influence by which the private vices inherent in men are caught in a snare and become public ones. Authority is mocked, power distrusted. Because the "Ins" are more vulnerable than the "Outs" political satire usually sides with the Opposition".(8) The Chilean satirist Herman Vidal states that, "Political humour in a dictatorship is something special, in a democracy the force is lost".(9)

Satire isolates and distorts by means of caricature and grotesque imagery. Gestures, features and situations are exaggerated on the one hand, and reduced to the lowest common denominator on the other. Witty inversions are distortions masquerading as truths. In order to focus arguments, the satirist edits the superfluous and emphasises the pertinent and thereby creates the dubious paradox of being both revealer and concealer. Non-partisan pretence is part of the delicate deceit of the satirist as a neutral arbitrator. This subterfuge is achieved "by throwing dust into our eyes, by fascinating us with the verisimilitude of his presentation by so delighting us with his wit that we never pause to question his argument". (10)

In order for the satirical arrow to hit the collective funny-bone, satire has to be easily understood. There are therefore constraints on iconographic range and on forms employed. Figuration takes precedence over abstraction where concepts need to be presented in palatable ways. Satirical evaluations of assumed social privilege can only be shared if metaphors and symbols are collectively understood. Personal fantasy is limited by constraints of clarity where the audience is exposed to ideas by means of familiar or revitalised metaphors. Audience and audience participation (in unravelling puns and hidden messages) are central to the satirical process. The artist meets the viewer half-way and the resulting mirth is a kind of covert collaboration between the two. Freud explains that "by belittling and humbling our enemy, by scorning and ridiculing him, we indirectly obtain the pleasure of his defeat by the laughter of a third person (i.e. society)"(11); and an anonymous poet re-iterates the importance of the audience:

a jests posterity lies in the ear
Of him that hears it never in the tongue
Of him that makes it (12)

Popular forms and languages are often used to communicate derisive responses to contradictions perceived in society. The sophisticated visual language of the media; coarse bar-room vernacular and historical references are amalgamated where one-liners and extended metaphors share the same satirical platform. Raw insults and erudite snubs are both means to the same end. "The spectrum analysis of satire runs from the red of invective at the one end to the violet of the most delicate irony at the other".(13)

Satire is largely topical and reflects the pressing concerns of the day. (Topicality is a necessary constraint when the satirist criticises by example.) The universality of a work of satire is directly proportionate to the formal and conceptual abilities of the artist. Alexander Pope argued for topicality when he declared that "to attack vices in the abstract without touching persons is fighting with shadows".(14)

The strength and success of satire, in exposing authoritarian abuses and corruptions, are reflected in the history of the repression of satirists through censorship and imprisonment, and explain the development of oblique references in irony, metaphor and disguised symbolism. Where the topicality advocated by Pope becomes impossible, sophisticated systems of defamation by allusion are devised. An 18th century critic writes of this development, "'Tis the persecuting spirit has raised the bantering one. The greater the weight (of constraint) is, the bitterer will be the satire. The higher the slavery, the more exquisite the buffoonery."(15)

Broadly speaking there seem to be two kinds of satirists, united in the contempt with which they comically attack. The first displays a misanthropic hatred of humanity. The resulting cynical laughter reflects a bitterness at the inexorable nature of Fate. Here satire is a form of punishment. The second offers the optimistic notion that, if confronted and satirically exposed, abuses and follies might be acknowledged by society and remedied. Satire functions in the void between what is, and what could be and affirms through negation, with an ability to attack and defend, to hurt and heal. The Chinese satirist Ding Long states, "I carve out the defects in order to let the patient live".(16)

Comedy and satire have a symbiotic relationship. Comedy supplies the satirist with a varied vocabulary of techniques and forms; humorous inversions have the capacity to dispel apathy by presenting comic dislocations that shock and surprise. Comedy, like satire, is aggressive and there is always a victim to bear the brunt of the derogatory laugh. "In laughter we always find an unavowed intention to humiliate and consequently to correct our neighbour."(17)

Comedy titillates and amuses, raises few doubts and poses few questions, celebrating an uncomplicated delight in the follies of the world. Where comedy is kind, satire is malicious; where the pain described in comedy is make-believe, in satire it is real.

The undisciplined world inhabited by farce and slapstick is often shared by satire. This playful disorder is essentially an escape from the realities of the day, the realities that satirists hope to expose. The laughter induced by comedy is an unselfconscious celebration; satire provides a catharsis of protest and understanding. The difference is one of moral judgement.

Antonia Artaud, the playwright, saw comic laughter as "an ally of tyrants. It softens our hatred. An excuse to change nothing, for nothing needs changing when it is all a joke."(18)

Satire approaches tragedy when satirical insights become more compassionate and less judgemental, and when pity turns to despair at the inevitability of Death. Comedy can be used to enhance and focus the terror of tragedy, as well as to provide a temporary release from impending doom. Broadly speaking, in tragedy the future is in the hands of fate, while comedy delights in the present with a disregard for the future, and tragi-comedy describes the unbearable present with the possibility of a happy ending. The aim of tragi-comedy is "to purge with delight the sadness of the audience achieving the liberation of the audience from melancholia."(19)

By describing, albeit by implication, a preferred ideal and by attempting to shift opinion to this end, satire is essentially optimistic. Tragedy is largely pessimistic.

Parody assumes an important part of the satirist's armoury when the mirror of exaggerated imitation (mimesis) is employed to expose flaws of character. It is a sceptical humour and a sophisticated system of criticism. Parody, like satire, is vulnerable to the paradoxical danger of immortalising what the satirist would prefer forgotten. Art forms are mimicked in order to humorously criticise mannerisms; popular forms are parodied in an attempt to exploit their familiarity. Meaning is shifted, and individuals and institutions are rendered ridiculous in travesties of their own absurdities. Parody is a moral condemnation and offers the satirist the opportunity to use weapons of the victims' providing.

Satire and the grotesque often merge in a subversion of order and the creation of a monstrous new "order" in the form of horrific and violent images. Caricature straddles both genres with bizarre exaggerations and distortions. The grotesque reflects the collapse of perceived reality, often resulting in a strange amalgamation of plant, animal and human forms. Fantasy is a key element in the structure of the grotesque, involving dark forces of the subconscious. Horror and humour converge in shocking and often sadistic imagery where obscenity, taboo-violations and scatological references abound; defecation being the great equaliser, as it reduces humanity to the level of the animal. The satirical convention of depicting the metamorphosis of man into animal form is in itself a grotesque concept. Both satire and the grotesque attempt to locate and release hidden forces which lurk beneath the surface of reality. Both conceal fears behind a curtain of laughter, where in the words of John Dryden, "ridicule is the best test of truth".(20)

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4. ASPECTS OF THE SATIRICAL TRADITION IN EUROPE

The legacy of allegorical form was firmly established as part of the satirist's armoury in Western Europe by the beginning of the 18th century. Popular myths and legends, related to specific visual symbols and depicting moral tales, had evolved into finely tuned systems of literary and visual metaphor. The possibility of combining allegorical, visual and verbal information in complex satiric metaphors was fully realised by the 18th century English satirists who borrowed from this rich tradition. Established, popular symbols and metaphors were extended and inverted to present comic scenarios which were clear and legible. Symbolism became a key iconographic device in the political print, and conventional symbols representing Time, Peace, Liberty, Death and Justice were established. The manipulation of these and other familiar signs through graphic and witty subversion is an important aspect of satirical language.

The development of printing processes, and the accompanying potential for multiplication and widespread distribution, together with a developed and legible visual language, established the satirical print as an important indicator of popular discontent beyond the bounds of formal government. Acerbic attacks on institutions, individuals and social codes were launched by means of pamphlets and broadsheets. The effectiveness and popularity of these can be judged by the vast numbers produced. The subject matter was mostly topical. Wars were scrutinised and condemned, kings denounced and ministers' excesses lampooned with an irreverent disrespect for social rank and a basic desire for justice and the triumph of Good over Evil. Both broad concepts and specific individuals were satirised through comic parody and caricature. The distortion and exaggeration of an individual's characteristics, or of an idealised form, through caricature, evolved into a precise language of grotesque wit; a system of ridicule (both economical and exaggerated) where the epigrammatic and the epic were employed in satirical attacks.

While some artists extolled kings and governments and their wars, others concerned themselves with exposing the contradictions of War, by articulating the absurdity of aspiring to peace through war. Jacques Callot (1593 - 1635) introduced this theme in a series of eighteen plates entitled *The Miseries of War* (1633) (Fig. 1) in which the horrors of war were chronicled in a scathing, documentary invective. The prints were accompanied by text in the form of couplets. The relationship between verbal and visual information is an important aspect of satiric language where cross-references allow for irony, pun or sarcasm. Callot's series of dwarfs and hunchbacks (Fig. 2) reveal a fascination with the grotesque and his *Satiric Symbol of War* (1634) (Fig. 3) incorporates these elements in an indictment of war.

The Reformation movement of the mid 16th century in Europe gave rise to prints satirising the corruption of the clergy in the granting of indulgences and other abuses of power, and attacking the doctrine of divine right. There was also an upsurge of partisan prints attacking and defending secular and church institutions alike. The Reformation generated satiric opposites. Religious

intolerance, and the mutual persecutions of Catholics and Protestants were presented in a satiric conflict, both sides using the same formal language of caricature and parody, but argued from opposing platforms. The political effectiveness of satire, in undermining the enemy while rallying support for a common cause, was also established.

William Hogarth (1697 - 1764) may be seen as an important forerunner of the satiric tradition. His detailed and cluttered scenarios define a morality articulated by irony and burlesque. His works are comparable to morality plays; didactic vignettes explaining social cause and effect, with a humour tempered by the tragedy of Fate. The clarity of his message is sharpened by the accompanying text. Social and moral abuses and foibles are identified, questioned and denounced. Claustrophobic scenes of upper and middle-class greed, cruelty and avarice are warnings against ambitions in conflict with moral integrity. *A Harlot's Progress* (1731) describes the downfall of an innocent country girl through prostitution; leading to imprisonment and her ultimate death, chronicling Fate whilst lampooning Ambition. The location of his scenarios, the furnishings, costumes and architectural details amount to accurate reportage of aspects of 18th century England. Hogarth's ability to define broad concepts and ideals, whilst attacking specific events, illustrates the artistic potential of approaching universality through topicality.

Thomas Rowlandson's (1756 - 1827) work is infused with bawdy references, tavern scenes and beer-drinking vernacular; colloquial references to experiences of which he was both participant and critic. In his drawings and paintings he created a formal language of simplified curvilinear exaggerations and abbreviations of type and gesture. Hogarth's high moral tone is replaced by a coarse satirical spirit. Rowlandson's insights into social posturing and fashionable conventions are underscored by a delight in the grotesque and the violent, and are infused with comic absurdity. His work stretches the limits of the horrific and the bizarre. His treatment of quacks in *Amputation* (1785) (Fig. 4) is an example. Apart from the opportunity for satirists to subvert the symbolic meanings of animals used in heraldry and as symbols of nations, inspired by the physiognomical studies of the day, the physical similarities between man and animal and the metamorphosis of one into the other, was seen as having rich satiric potential. Rowlandson exploited these aspects in what has now become standard satiric practice (Fig. 5).

James Gillray (1757 - 1815) chronicled the unfolding political events of his time, attacking members of parliament, the Church, and more specifically Napoleon Bonaparte. Kings and ministers are portrayed as gluttonous drunkards; sleepwalkers act out historic events, reducing them to parodies of their heroic intentions; bodies and faces are caricatured and contorted. Again, the written text plays an important rôle. A key feature of Gillray's work was the development of a set of easily identifiable characters who appeared in different contexts, enabling him to develop and extend themes. In his remorseless attacks on the double standards and greed for power of all countries and political factions he developed the rôle of the satirist as an independent arbitrator, functioning outside the partisan politics of the day. His acerbic attacks on the violent excesses of the French

Revolution (which he supported) were loaded with reflective ironies. His etching *A Family of Sansculottes Refreshing after the Fatigues of the Day* (1792) (Fig. 6) is an example of his horrific vision of humanity reduced to bestial cannibalism.

In France, the July Revolution of 1830 was received with scepticism by many intellectuals. Louis Phillipe, the elected king, represented for them a symbol of unachieved goals, and a perpetuation of monarchical powers controlled by an élite electorate. Their discontent with the injustices of the *status quo*, particularly the lack of social reform, was reflected in the satirical prints of the day. At this time Charles Phillipon, a literary satirist, founded two newspapers called *La Caricature* and *Le Charivari* in which the French government was ridiculed. Armed with new lithographic printing techniques and with platforms provided by these newspapers, Honoré Daumier (1808 - 1879) waged a campaign of satirical attack which was to last from 1831 to his death, and which included 4 000 satirical prints.

When criticism of political institutions and individuals became legally proscribed in France the morals, pretentiousness and social idiosyncracies of the bourgeoisie were humorously exposed by Daumier. The scope of his work was limited by his own experience of the bourgeoisie and this directed and sharpened the focus of his satire. The topicality of his work, however, does not exclude a universal character. Mundane events and specific concerns were the pegs on which broad ideals of Justice and Democracy were hung. The formal monumentality of his figures was achieved by the reduction of superfluous detail on the one hand, and the isolation of specific points of reference on the other. This has become standard in the language of satire. The monumentality of his lithographic images can be linked to the clay figures he made as sketch models for many prints, and which may be regarded as important contributions to the tradition of satirical sculpture. He also made a series of busts of prominent individuals who were related by way of the courts, parliament, the police and the bureaucracy, to the French establishment. These were accomplished sculptural renditions of what had previously been largely two-dimensional concerns. *Harlé Senior* (Fig. 7), for example, was described by Phillipon in *La Caricature*, as "one of the most noteworthy fossils of government, ... a gouty legislator, dyspeptic, asthmatic, rheumatic, snotty magistrate".(1) Daumier's caricature confirms him as an important forerunner of three-dimensional satire.

Daumier extended the tradition of exploiting characters that re-appeared in different scenarios. His *Ratapoil* described a political bully, and manipulator who hung onto the coat-tails of those in power. The character of *Ratapoil* was based on contemporary dramatic comic figures and reflects the close relationship between theatrical comedy and visual satire. His deceitful swagger is exactly captured sculpturally in *Ratapoil* (1851) (Fig. 8) hat cocked, hiding a calculating grimace, a club in his hand as the ultimate means of persuasion. A graphic version (of which there are many) is *Ratapoil and his general staff* (1851) which portrayed paid henchmen cynically applauding a military parade.

Daumier's *Gargantua* (1831) (Fig. 9) depicts a bloated Louis Phillipe gorging on sacks of money fed to him by slaves, the resulting excreta falling into the applauding hands of noblemen gathered under his throne. In this work Daumier satirised the relationship between king, nobleman and citizen in a concise scatological metaphor which has become a classic. In another metaphor with universal resonance Louis Phillipe is shown as a rotund clown drawing a curtain on parliament and exclaiming, "*The farce is over*" (1834) (Fig. 10).

Daumier was also concerned with broader issues of war, peace and disarmament. These concerns were documented in a number of prints exposing cynical truth concealed by military ceremony, and moral bankruptcy disguised as patriotic pride. Soldiers and soldiering are divorced from notions of heroism; a cripple is handed a rifle as "*The last conscript*"; Death looks expectantly down the barrel of a cannon; the inventor of the needle gun grins smugly over his fallen victims; and an indifferent general commands exhausted soldiers.

In the work of Francisco Goya (1746 - 1828) the malpractices of the Spanish church and state, the inhumanity of man against man in the Franco-Spanish war, and the parochial superstitions and traditions of his contemporaries were unmasked and attacked. By discussing two series of prints from his body of work it is intended to analyse some of the workings of his mordant humour, and his response to the tragedies of war, and to identify the satiric potential of concurrent themes of tragedy and comedy.

