

THE SURREAL AND THE SACRED:
ARCHAIC, OCCULT, AND DAEMONIC ELEMENTS
IN MODERN ART
1914 - 1940

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ABSTRACT

Surrealism is examined through its history and phenomenology. The frame of reference is shifted from the history of art to the history of religions; the premises of modern art historiography examined; and Surrealism placed within an interdisciplinary context. The conjunction between the Surreal and the sacred is developed through the phenomenological clues of the uncanny, the weird, and the irrational--popular perceptions of the Surreal. The Surreal is seen as the transition between the ordinary and the extra-ordinary: as the threshold of the sacred. The origins of the Surrealist impulse to "transform life" are traced to occultism, alchemy, and hermetic philosophy, that attempt to create "the union of opposites". Historically, Surrealism stems from this heterodox tradition of archaic, occult, and daemoniac elements in European culture, yet it radically opposes them to the accepted religion and conventional mentality. In so doing, Surrealism creates a new orientation based upon the power of contradiction and ambivalence.

RÉSUMÉ

LE SURREALISME EST ICI EXAMINÉ AU TRAVERS DE SON HISTOIRE ET DE SA PHÉNOMÉNOLOGIE. NOTRE CADRE DE RÉFÉRENCE N'EST PLUS L'HISTOIRE DE L'ART MAIS L'HISTOIRE DES RELIGIONS; NOUS AVONS EXAMINÉ LES PRÉMISSSES DE L'HISTORIOGRAPHIE DE L'ART MODERNE ET NOUS AVONS PLACÉ LE SURREALISME DANS UN CONTEXTE INTER-DISCIPLINAIRE. LA JONCTION ENTRE LE SURREEL ET LE SACRÉ EST ÉTABLIE PAR LE BIAIS DES INDICES PHÉNOMÉNOLOGIQUES DE L'ÉTRANGE, DU BIZARRE ET DE L'IRRATIONNEL QUI SONT LES PERCEPTIONS POPULAIRES DU SURREEL. LE SURREEL EST ICI VU COMME LA TRANSITION ENTRE L'ORDINAIRE ET L'EXTRAORDINAIRE: LE SEUIL DU SACRÉ. LES ORIGINES DE LA TENDANCE SURREALISTE À "TRANSFORMER LA VIE" SONT RATTACHÉES À L'OCCULTISME, À L'ALCHIMIE ET À LA PHILOSOPHIE HERMÉTIQUE QUI S'EFFORCE DE CRÉER "L'UNION DES OPPOSÉS". D'UN POINT DE VUE HISTORIQUE, LE SURREALISME PROVIENT DE LA TRADITION HÉTÉRODOXE DES ÉLÉMENTS ARCHAÏQUES, OCCULTES ET DIABOLIQUES DE LA CULTURE EUROPÉENNE, ALORS QU'IL LES OPPOSE RADICALEMENT À LA RELIGION ÉTABLIE ET À LA MENTALITÉ CONVENTIONNELLE. CE FAISANT, LE SURREALISME CRÉE UNE NOUVELLE ORIENTATION, FONDÉE SUR LE POUVOIR DE CONTRADICTION ET D'AMBIVALENCE.

IN MEMORY OF

PROFESSOR W.O. JUDKINS

I

A. A violent order is disorder; and
B. A great disorder is an order. These
Two things are one. (Pages of illustrations.)

III

After all the pretty contrast of life and death
Proves that these opposite things partake of one,
At least that was the theory, when bishop's books
Resolved the world. We cannot go back to that.
The squirming facts escape the squamous mind,
If one may say so. And yet relation appears,
A small relation expanding like the shade
Of a cloud on sand, a shape on the side of a hill.

- Wallace Stevens
"Connoisseur of Chaos"
1938

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PREFACE

Surrealism is an exceptionally elusive movement whose peculiar sensations have never been thoroughly analyzed. I undertook to write this dissertation with a view to illuminating the previously uncharted connections between Surrealism and the sacred. The approach involved a correlation of phenomenology and history, in order to arrive at the widest possible frame of reference. But to place this interdisciplinary argument in context required first a discussion of the ways in which history has been written in the fields of religious studies and art history. The frontal discussion of the problem of historical analysis detailed in Chapter One, while seemingly a digression from the pivotal discussion of Surrealism, is therefore intended to provide the frame through which the problem of Surrealism and modern art history may be viewed. Chapter One, then, attempts to ask the question that places the subject of this dissertation in its proper context.

Hence we begin with the broad view established in Chapter One and then move into the special problems entailed by the analysis of Surrealism. In Chapter Two, "The Surreal and the Sacred", we focus on the phenomenological clues that can illuminate the nature of the Surreal. Chapter Three deals with the historical context of Surrealism in its adaptations of occultism, daemonism, and decadence, while Chapter Four conveys the context of modernism through a lengthy discussion of Freud and Giorgio de Chirico in their relation to Surrealism. (These outstanding figures were chosen because, in my estimation, they have been the least adequately dealt with in the history of the movement.) Chapter Five deals with the phenomenology of the Surreal object and its extra-ordinary effect

on perception. The uncanny perception invoked by Surrealist art, is, in fact, its most striking characteristic, and the analysis of Chapter Five attempts to root out the origin of the Surreal perception. Finally, the conclusion presents a larger view of Surrealist art that weaves the threads of the previous chapters with the frontal argument attempted in the Introduction. Thus the structure of the whole dissertation is conceived in symmetrical format, with the broader aspects of the argument presented at the beginning and the end.

A necessarily ambitious topic such as this entailed research in a number of parallel fields; therefore the intended "contributions to knowledge" overlap several themes. While I cannot attempt to weigh the relative merit of the implications of this study, I suggest that the contributions to knowledge fall into the following categories: 1) history of religions--new analysis of the weird and the uncanny as elements of the sacred; exploration of the history of the occult; fuller definition of the meaning of the "daemonic"; clarification of Freud's affiliation with the occult; delineating the occult influences in modern art. 2) history of art--examination of archaic and occult elements in modern art, especially in relation to archaic religion; revised view of Freud in relation to Surrealism; revised assessment of the role of Giorgio de Chirico in Surrealist theory; new understanding of the role of the Surrealist object. 3) history of ideas--a more extensive definition of the term "surreal"; tracing of the history of pagan/Christian oppositions; explored influence of history of religions in the field of modern art. It is hoped that the larger contribution of this dissertation may be the interdisciplinary model developed through the intersection of theories of religion and theories of art.

Previous work in the field involved research in the history of religions and history of art at graduate and undergraduate levels (B.A. University of Manitoba, 1975; M.A. status McGill University, 1978) in the areas of Chinese and Japanese religion and aesthetics; methodology: archaic religion, myth, and psychology of religion. Research in modern art history and art theory was conducted concurrently (B.F.A. University of Manitoba, 1976; M.F.A., Wisconsin, 1980). The format of the dissertation is designed for greater readability and a unity between the images selected and the written text.

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DISORDER

AND

THE

IDEOLOGY

OF

MODERNISM

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION Disorder and the Ideology of Modernism

It has been precisely sixty years since the beginning of the Surrealist movement in Paris in 1924, and since that time the movement has been subject to a variety of approaches. Among these approaches, we may discern two prevailing trends: that is, to see Surrealism as but a step in the continuous progress towards artistic abstraction that was posited by the ideological program of modern art; or to see it as part of the increasing disorder and fragmentation of values that characterizes modern culture. Within these two interpretations, we find implicit two views of history that we may call "the utopian" or "the apocalyptic".

At its inception early in the twentieth century, it was difficult to place Surrealism within a historical context. The illusionistic character of much Surrealist art seemed a survival from the Romantic past, yet its intention was utopian in the extreme, for it proposed to "transform life".¹ The movement had all the allure of a fashionable radical chic, that surrounds anything novel, different, or revolutionary--and the intentional shock of the Surrealist images had the unintended effect of deflecting attention away from the movement's larger program. Many of those who chronicled the movement were directly involved in its development; they were advocates or exiles, who wrote laudatory or evangelical texts extolling the Surrealist vision, and in particular, they reacted to the basic tenets of Surrealism as defined by its premier ideologue, André Breton. Among this first generation we may locate the outstanding scholarship of Marcel Jean

and Maurice Nadeau, whose detailed histories of the movement and its art now form the classic primary sources for scholarship in the field.²

For the most part, the literature on Surrealism is a record of histrionic cries for the ascendance of the imagination, influenced by the strident polemical tone of the Manifestoes of Surrealism. To date, scholarship on Surrealism has been largely descriptive, even superficial. The movement's real contribution to modern culture has become increasingly obscure, adapted as it is by advertising, and coloured, on the other hand, by various psychological explanations of Surrealist art that conceive of its meaning as lying somewhere in between Freud and the dream.³ This elusive movement, whose striking contribution to art is the peculiar sensation of the uncanny, the weird, or the extra-ordinary, continues to provoke questions.

Surrealism resists the evolutionary lineage of modern art movements set forth by most popularized art histories, but our understanding of the movement still is confined by the ideological thrust of the early modern period from which it emerges. Then too, the particularly religious aspirations of the movement, found in its belief in a "surreality" and the unswerving insistence of its artists on the primacy of the imagination as revelation, as well as in the sectarian social structure of the movement itself, have never been dealt with from the perspective of religious studies. While many have noted the persisting correspondences between Surrealism and religion in its many manifestations, especially as delineated in the movement's transformations of archaic, occult, and heterodox elements, these curious resemblances have never been pursued and illuminated.⁴

Our problem then, is to search out the intrinsic meaning and significance of the Surreal, especially in its religious ramifications and impact on modern culture. The larger purpose of our argument is, however, to question the conventional wisdoms from which much of our knowledge of modern art stems, not just because conventional categories ought to be challenged, but because they may prove too confining to the singular meaning that we must pursue. Then too, the term "modern" itself has now passed into history, having acquired an ideological overlay that links it firmly to the past: a withdrawal that is pointed up even more acutely by the current popular acceptance of the term "post-modern" to signify the contemporary period.⁵ Here we must ask questions of our chosen subject, Surrealism, in a new way. Ultimately, we will need to shift the frame of reference--that is, to say, our method and approach--from the history of religions to the history of art.⁶ But first, we must briefly reconstruct the nature of the two prevailing interpretations of modern art through the perspective granted by the intersection of these two disciplines. And this perspective finds its common denominator in the discipline of history itself.

1. Modern art and the utopian design of history

Early modern art history was influenced by the utopian idealism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which held that through **progress** man could achieve a perfect world. The idea of progress, in its many permutations, took firm hold of the artistic imagination of the early twentieth century, carrying with it a belief in the order and continuity of history, and the hope that man's lot would become perfected throughout the successive course of time.⁷ In its more extreme forms,

progress philosophy also proposed the eventual existence of **Utopia**, the earthly paradise that would occur at the end of the historical sequence.⁸ In a fundamental sense, then, the ideology of progress necessitates a belief in the succession or **order** of history.

