

In one place Frank accuses Americans of getting their Dada from Europe, and in another he says, "No wonder they (the French) imported our essential chaos to lighten the regularities of France!" This is not a contradiction; it may be clarified by further development. Thus: America is Dada in its actual mode of life, and has produced popular artists to express this Dada. The French Dadas express rather a reaction against their old, well-ordered system, and look to the chaotic conditions in America with relief. American intellectuals go to Paris where they learn to be patriots, returning to America with the religion of Joe Cook and Krazy Kat. They mimic the more literary variety of French Dada, rather than the American stock with its greater vigour (greater vigour because it is the potato bug proper to the potato). Dada in Europe is a prodigal son. In America it is Topsy, and just grewed.

W. C. Brownell, in *The Genius of Style*, points out that when the command "As you were" is given, the regiment falls out of line and style ceases. Obviously, this is where Dada begins. Which is to say, Dada is the result of neither regimentation nor chaos, but of pronounced regimentation coexisting with pronounced chaos.

Moral standards were never more fluctuant? Time-tables were never more trustworthy. Dada could arise in Europe and America simultaneously because in both regions regimentation and chaos thrive side by side, each engendering a keener sense for the other.

The architecture of the moving van is Dada. Or the eye which notes that architecture is Dada. (Read "was Dada." For Dada, like God, is dead.)

Whereupon our definition. Dada is perception without obsession. In a civilization of much grotesqueness (of pronounced opposites) Dada is the recording of this grotesqueness. Dada is the child who, seeing a lame man hobble down the street, attempts through neither sympathy nor mockery, but sheer curiosity, to hobble.

I rescue from the obscure files of a 1921 New York Tribune, and place here in the eternal archives, a paragraph I once composed on Dada:

"There is a certain warehouse in New York with four entrances for receiving goods. Above each entrance is the name of the product received. They are: bar steel, bar iron, sheet steel, plate steel. A person standing