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Study Questions for HCC1: **Victimization: New Objectivity in Germany**

Study Questions for HCC2: **Reconstruction: Purism in France**

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### **Victimization**

1. Think about the visual representation of war and its aftermath in contrast to verbal representations. What can pictures do that writing cannot? What can writing accomplish that is beyond the capacity of pictures?
2. How can a single picture manage to convey the enormity of suffering and loss? What can it show, and how can it show it?
3. Does exaggerating that severity of wounds enhance the message, by making things look truly terrible, or does it undercut the message, by abandoning claims to unadorned reportage?
4. What is the difference between representing war and representing war's aftermath?
5. What is the difference between a picture showing something and it trying to persuade us of something?
6. To which audience, or audiences, are Dix's and Grosz's pictures directed? Identify several audiences that might have seen such pictures. To which audiences would the pictures have appealed, and which would they have alienated?

### **Reconstruction**

1. How does being the French "victor" rather than the German loser alter a one's perception of World War One? What had France won and what had it lost?
2. Why does French art (at least, the art we are looking at) refuse to look directly at the consequences of war, and instead approach it indirectly?
3. How can a glass be more than a glass? When can a simple thing such as a plate mean something much more, such as the French survival of the fittest?
4. Imagine a photograph of a utensils and such on a table. How would the message of such a photograph differ from a purist painting of such a collection of things? How do the pictorial devices—such as composition, line, color, and brushstroke—shape the meaning of these pictures? What are the relative roles of subject matter and style in conveying meaning?
5. How do these pictures convey the ideas of planning and reconstructing for the future?
6. Imagine two former soldiers, one French and one German, standing in front of a purist painting. What sort of discussion might they have about it?