The idea of a progressive, linear order to history informed early modern art criticism in a number of ways. It fathered the ideal of innovation as a sign that progress in art occurred. The early art criticism of Appollinaire declared that art would evolve to a point of "cerebral abstraction" that he allied to the utopian "fourth dimension" of Theosophical thought. Appollinaire wrote:

They are driving themselves towards an entirely new art which will be to painting, as known up to now, what music is to poetry...this will be pure painting.
...The painters have been led quite naturally, one might say by intuition, to preoccupy themselves with the new possibilities of spatial measurement, which, in the language of ^{the} modern studios, are designated by the term, the fourth dimension. (1913)⁹

With the seminal criticism of Appollinaire, the criterion of "modernity" became innovation, invention, abstraction, and, by implication, imagination. The work of Appollinaire's contemporaries--Picasso, Giorgio de Chirico, Robert Delaunay, or Duchamp--could be understood as "moments" in the inevitable evolution of art towards abstraction. As envisioned by Appollinaire, modern art prefigured a utopian vision of the **fourth dimension**:

Wishing to attain the proportions of the ideal, to be no longer limited to the human, the young painters offer us works which are more cerebral than sensual. They discard...the old art of optical illusion...in order to express the grandeur of metaphysical forms. The **fourth dimension**: this **utopian expression** should be analyzed and explained...has come to stand for the aspirations and premonitions of the many young artists who live in the anticipation of a sublime art. (1913)¹⁰

The idea of progress thus became the keystone for the evaluation of modern art. The simultaneous popularization of evolutionary theory in other disciplines confirmed the belief in the progress of art. Modern art criticism came to express a kind of "philosophical Darwinism", evident as well in the parallel fields of literature and music as the purist "search for origins".¹¹ Evolutionary theory also informed the fledgling disciplines of comparative religion, anthropology, and ethnology with a fascination for the "primitive mind", located somewhere in the far distant past, which not only could reveal the logic of the thought process itself, but which could provide the key to man's spiritual rejuvenation in an imminent, utopian future.

Appollinaire's critical vision of a utopian art of the "fourth dimension" contained the seeds of prophecy, linking the ideology of progress with both Darwinian evolutionary theory and with Theosophical, spiritualistic views of the development of human consciousness. The self-fulfilling impetus of an ideology was thereby invoked by Appollinaire's interpretations of modern art. This was the ideology of progress. It was, by implication, the **idea of order**: an order to achieve ideal abstraction within the structure of human consciousness itself, and without, in an optimistically linear succession of history. The impulse towards abstraction in art could, in Appollinaire's view, express the progress of human consciousness towards a utopian "fourth dimension", just as history itself would be ordered by progress towards a better, perhaps even utopian, world.

Building on nineteenth century ideals of historical progress, sectarian modern art movements such as Dadaism and Surrealism produced manifestoes promoting the idea of a future transformation of human consciousness, which they conspired to bring about through artistic and

spiritual revolution. Dada's nihilism masked an intense desire for the "new man", one who reveled in expressions of primal energy, untrammelled thought, and a direct perception of reality. The old bifurcation of mind and feeling, dream and reality, would be destroyed; and a new, original unity regained. The search for origins was derived partially from Romantic conceptions of the primitive and the exotic, which were seen as participating in a purer and more fundamental level of existence.¹² This implicit Romanticism is made explicit in Tristan Tzara's sound poems, rhythmic music, and in Dada performance pieces, such as "La coeur au gaz", which play with transformations of archaic and primitive art forms to invoke the spiritual persona of the new man: the "noble savage" redux.¹³ Unmasked, Dada provided Surrealism with the void of total negation, the tabula rasa that would enable the Surrealists, in turn, to establish the new principle of "the Surreal". The Manifesto of Surrealism of 1924 proclaims the power of the imagination and the dream "to solve all the principal problems of life".¹⁴ Here the manifesto as a genre of literature discloses its fundamental identity with more obviously utopian social discourse, especially in the mutual struggle for a complete transformation of human spirituality into an achievable human utopia here on earth.¹⁵

Premises of the Progress View

The utopian optimism of the early modern art movements, expressed in the genre of the manifesto, prefigured the development of the more intentionally abstract and cerebral art that was envisioned by Apollinaire. Gradually, this intention became obscure. What remained of the purist motivations generated by Apollinaire was the idea of historical

progression: an idea that had flattened into a **historicism** without definite end.¹⁶ The result was that modernism, as an attitude of utopian aspiration, slowly fossilized into formalism. Appollinaire's lyrical ideal of "cerebral abstraction" was eventually flattened, by the mid-nineteen-sixties, into minimalism, and the seminal work of the early modern art movements such as Cubism and Surrealism became, for many writers, but a step in the upward-spiralling staircase of art. Even today, descriptions of the early modern period still are characterized by a predisposition to employ a strictly chronological approach that implies historical succession and sequence. But as Karl Popper has so clearly stated:

The poverty of historicism, we might say, is a poverty of the imagination. The historicist continuously upbraids those who cannot image a change in their little worlds, but the historicist is himself deficient in imagination since he cannot imagine a change in the conditions of change....It really looks as if historicists were trying to compensate themselves for the loss of an unchanging world by clinging to the belief that change can be foreseen by an unchanging law.¹⁷

The comfort of **the idea of order** as historical sequence had prevailed.

The idea of a linear order within history carries certain assumptions about the nature of history, as well as an implicit epistemology that promotes a linear analysis of the material. This is in part due to the still prevalent influence of the logical positivism of the nineteenth century, with its belief that "proof positive" could be obtained through a "cause and effect" analysis;¹⁸ "The culture of the nineteenth century, too, endowed the writing of history with a particular significance: the historical record was proof positive of the progress of the race, a progress...which was all but qualitatively completed with their own age."¹⁹ The basic presupposition of such a mechanistic ordering of history is to break down events and their meanings into fragments which lead up to, and

explain, the contemporary situation. If events could be ordered in a linear sequence, according to the logic of cause and effect, then they could be introduced into one's personal range of experience, digested and realized, made accessible to the understanding in that they explain the current circumstances. The ideology of progress necessitates an attempt to introduce the object of study into one's present historical moment, and it thereby distorts the perception of the historical event as a unique and autonomous moment. The writing of modern cultural history from a linear perspective makes that history psychologically reassuring to both the historian and the audience. In this sense, much modern cultural history is the product of a predisposition to linear modes of thought, mutually reacting with the ideology of progress. The event could be seen as part of the chain leading up to, and explaining the present situation.

The residue of nineteenth century ideals of historical order persists into present scholarship, particularly in the progressive sequence of art movements typified by more simplistic art histories--and, paradoxically, in the negative critical perception of the fragmentation and increasing disorder of modern culture that is so often proposed by scholars in the parallel fields of religion and culture. We may call this latter interpretation **fragmentation theory**. We find its source in the apocalyptic design of history.

2. Modern art and the apocalyptic design of history

One of the conventional wisdoms of cultural history is the interpretation of modern culture in terms of fragmentation, disorder, and a relativity of values. As with the idea of progress, it is necessary to

question the idea of fragmentation as the essence of modern experience, in order to uncover its implicit assumptions about modern art, history and culture. One of the major proponents of the "fragmentation theory" is Nathan Scott, who in The Broken Center examines modern literature from a religio-historical perspective.²⁰ He suggests that a relativity of values is the primary feature of modern art. Scott decries the fragmentation and relativity of modern cultures, which he asserts stems from the breakdown of the moral and religious fabric of western culture. For him, modern art expresses a loss of absolutes: "the anchoring center of life is broken and the world is therefore abandoned and adrift".²¹ The traditional values that formerly held society together are buffeted and challenged by the radical changes of modern life. The central problem for the artist is, therefore, the breakdown of all absolute values, which dissolve into fragmentation and relativity:

But when the traditional premises regarding the radical significance of things have collapsed, and when, therefore, there is no longer any robust common faith to orient the imaginative faculties of men with respect to the ultimate mysteries of existence--when, in other words, the basic presuppositions of a culture have become just yawning question marks--then the literary artist is thrust upon a most desolate frontier indeed.²²

Scott is not alone in this interpretation of modern culture. Many scholars support the theory that relativity and fragmentation are the subtext of modern art: terms such as "fragmentation", "breakdown", "disunity", "disharmony", and "disorder" are often employed in describing the modern experience expressed in art. Cubism, in particular, is subject to this kind of negative interpretation, its multiple perspectives more readily interpreted as fragmented disorder rather than the fluctuant and vital order that it may also be said to depict.²³ For example, both

Katherine Kuh's Break-Up: The Core of Modern Art, and Erich Kahler's The Disintegration of Form in the Arts treat modern art as a breakdown of traditional genres and conventional ways of perceiving.²⁴ Kuh's text deals with the visual break-up of form in modern painting, while Kahler's text discusses modern art movements, from Dadaism to the emptiness of John Cage, in terms of a lack of coherence, a deliberate frivolity of meaning that is intended to irritate the audience. And as its title so obviously suggests, H. R. Rookmaaker's Modern Art and the Death of a Culture develops a chronological survey of modern art from the perspective of an acutely regressive movement into disorder and meaninglessness.²⁵ Even so balanced a text as William Fleming's Art, Music, and Ideas occasionally falls prey to the dissonances of the fragmentation theory of modern art:

Clashes and discord for him are more usual than concord; disunity is ascendant over unity; discontinuity is more familiar than continuity; and a multiverse has replaced the universe.

....No static, unchanging absolute can possibly provide a satisfactory view of the moving world of today. Even the age-old principles of mathematics can no longer be regarded as eternal truths, but, like art, man-made expressions relative to the time and place of their creation. So also the firmest dogmas of religious faiths and political doctrines are subject to far more commentary and modification from time to time than their followers would care to admit.²⁶

The derivation of the title, The Broken Center: Studies in the Theological Horizon of Modern Literature, is revealing. A pertinent passage in William Butler Yeats' apocalyptic poem, "The Second Coming", provides the source:

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer
**Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.**
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned.*

*The best lack all conviction while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.*

*Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming!²⁷*

Scott's selection of this poem as the theme of his study suggests a commonly held pessimism, while eluding its contextual meaning and millennial motivation. However, when seen within the context of the poem, the fragmentation and disorder revealed through the filter of Scott's "broken center" prefigure a higher and more glorious future hidden in the present ambiguities of the modern period.

The end result of modernism is, then, for many authors, a loss of meaning and the expression of complete disorientation. Scott, too, suggests that modern literature describes a loss of absolutes; it must be seen against the void of unbelief, for "the negatively theological character of modern literature compels the critic to enter an essentially theological order of discourse and evaluation...the theological horizon is centrally important in the literary landscape of our period."²⁸ The perceptions embodied in modern art are relative and fragmented, expressing:

the evaporation of those primordial images which objectify a people's faith and provide the moral imagination with its basic premises....And when there are no paradigmatic experiences, then nothing is any longer revealed as having decisive importance, and men are ruled...by a kind of kaleidoscopic concept of life, which, in giving equal significance to everything, does, in effect, attribute no radical significance to anything.²⁹

Secular man is condemned to the hell of relativity and disorder, grasping for the broken center that once provided sense and order.³⁰

Premises of the Regress View

The interpretation of modern culture solely in terms of fragmentation and disorder implies a view of history that we may call **regress**.³¹ It suggests that the increasing disorientation and discontinuity of modern life are part of a larger universal order that is beyond man's control. The irreversible order of history is from bad to worse. We may also assert that the fragmentation theory of modern culture has its roots in the Biblical design of history.³² More significantly, the fragmentation theory recalls historical apocalyptic thought, in its essentially predictive tone of dissolution and decay. Like historical apocalyptic, it sees the linear pattern of history as a downward-spiralling motion into a catastrophic abyss, from which salvation can be achieved only through miraculous intervention. The primary interest of apocalyptic thought is in eschatological prophecy or the prophecy of the "end-time": "The ideal future of the apocalypticist could only be inaugurated by awful convulsions, catastrophes, or some other miraculous deliverance. The signs of its nearness were not the likeness but unlikeness of the present to it."³³

As in the apocalyptic vision, fragmentation theory predicts a consummation to the pattern of historical regression, that is, an end to time. The fascination with "end-time" evoked by the cataclysmic disorder of modern secular history is a recurrent theme in the fragmentation theory of modern art. Modern literature especially has been interpreted as a metaphor for secular man's quest for ultimate meaning: themes of descent, disorientation and resurrection are compressed into a millennialist paradigm, "the way up is the way down", often without adequate sensitivity to the incipient meaning that must itself emerge from the work.³⁴ Like historical

apocalyptic, the interpretation of modern culture in terms of the negative meaning of fragmentation is "marked by a strange combination of pessimism as to the present, and hope as to a miraculously established future."³⁵ The implicit millennialism of this view suggests that it is necessary to endure the chaos of the abyss before the "claritas" of divine illumination. Disorder overtakes order; all must be destroyed for life to begin anew. After the final Apocalypse, the pattern of spiralling regression is halted, Satan and the powers of darkness destroyed, and a new order brought into being.³⁶ The Apocalyptic event is necessary for the new order to be realized. The fragmentation theory is, then, a new manifestation of the apocalyptic imagination: a projection of which we often are unaware because of its intimate connection to the historical sources of Western thought. Its power lies in its prophetic undertones that assure it, like other self-fulfilling prophecies, a certain inevitability.