In a series of 80 etchings entitled *The Caprichios (Los Caprichos)* (1799), Church repressions and secular superstitions were sarcastically satirised by means of visual metaphor and dead-pan attack. The power of his message was directly related to formal strengths, particularly skillful draughtsmanship and composition. The text which announced the publication of the prints succinctly described Goya's satiric intentions: "The artist has selected from the extravagances and follies common to all society and from prejudices and frauds sanctioned by custom and ignorance".(2)

Goya conjured up the monsters and superstitions lurking in the unconscious in an attempt to purge himself and society of what he saw as grotesque evils, by identifying and denouncing them. His tragic vision of humanity and the inevitability of Fate colours this approach. This bleak tragedy occurs in *The Caprichios* where "original sin and original stupidity" (3) are confronted. "Caprichos" means "fantasies"; and the fantasy which is an important element in Goya's work may be described as a combination of caricature, the grotesque and the imagination. Witchcraft was satirised, sexual mores mocked, and vanities and abhorrent social behaviour exposed. A maiden accepts a hunchback's hand in marriage because of promises of wealth (*Que sacrificio*) (Fig. 11); a dying man hides his money for time to come (*Porque escondelos?*), an old man is shown as a spoilt baby (*Ed la rollona*), a drunkard is incapable of extinguishing a fire of his own making (*Y se le querma la Casa*). All these scenarios are presented as moral and didactic lessons, "taught" through

words and imagery. The first series closes with images representing donkeys acting as men and women in an inverted world. Teachers, pupils and doctors are transformed into donkeys, and depicted riding on the backs of men (Fig. 12).

Goya's wit was dark, angry and uncompromising. The final section of this series incorporates the fantastical and the grotesque in images of supernatural dreams and nightmares. It starts with a self-portrait proclaiming that *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*. His intentions are made clear by the subtitle, "The author dreaming. His only intention is to banish harmful common beliefs and to perpetuate with this work of *Caprichios* the sound testimony of truth." The titles accompanying these prints are often sarcastic or ironic, and are extensions of the allegorical constructions that criticise 18th century Spanish prejudices, fears and foibles.

In the second series of prints, *The Disasters of War (Los Desastres de la Guerre)* (1810 - 1813), the brutality of the scenes depicted is emphasised by the ironical nature of the titles. *This brings you luck* describes a bloody assassination; *And there is no remedy another*; *I say this*, describes a rape and *This*, a murder. *Charity* shows decapitated bodies being flung into a large pit; *Wonderful heroism against dead men* shows mutilated corpses. The futility of war and the violence which accompanies it are presented in a direct and challenging manner. Where the *Caprichios* show a comic inversion of values, the *Disasters* show a tragic inversion. The comic and the tragic seem to run parallel to one another in his work, and when they intersect, produce a dark morbid satire.

In his paintings and drawings George Grosz (1893 - 1959) reflects aspects of life in Germany during the Weimar period (1917 - 1933) and is concerned with satirising social and political injustices. The horrors of war, the rise of Fascism and its false heroes, patriotism and "the Fatherland" are subjects of his satire in an art which he described as "*Tendenzkunst*"(4), literally tendentious. His early drawings, influenced by the simplicity of child art and the boldness of graffiti, reflected the turmoil of war and the resulting poverty and starvation. His calculatedly crude line described debauchery and licentiousness. The irreverent, critical, reactionary and anarchic spirit of the Dada movement (1916 - 1922), in its confrontational attitudes to established social codes and conservative institutions, was given sharp political focus. By depicting the smugness and hypocrisy of those in power, and the moral collapse of contemporary society in Germany, he hoped to shock his audience into realising the need to reform. Grosz described a society bent on its own destruction. By exposing its hypocrisies he hoped, in his own words, "to preach, inform and reform"(5), accurately expressing the moralising and educating nature of satire and, more importantly, the potential that it could help forge change. Significantly, a key aspect of Grosz's work was a demystification of appearances.

War and its effects were documented in an art informed by an extreme misanthropy. Militaristic ethics and the rhetoric of the propagandists were derided in a series of drawings entitled *The Face of The Ruling Class*, which appeared in 1920 in *Der Pleite (Gone Bust)*, published by Malick Verlag. This educational, largely pacifist publishing venture was founded in 1917 by Grosz, John Heartfield (1891 - 1968) and Erwin Piscator (1893 - 1966) as a platform from which to launch satirical attacks on German society by way of journals and newspapers. *Got Mit ons* is a subsection within this body of drawings which addresses Prussian militarism in Weimar Germany. The economic relationship between the wealthy ruling classes and the marauding soldiers is sharply portrayed in *The communists are dying and the foreign exchange rates are going up*. Murder is satirically trivialised as part of the economic process. Soldiers are reduced to animal-like caricatures and the Prussian ruling class is represented by two grotesquely drawn caricatures of sophisticated posturing.

"I wanted to protest against this world of destruction I saw heroism, but it seemed to be blind what I saw more was misery, stupidity, hunger, cowardice and horror."(6)

Grosz's work is coloured by a pessimistic cynicism which is also hostile. The painting *Pillars of Society* (1926) (Fig. 13) is another key work encapsulating his thematic concerns and formal devices. He proposed to make historical paintings, depicting aspects of Fascism, its military components and the Church's complicity in its perpetuation. In this work a beer-drinking burgher is shown with sword, swastika and monocle, with his head sliced open to reveal heroic thoughts of a soldier on horseback. Behind him a red-nosed citizen whose brain is reduced to a pile of steaming ordure, waves a nationalist flag. An upturned chamberpot adorns the head of another citizen, whilst a red-nosed clergyman preaches justifications. The scene is an anti-Fascist metaphor where the complicity of Church, soldiers and citizens is satirically exposed. By reducing the Prussian bourgeoisie to bloated, walrus-moustached stereotypes, Grosz attempted to personify greed and the abuse of power. The simplification of form to abbreviated outlines and the schematic rendition of gesture are important aspects of his work. *Rabble Rouser* (1928) (Fig. 14) develops these themes by portraying a false prophet, a propagandist complete with sword, swastika, megaphone and truncheon, who is bedecked with medals and who promises food, wine and women. This thinly disguised attack on Hitler and National Socialism reduced the supposed Aryan '*Herrenvolk*' to ugly caricatures with grotesque expressions.



Israel ex. Cum Prius. Reg.

*A la fin ces Valeurs infames et perdus,
Comme fruits malheureux a cet arbre pendus*

*Monstrent bien que le crime (horrible et noire engeance)
Est luy mesme instrumant de honte et de vengeance,*

*Et que cest le Destin des hommes vicieux
Desprouver tost ou tard la justice des Cieux . 3]*

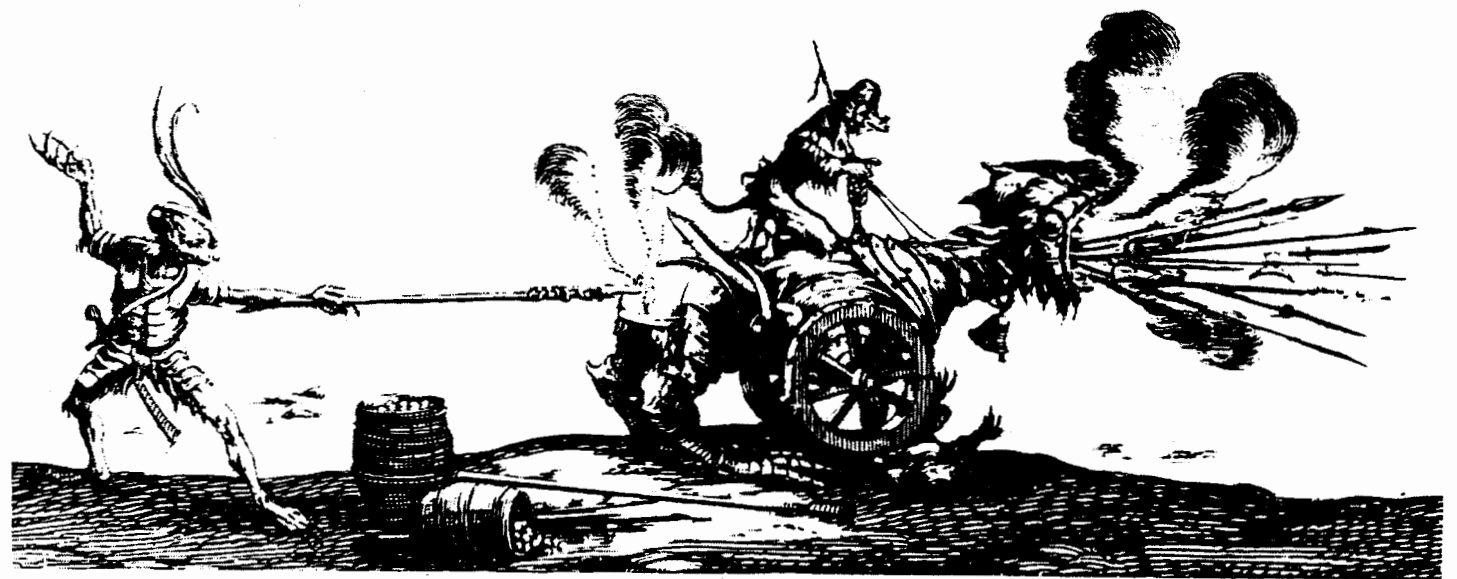


4.1 ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Jacques Callot
The Miseries of War
1633

2. Jacques Callot
Grotesque Dwarfs
1622

3. Jacques Callot
Satiric Symbol of War
1634





4. Thomas Rowlandson
Amputation
 1785

5. Thomas Rowlandson
Physiognomical Study

6. James Gillray
*A Family of French
 Sansculottes Refreshing
 After The Fatigues
 of the Day*
 1792

7. Honoré Daumier
Harlé Senior
1833



8. Honoré Daumier
Ratapoil
1853





9. Honoré Daumier
Gargantua
1831



10. Honoré Daumier
The Farce is Over
1834

11. Francisco Goya
Que Sacrificio
1799



Que sacrificio!

12. Francisco Goya
Tu que no Puedes
1799



Tu que no puedes.



13. George Grosz
Pillars of Society
1926

14. George Grosz
The Rabble Rouser
1928



4.2 VISUAL REFERENCES

1. Jacques Callot. *The Miseries of War*. 1633. Daniel, fig. 275.
2. Jacques Callot. *Grotesque Dwarfs*. 1622. Daniel, fig. 129 - 148.
3. Jacques Callot. *Satiric Symbol of War*. 1634. Shikes, p 52.
4. Thomas Rowlandson. *Amputation*. 1785. Shikes, p 78.
5. Thomas Rowlandson. *Physiognomical Study*. Lucie-Smith, p 17.
6. James Gillray. *A Family of French Sansculottes Refreshing After The Fatigues of the Day*. 1792. Lucie-Smith, p 65.
7. Honoré Daumier. *Harlé Senior*. 1833. Passeron, p 31.
8. Honoré Daumier. *Ratapoil*. 1851. Passeron, p 167.
9. Honoré Daumier. *Gargantua*. 1831. Passeron, p 66.
10. Honoré Daumier. *The Farce is Over*. 1834. Shikes, p 161.
11. Francisco Goya. *Que Sacrificio*. 1799. Huxley, plate 14.
12. Francisco Goya. *Tu que no Puedes*. 1799. Huxley, plate 42.
13. George Grosz. *Pillars of Society*. 1926. Flavell, p 60.
14. George Grosz. *The Rabble Rouser*. 1928. Flavell, p 62.

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5. Schneede, U.M. *George Grosz: Life and Work*. London: Gordon Fraser, 1979. p 60
6. Flavell, M.K. *George Grosz: A Biography*. London: Yale University Press, 1988. p 27.

5. **VISUAL NOTEBOOK**

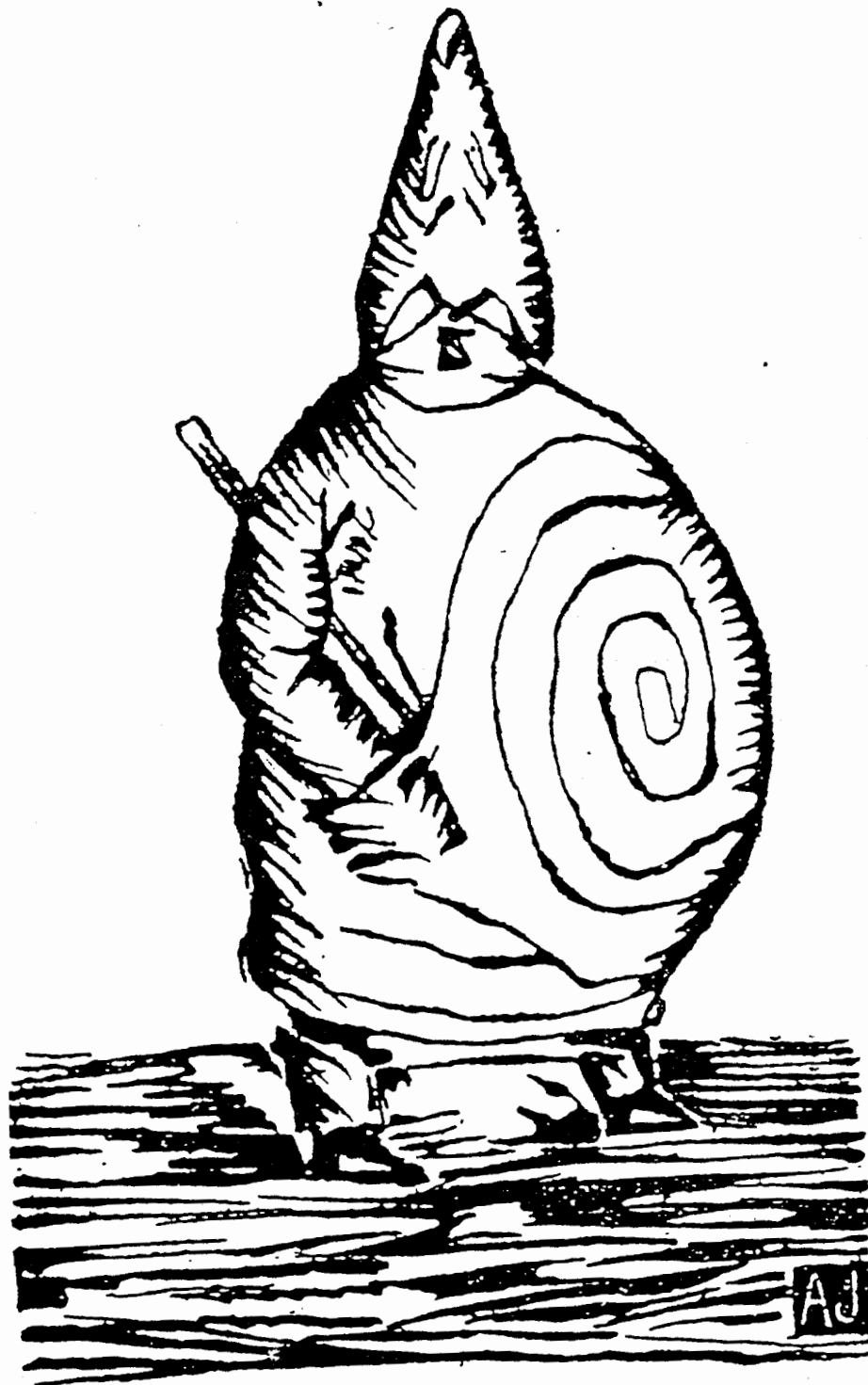
This section includes selected photographs, prints and illustrations which are pertinent to the visual history of satire and which document thematic parallels referred to in my work, as well as influences on the development of the formal language and eclectic nature of my satirical constructions, sources and inspirations.

