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After the famous opening of the *Moulin Rouge* in 1889, the word *cabaret* has evoked images of Paris of the *Belle Époque*. However, its origin dates back to the 15th century. The term cabaret derives from a Piccard/Walloon word, *Camberete/Cambrete*, that describes a small room and is associated with a kind of performance combining dance, theatre, and comedy (see <https://www.dwds.de/wb/Kabarett> and <http://www.fromtaver.treccani.it/vocabolario/ricerca/cabaret/>). Although its first form can be traced back to Paris at the end of the 15th century, cabaret spread throughout Europe between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

The venues in which the small theatrical performances were staged differed from taverns, where only drinks (and not food) were sold, and the tables were covered with tablecloths. Cabaret reached its peak popularity and maximum period of splendour at the end of the 19th century as a place for entertainment and experimentation with new artistic languages. It is here that the artistic movements of Dadaism and Surrealism flourished (see Di Corato-Di Raddo-Tedeschi 2016). Cabaret's birth is linked to the development of the metropolises and, as a symbol of the literature of modernity, should be understood as the product of a society undergoing radical change. As a kind of show where small theatrical performances, accompanied by other forms of art, such as ballet, operettas, and conjuring, cabaret must be distinguished from *cafés chantant* or *café-concerts*, both in terms of location, and, by extension, as a particular form of performance (Merle 1985). Originating in 18th-century Paris, particularly on the Boulevard du Temple, the *cafés chantant* quickly spread throughout the Parisian metropolis at the time of the French Revolution (see Appignanesi 1975). While the *cafés chantant* offered short acting performances and *tableaus vivants*, cabarets experimented with different art forms. Since their birth cabarets were places in which young artists could emerge and make a name for themselves. In this regard, the singer Aristide Bruand, the poet Paul Verlaine, the composer Erik Satie, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec or Paul Signac, were frequent visitors of the first real Parisian cabaret, *Le Chat Noir* (see Meakin 2011), founded in the Montmartre district in November 1881 by Rodolphe Salis. It hosted performances of music, entertainment, social criticism, and combined them with news and political and social satire. *Le Chat Noir* was able to bind rich and famous Parisian personalities with the bohemians and the artists of Montmartre and Pigalle. Therefore, it became an example of a 'trivial' urban form that turned out to be of great importance for the contemporary Parisian social fabric (see Simmel 1911, pp. 31-64).

The French cabaret has become the symbol of this mixed form of entertainment, first in Europe and then worldwide: from the French capital it spread through Europe, developing different features associated with the country of arrival. In the interwar period it even spread overseas. For example, in the Netherlands, cabaret's birth dates back to 5th August 1895: cabaret, here also called *kleinkunst*, or small art, represented a form of popular entertainment. Over the years, a cabaret academy (*Kleinkunstacademie*) even appeared in Amsterdam with the purpose of studying this mixed art form of stand-up comedy, theatre, and music. With the advent of the mass media, many cabaret shows are broadcast today on television, especially on New Year's Day when the artists comment on the past year's main events. Taking as model *Zielony Balonik*, a famous cabaret founded in Krakow by artists and poets during the last years of Poland's partition in the late 18th century, cabaret has been developing in Poland since 1905. It comprises a form of live entertainment of humorous sketches filled with double entendre to circumvent censorship (Segel 1987).

Cabaret has no real tradition in Italy, where it began circulating during the late 1950s with Rome and Milan as the two main centres: in Rome with the «I Gobbi» trio (Vittorio Caprioli, Alberto Bonucci, and Franca Valeri), and simultaneously, in Milan, at the Teatro Piccolo with the Fo-Durano-Parenti trio; also noteworthy is the «Borsa Arlecchino» in Genoa. The Milanese cabaret was influenced by the German cabaret: the former can be

described as provocative and politically committed. Its major representatives are Enzo Jannacci, Cochi e Renato, Lino Toffolo and Bruno Lauzi. At the «Derby Club» in Milan cabaret also became in the '60s a real art movement in Italy, characterized by surreal songs (Pupo de Luca) and witty monologues (Paolo Villaggio, Massimo Boldi, Giorgio Faletti, Diego Abatantuono, Paolo Rossi and others). In Rome, from 1965 onwards, cabaret achieved success thanks to «Il Bagaglino», founded by the group of journalists including Francesco Pingitore, Mario Castellacci and Luciano Pirri.