It should be apparent that the descent and fragmentation themes disclosed by modern art and literature are qualitatively different from traditional Biblical apocalyptic literature. In its contemporary guise as fragmentation theory, the jeremiads of the traditional Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic are thinned and flattened into a simplistic pattern imposed upon the art and literature of the modern period. This predictive approach may be useful in the analysis of broad and pronounced cultural change, but when it is taken as a universal truth, it distorts the intrinsic character of the autonomous event. Modern art remains, and must remain, within the historical context; this context has been "marked by a distinct feeling of doom and cosmic helplessness"³⁷ that increasingly has aroused the tradition of apocalyptic prophecy in a camouflaged form. Like contemporary millennialists, the fragmentation theorists selectively choose the breakdowns

that they describe: "Almost any scrap of truly bad news is hailed as another sign that we are in the homestretch of history".³⁸ Traditional apocalyptic thought is the seedbed of this modern "ideology of regress", moral in overtone, but historicist in actuality. The metaphorical density of historical apocalyptic is flattened into a regressive pattern that forbids positive cultural change, because it needs to invoke a historic millenium. And to interpret modern art exclusively within this single pattern is to distort both the modern and its historical source.

The concept of the relativity and disorder of modern culture sounds a dominant key of discord; it implies a "broken center" tradition of apocalyptic thought. Although this perception of the fragmentation of modern culture is a much cherished notion, perhaps it cannot encompass the entire situation. The proponents of this school, many of whom, it must be noted, were writing in the earlier decades of the twentieth century, have been too immersed in the historical situation to encompass fully the dynamics of cultural change, which involves breakdown and recreation. With the writing of Nathan Scott in particular, the use of a theological framework suggests a too-solidly rooted historical perspective, that disallows impartial or even secular formulation. But a rigid attachment to the idea of a linear, albeit regressive, order to history shows a fundamental mistrust of unpredictable change, which is then perceived from the former orientation as "disorder" or "chaos". As Kenneth MacRobbie has observed:

Attempts throughout history to arrest change have ranged from autocratic tyranny to self-magnified egalitarian individualism. But this is to oppose re-forming discontinuities in favour of a false stability, and to impose upon the fruitful chaos of life breaking through to new meaning, the chaos of an old order breaking down into meaninglessness.³⁹

This is an understandable, but unfortunate predilection.

The fragmentation theory of modern culture offers only a partial perspective with regard to modern art. An actual disintegration of established artistic conventions and genres indeed has occurred--but to remain within this perspective is to obscure the perception of new meaning with the perspective of the past, and to distort the historical present with a retroactive interpretation of the events and objects of recent history. The new forms of modern art have been seen only in relation to their discontinuity from traditions of the past, and not as things in themselves, intrinsically meaningful. The interpretation of modern art as fragmentation and disorder sees the shadow cast by modernism but not its unique substance.

3. Utopian and Apocalyptic Thought Compared

Paradoxically, the utopian and the apocalyptic designs of history meet at the culminating point of historical succession: that is, at the point where Utopia and the millennium merge: this point is the paradisaical state at the end of time when the New Jerusalem and the archaic Golden Age are reestablished. The apocalyptic design of history forms a close parallel to the program of utopian progress in that the increasing fragmentation and disorder of millennialist vision of history can signify an eventual progress to a rejuvenated existence; a progress that is contingent on dire and dramatic regress, but progress nonetheless.⁴⁰ This is the "new heaven and new earth", the new Jerusalem brought about through cataclysmic destruction and renewal. Is it, then, so surprising that these two approaches to cultural history adopt twin postures?

For the theory of fragmentation is exactly the obverse of the theory of historical progress, that is, the nineteenth century ideal of linear historical order. The "broken center" hypothesis suggests a regressive movement to a cataclysmic, apocalyptic disintegration, paralleling in reverse the Victorian ideal of linear historical progress. Nineteenth century ideals of progress, so deeply embedded in the program of modern art, predicted a linear evolution to the final order of an earthly Utopia. Early modern art criticism similarly held the position that art would progress to an ultimate point of other-worldly, cerebral abstraction. Conversely, many religio-cultural studies of the twentieth century asserted that the modern era would experience a complete relativity of values, expressed in the fragmentation and disunity of modern art--a disintegration culminating in the chaos of the Apocalypse. George Steiner has written that "mankind may only ask certain questions in order to elicit a negative, predictive reply".⁴¹ The interpretation of the current cultural cacophany as movement into chaos carries with it a predictive element, a self-fulfilling prophecy, that in itself belies its philosophical sources in the tradition of apocalyptic thought. The fundamental polarity of the idea of fragmented disorder and utopian order is revealed by the predictive nature of these two approaches to modern culture and history. For the concept of **progress** to an abstract and utopian "fourth dimension" and **regress** to an inevitable and apocalyptic disintegration reveal their commonality in the implicit belief in historical order: the idea of a sequence and predictable stages to history. A curious and complex symmetry is created, whereby the future utopian order recalls archaic past perfection, and the apocalyptic disorder invokes a future "New Jerusalem". Both radically divergent views meet at the final point of historical development when apocalyptic disorder

leaps into utopian order. Both the teleologies of modern cultural history as progress towards utopian order or as regress to apocalyptic disorder attempt to **end time** at the culmination of historical sequence. And both, therefore, succumb to the idea of order in history.

4. Locating the problem

In the light of this comparison, we may interject an alternative perspective, that is, to view the modern period as one of changing orientation. The disorientation brought about through the rapid cultural, social, and political changes of the twentieth century also anticipates a newly forming, uniquely modern orientation. We must be sensitive to the complexities of this emergent vision, so as not to reduce it either to apocalyptic fragmentation or to utopian order. Instead, we find in this protean recombination of forms, a transformation of known categories of art and thought, into unknown and as yet unnamed vehicles of human feeling. Another way of saying this, is to characterize the modern period as one of "transition" that contains tensions between the old historical world view and the new evolving one. A symptom of transition is the ambivalence that is created when elements of the emergent and the dissolving cosmologies collide. The transitional nature of the modern period produces tensions and ambiguity because many patterns of art, thought, and belief co-exist simultaneously, producing an effect that is often interpreted as dissociation, discontinuity or ambivalence. It is this very ambivalence that itself is the new meaning that we must pursue. Only in this way may we escape the twin historicist values of innovation or degeneration, utopia and apocalypse, and find in the contradictions, ambiguities, and ambivalences of modern art the expression of some positive rather than negative meaning.

Many aspects of ambivalence or contradiction in Surrealism in particular, and modern art in general, cannot be understood from the perspective of linear or classical ideas of order, because the principle of contradiction is antithetical to a linear or mechanistic understanding of art. There is, however, a certain logic to contradiction that may be called, "irony" or "the absurd". It is often sensed in modern art as the "weird", the "uncanny", "or the extra-ordinary"--the sensations of the Surreal. The logic of contradiction points up the absurdity of mechanistic order, or as Bergson calls it, "the lifelessness in life",⁴² and uses the absurd and the irrational to provoke fresh perceptions of the world. Dada and Surrealism especially employ the principle of the absurd to call into question the Victorian conventions that strait-jacketed their society. The elements of ambivalence and contradiction found in modern art call for new methods of analysis, intentionally withholding stale prejudices of order and disorder, so that we may find some historical significance therein, and thus issues of attitude, approach, and method must be foremost in our consideration of modern art movements, because only in the awareness of the attitude that we bring to our subject, can we be free of it.

Ambivalence is objectified in the Surrealism in a number of ways. In Surrealist art and thought, we find tensions between the conventional genres of art, and the unusual and extra-ordinary ways of perceiving developed by the movement. In the history of ideas informing its context, we find oppositions of rationalism and supernaturalism, academicism and primitivism, and the uniquely Surrealist tension of the "mundane" as opposed to "the marvelous".⁴³ Religious tensions form a substantial element in the development of Surrealism: in particular we find a persistent pagan/Christian opposition whose trajectory can be traced from its early

manifestations in the medieval period, to a fruition in the late nineteenth century in France, when it is latterly expressed as the tension between occultism and rationalism, and especially is manifested as an element in the ideological revolt of the subterranean bohemian milieu allied with the political left, against the dominant bourgeois society and its established conventions and values. That this reaction often took the form of a rejection of the still dominant Catholic tradition in France, the radical questioning of which has been called "la crise de la conscience Catholique", has been acknowledged by current scholarship in sociology and the history of ideas.⁴⁵ The Surrealists emerged from this subcultural tradition that traditionally had employed the elements of heterodoxy and the occult against the hegemony of reason, the bourgeois mentality, and conventional religion. In their cry to "lay waste to the ideas of family, country, religion",⁴⁶ the Surrealists intentionally exploited the power of these persistent religious tensions in order to provoke a new vision of reality: a **surreality**. Like the power of the curse, the blasphemy of the sacred employed by much Surrealist art in order to shock the viewer, ironically evokes a double reaction of fear and awe. Thus, iconoclasm and blasphemy embody a parallel potential to effect sacred power, through the radical **breaking** of religious and social taboos. The outrageous shock effect of Surrealist art startles the complacently religious, while at the same time revitalizing the radical dissident in his quest for a new vision.⁴⁷ Religious blasphemy and taboo therefore become powerful weapons wielded by the Surrealists against the established frame of reference.

5. The Central Question

Our central question is, then: is there not some positive new identity in modern art? Can we not discern therein some centripetal consistency rather than centrifugal fragmentation? The problem of meaning in modern art has commonly been perceived as a **change from** the forms of the past rather than a **change into** new forms. Questions have been asked from the perspective of the past, that is to say, retroactively, and the substance of modern art has been made subject to the historical present in predictive orderings of history. In particular, the apocalyptic and regressive dimension of much of the historiography of modern art has been the least acknowledged of these perspectives. Modern art has been interpreted in terms of negative meaning, and the fragmentation theory has served to dispense this half-truth. Putting the question in this new way allows for the possibility of some positive orientation, even if, paradoxically, ambiguity and ambivalence are the elements deliberately cultivated and expressed. The question can be asked in a number of different ways, but its primary purpose lies in the fact that it may afford an escape from the twin historicist values of innovation or degeneration, and simultaneously allows one to see dimensions of ambiguity, ambivalence, and contradiction in modern and in terms of positive rather than negative meaning.

Instead of attempting to order the impressions of Surrealist art into previously determined categories, let us allow the phenomena to speak for itself, to determine its own formulation and phenomenology. The historicist tendencies of the utopian or apocalyptic vision of modern art must be rejected as too confining to the as yet unrealized nexus of relations that we must pursue. Rather, it is as "connoisseurs of chaos" that we must

approach our subject. The elements of ambiguity and ambivalence that so often have been noted as the primary features of Surrealist art must not be perceived negatively as shadows, but positively as substance. Openness to the multiple dimensions of Surrealist art and thought requires, then, a taste for ambivalence and a willingness to tolerate ambiguities, so that the various motives impelling its creation may finally be made manifest.