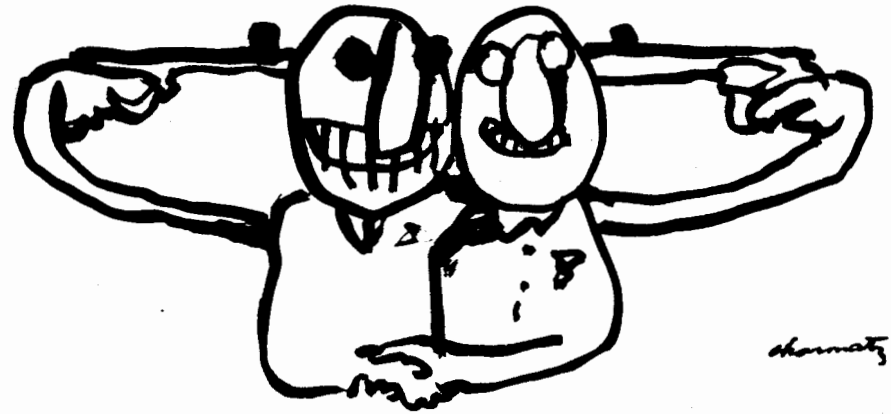
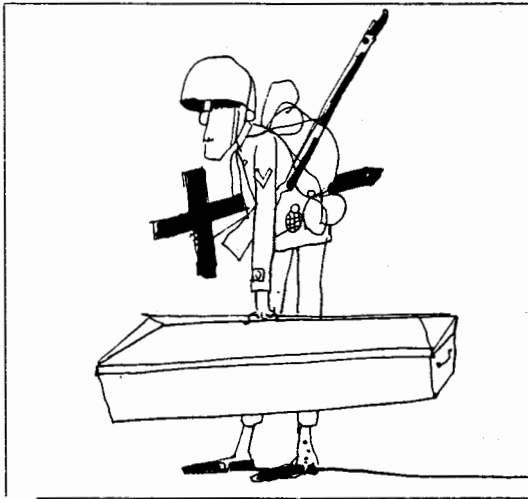
(The images are numbered clockwise, starting at the top left-hand corner)

- 1 A. Jarry
Ubu Roi
1896

2 J. Callot
Gobbi
1616

3 J. Callot
Gobbi
1616





4 T. Ungerer
Untitled
1964

5 B. Charmatz
Duet
1983

6 F. Desprez
Figure
1565

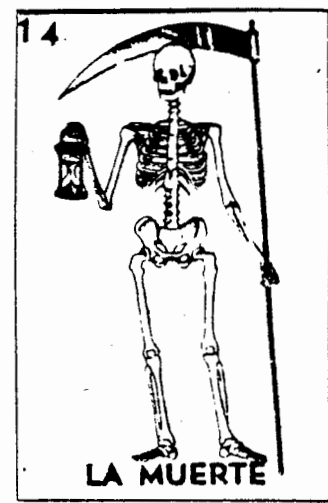
7 A. Paul Weber
*And now after a
brief intermission*
1934



8 Anon (Italy)
Anti-British Postcards
 1941

9 F. Botero
Roman Soldier
 1986



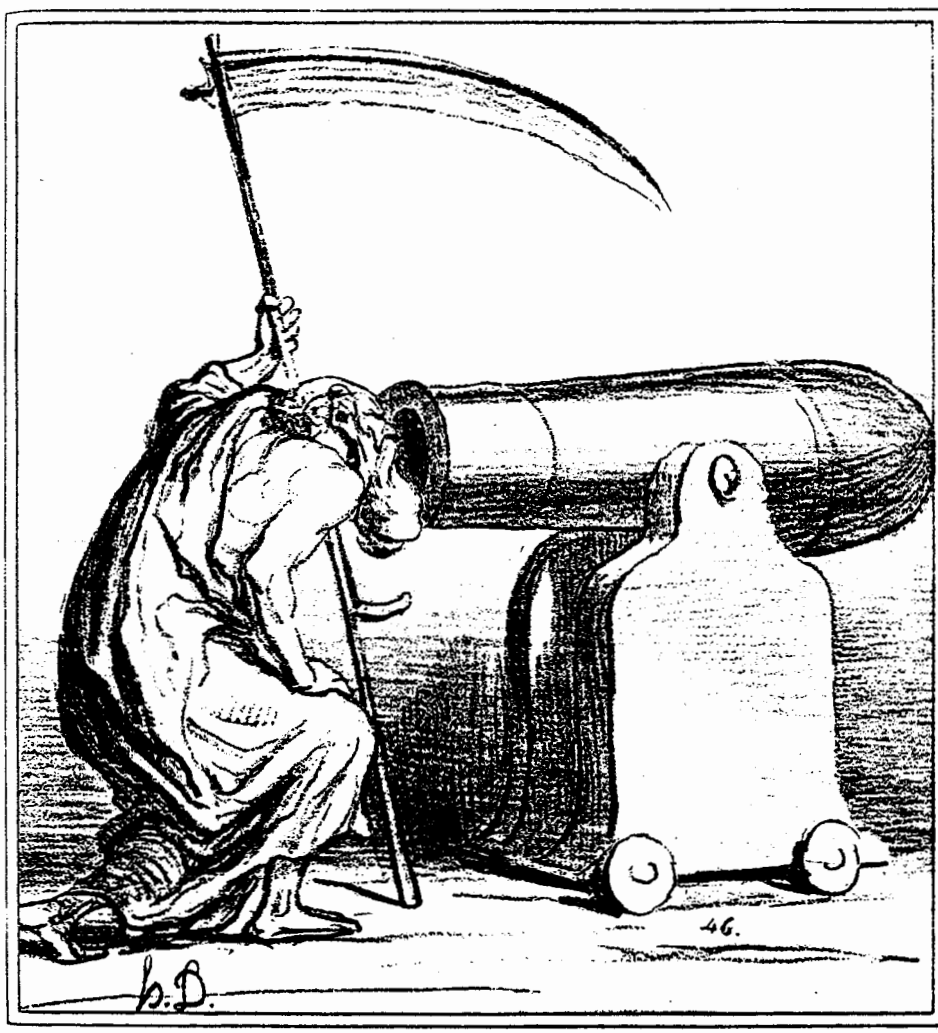


10 Buster Keaton
The General
1927

11 Anon (Mexico)
La Muerte
1910

12 Anon
The Crown
1832

13 H. Daumier
When again?
1868

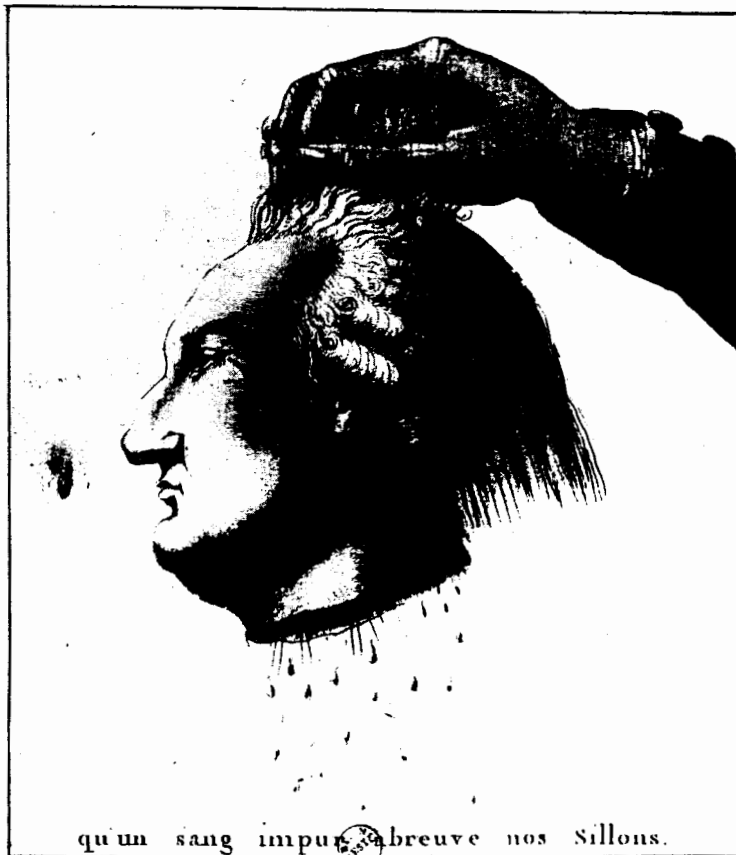




14 Benin
Memorial Head
14th Century



15 Anon
Postcard
1914



16 Yoroba
Untitled

17 Villeneuve
Engraving
1793



qu'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons.



ИЛИ СМЕРТЬ КАПИТАЛУ.



ИЛИ СМЕРТЬ ПОД ПЯТОЙ КАПИТАЛА?



18 V. Deni
Crush Capitalism
1919

19 W. Appelton
The Boss
1906

20 Anon
Die Pelliissier-gesin
1938





21 Kukrinisky
Lie-Locators
1941

22 B. Efimov
Goebbels as Mickey Mouse
1941

23 Boonzaier
A message to the People
1938

24 J. Heartfield
Policeman
1919



25 Kamarun
Mask





26 Volkspele

27 F. Masereel
Mr X
1926

28 Kamarun
Head

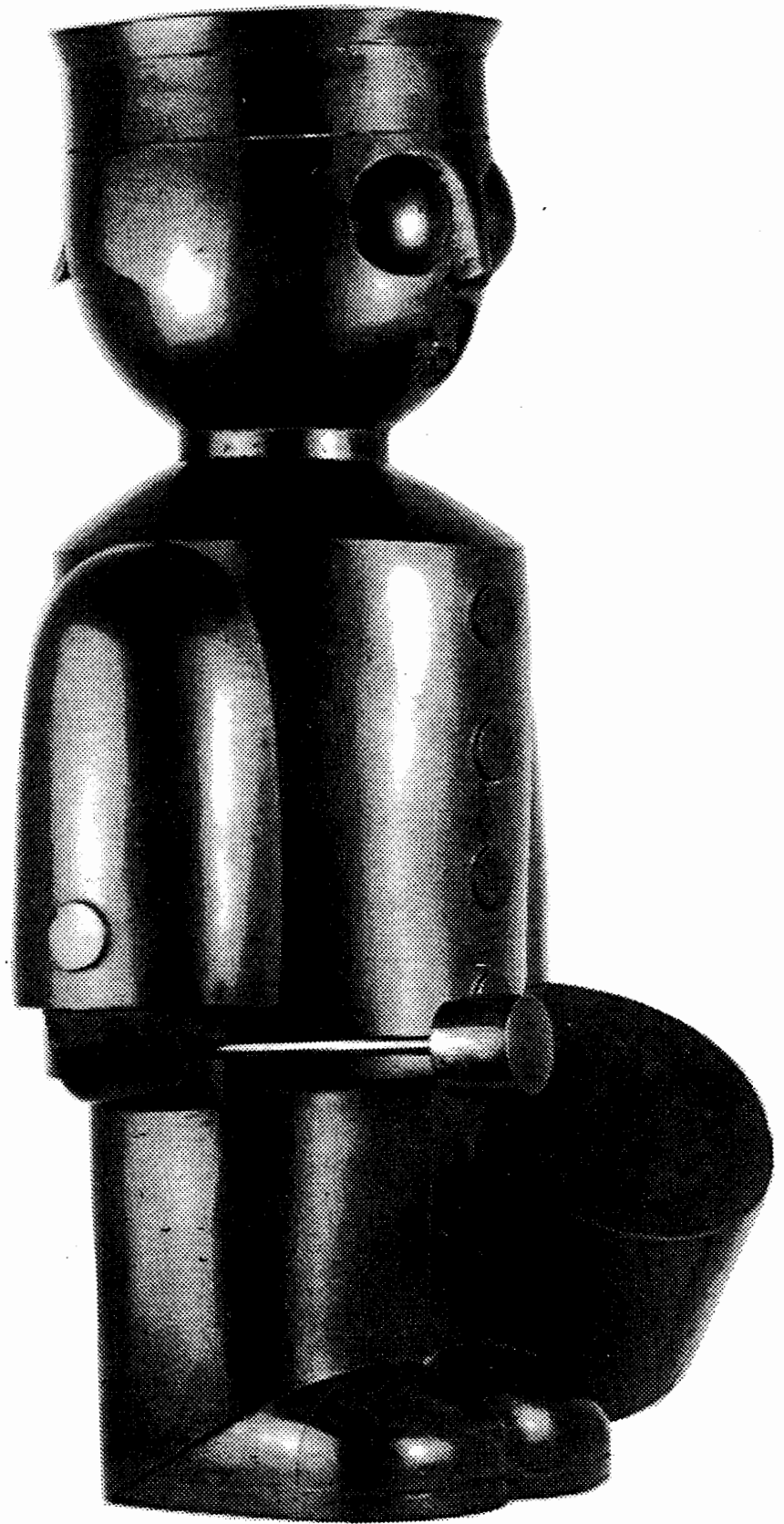
29 B. Franklin
The Colonies Reduced
1766

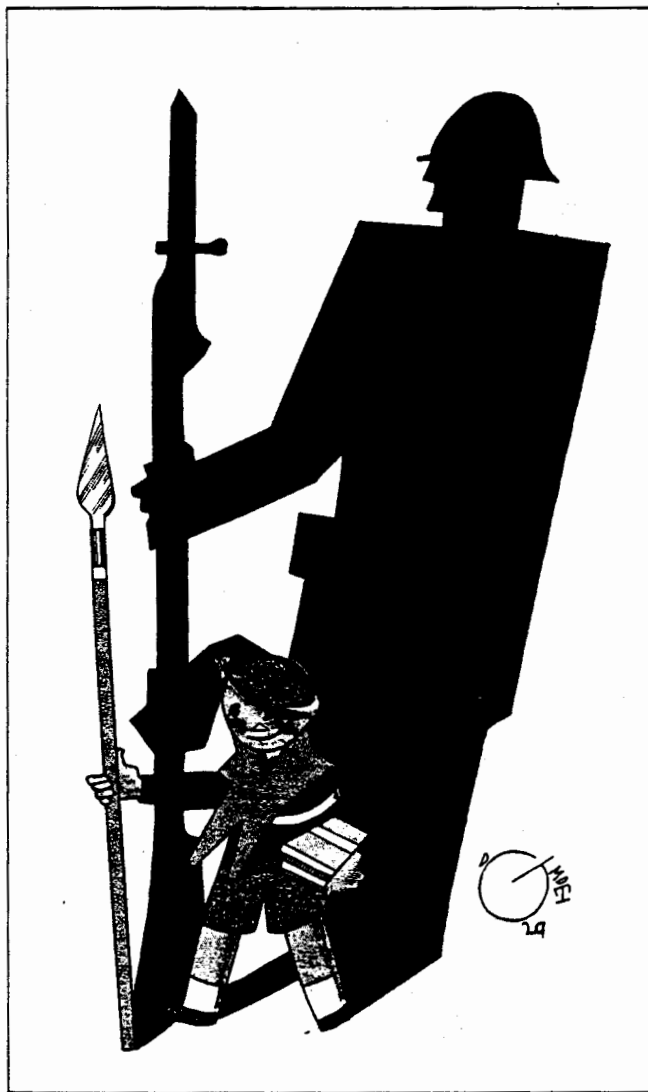


30 H. Daumier
Fat Greedy Guts
1934

31 B. Arnott
Oskar I
1980

32 V. Schlöndorff
"Oskar" - The Tin Drum
1981





33 Anon
Napoleon

34 Walt Disney
Pinocchio
1941

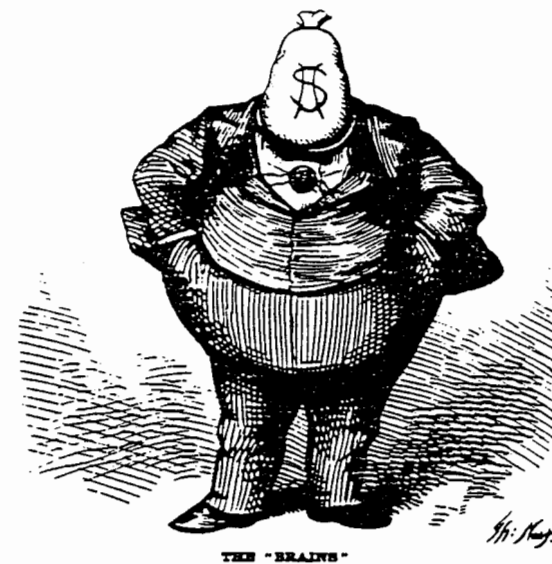
35 Italian Schoolbook
*"A book and a rifle
make a perfect Fascist"*
1934