Also famous are the German-speaking cabarets. Like their French counterparts, they were not only places of artistic experimentation, but they also witnessed the passage and cultural and economic contacts between different national cultures. For instance, the Viennese cabaret was strongly influenced by Yiddish culture. It was introduced to the capital by Jews who lived on the eastern borders of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and came to the capital in search of fortune (Schäfer 2019). The history of Austrian cabaret goes back to the last years of the Austro-Hungarian-Empire, when it became an art form widely accepted by the public sphere. The first and actual cabaret, the *Bierkabarets Simplicissimus*, was inaugurated in 1912. Until the Anschluss of 1938, it was a literary-dramatic form tailored for a bourgeois-liberal Jewish public. Its origins can be traced back to the 17th century to extemporary poets such as Marx Augustin (known as *Der liebe Augustin*, 1643-1685), but its roots also lie in the late Baroque period and the Biedermeier. With the strong censorship under Maria Theresa of Austria and Count Metternich, who both considered only opera and theatre as art forms, this form of ironic and political satirical performance was shelved and replaced in literary cafés by more moderate forms of criticism and social satire (Dacrema 2003). Its rediscovery and rebirth took place with the theatre crisis in 1783, a consequence of the financial crisis: as people were looking for other entertainment forms than the official ones, new forms of entertainment, such as variety shows, sprang up. These represented an intermediate form between the circus and the theatre. Like the French model, Felix Salten inaugurated the *Jung-Wiener Theater zum lieben Augustin* in 1901, which closed after the first six performances and only reopened in 1906. In the same year, March Henry opened the *Cabaret Fledermaus*, which, among others, was patronized by Alfred Polgar. Famous Viennese stand-up comedians are Fritz Grünbaum and Paul Morgan. Grünbaum and Karl Frakas developed a new artistic form, the *Doppelconférence*, a dialogue between two cabaret artists. The cabaret of this period does not have political value, at least not in the interwar age, when it was in close contact and mutual exchange with the Berlinese cabaret. The Viennese cabaret scene experienced a renaissance in the 1950s, when it was brought back to life by the Jewish veterans (Karl Farkas returned from the USA and became director of the *Simpl.*; Gerhard Bronner, who had fled to Palestine in 1938, founded a group of cabaret artists together with Helmut Qualtinger and Carl Menz named after the *Namenloses Ensemble*). In the following years, especially in the late 1970s, the cabaret was replaced by satirical television programs (e.g. *Ohne Maulkorb*). It saw a revival in the late 1980s thanks to Roland Düringer, who made the *Wiener Stadthalle* a place for cabaret shows and led to a subsequent politicization of this kind of show in the 2000s.

18th January 1901 was the date of birth of the German cabaret. In Berlin, at number 40 Alexanderstraße, Baron Ernst von Wolzogen founded the *Überbrettl* club (full name *Buntes Theater*), whose name was a parody and homage to Friedrich Nietzsche and his superman theory (see Forcht 2009, pp. 87-152). Wolzogen himself was its director and presenter, as well as author, of pieces of social satire: the evenings included humorous monologues, literary parodies, pantomimes, Chinese shadows, etc. The role of musical direction was assigned to Arnold Schoenberg from the beginning and, among the main collaborators, were the composer Victor Hollaender and the writer Arthur Schnitzler. Due to financial problems, the theatre was moved to Köpenickerstraße 67/68 on the 28th of November of the same year, and the name was shortened by removing *Überbrettl*. It permanently closed in 1902. Another famous cabaret, also opened by Max Reinhardt in 1902 in Berlin, was the *Schall und Rauch*, (since 1902 *Kleines Theater*) in Bellevuestraße, moving later to the Hotel Viktoria on the Unter den Linden. The Cabaret's name has become a symbol of the short