THE SURREAL

AND

THE SACRED

Chapter II

THE SURREAL AND THE SACRED: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INQUIRY

A. THE NATURE OF THE SURREAL

From the perspective of Religious Studies, the most perplexing and important element of the art of Surrealism is its disturbing sense of premonition or impending doom -- a feeling of foreboding, predestiny, or a strange and uncanny immanence in the everyday event. The apprehension of the Surreal as the "extra-ordinary" element in ordinary experience resists the formal analysis and stylistic categories of much current art history and eludes as well a simple transference of themes from the arena of literary criticism onto the "mute materiality" of the Surrealist object.¹ By breaking conventional genres of subject and modes of depiction, Surrealist art insists upon its own self-defined genre. Yet from a philosophical perspective the movement often has been seen as an anachronistic form of Romanticism, the last gasp of Romantic irrationality, which moves against the currents of progressive abstraction in art and in thought. The difficulty of easily understanding Surrealist art is attested to by the current popular characterization of its unique emotional tone as the uncanny, the strange, or the weird; that which unexpectedly invades the realm of mundane experience. This feeling of an irrational fear and disturbing attraction invoked by Surrealist art has often been acknowledged by scholars, who usually classify it as gothic, thus emphasizing the element of dread, and by the general public, who, having accepted it as art, find its peculiar mental provocations perversely attractive, even emotionally

satisfying. But the uncanny and disconcerting phenomenon of the Surreal has yet to be examined as a dimension within the context of religious experience.²

1. The Surreal in Popular Culture

Our current understanding of the Surrealist movement has been coloured by the visual cliches of recent advertising, which employs Surrealism's disconcerting effects of shock and surprise to develop a seductive promotional style. Contemporary advertising has, in fact, claimed the emotional tone of the Surreal as its own, and has exploited the formal techniques of its art to compel its audience into the riveting magnetism of the material object -- the product -- and the magic of consumer activities. Formerly intended to jolt the viewer out of habitual patterns of thought, the values of shock and strangeness found in the juxtapositions of Surrealist art are now distorted into a successful commercial formula that excites a profound fascination with the consumer object. The translation of a Surreal "look" into a compelling special effect at the same time demonstrates the power of Surrealist art, even when most bowdlerized, to provoke the imagination with a singular, phenomenal object. The techniques of a surrealistic effect are well-known and well-worn. Thus it has become increasingly difficult to apprehend the movement's original impact and revolutionary intent. However much concealed by its later manifestations, in

its historical context Surrealism was a shockingly new development, both in the intellectual and artistic fields. Its direct expression in art was often upsetting or even insulting to those viewers who could not transcend preconceived notions of art, and particularly a rarefied aestheticism inherited from the Symbolist movement, in order to understand the movement's intrinsically spiritual impetus. In fact, André Breton, the self-appointed "Pope" of Surrealism and spokesman for the movement, decried the later popularization of Surrealist imagery as "applied phantasmagoria" or "bazaar Surrealism."³ Today, even the term Surreal has degenerated into common adjectival usage. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid the conventional interpretations and clichéd transformations of Surrealism in order to uncover the deeper meaning of the movement, its original character, and its place within modern culture.

2. The Problem of Descriptive Language and the Surreal

Compounding our increasingly myopic vision of the Surreal, so often misconstrued as a compelling special effect, is the problem of the poverty of language with which to describe, in precise terms, its emotional nature and quality. Just as the techniques of isolation, juxtaposition, and surprise have been adopted by commercial culture, so too the descriptive language of what may provisionally be called the "extra-ordinary" element in experience has been co-opted by the cult of experience as a commodity: the "religion by ticketron"⁴ of the last two decades, which vends the unique

and unusual experience. The Surrealist quest for the marvelous, and concurrent rejection of established and conventional values, is also paralleled in recent counter-cultural movements⁵, which have as combined objectives a spiritual quest and cultural dissent. The vocabulary adopted by such movements expresses a similar fascination with the strange, the weird, or the bizarre: in short, with the Surreal. The precise meaning of terms such as "strange" or "weird" simultaneously became overextended and obscured during their metamorphosis into all-encompassing cultural values. Hence, the present difficulty of verbally identifying and isolating the phenomenon of the Surreal is increased by the loss of a descriptive language with which it can be characterized. But, although overworked, words such as "weird" have not lost precise definition. In intentionally restoring them to exact usage, perhaps we may also discover a glimpse into the nature and meaning of the Surreal.

3. An Initial Definition of the Surreal: the element of the "weird"

An initial definition of the Surreal in art can be developed through such current popular notions of Surrealism as uncanny, strange, dream-like, or weird. The term "weird", so often casually applied to Surrealist art, upon closer scrutiny proves curiously and increasingly appropriate. Upon pursuing the etymology of the word, "weird", the Anglo-Saxon term wyrd emerges as a sense of "the miraculous or terrible

event which occurs by chance; destiny; fate; and ultimately death itself."⁶ As B.J. Timmer suggests in his definitive article, "Wyrd in Anglo-Saxon Prose and Poetry", wyrd is the vast controlling force of fate, destiny, and the pre-ordination of God which overtakes men's lives and which simultaneously determines the singular events, whether miraculous or grievous in nature, which shape their lot.⁷ In pre-Christian times wyrd was a proper name for the early mythological Germanic Goddesses of Fate or the three sisters, the Moirae, who were also fertility deities.⁸ Thus, the idea of wyrd implies the old Germanic belief in fate as the hostile power that governs men's lives. Originating in the Old Saxon wurd and the old High German wurt,⁹ the word wyrd is first recorded in Old English epics such as Beowulf, which spring from a tradition both pagan and Christian.¹⁰ Yet the Anglo-Saxon idea of the wyrd differs sharply from the classical Latin concept of fate (fatum) because the term wyrd is from the stem of weordan - "become", whereas fate is from fari, "speak".¹¹ Thus fate is "what has been spoken" by the personification of a superior power, rather than something which merely occurs, becomes, or is realized. This seemingly minor etymological difference proves remarkably important to an understanding of the present usage of "weird", for it lends to the idea of wyrd the sense of an event made real, actualized, or effected by a neutral power. It is "what comes to pass" and not "what has been spoken".

a) *The ambivalence of the wyrd:*

The term wyrd as it is recorded in Old English prose and poetry is, then, ambivalent. It signifies a miraculous or terrible event, chance, and hence that sense of destiny or purposeful coincidence that governs

men's lives. As the quality of miracle it is linked conceptually to wonder (wundor, wundorwyrd)¹² and on the other hand can apply to terrible, grievous events that occur through the unalterable course of time. This ambivalence of wyrd extends to the greatest degree when it signifies life as ordained by Providence, or antithetically refers to the destined end of all human life, death itself. On this point, Timmer points out, "from the general sense of lot may be traced the development of meaning represented by wyrd as the end of the whole world, or the end of a person's life = death."¹³ Thus the word wyrd suggests a special kind of event, "a miraculous, wondrous, event or a terrible, grievous event,"¹⁴ and its range of circumstance and manifestation extends from the occurrence of a miracle to the ultimate annihilation of the world itself. Its neutral power encompasses both poles of life and death.

The deeper meaning of the term weird as uncovered by its roots in the archaic wyrd resembles the apprehension of power experienced in the sacred event, which breaks through the simple realm of ordinary existence in miraculous or terrible manifestations. It evokes ambivalent feelings of fascination and dread, fear and attraction, transforming them into a sense of awe before the uncanny event, sublime vista or the power object or the fetish: that is, before the "weird".

The contemporary use of "weird" as a colloquial adjective synonymous with the Surreal still calls forth a sense of a peculiar and curious power that pushes an event out of the range of ordinary experience, whether it be an amazing coincidence, haunting recurrence of events or unusually heightened circumstance.

4. The Surreal and the Element of Fate

The weird or the uncanny as the quintessential quality of the Surreal is also acknowledged by other writers on Surrealism. Notably, Roger Shattuck's perceptive introduction to Maurice Nadeau's classic The History of Surrealism, isolates the phenomenon of fate as the salient characteristic of the Surreal.¹⁵ Shattuck believes that fate, which combines the arbitrariness of chance with the deliberation of destiny, was the magical force that attracted the Surrealists. Like the idea of wyrd, the concept of fate to which he refers combines two contradictory world-views, that of a pre-ordained sense of order or destiny or the disorder and senseless character of chance:

For a long time I have felt the need to distinguish two contrasting ways of grasping experience. On the one hand, a deep-seated continuity appears to link all things and all events and to lend them a significance that provokes our wonder....On the other hand, we frequently reach the point at which the routine, falsity, and injustice of life inflict on us a feeling of senselessness; things happen without any evident explanation beyond mechanical temporal sequence....In the first view, the world is filled and its parts held in place by connections....In the second view, nothing has structure or significance; the world barely holds it own against collapse.¹⁶

Shattuck defines these two attitudes towards experience firstly as "destiny: a sense of personal fulfilment (or failure) in an arena of events", and second as "chance: blind accident working as the minimal propulsive force between one instant and the next, but never bestowing meaning on happenings thus touched off."¹⁷ These apparently conflicting visions are united in the archaic sense of fate:

Too clean a distinction here unsettles us. I should contend that our current usage of the word **fate** (with its quirks, its ironies, and its justice) retains both these meanings. We usually leave the ambiguity undisturbed because we sense that it belongs.¹⁸

The Surrealist preoccupation with "objective chance"¹⁹ as a fundamental principle of life yields an implicit acknowledgement of fate as the active force that works through chance and transforms its "anomalous randomness" into meaningful coincidence. The incandescent moment of sudden and disturbing relationship, ignited by chance, provides the key to Surreality. The epiphany, the moment which expands to encompass multiple shades of meaning, intensifying and compressing time itself, became the focus of Surrealist thought. According to Shattuck, "like a secret opening in the fabric of ordinary experience....the Surrealists...dropped everything else and affirmed these moments as the only true reality, as expressive of both the randomness and hidden order that surrounds us."²⁰ The seemingly arbitrary working of chance gives way in Surrealist thought to a heightened appreciation of the wonder of co-incidence; its uncanny occurrences appeared to them pregnant with hidden meaning. If only the imagination could follow suit by mirroring the operation of chance in "pure psychic automatism" -- the automatic expression of thoughts and feelings without conscious deliberation or control, based in part on Freud's method of free association -- then the concealed meaning would be revealed in a new state of Surreality. "Imagination alone offers me some intimation of what can be,"

writes Breton in the first Manifesto of Surrealism (1924). "The imagination is perhaps on the point of reasserting itself, of reclaiming its rights....When all else fails, it then calls upon chance, a divinity even more obscure than the others to whom it ascribes all its aberrations."²¹ The bizarre and wondrous chance encounter, typified for the Surrealists by the famous metaphor of Isidore Ducasse (le Comte de Lautréamont): "He is as *handsome* as the fortuitous encounter on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella",²² became a leitmotif of Surrealist aspiration and desire, its fateful randomness understood as the opening to the Surreal.

5. The Surreal and the "Uncanny"

The word "uncanny", too, admits a similar conception of the Surreal as does the "weird", especially in the mutual contradictory elements bound together in the idea of fate or "the weird". Associated with a peculiar emotion of creeping dread and unsettling recognition, "the uncanny" arouses a sense of omen, premonition and foreboding that often arises from a remarkable coincidence or recurrence of events. The phenomenon of "the uncanny" signifies something that provokes uneasy tension, including the gloomy, ghastly, or haunted, or the secret and concealed.

a) Freud's analysis of the Uncanny.