36 G. Grosz
Heartfield the Mechanic
 1920

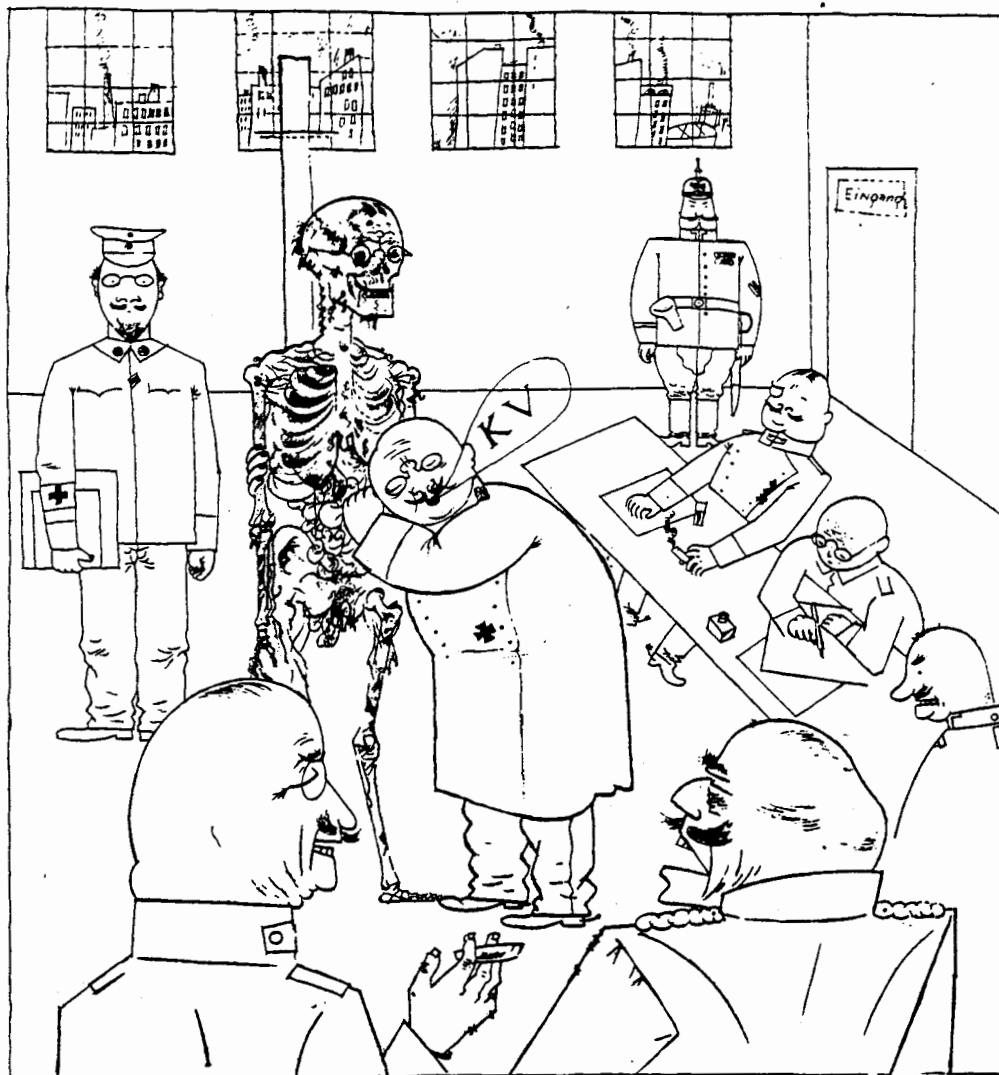
37 J.R. Monsell
The Motor Car Dumpy Book
 1904

38 T. Nast
The Brains
 1871



THE "BRAINS"

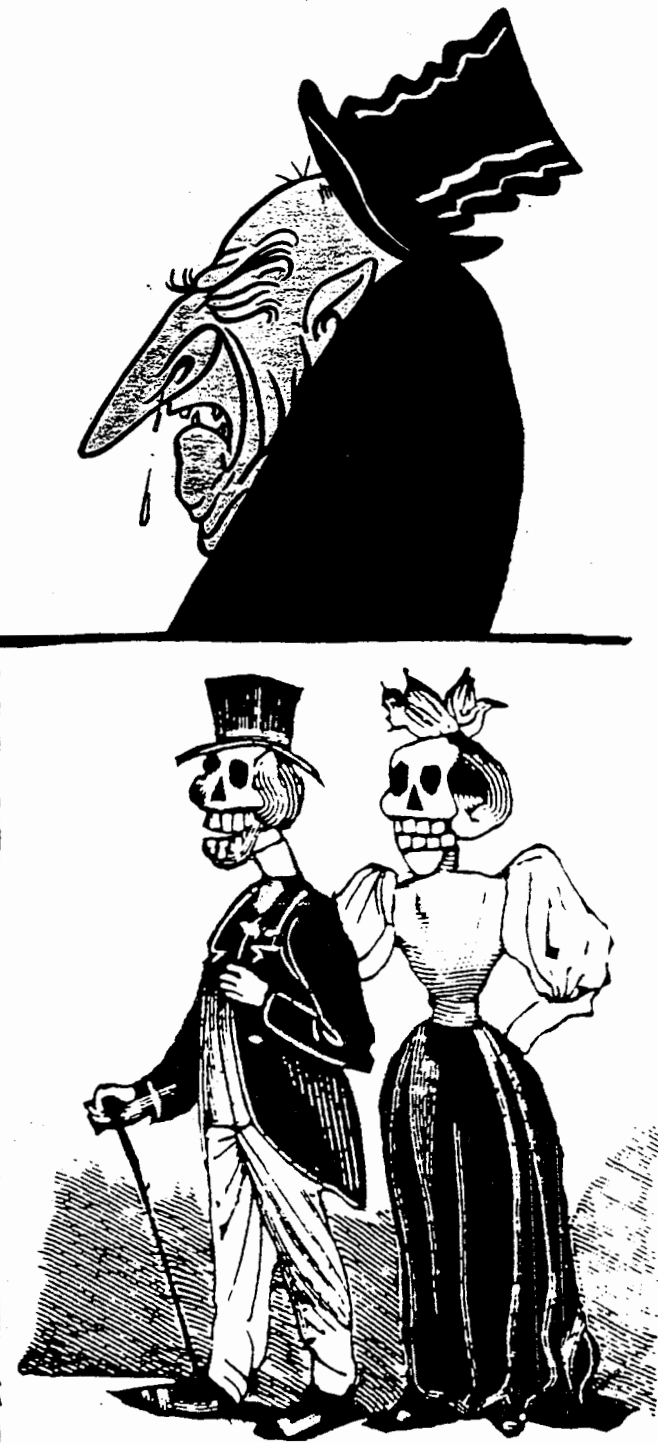
ФАНТАЗИЯ
БРЕД
УТОПИЯ



39 V. Deni
5 Year Plan
1933

40 J. Posada
Untitled
1890

41 G. Grosz
Fit For Service
1920





42 H. Daumier
The Conqueror
1859

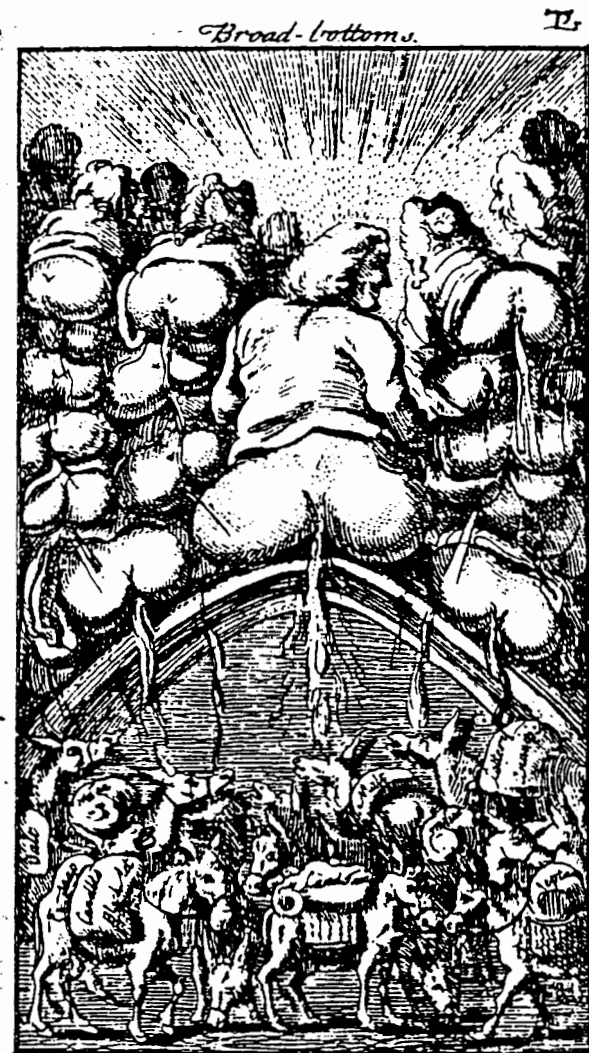
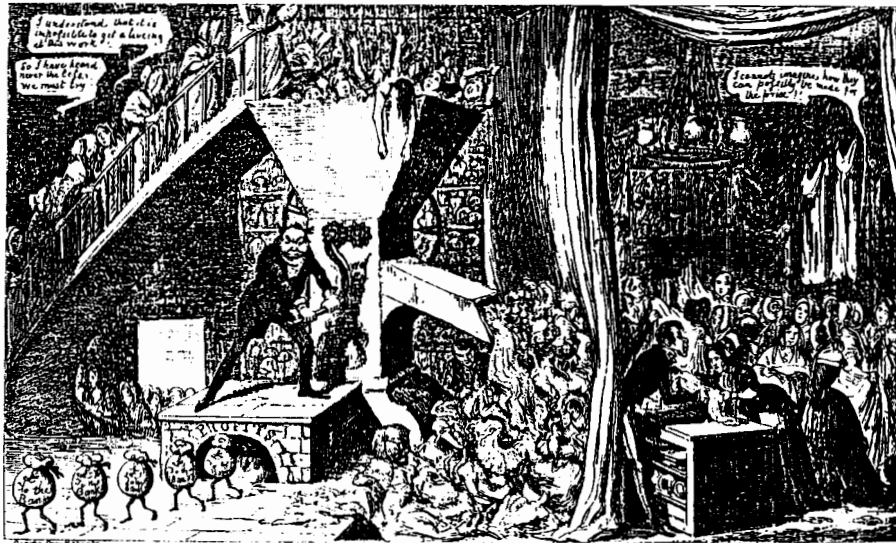


43 J. Callot
Gobbi
1616



44 G. Grosz
*The Workers have
been disarmed*
1919





45 G. Cruikshank
Untitled
1815

46 Anon
Broad-bottoms
Date?

47 Anon
Automatic Soldier Maker
1630

Believing, we lifted ye up among the Mighty,
Yet our Drivers have ye join'd, increas'd



48. Anon
Hitler
1930

49. Anon
Caracalla
3rd Century A.D.



50. J. Tenniel
Alice's Adventures
1865

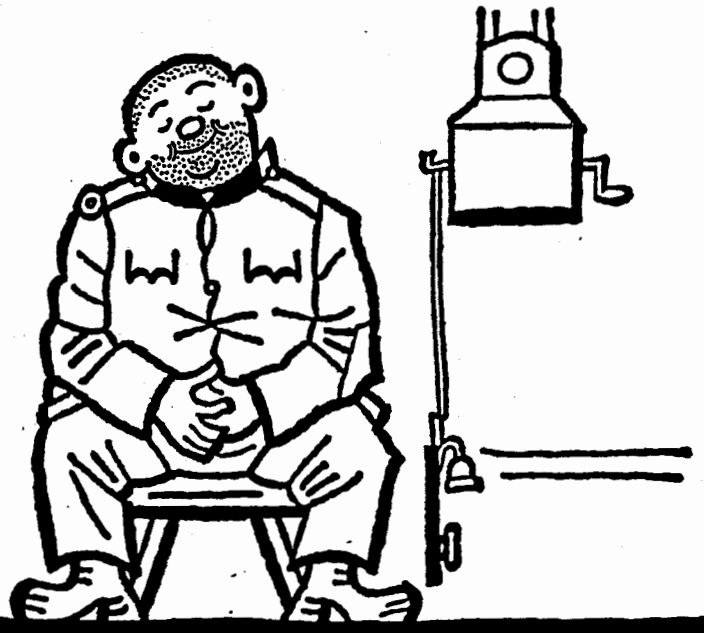




51 F. Messerschmidt
Character Heads
1770

52 Yoruba
Head

53 G. Grosz
The White General
1930



54 Tin Toy
Gentleman
c. 1925

55 Baulé
Sitting Figure

56 Hasék
The Good Soldier Schweik
First World War

57 C. Chaplin
The Great Dictator
1940



58 Adolf Hitler





59 Saramo
Standing Figure



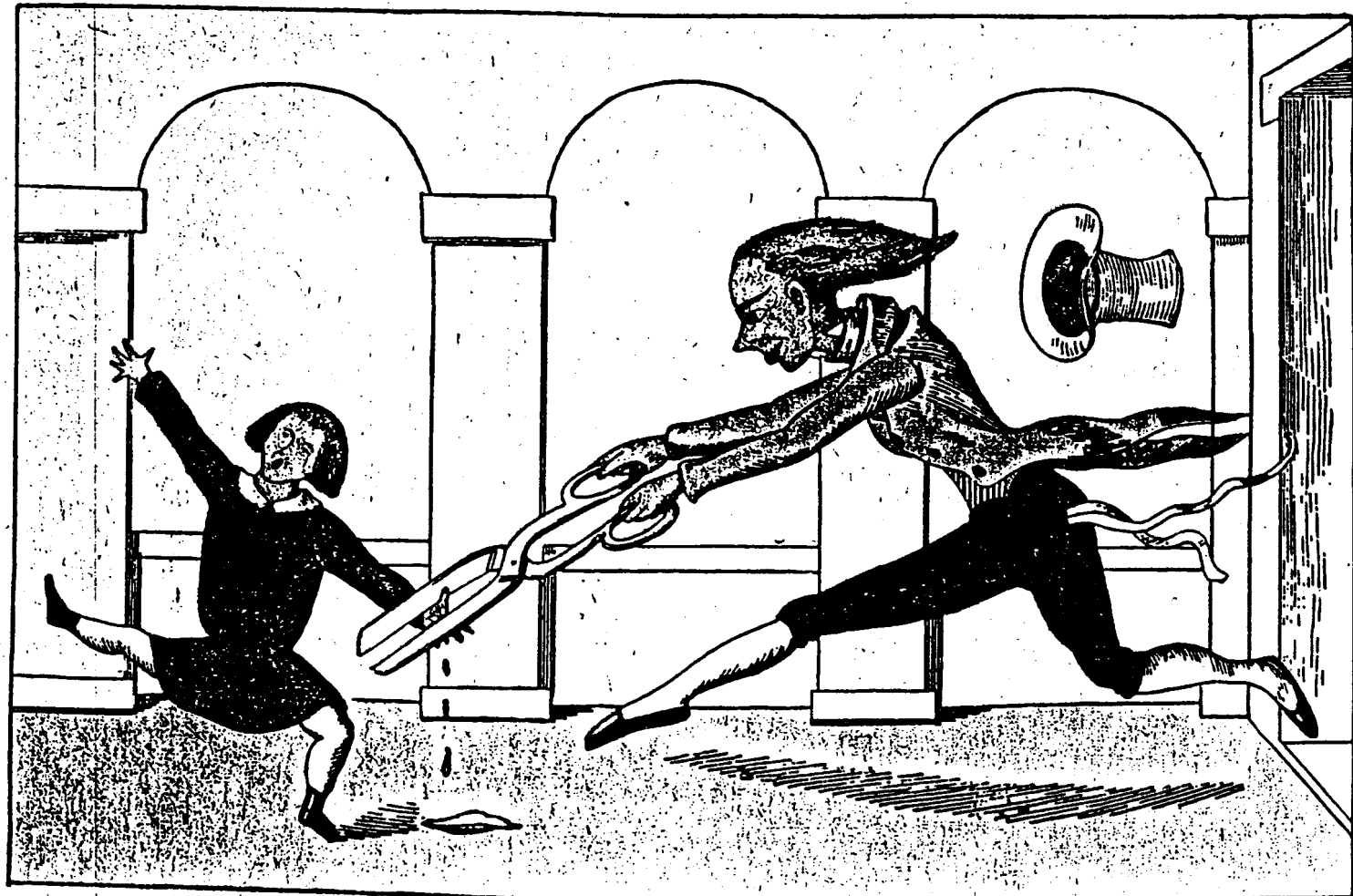
60 Anon
Allons, enfants
de la patrie!
1915