theatrical form that delighted the Berlin audience for long time, from its main parodic form to that of theatre. It also staged parodies of literary works (e.g. Schiller's *Don Carlos*). Among the cabaret goers there were Kurt Tucholsky, Walter Mehring and Friedrich Hollaender (see Forcht 2009, pp. 175–76). The German cabaret differs from the French one for its greater satirical and macabre components, which mainly go back to the contribute of Frank Wedekind (see Forcht 2009, pp. 87–152) and his activity at Munich's political cabaret *Die Elf Scharfrichter* (1901) (this cabaret had its origins in the novel *Stilpe* (1897) by Otto Julius Bierbaum, where the form of the artistic cabaret is discussed, see Forcht 2009, pp. 50–86). Between 1900 and 1904, Frank Wedekind performed on his guitar as a chansonnier and became an artist model through the macabre spirit of his satirical ballads, i.e. ballads laden with contemptuous moral judgments against the Wilhelminian Germany. Peculiar to this form of cabaret are the *Moritäten* satirical-grotesque ballads, loaded with moral judgments against the society of the time. Another famous Munich cabaret is the *Simplicissimum*, founded by Kathi Kobus, and linked to the magazine with the same name, where Isadora Duncan is also said to have performed (see Forcht 2009, pp. 25–44). International criticism associates German cabaret with ambiguity, perversion, and decadence, particularly according to National Socialist propaganda, American criticism, and filmography (see the 1972 film *Cabaret*, based on Christopher Isherwood's book *Goodbye to Berlin* of 1939). During the Weimar Republic, cabaret was associated with Marlene Dietrich's sexual ambiguity, Bertolt Brecht's theatre, or Kurt Weill's music. Cabaret was basic for Brecht's theatre and idea of poetry.

The most famous Swiss cabaret is Zurich's *Cabaret Voltaire*, founded on the 5th of February 1916 by Hugo Ball and Emmy Hennings. The art-literary movement of Dadaism was born there (the Dada Manifesto would not be published until July 1916). As a neutral country during World War I, Switzerland welcomed artists who fled the war and found a fruitful place of artistic experimentation in the *Cabaret Voltaire*, which was used not only for performances but also for exhibitions (for example, African art). Overseas, Jesse Louis Lasky introduced cabaret on the French model in 1911. Over the following years, he developed a performance style that differed from the European model because of the influence of jazz and German artists who had emigrated there during World War II. The American cabaret is essentially entertainment: the Chicago cabaret used large orchestras and reached its greatest success during the Prohibition years, while New York cabaret focused its attention on individual artists such as singers Nina Simone, Bette Midler, etc. In the 1960s, it was gradually replaced by rock concerts and variety shows. Currently, we are witnessing a renaissance of cabaret in cities such as New Orleans, Kansas City, Seattle, and Philadelphia, where artists reinterpret old musical forms and mix political satire, music, and burlesque.

It can thus be said that cabaret is, above all, entertainment that bears witness to the complexity of transnational migration processes. It becomes a form of transnational encounter between artists of different social and national backgrounds who find a meeting place and experiment in it. Its first task was to educate the public on the art of variety through political criticism and social satire (see Grazzini 2019, pp. 72–81). Within the discourse of modernity, cabaret experiences the development of the metropolises, linked not only to cultural life but also to social and economic circumstances. It is, therefore, to be understood as the result of anthropological and cognitive changes that altered the life rhythms of society at the end of the 19th century. It also represents the creation of a new art form, which influences society and distracts it from the daily reality by imitating its fast rhythms in a multiplicity of artistic forms. In some sense, it seems to concretize Georg Simmel's idea of the role of the ephemeral and disjunctive in modern society: cabaret, which emphasizes fragments, ambiguity, freedom and artistic creativity, is also the place where the comedy of human existence is staged in a dimension that is rebuilt day by day, given the uncertainty surrounding 20th century societies. Time and space of the cabaret are the media that dictate the forms and ways of exteriority. As a performance combining song, monologue, poetry, dance, and humour, cabaret became a multimedia extension that has allowed the representation of emotions and a means of critical observation of the political

and cultural situations in Europe and the United States since the end of the 19th century. It becomes an art form that, in the relationship between actor and spectator, comments on historical events and their political, social, and emotional consequences, and shows – through satire – our reality, who, and why, we are. The reality of cabaret is indeed linked to a trivial dimension, but, in this dimension, it shows the essence of human experience, becoming an alternative way of living through the narration of a personal story with universal meaning. Its scripts are neither fixed nor immutable, but are perceived as performances and, in the transition from writing to staging, are adapted by the author who often recites them to the public. The small size of the cabaret venues reduces the distance between the artist and the public, giving the performance a sense of immediacy. Therefore, cabaret is a cultural practice in the relationship with other art forms; it favours freedom and artistic creativity though considering censorship. From the intermediate position between art and entertainment, cabaret also represents the emancipation of short art forms.

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