In an article of 1919, titled "The 'Uncanny'", Sigmund Freud explored the nature of the uncanny emotion with regard to a "theory of feeling" which was uncharacteristic of his more prominent preoccupation with neurosis.²³ He suggests that "the uncanny belongs to all that is terrible - to all that arouses dread and creeping horror...it is equally certain, too, that the word is not always used in a clearly definable sense...yet it implies some intrinsic quality that justifies the use of a special name."²⁴ Freud's analysis of the uncanny as an intriguing psychological dimension of aesthetic experience is particularly pertinent to the present exploration of Surrealist art, which so often draws forth a sense of the uncanny in its depiction of mysterious events or paradoxical images.

Indeed, the Freudian influence on Surrealism is well-documented, if not, in fact, overemphasized. In 1921 André Breton, having cultivated an interest in psychiatry while a medical orderly in an army mental clinic in Nantes (1916),²⁵ interviewed Freud in Vienna. Breton's interest in psychology was particularly piqued by Jacques Vaché, a former patient in the hospital, who made a lasting impression with his deliberate changes of persona and costume and his obsession with rituals inspired with absurd humour.²⁶ Breton, however, seems to have made a poor impression on Freud, who probably found Breton's intense absorption in the techniques of the new science too self-serving and nebulous to be flattered. Freud never wrote about or professed an interest in the Surrealists; their intentionally irrational antics irritated and perplexed him. But it is curious to note

that the 1919 publication of "The 'Uncanny'" in Freud's journal Imago²⁷ coincided with the establishment of the Surrealist movement in Paris and the first publication of its magazine, Litterature; the 1925 English translation of "The 'Uncanny'" appeared one year after the publication of the first Manifesto of Surrealism in 1924 -- and the thrust of inquiry of both was a quest for the ineffable and the uncanny. There is, in fact, a good reason for this common quest. Freud was as much a part of the Occult Revival of the late nineteenth century as he was against it, with his own brand of psychological empiricism. Always fascinated by parapsychological phenomena such as prophecy, telepathy, and dreams, Freud's writings of the 1920's reveal a profound attraction for the occult, especially apparent in the paper "Psychoanalysis and Telepathy" of 1921.²⁸ The close relation of psychological research to the occult again is illustrated by the early German name for parapsychological research: wissenschaftliche Okkultisten, the domain of forbidden, rejected knowledge.²⁹

Freud states that "the uncanny is that class of the terrifying which leads us back to something long known to us, once very familiar."³⁰ Citing an extensive review of comparative semantics,³¹ he points out that in Arabic and Hebrew the uncanny means the "daemonic", that which is impelled by an animistic or supernatural spirit, morally neutral and unpredictable in deed. How this transformation of the familiar into the uncanny and frightening occurs is illuminated by the following remarks:

The uncanny in German is the word unheimlich, the opposite of heimlich, heimisch, meaning 'familiar', 'native', 'belonging to the home', and we are tempted to conclude that what is 'uncanny' is frightening precisely because it is not known and familiar.... However, not everything which is new and unfamiliar is uncanny. Something has to be added to what is novel and unfamiliar to make it uncanny.³²

A further investigation of the term heimlich, which means familiar, intimate native or belonging to the home, reveals a second, antithetical aspect of its meaning:

II. Concealed, kept from sight so that others do not get to know about it; withheld from others.
geheim - secret, concealed;
 also Heimlichkeit for Geheimnis - secret;
 to behave heimlich, as though there were something to conceal;
heimlich love - love affair; sin;
heimlich places - which good manners oblige us to conceal;
 private parts
 the heimlich art - magic
 a holy heimlich effect;³³

Thus, heimlich can also be defined as a kind of knowledge that is both secret and familiar, vernacular and occult. The contrary meaning that emerges refers to mystical, occult knowledge: a heimlich meaning (mysticus, divinus, occultus, figuratus).³⁴

b) the occult and the uncanny

In this connection, the forbidden knowledge of magic, often known as the "Left Hand Path,"³⁵ is linked to the idea of the uncanny through its French and Portuguese cognates, sinestre, siniestro, meaning the sinister, the uncanny, the other: in effect, the left and not the right.³⁶ The coloration

of the term "sinister" with a magical aura perhaps may stem from the name of one Ludovicus Maria Sinistrari, (1622-1701) a Franciscan theologian and expert on demons, whose famous treatise on demonism, Demoniality (De Daemonialitate)³⁷ acquired some fame in occult circles.

This identification of the uncanny with the occult is further illustrated by the use of geheim ("secret," from heimlich, "familiar") in the 16th century alchemical treatise, Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzen,³⁸ which was revived by the late nineteenth century Rosicrucian occultists. To gain such "secret" knowledge would allow one to acquire magical powers, with universal potency. "Knowledge of the invisible is power to transform the visible. It is awesome, fascinating, dangerous knowledge."³⁹

In a different sense, heimlich can mean "withdrawn from knowledge, unconscious, that which is obscure or inaccessible to knowledge."⁴⁰ Thus by extension, heimlich comes to mean its opposite, unheimlich: uncanny, strange, eerie, ghastly, or unfamiliar. Freud explains this duality of meaning:

Among its different shades of meaning the word heimlich (familiar) exhibits one which is identical with its opposite, unheimlich (uncanny). What is heimlich thus comes to be unheimlich. The word heimlich is not unambiguous but belongs to two sets of ideas, which, without being contradictory, are yet very different: on the one hand, it means that which is familiar and congenial, on the other, that which is concealed and kept out of sight.⁴¹

Out of the secrecy and concealment that surrounds the uncanny is drawn another curious kind of knowledge, that is, sexual knowledge. The ambivalent attitude towards sexuality expressed in such clichés as "heimlich places in the human body (that is, private parts); heimlich love, love affair, sin",⁴² combines intimacy with concealment. In this sense, then, the uncanny occurs where the familiar and intimate becomes secret and concealed. René Magritte's astonishing The Rape of 1934 expresses precisely (and somewhat raunchily) the ambivalence of sexual attraction, where the familiar face is raped by the artist's secret desire (figure 1). Indeed, the Surrealist predilection for the mysterious **valise**, a familiar object which conceals things of an intimate nature, illustrates this notion of the uncanny. The Surreal valise, like Marcel Duchamp's Green Box for example, which contains the plans for The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even, 1915-23, participates in the uncertainty of the uncanny; filled with unseen and perhaps indescribable objects, it precipitates the uncanny play between familiarity and concealment (Figure 2). And The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even itself conceals desire in Duchamp's adolescent fantasy about the mechanization of sex as the "internal combustion engine", the bachelors as "malic molds", in a puerile yet subversive vision that has often been viewed with a misplaced high seriousness by the later avant-garde.

Figure 1. René Magritte. 1934.

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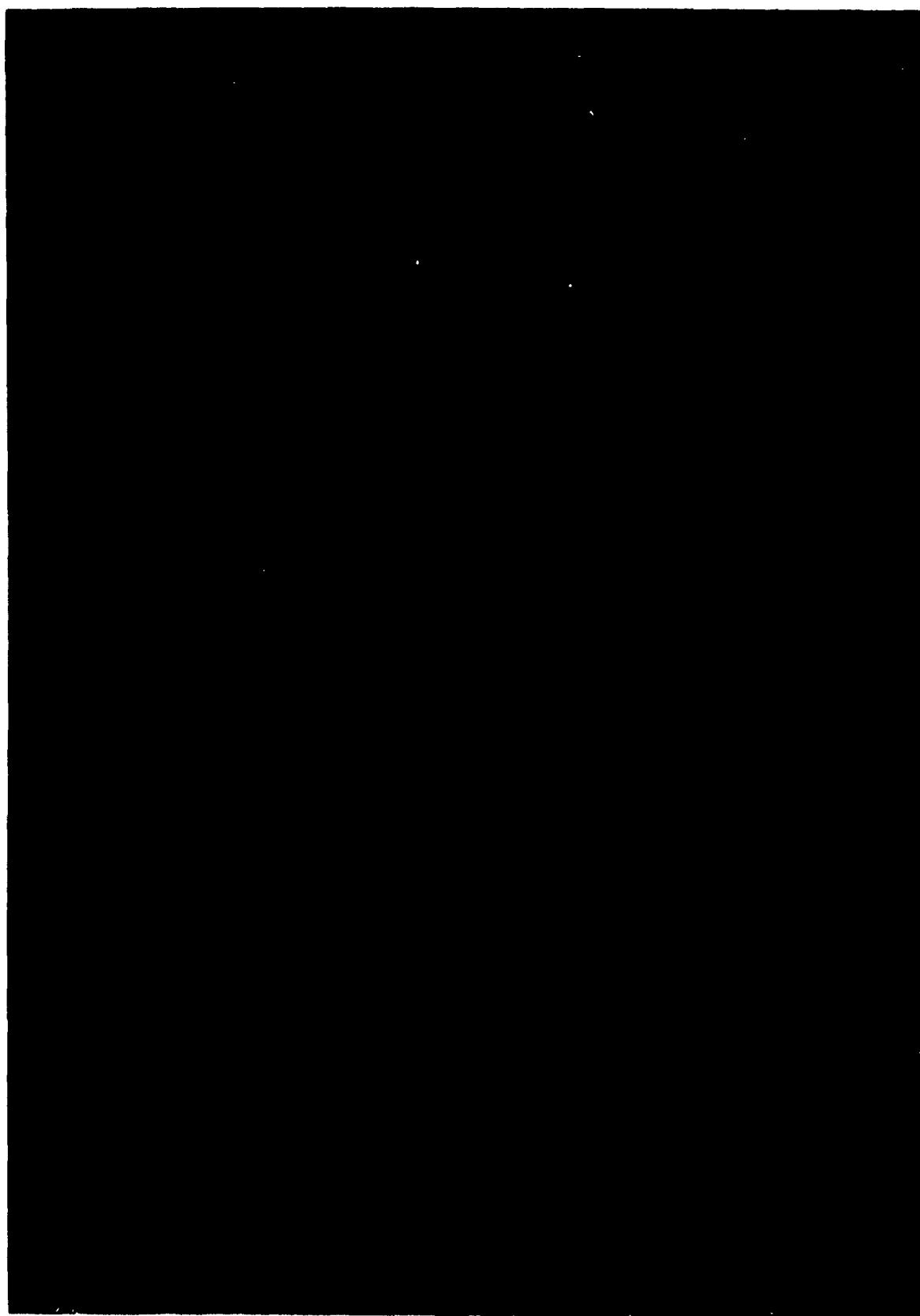


Figure 2. Marcel Duchamp. Green Box 1915-23.

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Marcel Duchamp. The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even. 1915-23. (detail) below.



c) *The ambivalence of the uncanny*

The meaning of the uncanny is uncovered in the recognition of its dual nature as familiar and concealed. Tracing this polarity of meanings, Freud finds that Schelling's definition of the uncanny most appropriately expresses the concept's inherent contradictions: "The Unheimlich is the name for everything that ought to have remained hidden and secret and has become visible."⁴³ Thus, the basic ambivalence that appears in the idea of the heimlich is finally named in the unheimlich, the uncanny: "Heimlich is a word the meaning of which develops towards an ambivalence until it finally coincides with its opposite, unheimlich."⁴⁴

According to Freud, several events can provoke the ambivalence of the uncanny. The uncanny emotion is aroused by a confusion between the animate and inanimate, which is particularly provoked by dolls and mannequins that are still, yet seem unnaturally alive, filled with human presence. This phenomenon is surprisingly pertinent to an understanding of Surrealism. The Surrealist preoccupation with dolls and mannequins is well known: they often appear as Surrealist objects, transformed through some radical or shocking apparel, or even a realignment of their limbs. The former is best illustrated by the 1938 International Exhibition of Surrealism in Paris. Included the exhibition were: 1) an entourage of outrageously outfitted mannequins which greeted the viewers (figure 3); 2) a bird-cage or flower-headed woman (figure 4); 3) Dalí's Rainy Taxi dripping rain from the inside and filled with a mannequin and live snails (Figure 5).