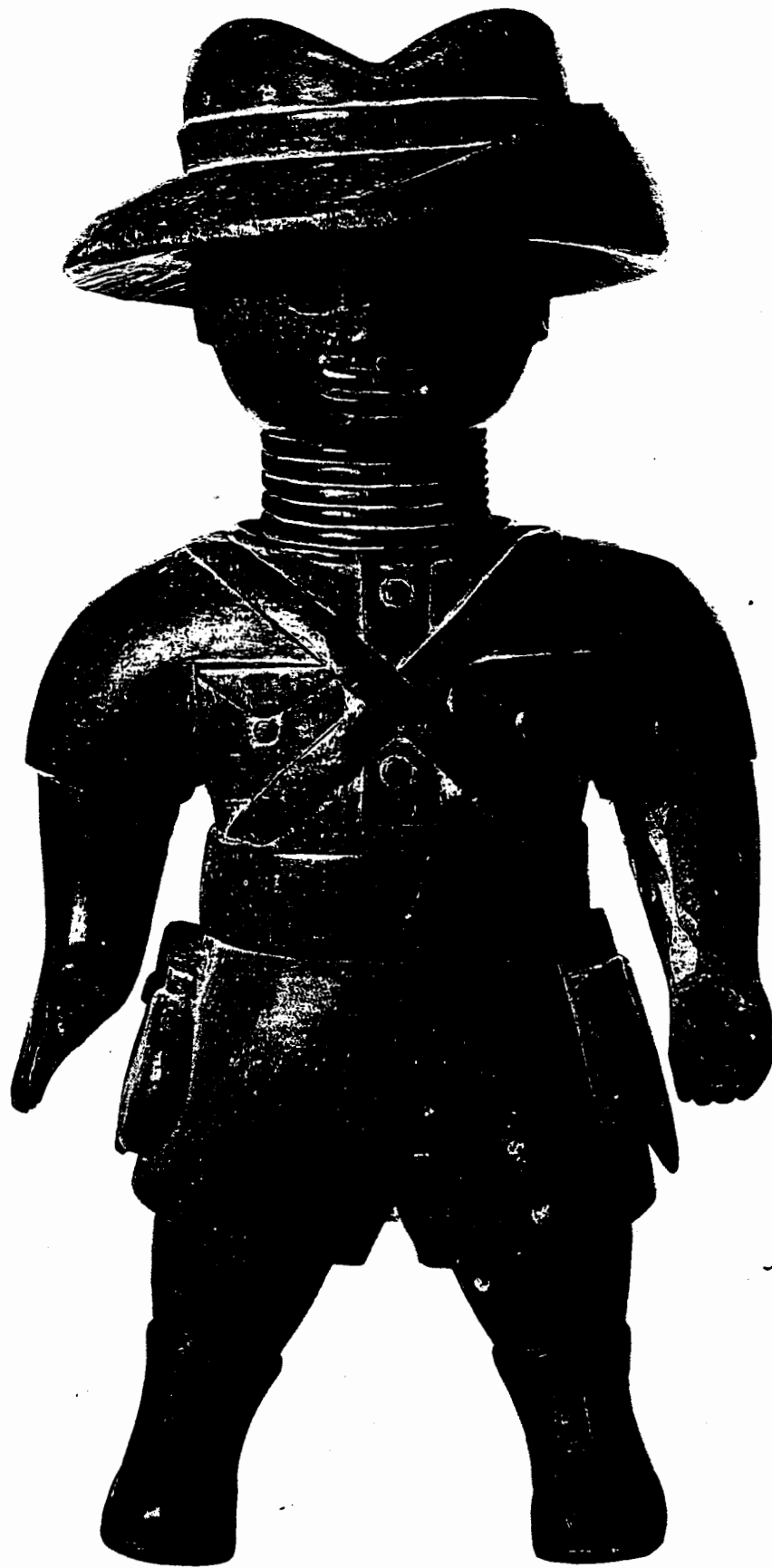


61 F. Goya
*What more
 can we do?*
 1810 - 1820

62 F. Goya
*Great deeds
 against the dead!*
 1810 - 1820

63 H. Hoffman
*Naughty little
 Suck-a-Thumb*
 1876

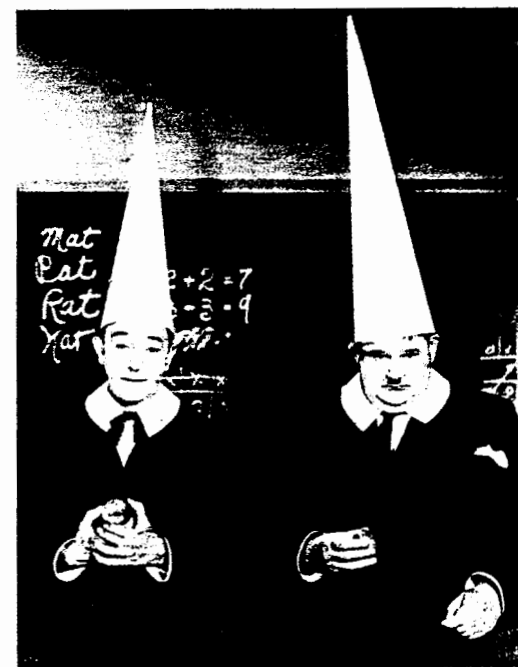




64 Mende
Standing Figure

65 Tin Toy
Clown
1925

66 Laurel and Hardy





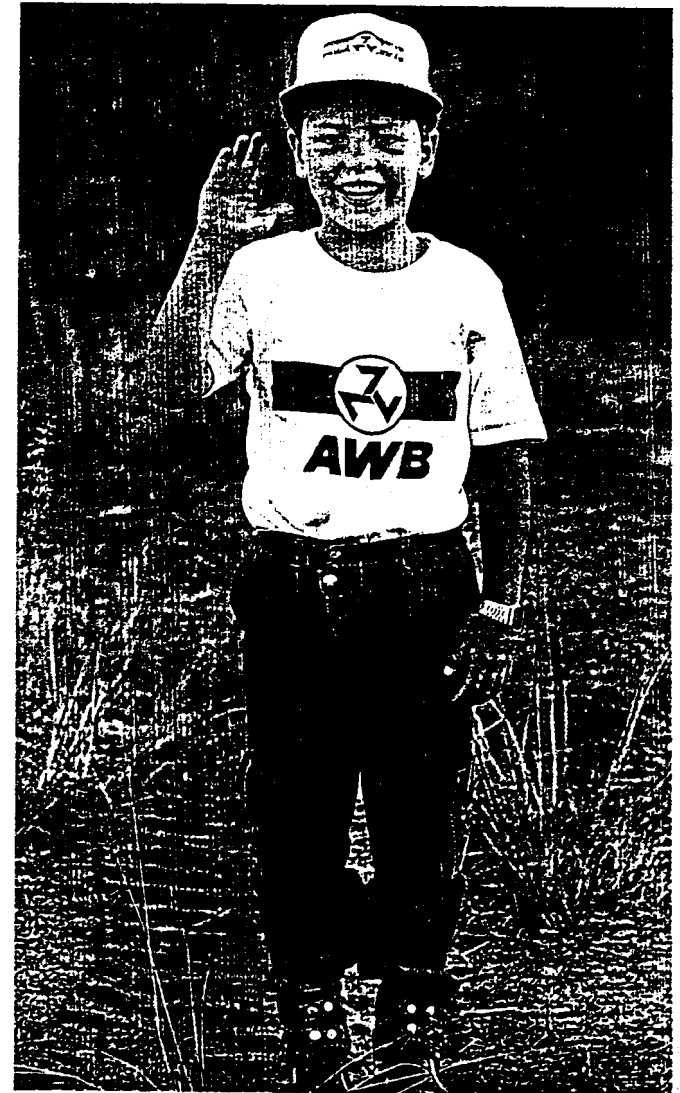
67 Fountain



68 A. Weber
The Drummer
1936

69 J. Heartfield
Goering
1933





70 Nazi Youth

71 A.W.B. Youth

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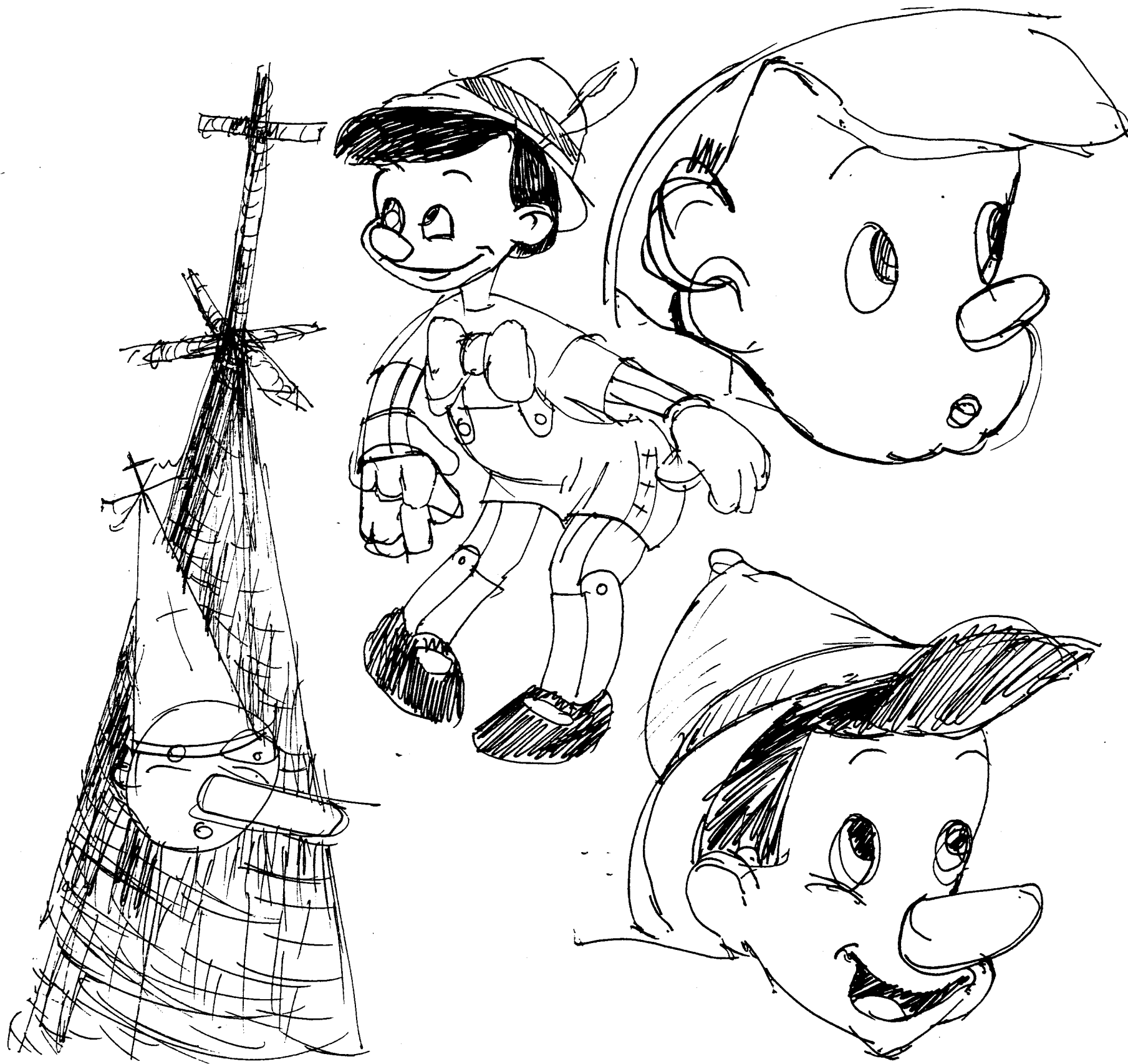
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- 16 Jahn, H. *Colon*. München: Rogner und Bernhard, 1983, plate 110.
- 17 Lucie-Smith, E. *op.cit.* p 64.

- 18 Baburina, N. *The Soviet Political Poster*. Moscow: Sovietsky khudoznik Publishers, 1984, plate 4.
- 19 Shikes, R.E. *op.cit.* p 321.
- 20 *Lantern*, Vol. XXVII, No. 1, Nov. 1977, p 7.
- 21 Rhodes, A. *op.cit.* p 219.
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- 23 Die Burgher, 14 Mei, 1938.
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- 25 Jahn, H. *op.cit.* plate 111.
- 26 *Lantern*, *op.cit.* cover.
- 27 Phillipe, R. *Political Graphics - Art as Weapon*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1980, p 228.
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- 30 Passeron, R. *Daumier*. Oxford: Phaidon, 1981, p 91.
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- 32 Postcard
- 33 Phillipe, R. *op.cit.* p 137.
- 34 Edera, B. *Full Length Animated Feature Films*. London: Focal Press, 1977, p 33.
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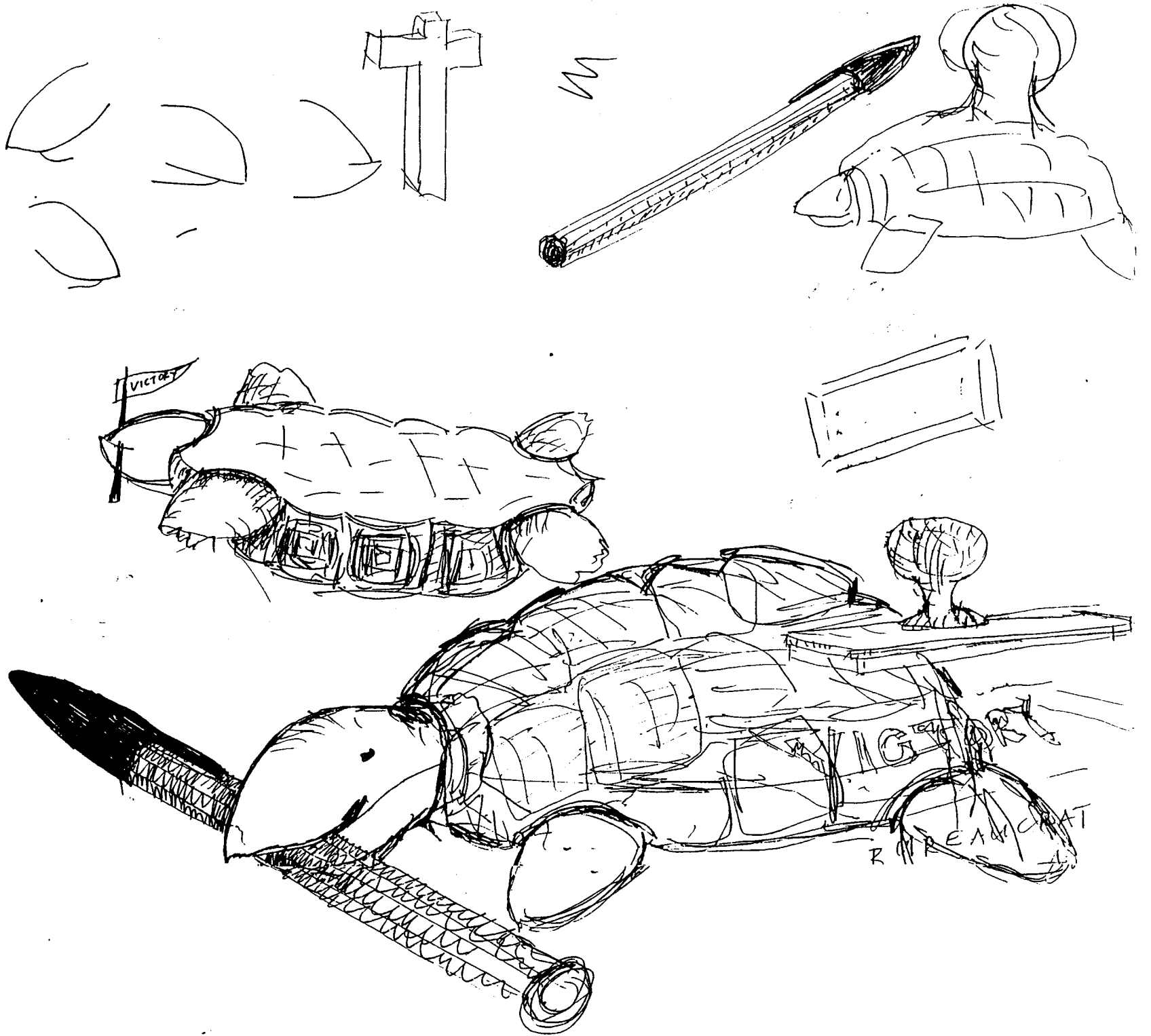
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- 69 Siepmann, E. *op.cit.* p 189.
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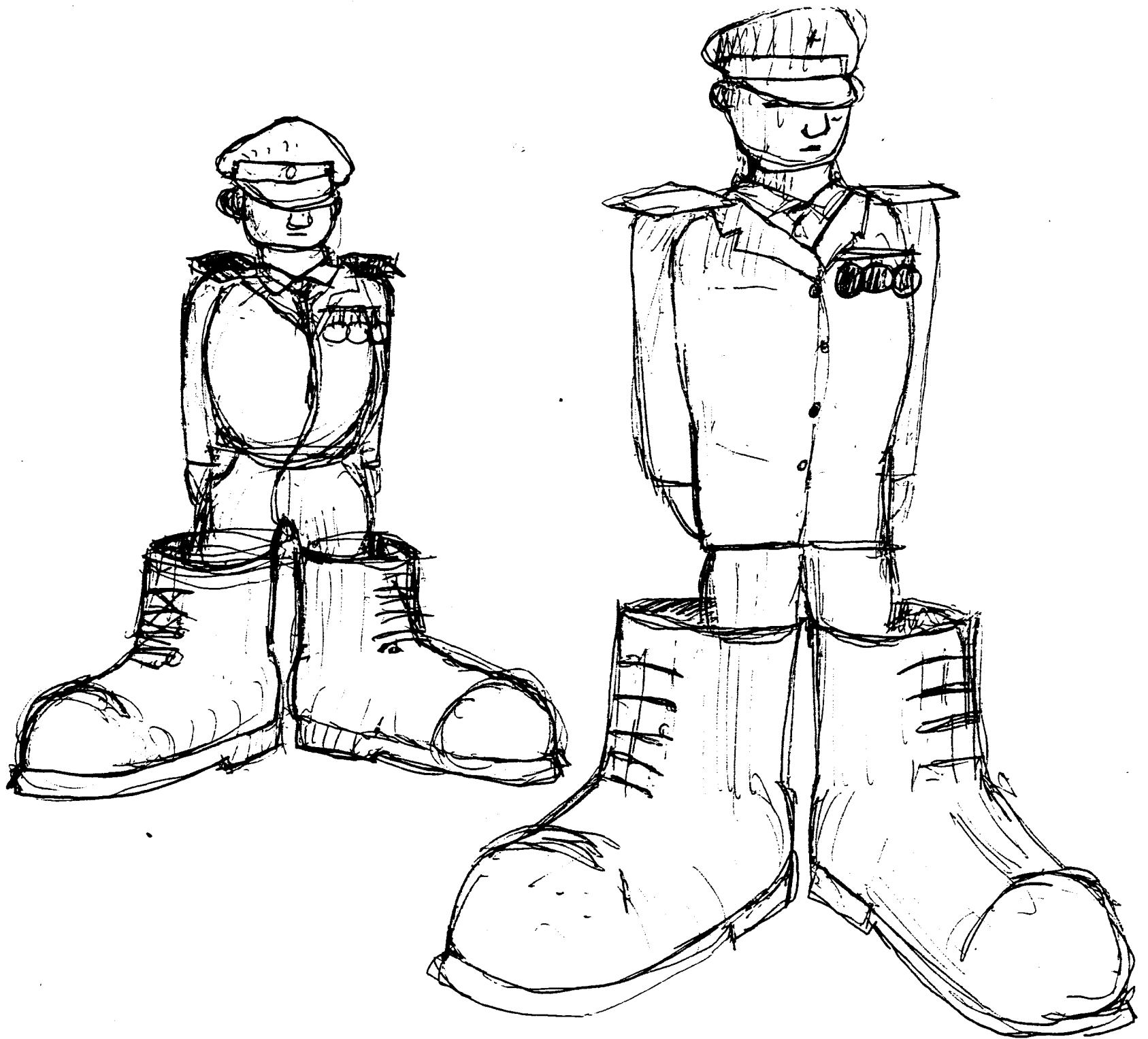
6. **SKETCHES AND WORKING DRAWINGS**