Figure 3. International Exhibition of Surrealism. Paris, 1938.

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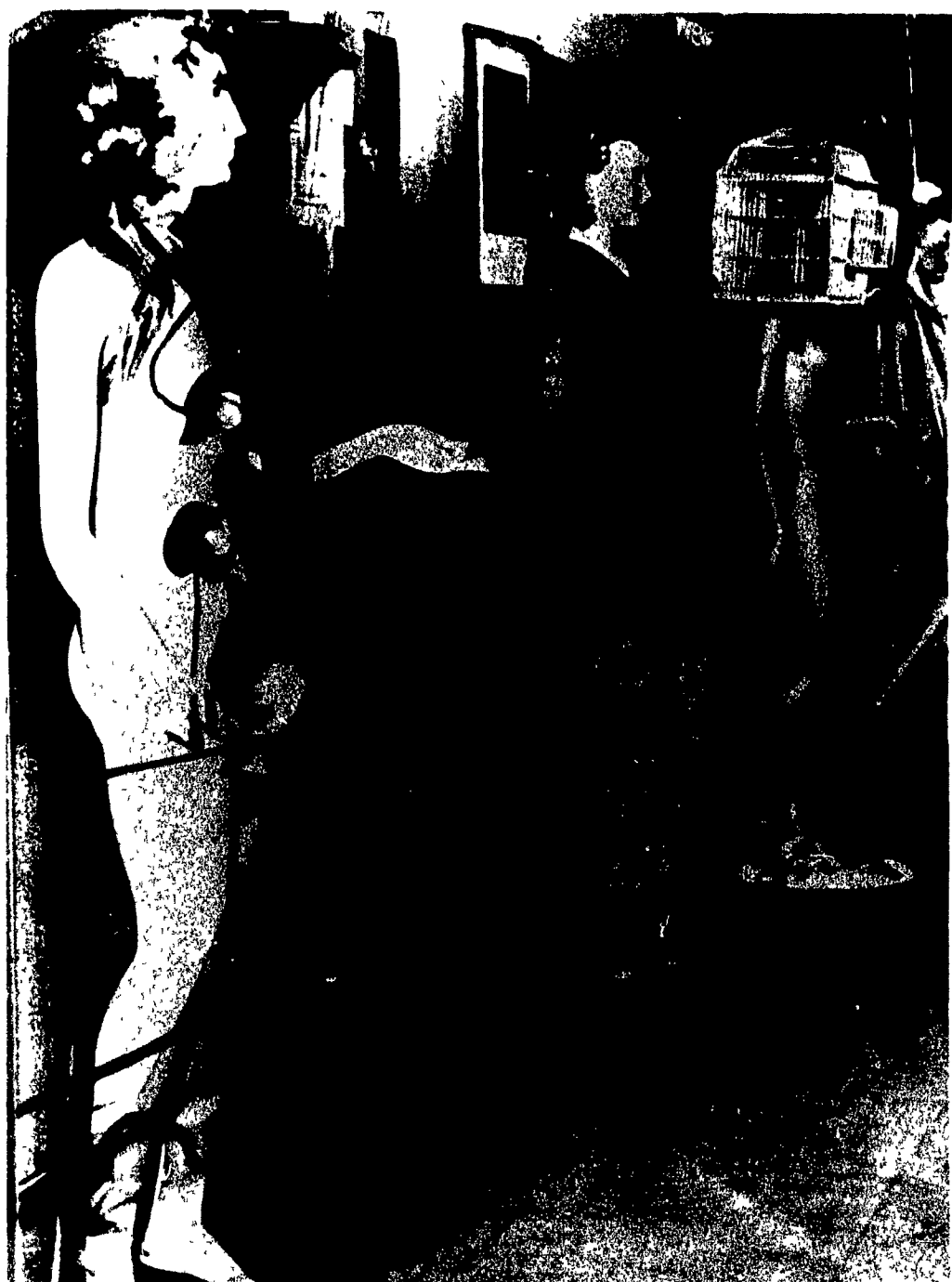


Figure 4. International Exhibition of Surrealism. Paris, 1938.

André Masson. Bird-cage headed mannequin. (right)
Flower-headed woman. (no attribution). (left)



Figure 5. Salvador Dalí. Rainy Taxi, 1938.

International Exhibition of Surrealism, Paris, 1938.

Dalí's Rainy Taxi, dripping rain from the inside and filled with a mannequin and live snails.



The latter was exemplified by Hans Bellmer's horrific rearrangement of doll parts, La Poupée (figure 6) or his menacing and perverse view of woman, The Machine-Gunneress of 1937 (figure 7).

The unusual attraction of the doll and mannequin is only partially due to the "intellectual uncertainty"⁴⁵ that allows one to see something as both alive and dead, animate and still. As Freud suggests, however, the idea of intellectual uncertainty cannot explain the unusual miasma that surrounds the uncanny with ambivalent presence. This presence is immediately felt in such peculiar Surrealist objects as Kurt Seligmann's Ultrafurniture of 1938, a repetitious play on the act of sitting that employs a type of sympathetic magic, the part suggesting the whole in a sophisticated psychological pun; or in the pseudo-horrific Grammophone Sculpture 1938, the mannequin swallowed whole and transformed by the machine (figure 8; figure 9). The Surrealist preoccupation with dolls and mannequins may, in fact, stem from the idea of the **double**, the projection of one's self into an identical prototype, a twin over which one has no control. With the double, an estrangement and alienation occurs in which even the most basic familiarity with one's face and body is lost.⁴⁶ Thus in Freud's analysis the basic dynamic of the uncanny is the projection of one's sense of self into any possible figure of reality. The anthropomorphic co-mingling of the figure and the still life in many Surrealist objects delineates an ambivalence of meaning that provokes a sense of the uncanny. This fusion of the human and the inanimate manifests the basic principle of the uncanny as a type of psychological projection almost identical to the animistic vision of archaic religions (figure 10). The doll

Figure 6. Hans Bellmer. La Poupée. 1936. (above)

The realignment of doll or mannequin limbs, best exemplified by Hans Bellmer's horrific rearrangement of doll parts, La Poupée or his menacing and perverse view of woman, The Machine Gunneress.

Figure 7. Hans Bellmer. The Machine Gunneress. 1937. (below)



Figure 8. Kurt Seligmann. Ultrafurniture. 1938. (above)

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Figure 9. Oscar Dominguez. Grammophone Sculpture. 1938. (below)



that sees, the severed hand that moves, and the house preternaturally filled with ghastly presence -- all indicate a primary mental operation, which Freud calls "repetition-compulsion"⁴⁷ that is linked to animism and the perception of mana, a magical power that informs all aspects of the natural world. Even the apparently gothic Caught Hand 1932, by Alberto Giacometti evokes the chilling power of the uncanny, as does his sinister The Palace at 4 A.M. 1932-33, both of which were created during his Surrealist period (figure 11; figure 12).

Freud's discovery of the ambivalence inherent in the phenomenon of the uncanny gives surprising insight into the shape of the Surreal domain. For what is the uncanny but the attempt to resolve two previously contradictory states, the ordinary and the extraordinary, the familiar and the unfamiliar, into a new reality? Breton expresses an identical desire in the search for the Surreal: "I believe in the future resolution of these two states, dream and reality, which are seemingly so contradictory, into a kind of absolute reality, a **Surreality**." ⁴⁸ The uncanny effect is, in Freud's analysis, produced by effacing the distinction between the imagination and reality. And what then is the profound ambivalence of the uncanny but this very attempt to resolve the antithesis of the familiar and the unfamiliar, and imaginatively to reform and reorder the world with the new meaning of the Surreal?

The profound ambivalence of this concept, like ancient riddles both humorous and mysterious, attempts to create a new understanding of the ordinary as penetrated through and through with the extraordinary. The foreboding with which the experience of the uncanny is characterized

Figure 10. Left: Salvador Dali. The Venus de Milo of the Drawers.
1936.

Center: René Magritte. Bottle. 1959.

Right: Lawrence Vail. Bottle. 1944.

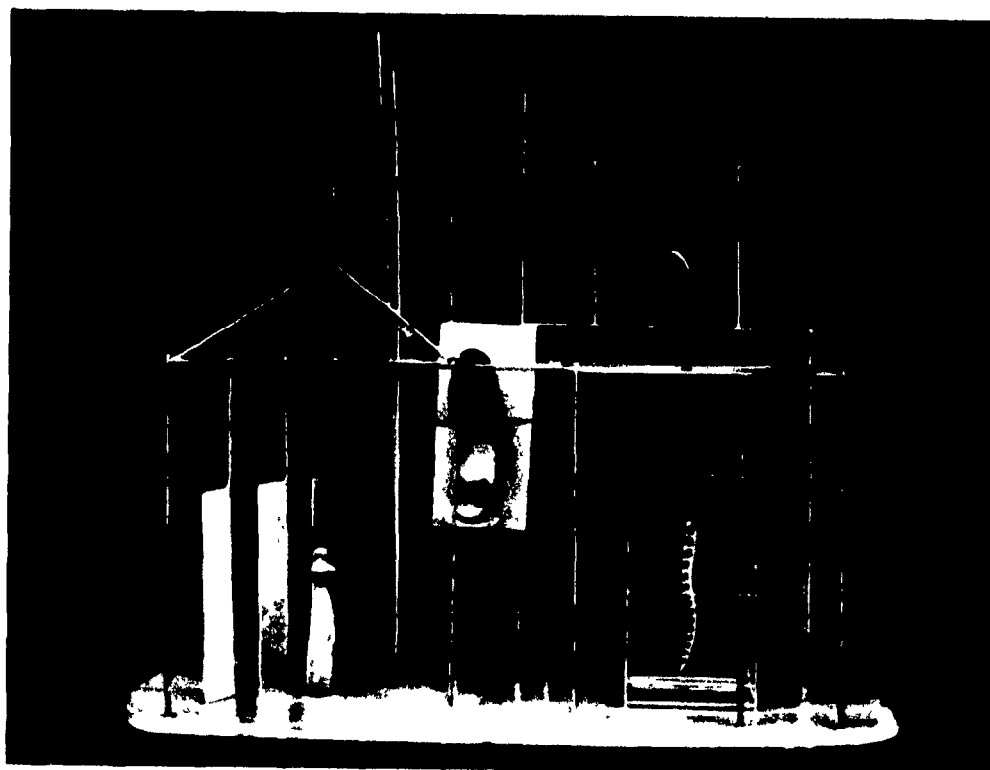
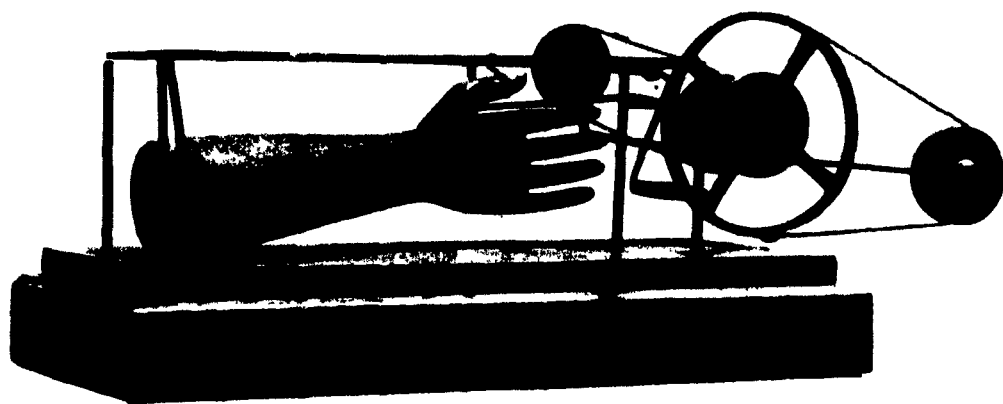
The anthropomorphic co-mingling of the figure and the still life in many Surrealist objects delineates an ambivalence of meaning that provokes a sense of the uncanny. This fusion of the human and the inanimate manifests a basic principle of the uncanny as a projection of one's sense of self into any possible figure of reality: a type of psychological projection almost identical to the animistic vision of archaic religions.



Figure 11. Alberto Giacometti. Caught Hand. 1932. (above)

The doll which sees, the severed hand which moves, and the house preternaturally filled with ghastly presence -- all indicate a primary mental operation which Freud calls "repetition-compulsion" that is linked to animism and the perception of mana, a magical power that informs all aspects of the natural world. Even the apparently gothic Caught hand 1932, by Alberto Giacometti, evokes the chilling power of the uncanny, as does his sinister The Palace at 4. A.M. 1932-33, both of which were created during his Surrealist period.

Figure 12. Alberto Giacometti. The Palace at 4 A.M. 1932-33. (below)



conversely can emerge as humour or the absurd. In the absurd ironies of coincidence, chance, or recurrence, the colloquial **simple twist of fate** opens a reality in which the awful and the absurd become complementary. The notorious Alfred Jarry, author of *Ubu Roi* and the inventor of *Umour*, which was a devastatingly morbid sense of the absurd, writes, "Laughter is born out of the discovery of the contradictory."⁴⁹ Systematized in his "Pataphysics" (The science of the realm beyond metaphysics) his sense of the absurd "became a method of humour based on logic perpetually reversing itself."⁵⁰ Full contradiction, with its antithetical reversals of meaning, points up the absurdity of mechanistic order, **"the lifelessness in life"**⁵¹ -- and therefore uses the absurd to arouse fresh perceptions of the world. Similarly, the Surrealists employed the element of the absurd, inherited from Jarry and the early French avant-garde, to achieve a disturbing recognition of the contradictions of existence. Often misrepresented as meaningless disorder or as the result of an "automatism" derived from Freud, the paradoxes of Surrealist art are intended instead to provoke new cognitive resolutions that allow one simultaneously to entertain antithetical sentiments and sensations. Thus the logical purpose of the ambivalence of the uncanny can be seen on one level as the principle of the absurd.

Surrealism especially claims and exploits the absurd to break conventional modes of thinking and feeling. Seen in this way, the uncanny element in Surrealist art points up **the life in lifelessness**. The strangely menacing object -- the secretive concealing suitcase; the mannequin, removed from familiar context and more poignantly human thereby -- all are an attempt to change our experience of the ordinary universe. Even the anthropomorphic machine art of Picabia and Duchamp presents an attempt to humanize, and therefore contradict, the mechanistic view of life. The heightened awareness of the Surreal holds together the mundane and the extraordinary: the uncanny, the weird, and the Surreal. In the Surreal domain, fundamental distinctions no longer apply. The first Manifesto of Surrealism concludes: "It is living and ceasing to live that are imaginary solutions. Existence is elsewhere."⁵²

B. THE SURREAL AND THE SACRED

An initial definition of the Surreal, a concept and quality so elusive that it must be traced through its component elements, can be developed through current popular notions of Surrealism as the weird, the uncanny, or fate. In the previous discussion we found that cognate terms for the Surreal, such as the weird, contain a fundamental antithesis in the sense of "a miraculous or terrible event which occurs by chance, destiny or fate."⁵³ The idea of the Surreal is even further amplified and defined by the ambivalence of the sacred, which combines irrational feelings of fear and attraction and transforms them into a sense of awe before the power object, apparition, or the uncanny event. In this section we shall explore the deeper meaning of the Surreal, which must be connected with the sense of power felt in the sacred event.

The special element of ambivalence in the phenomena of **sacred power** proves central to our understanding of the religious dimension of Surrealism. The essentially ambivalent nature of the Surreal, as demonstrated through its parallel manifestations in the uncanny and the weird, expresses a highly charged tension, with exceptional and unusual power. The extraordinary tension of the Surreal combines the extreme contradictions of fear and longing, chance and destiny, the ordinary and the occult, yet always holds them in opposition. This contradiction is drawn taut to provide a dynamic confusion of meanings: "If there is contradiction, it must imply tension; the more prominent the contradiction, the greater the tension; in some way other than by the contradiction, the tension must be conveyed and must be sustained."⁵⁴

When abstracted from the context of the Surrealist movement, the idea of the Surreal indicates the extraordinary dimension within ordinary experience, a contradiction that stands out as mysterious, strange, or weird. At its core stands a fundamental paradox which compels some to dismiss it as non-sense, seeing only its non-logical face; and others to define it anachronistically through previously existing categories such as "Romanticism" or "Hegelian dialectic", and thereby rationalize it while misplacing it in the past. However, the striking characteristic common to all Surrealist art and thought is its fascination with the irrational as a means to provoke a sense of "Surreality".

1. The Irrational and the Surreal

The irrational aspect of the Surreal demands renewed consideration, for it appears as distinctly and qualitatively different from the thunderous roll of Romantic ecstasy, whether conceived of in the muscular mysticism of Blake or in the energized, airy spaces of Turner's water-world. For what is the irrational in the Surreal but the antithetical meanings that appear in the uncanny, the weird, and the extraordinary? The Surrealist movement was predicated on the belief in the power of the irrational and unconscious mind, which, if left unfettered by conscious thought, would provide the avenue to "the marvelous."⁵⁵ The Surrealist object in particular (as yet only briefly discussed as the altered object, the mannequin, or the valise), elicits an irrational fear and attraction

out of proportion to its formerly functional origin. The irrational factor in the Surreal has at its source a fundamental principle of "full contradiction"⁵⁶ or antithetical meaning, which runs through the ordinary and transforms it into the exceptional and extraordinary -- but this conflict is always held in tandem so that we see, feel, and understand it as a unit.

Thus, to our initial definition of the Surreal as the extraordinary within ordinary experience, as that which stands out as uncanny, fateful, or weird, we can add the further element of the irrational as a first-order structure pervading the Surrealist movement. But we must also look behind these terms to see through to the phenomenon of the Surreal itself, and ask why it intentionally evokes an irrational response.

2. The Holy and the Irrational

A simple shift in our frame of reference from the phenomenological to the historical proves illuminating on this point. The nonrational, so often negatively viewed by Western philosophical positivism except for its expression in humour, is a central characteristic of religious emotion. It has been explored by Rudolf Otto, a theologian and pioneer in the phenomenology of religion, who defines the non-rational in the sacred as **the numinous** ⁵⁷ or the holy. In The Idea of the Holy (Das Heilige) of 1917, Otto explored the nonrational element in the sacred and pointed out its ambivalent nature. The publication of The Idea of The Holy in 1917, and its English translation of 1923, once again coincided with the inception

of the Surrealist movement in Paris, as did the occult writings of Freud.⁵⁸ The book itself enjoyed an immediate and lasting success that attested to the current popular fascination with the esoteric, the irrational, and especially, the mystical. Certainly, both Otto and Freud were familiar with the work of the psychologist, Wilhelm Wundt⁵⁹ on the origins of religion, as he is cited both in Freud's Totem und Tabu (1913), and Otto's Das Heilige (1917).

Otto himself refers to the irrational tendencies of his time in the foreward to the English edition of The Idea of the Holy of 1923:

In this book I have ventured to write of that which may be called non-rational or 'supra-rational' in the depths of the divine nature. I do not thereby want to promote in any way the tendency of our time towards an extravagant and fantastic 'irrationalism', but rather to join issue with it in its morbid form...This book, recognizing the profound import of the non-rational for metaphysic, makes a serious attempt to analyse all the more exactly the **feeling** which remains where the **concept** fails.⁶⁰

No doubt Otto sensed the soundings of a growing political irrationalism in Hitlerian National Socialism, with its call to the pagan roots of German culture in Volkisch ideology.⁶¹ That The Idea of the Holy grew almost excessively popular during the interwar period,⁶² is a testimony of itself to the accelerating and obsessive interest in irrational and occult phenomena. Otto was, nonetheless, equally a man of his time, and his description of the "non-rational factor in the divine" may be newly seen,

even at the risk of flattening its meaning, as a residue of the Occult Revival and esoteric interests of the early Modern period.⁶³ This compulsive fascination with the esoteric was expressed in the dominant tendency among serious scholars as well as the general populace to pursue the elusive matrix and origins of human consciousness.

3. The Holy and the Surreal

In defining the non-rational element of the holy as a "numinous power" (from the Latin Numen, or Divine Presence), Otto suggests that the origins of religious consciousness lie in a peculiar emotion likened to the uncanny, which he calls mysterium tremendum et fascinans. He explains that "conceptually, mysterium denotes merely that which is hidden and esoteric, that which is beyond conception or understanding, extraordinary and unfamiliar"⁶⁴ -- and from this sense of secrecy, we may also glimpse its relationship to the occult. According to Otto, the mysterium tremendum et fascinans is the essence and origin of the religious impulse:

For the special numinous quality, 'religious dread' or 'awe' would perhaps be a better designation. Its antecedent stage is 'daemonic dread', (cf. the horror of Pan) with its queer perversion, a sort of abortive offshoot, the 'dread of ghosts'. It first begins to stir in the feeling of 'something uncanny', 'eerie', or 'weird'. It is this feeling which, emerging in the mind of primeval man, forms the starting point for the entire religious development in history. 'Daemons' and 'gods' alike spring from this root, and all the products of 'mythological apperception; or 'fantasy' are nothing but different modes in which it has been objectified.⁶⁵

The nature of "the holy" is central to our understanding of Surrealism, for within the holy we may discern the very ambivalence which characterizes the weird, the uncanny, and ultimately, the Surreal. The fundamentally dual nature of the holy, defined by Otto as both daemonic and divine, daunting yet fascinating, holds the key to the ambivalent resonances of the Surreal and throws into sharp illumination its precarious identity and elusive character. For the Surreal may be understood as "a quality of existence that distinguishes the unusual and extraordinary from the usual and ordinary,"⁶⁶ and in this particular sense it expresses a sacred power. The "exceptional" is what is sacred: "a category of valuation which has no place in the everyday natural world of ordinary experience."⁶⁷ The sacred is marked as different. Standing apart from everyday life, it indicates a reality that can be known only at the boundaries of the profane, for that is where the sacred makes itself known to us. "The 'sacred' is what has been placed within boundaries -- the exceptional (Latin-sanctus). Its powerfulness creates for it a place of its own."⁶⁸

The taboo or fetish object, the relic, and also that which only seems non-religious, including such related phenomena as the Romantic category of the sublime as well as the modern "peak experience", (felt in some unusual quirk of the atmosphere, or intensification of mood)-- all can provoke a sense of the sacred. In Otto's words:

Whatever has loomed upon the world of ordinary concerns as something terrifying and baffling to the intellect; whatever among natural occurrences or events in the human, animal, or vegetable kingdoms has set him astare in wonder and astonishment -- such things have ever aroused in man and become endued with the 'daemonic dread' and 'numinous feeling' so as to become 'portents', 'prodigies', and 'marvels'.⁶⁹

Similarly, Breton believes that "The marvelous is always beautiful, anything marvelous is beautiful, in fact only the marvelous is beautiful."⁷⁰ A keynote in Surrealist thought, the idea of **the marvelous**, points to the Surrealist ability to change perception, and to find the marvelous in the chance encounters of everyday life.