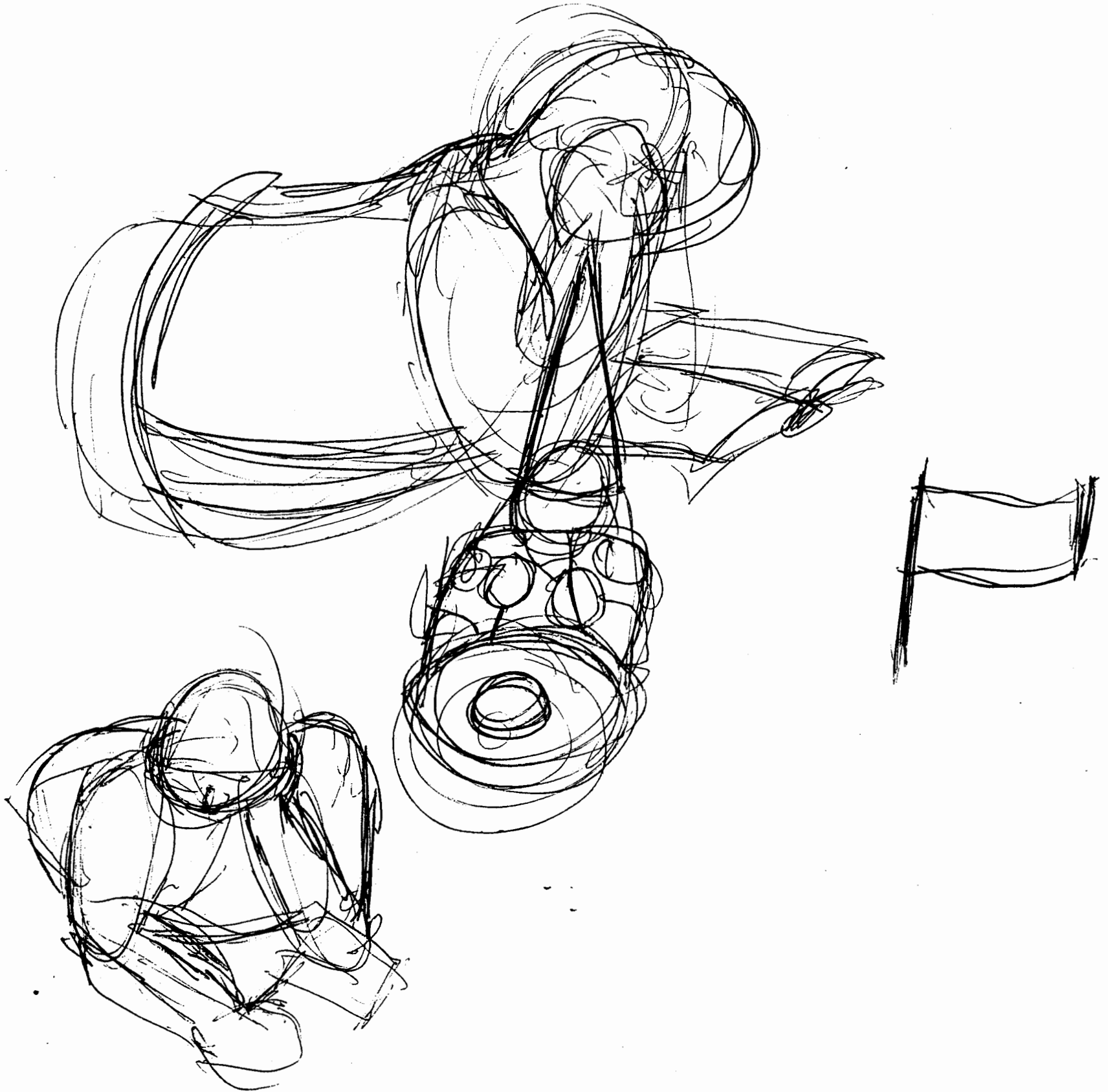








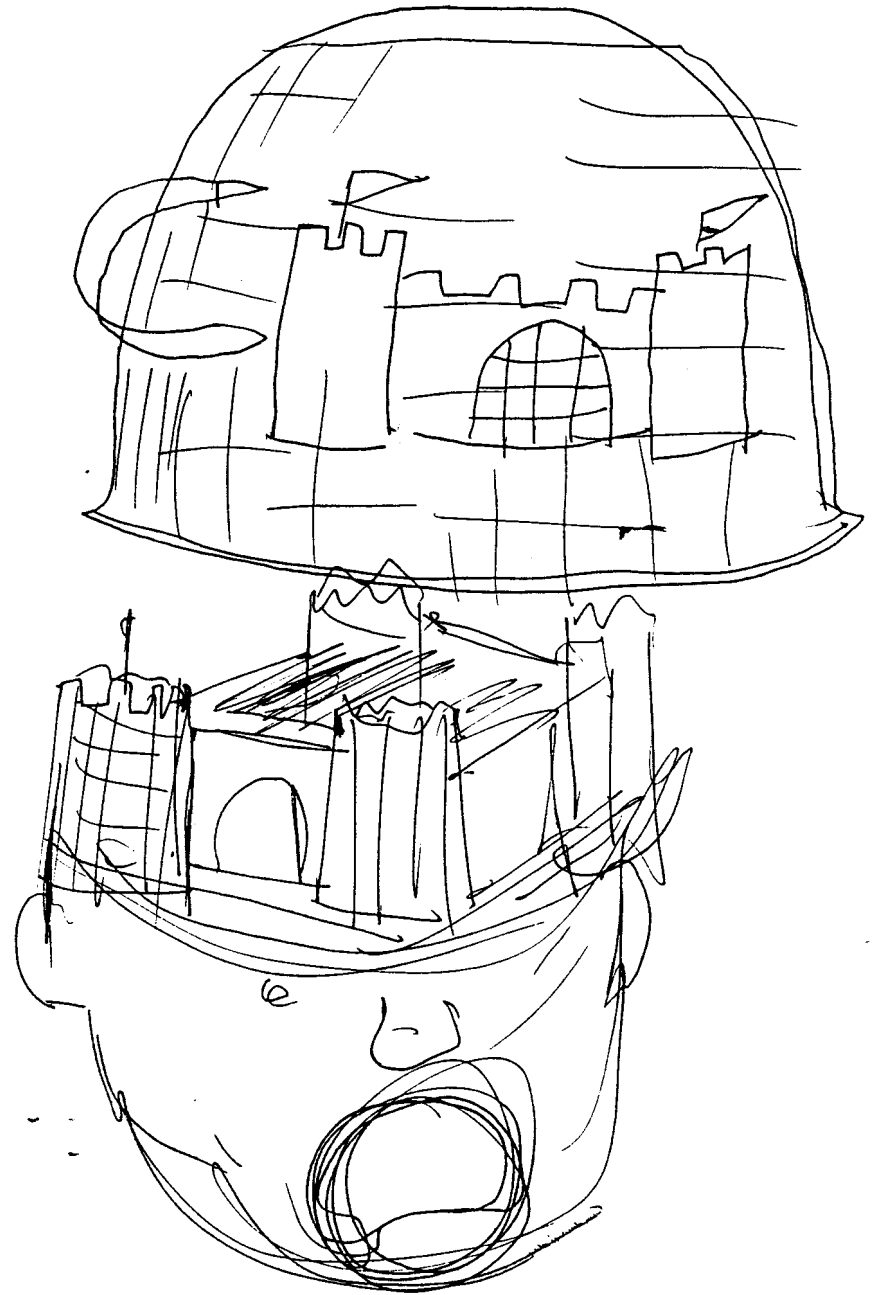




















7. NOTES ON INDIVIDUAL PIECES

Working within the tradition of satire, attempts have been made to define and expand aspects of its formal and conceptual parameters; and the limits of entertainment, "legibility" and topicality have been examined. The history of satire is accumulative and accumulating; themes and metaphors are revived and recontextualised. The need to reach as broad an audience as possible demands the use of a limited iconography of commonly understood visual references in which figuration is the fundamental currency of communication.

There are strong historical relationships between various media (as means of communication) and satire, largely determined by the development of printing processes and the distribution of popular satirical images in newspapers, pamphlets, broadsheets, comic-books and films. The perceived capacity of a sensitised contemporary audience to decode satirical messages is exploited in the visual and verbal dynamics of my work. Films, magazines and television are part of a media-saturated present and my satire reflects this vernacular. Thus the visual conventions of contemporary comics and three-dimensional animation are reflected in my work, as is the specifically derisive nature of contemporary political cartooning, especially in its attempts to humorously belittle its victims.

The metaphors which occur in my work are developed by way of fantasy and eclectic borrowing. Formal and conceptual devices have been derived from early satirical publications, book illustrations, posters, logos and artefacts, and reworked in a process where garden gnomes, Walt Disney characters, Benin bronzes and the "Oros man" are amalgamated into a hotch-potch of stylistic references.

While conceptual influences may be largely derived from European and American sources, my formal language consciously evokes an African context.

I have attempted to develop a consistent stylistic vocabulary in order to present concise, epigrammatic ideas. This formalisation unites thematic threads in a family of ideas and clarifies iconographic cross-references.

The sculptures attempt to denigrate immoralities perceived within the South African context. Myths of militarism and patriotism, the violence of conscription and the abuse of power are satirically addressed. The response of derisive laughter provides the intended indictment. By challenging false prophets and their victims I hope to reveal and expose perceived hypocrisies and hidden evils for all to see. The intention to shift and influence public opinion is explicit in the sculptures, which may be seen as arguments for social change. The satirical paradox of affirming by negating is applied where a preferred ideal is defined by what is under attack.

Incongruities between two or more merged frames of reference create humorous tensions. In this body of work violence is a thematic frame of reference, and tragic ironies are created when violence is qualified by humorous invention. Satire is a form of more or less violent protest, where vitriolic attack and sarcastic mockery are opposite sides of the same coin. One of the intentions of satire is to wound and through hurting, to heal. The metaphoric violence in my work reflects a broader reality of violence, both implicit and explicit. The violence of authoritarian systems, particularly the military, is reflected. Both active participants and innocent victims are identified; and it is when the powerlessness of a victim is described, that my satire turns to pathos and comedy to tragedy.

The sculptures reflect my responses to aspects of the contemporary South African situation. These responses, in turn, incorporate autobiographical content in the form of idiosyncratic subject matter and in the development of the image of the short, podgy youth who is both perpetrator and victim of these depravities and abuses. Comic scepticism is therefore enhanced by the subjective nature of the references. This recurring character cements the cross-references between sculptures and, as a result, themes are developed and extended.

The body of work incorporates three main thematic thrusts, which may be subdivided into related concerns. The first deals with exposing military duplicity and false patriotism, and identifying the dilemmas of conscription. The second confronts the civilian, with attacks on bureaucratic idleness, institutionalised short-sightedness and unquestioning obedience. The last addresses the nature of authority where concepts of self-obsessed kingship, indulgent power ploys and systematic violence are examined.

1. **POLICEMEN**

30 cm x 26 cm x 50 cm*

30 cm x 40 cm x 24 cm

30 cm x 42 cm x 24 cm

Fibreglass, resin, found objects, wood and oil paint

The starting point was to challenge concepts of police and policing, by employing an inversion where justice, law and order become unjust, lawless disorder. Violence is hinted at in the decapitated nature of the caricatured stereotypes. The familiar saying "Hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil" is alluded to, as are concepts of censorship and disinformation.

* Note: All dimensions are in centimeters, height and length and width.

2. **SOLDIER**

27 cm x 37 cm x 27 cm

Fibreglass, resin and oil paint

The reality of death concealed by popular misconceptions of patriotism and heroism within the military ethos is confronted. Death is described by decapitation, and moral and physical decay is hinted at by the introduction of flies. The transformation of a man into the symbolic image of a pig carries with it familiar references to gluttony, greed and evil. The attempt to fuse formal simplification with an epigrammatic idea is a concern here, as it is throughout the body of work.

3. **CITIZEN**

63 cm x 36 cm x 27 cm

Fibreglass, resin, wood, cast iron and oil paint

Parochial stupidities and tunnel vision are referred to in a metaphor describing a cultural impasse, an ignorance of the consequences of history and a blindness to the future. Reference is also made to colonial trophies where the 3-legged pot becomes an ironic crown.

4. **PRESIDENT**

56 cm x 46 cm x 23 cm

Ciment fondue, wood and oil paint

The theme of wish-fulfilment is introduced. Audience participation is hinted at in a symbolic purging of an evil force. The colloquial insult "*hout kop*" is translated and the expression "grinding axes" is referred to. The top hat is used as a symbol of power.

5. **BUREAUCRAT**

19 cm x 28 cm x 24 cm

Ciment fondue, cast iron and oil paint

The bureaucratic dead-weight of the civil servant is described by means of incongruous cross-references. The upturned, dying tortoise recalls African carvings, sharply contrasted by the ball-point pen which identifies a specific occupational context in an intended denigration of idle "pen-pushers".

6. **MINISTER**

82 cm x 30 cm x 28 cm

Ciment fondu, mild steel and oil paint

This work encapsulates an amalgamation of images and references in a symbolic unit which denounces sanctimonious deception. A dunce's hat doubles as a church steeple; the cross doubles as a weather-vane (where concepts of religious truth shift according to the wind). The moral tale of Pinocchio is quoted, his nose growing longer with each ecclesiastical justification and obfuscation.

7. **DEAD PRESIDENT**

43 cm x 22 cm x 22 cm

Fibreglass, resin and oil paint

The familiar symbols of top hat, skull and target are amalgamated in an attack on a perceived evil force. The target implies a self-destructive system.

8. **KING**

73 cm x 26 cm x 26 cm

Fibreglass, resin, mild steel and oil paint

The starting point was to attack figures of authority. A self-obsessed child is shown as a king, a cock-sure braggart presenting an erection while sucking his pacifier. A prophetic parallel between pretended and actual abuses of power, where authority is reduced to foolish posturing. There are various historical sources including Renaissance *putti*, Daumier's bloated kings and urinating fountain figures.

9. **PROPAGANDA**

70 cm x 23 cm x 30 cm

Fibreglass, resin, wood and oil paint

The mechanisms of propaganda are represented as a grotesque figure spewing forth disinformation disguised as truth. The loudhailer acts as a megaphone and as a "choking" funnel. The deaf figure becomes a victim of his own deceit where "truth" reveals itself in a violent eruption. This scatological metaphor quotes a textured history, including Daumier's *Gargantua* (1831).

10. **STATE PRESIDENT**

41 cm x 38 cm x 26 cm
Fibreglass, resin, wood and oil paint

An attempt has been made to redefine military power and to articulate the irony of aggression turning on itself; where war-mongering is seen as perpetuating a cycle of violence in the name of peace, and is identified as an hypocrisy. The colloquial saying, "What you give is what you get" is alluded to and notions of *karma*, divine justice and reciprocity in life are invoked.

11. **ARTIST - SELF PORTRAIT**

64 cm x 34 cm x 32 cm
Fibreglass, resin, bronze, steel and oil paint

The satirist is represented as a reluctant scourge of society's ills, a moral "medicine-man" balancing on a knife-edge between creativity and destruction. Affirmation and creativity are symbolised by the palette, and negation and destruction by the bronze enema. It is through the artist that "constipated" ideologies are symbolically purged.

12. **POLICEMAN**

61 cm x 30 cm x 39 cm
Fibreglass, resin and oil paint

This is intended as a mocking attack on disproportionate political power in a visual inversion of the saying, "Too big for his boots". The stupidity of violence is satirised in the form of an immobilised enforcer. Abuse of authority is ridiculed in the mock-monumental form where brawn takes precedence over brains.

13. **LEAPFROG**

44 cm x 27 cm x 30 cm
Fibreglass, resin and oil paint

Power plays are reduced to the level of school yard antics. Political processes are shown as ironically static as Brother hands over power to Brother in a closed freemasonry. A sexual coupling is implied, in reference to an exclusive union where "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours".

14. **AUNTY**

42 cm x 24 cm x 20 cm
Fibreglass, resin and oil paint

The conceptual starting point was to satirise obedience to parochial nationalism. The associations of the pig with greed and licentiousness are contrasted by a playful disposition, and smug self-righteousness describing absurd pride. George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and Walt Disney's animations are conceptual and formal sources.

15. **MOTHER**

50 cm x 22 cm x 24 cm
Fibreglass, resin, mildsteel and oil paint

This work attempts to reveal the symbolic and actual power of motherhood, and the potential for this power to be abused. Implicit perpetuation of social values is identified as active participation in violence. Camouflage is ironically used as a revealing rather than concealing device.

16. **PATRIOT**

45 cm x 32 cm x 21 cm
Fibreglass, resin, mildsteel and oil paint

The subservience and obedience of the soldier is symbolised by a performing elephant waving a camouflaged flag. The enslavement of circus animals, with connotations of ringmaster and whip, is referred to. The caution that "The bigger they are, the harder they fall" lies beneath the surface meaning in an intended subversion of a supposedly triumphant act.

17. **BUTCHER**

50 cm x 26 cm x 26 cm
Fibreglass, resin, wood and oil paint

This work embodies a warning against violence, where brutality inverts itself and the attacker becomes the attacked. The comic-book style of indicating truncated limbs is an ironic reference. The expression "To cut off his nose to spite his face" explains this temper tantrum where the scream is both a battle cry and a shout of pain.

18. **MELANCHOLIA**

58 cm x 56 cm x 30 cm

Fibreglass, resin, mildsteel and oil paint

This work is a reflection on the violence of conscription in which the opposing values of "innocent victim" and "guilty perpetrator" are merged. The grim realities of soldiering are ignored as an unhappy fool contemplates a flag representing confused loyalties.

19. **SHITTING SOLDIER**

46 cm x 35 cm x 24 cm

Fibreglass, resin and oil paint

This is a compassionate description of the consequences of conscription (statutory injustice and personal violation), where individual freedoms are distorted, private acts become public performances, and humiliation replaces heroism. Chivalrous myths of soldiering are reduced to descriptions of bowel movements.

20. **DRUNK SOLDIER**

60 cm x 60 cm x 46 cm

Fibreglass, resin, mildsteel and oil paint

Military ethics are portrayed as power-drunk indulgences. Camouflage is used to reveal a frightening analogy between child and soldier, where playground bully-boy antics have become uncontrolled manifestations of political power. A cup doubles as a loudspeaker for the intoxicated rantings of a call to arms.

21. **SLEEPWALKER**

89 cm x 40 cm x 39 cm

Fibreglass, resin, mildsteel and oil paint

The somnambulist acts out a metaphor for ignorance and confusion. The stumbling child becomes the symbol of an impasse where actions are neutralised by mindlessness, and the inevitability of unfolding events is accepted without question.

22. **FALLING POLICEMAN**

30 cm x 62 cm x 58 cm
Fibreglass, resin and oil paint

This is a fetishistic image of the recipient of fantasies of punishment and revenge. The violence of this implied punishment is in direct proportion to the violence condemned. A system of retribution is hinted at where the satirist moves from the position of ironic commentator to that of moral judge.

23. **MARCHING SOLDIER**

76 cm x 43 cm x 44 cm
Fibreglass, resin and oil paint

An attempt has been made to represent conscription as imposed violence. The victims of this system are symbolised by a contorted marching soldier who plods backwards and forwards simultaneously, physically acting out imposed hypocrisies as the confused prisoner of a sick joke. Ignorance and obedience are questioned, and formal qualities referring to toys become ironic within this context.

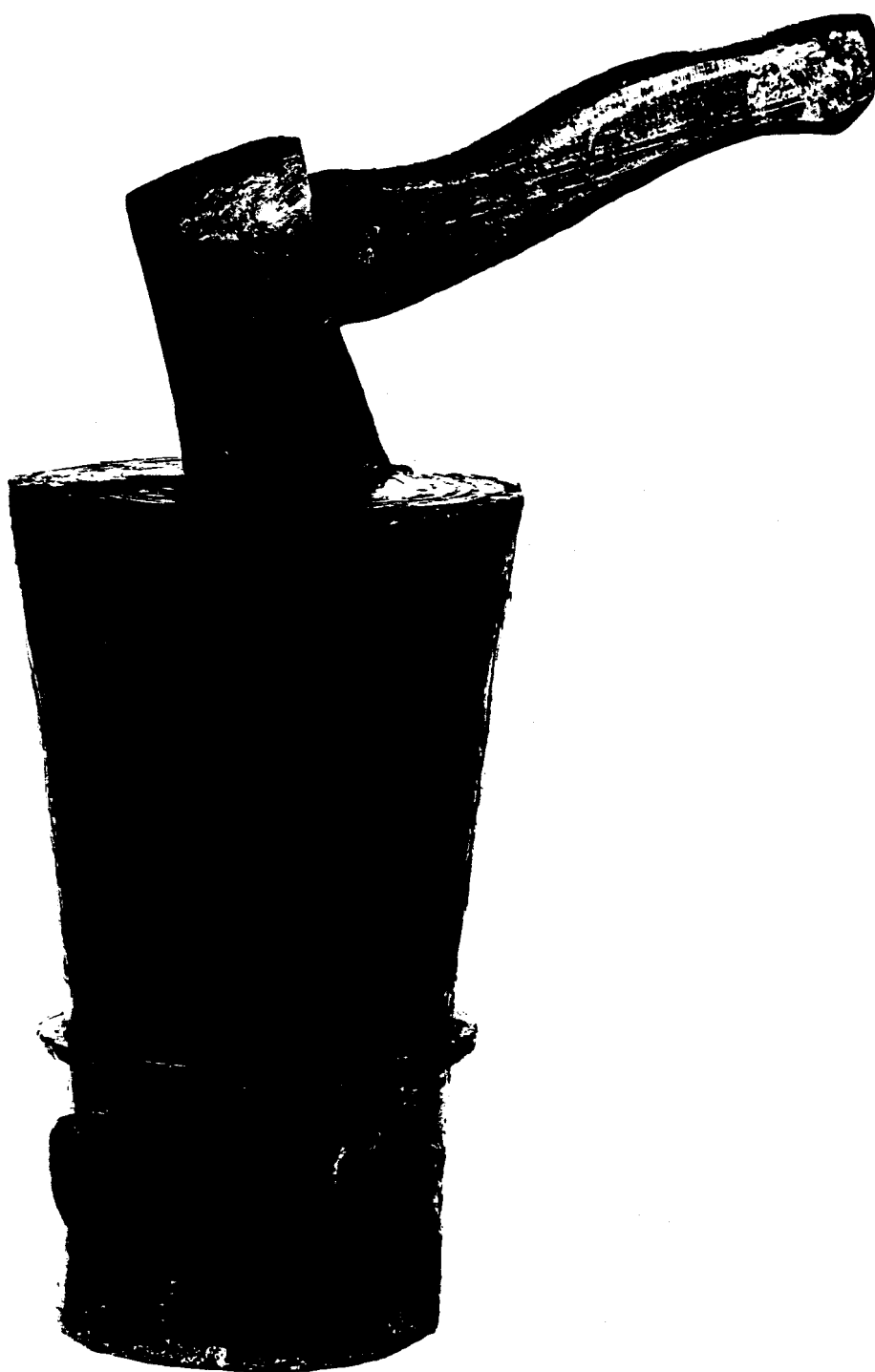
8. **DOCUMENTATION OF INDIVIDUAL PIECES**

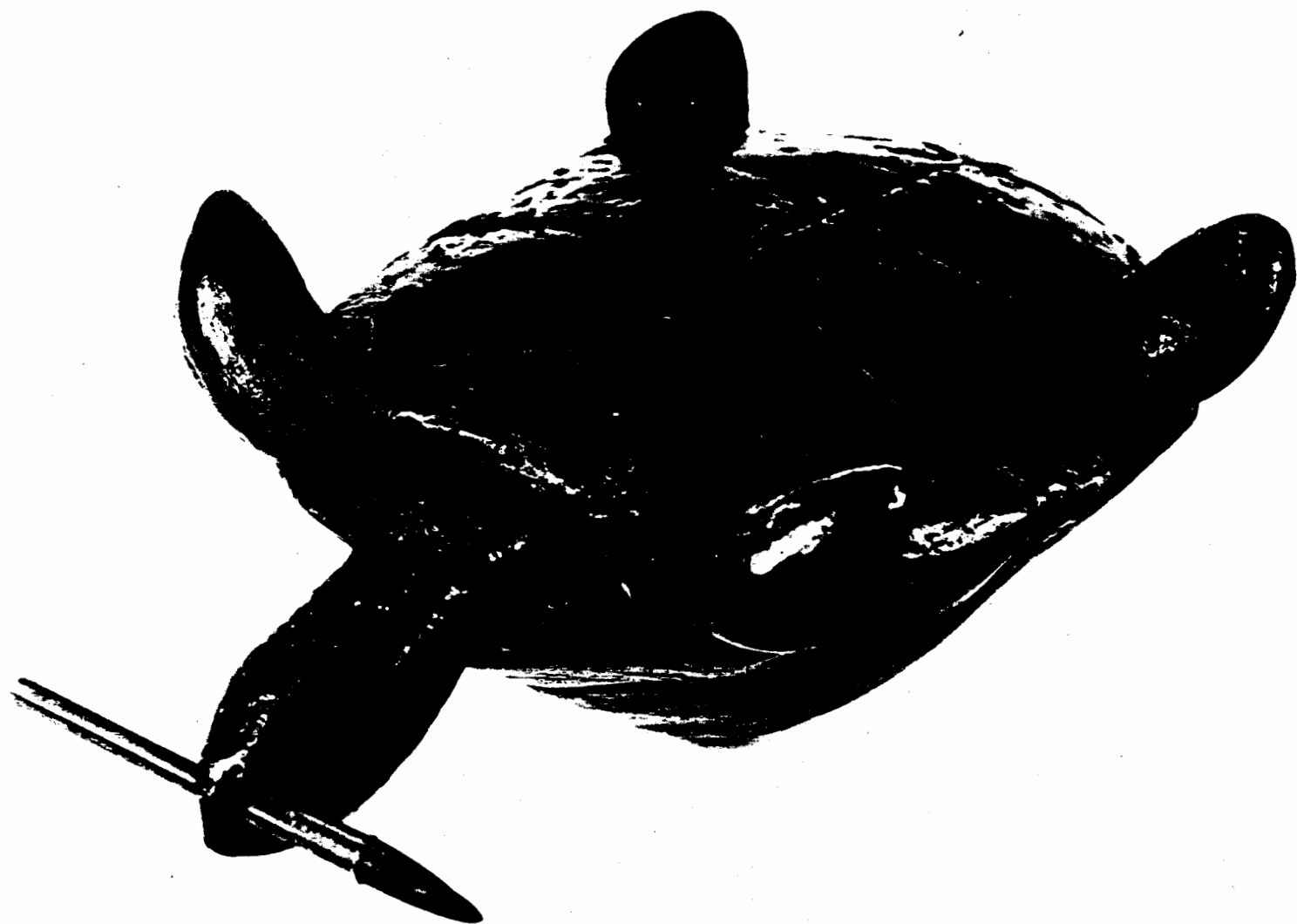


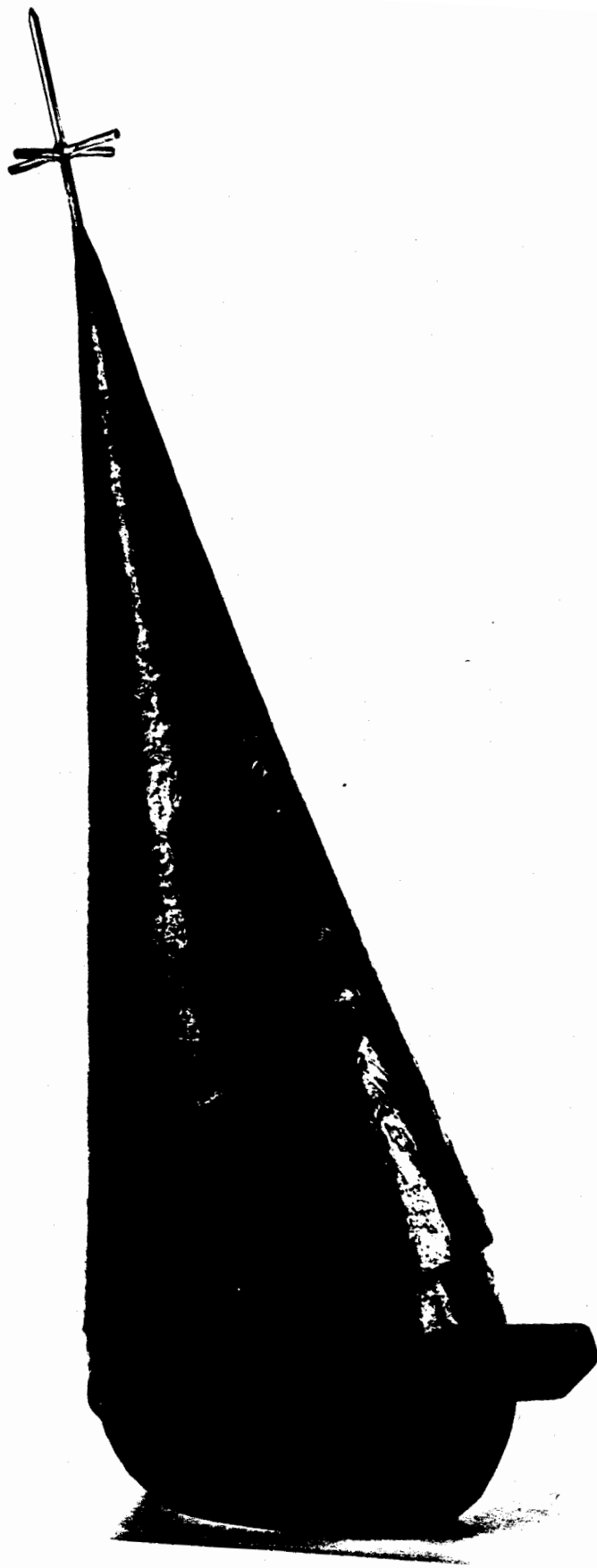


2. **SOLDIER**









6. **MINISTER**

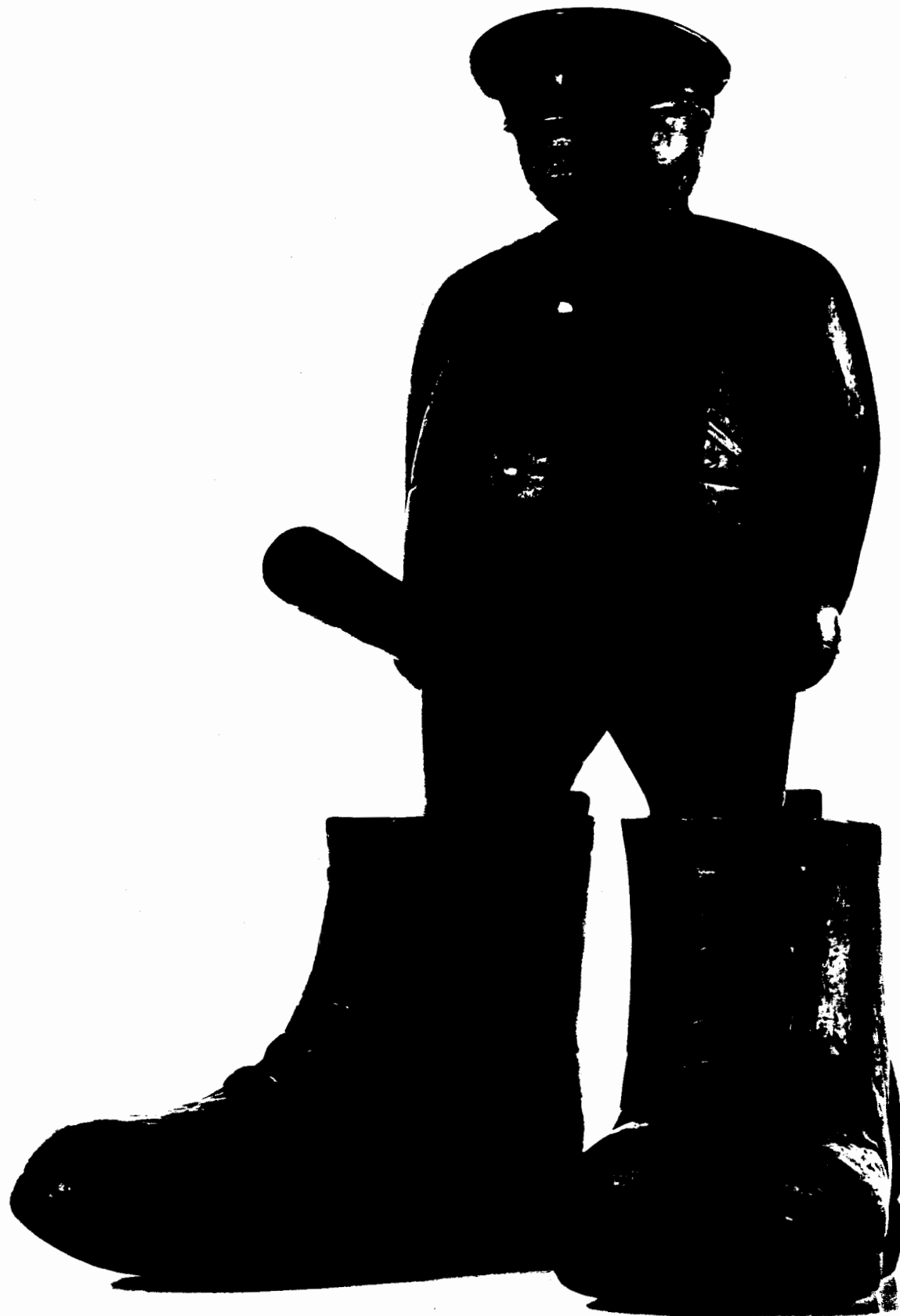








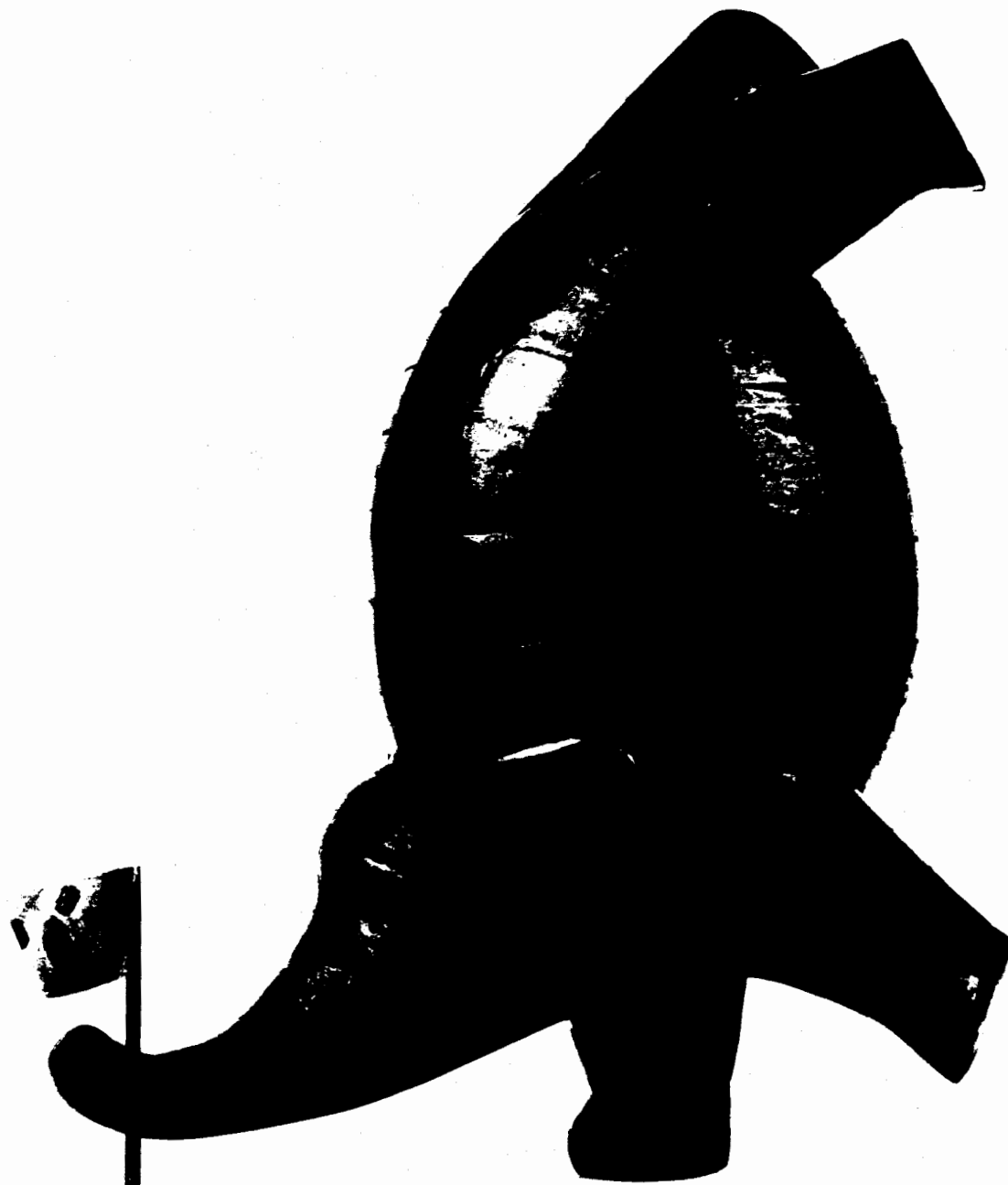




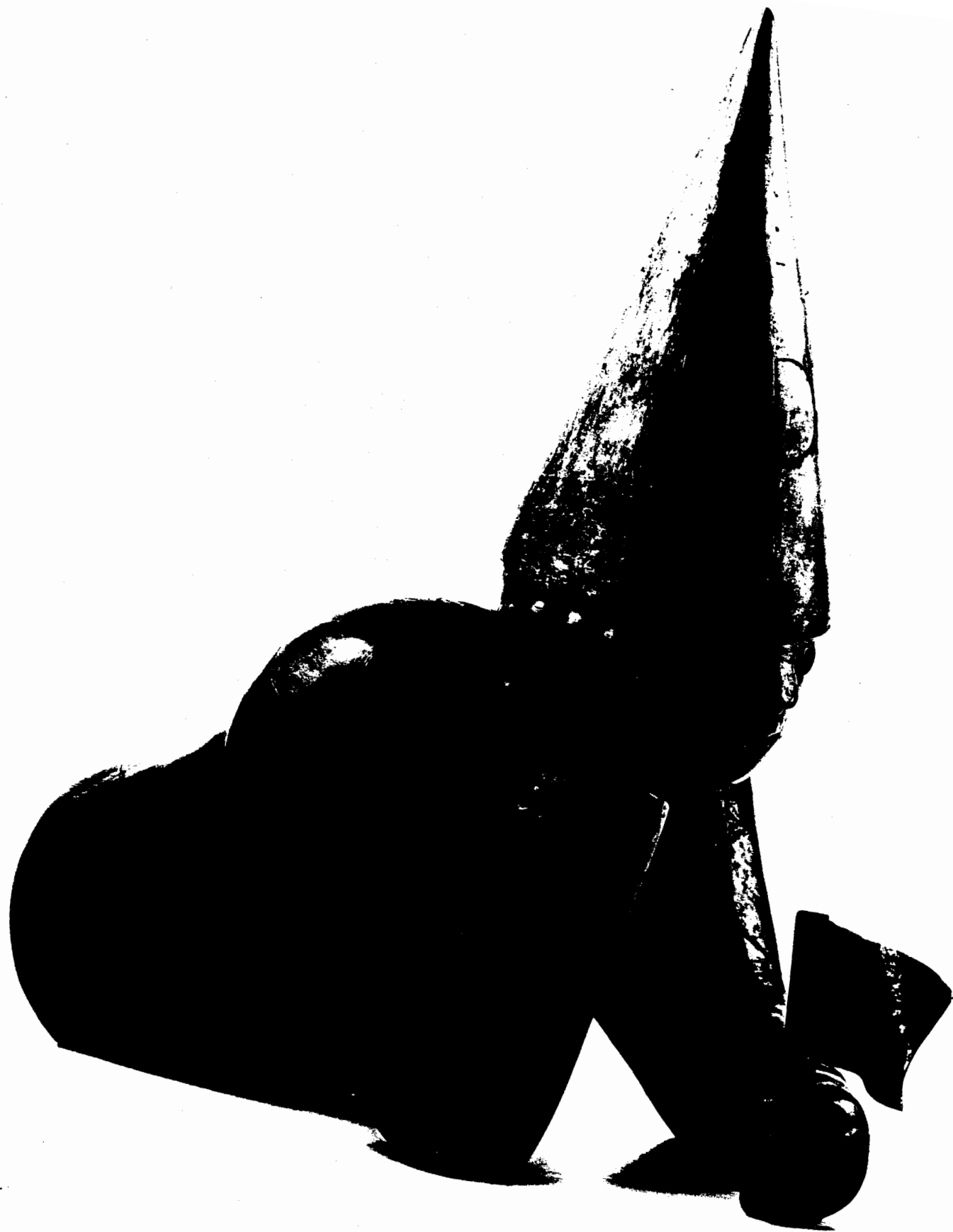








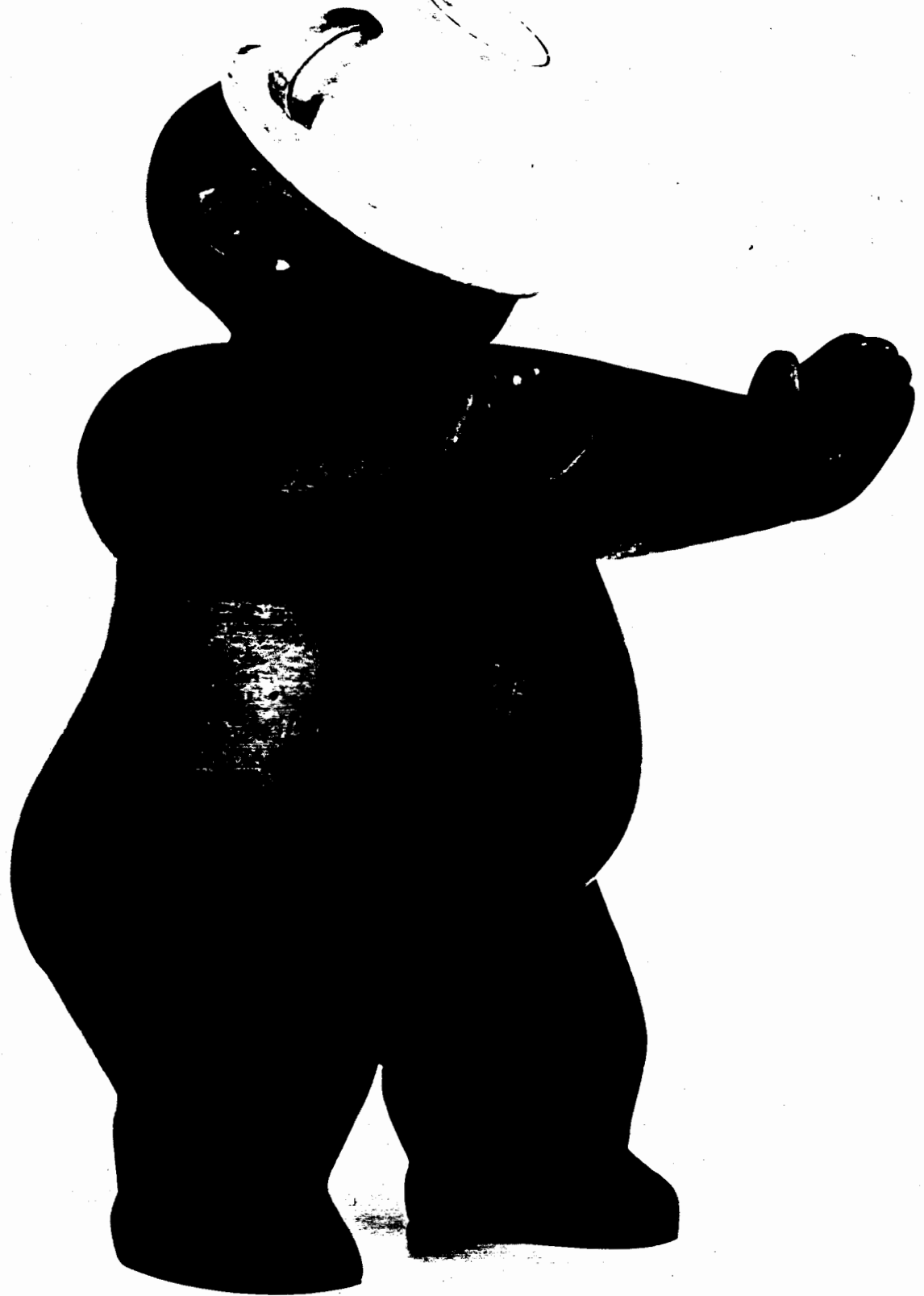




18. MELANCHOLIA











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