The perception of the unusual and magical quality that can arise from everyday life is implicitly recognized in modern culture, concealed in popular language, and ironically held up as an ideal by the banalities of advertising which promise an escape from ennui, uniformity, and discontent. The intrinsic relationship of such exceptional experiences to the religious sphere seldom is acknowledged, because the distinction between the secular and the sacred at this point becomes blurred. Experiences of a heightened sense of time or mood (the Romantic epiphany) vague premonitions or strong presentiments, are believed accessible to many in modern society, but these occurrences are better understood when placed beyond the compass of the profane. The concept of the ambivalence of sacred power, therefore, is essential for any conception of the religious emotion, a curious impulse

which at its inception impels so many dimensions of human life. And if we are to understand the religious emotion as a living thing, then we must acknowledge its potential for new transformations and developments in modern life. The continual effervescence of the religious imagination in modern art and culture immediately becomes apparent when conventional demarcations of "religious" or "non-religious" (whether traditional or sectarian) become background to the locus of religious meaning that we pursue -- even as it unfolds in the Surreal. Then secular culture shows inherent similarities to sacred manifestations, reiterated in the continuing transformations of Biblical, archaic, and occult elements.

4. The Ambivalence of the Sacred:

The nexus linking all these phenomena is the ambivalence of the weird, the irrational, the extraordinary, and hence, the sacred. This network of experience contains an irrational aspect which cannot be explained either in logical or conceptual terms, but which stems from a special emotional response which we must distinguish and call "the numinous" or "the sacred".

The idea of the sacred conceptually can be separated into two responses -- attraction and repulsion; terror and wonder, the daunting and the comforting -- yet which in spite of their contrary impulses, are always part of a central, cohesive whole. The sacred is that which "breaks

through" the world of ordinary experience, and therefore it must manifest itself finitely to be known. This central paradox establishes its essential identity as both finite and infinite. Otto therefore suggests that the holy is fundamentally dual in nature, composed of the quality of "daunting awefulness and majesty," and at the same time uniquely attractive and fascinating:

These two qualities...combine in a strange harmony of contrasts: mysterium and fascinans...and the resultant dual character of the numinous consciousness, to which the entire religious development bears witness at any rate from the level of the 'daemonic dread' onwards, is at once the strangest and most noteworthy phenomenon in the whole history of religions.⁷¹

This antithesis of emotions is further focused through the archaic phenomenon of taboo. In Totem und Tabu (1913) Freud observed that, "The meaning of taboo diverges into two contrary directions. To us it means on the one hand, 'sacred', 'consecrated', and on the other 'uncanny; dangerous, forbidden, unclean.'⁷² According to Freud, the ancient Roman sacer (sacred) meant the same as the Polynesian taboo, the converse of which is noa, meaning "common" or "generally accessible".⁷³ For him taboo is a magical power, which is transmitted like electricity from persons to objects, and similarly it contains both positive and negative charges.

Thus the sacred is what is set apart: **sanctus**. Boundaries are required to mark this transition from the sacred to the profane in order to

protect what is "forbidden" with taboos against forms of contact with sexuality, property, and death. At the boundary, an ambivalent domain is created; it is here that both realms meet and co-exist. The ambivalence of the sacred extends through the perceptual response to a taboo object, to the direct awareness of the numinous emotion itself. Mircea Eliade has written:

This ambivalence of the sacred is not only in the psychological order (in that it attracts or repels), but also in the order of values; the sacred is at once "sacred" and "defiled", sacer can mean at the same time accursed and holy....This same double meaning exists with hagios, which can express at once the notion "pure" and the notion "polluted".⁷⁴

The principle of contradiction is especially apparent in Surrealism. It strives to attain a peculiar mental vantage point at the boundary of consciousness, where all contradictions cease to exist:

Everything tends to make us believe that there exists a certain point of the mind at which life and death, the real and the imagined, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, high and low, cease to be perceived as contradictions. Now search as one may one will never find any other motivating force in the activities of the Surrealist than the hope of finding and fixing this point. From this it becomes obvious how absurd it would be to define Surrealism solely as constructive or destructive: the point to which we are referring a fortiori, that point where construction and destruction can no longer be brandished one against the other.⁷⁵

Manifesto of Surrealism, 1930.

This fixed point is the imagination, the telescope through which ones looks in one direction to imagine infinity, and in the other, to recognize the finite. It is the "terra intermedia" of dream and myth. And it is the imagination which symbolically transforms the mundane into the Surreal.

Breton himself recognizes the necessity of contradiction and paradox to the activity of Surrealism. "The greatest common virtue of Surrealist images," he writes, is the manner in which they utilize contradiction to achieve a sense of the Surreal. He describes this virtue as a "seeming contradiction" because of the non-rational methods that it employs:

...because it carries an immense amount of seeming contradiction, or because one of its terms is strangely concealed, or because it is of a hallucinatory kind, or because it very naturally gives to the abstract the mask of the concrete or the opposite, or because it implies the negation of some elementary physical property, or because it provokes laughter.⁷⁶

Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924.

The Surreal participates in the character of the sacred, because it too is rooted in a fundamental antithesis, drawn through the arbitrariness of chance, to the absurd, which provokes laughter in recognizing and creating a purposeful destiny.

Yet Surrealism cannot be defined as religious per se, for it proclaims its freedom from religious forms, insisting on an ever-reflective response to experience. It rejects identification as a philosophy or a religion or an art and aims instead for an annihilation of false distinctions in the moment when the imagination transforms reality:

Surrealism is not interested in giving very serious consideration to anything that happens outside of itself, under the guise of art, or even anti-art, of philosophy or anti-philosophy - in short, of anything not aimed at the annihilation of the being into a diamond, all blind and interior, which is no more the soul of ice than that of fire.⁷⁷

Manifesto of Surrealism, 1930

This moment, this epiphany of expanded time, is available only from the unique vantage point of the Surreal. Its special matrix, located in the imagination, "points to the presence of a new reality, which seeks to make its way into the reality frozen by our conventions, to enter into harmony with it."⁷⁸ The imagination has the potential to reveal the elusive meaning of the Surreal. The imagination is placed at the **threshold:**

The threshold that separates two spaces also indicates the distance between two modes of being, the profane and the religious. The threshold is the limit, the boundary, the frontier that distinguishes and opposes two worlds, and at the same time the paradoxical place where those worlds communicate, where passage from the profane to sacred world becomes possible.⁷⁹

The Surreal occupies its own special place at the threshold of religion.

But from whence does this religious dimension come? What in the Surreal indicates clearly the profound religious meaning which it so urgently seeks? To this, we must respond, "the supernatural," which is the other name for "the surreal."

C. THE SURREAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL

1. The Element of the Supernatural:

The Surreal is the supernatural: this is its other name. This concept, and not the work of a single individual, whether it be that of Freud, Breton, or De Chirico, is grandfather to the history of the Surrealist movement, and it is with "supernatural lenses" that we must see through to the world of the Surreal. Within the supernatural, too, the work of Freud must be subsumed, even if he is cited often in the Manifestoes and remains dominant in all "psychological" explanations of Surrealist motives and expressions -- for in concerning himself with the subconscious, with all that cannot be understood in human behaviour by rational means, Freud, in his consideration of the psychology of dreams and psychic phenomena, was equally compelled by the power of the irrational.

Contrary to popular belief, the word surréalisme did not make its first appearance in print with Guillaume Apollinaire's play Les Mamelles de Tirésias (subtitled drame surréaliste) in June 1917, but rather, earlier in May of that year as part of Apollinaire's programme notes to the avant-garde ballet, Parade.⁷⁹ Parade was directed by Diaghilev, written by Jean Cocteau, with music by Erik Satie, and with set and stage design by Picasso. Apollinaire saw in this collaboration the spirit of a new art, to which he gave initial definition as "sur-réalisme": "alliance de la peinture

et de la danse, de la plastique et de la musique", which would produce "une sorte de sur-réalisme."⁸⁰ The mutual collaboration of the arts in Parade discloses the emergence of a general tendency, merely named by Appollinaire in his role as critic and erstwhile creator of modernism. It proved a fresh alternative to his use of supernaturalisme or orphisme:

Orphisme ou supernaturalisme, c'est-à-dire un art qui n'est pas le naturalisme photographique uniquement, et qui cependant soit la nature, même ce qu'on en voit et ce qu'elle contient, cette nature intérieure aux merveilles insoupçonnées, imponderables, impitoyables et joyeuses.⁸¹

The association of seminal modernists such as Picasso and Satie with the development of Appollinaire's vision of a new art betrays a closer alliance between these figures and the origins of Surrealism than has previously been recognized.

Even so, the provenance of the term surréal is surrounded by discord. Other intellectuals such as Ivan Goll or Paul Dermée claimed to have some responsibility for the word's origin.⁸² But according to Max Jacob, it was Pierre Albert-Birot who suggested the term to Appollinaire as an alternative to the latter's more imprecise use of "supernaturalisme"⁸³-- a suggestion that he obviously employed. Historically, the attribution has rested with Appollinaire for creating the descriptive term "surréaliste", which remained relatively undefined until its appropriation by André Breton in 1924.

This adjective supplied the Surrealist movement with a name only, while in spirit the Surrealists clung to the idea of the supernatural as defined by Gérard de Nerval (1808-1855). After much contention among various intellectual and artistic groups, each claiming the exclusive rights to use the word "surréalisme," André Breton commandeered the term, and redefined it as a philosophy, an activity, and a way of life in the first Manifesto in 1924. Under his oracular tutelage, the self-definition of Surrealism acquired an ideological basis that far surpassed its original adjectival usage.

The second, more definitive introduction to the word surréaliste at the presentation of Appollinaire's play, Les Mamelles de Tirésias, was accompanied by a chance encounter consistent with the aims and beliefs of Surrealism itself. In attendance were André Breton, former medical orderly at a military hospital at Nantes, seeker of truth, and arriviste on the Parisian art scene and, unknown to him, his former patient of the previous year, Jacques Vaché. Vaché accepted only one absolute value: Umour, the black humour of Alfred Jarry. Vaché's preoccupation with the absurd led him to counterstage the production of Appollinaire's play with a final theatrical gesture of his own: he appeared at the close of the premier performance dressed as an English officer and, brandishing a pistol, threatened to fire it into the audience.⁸⁴

The nihilism of this act so struck Breton that he felt himself overcome as if by a revelation; he later wrote of Vaché that "he released in me that conspiracy of obscure forces which leads one to believe in...a

vocation."⁸⁵ Vaché's Lettres de Guerre of 1919, posthumously published by the seminal surrealist group, established his presence as a cult figure for the movement. The letters express his despair at the "theatrical and joyless futility of everything."⁸⁶ They later inspired Breton to write the following controversial passage, which so often has led to a superficial identification of Surrealism with mere anarchism: "The simplest Surrealist act consists of going out into the street, revolver in hand, and firing at random into the crowd as often as possible."⁸⁷ The inexplicable Surreality of this gesture was inspired more by a frustrated idealism than by a naive and cruel barbarism. Like other Surrealist acts, it is designed even on the conceptual level to shock, surprise, or menace the viewer out of his habitual world-view. In it we can discern that inflammatory confluence of motives that combines cultural Revolution and belief in the supernatural with a long European tradition of mystical anarchism.⁸⁸

An oft-overlooked, yet prominent passage in the first Manifesto of Surrealism (1924) delineates the precise influence that the idea of the supernatural had on Surrealist thought. In it, Breton writes of the naming of the movement, and notes the conceptual conflict between the uncertain and poorly defined neologism coined by Appollinaire and the actual ideological import of the surreal as "the supernatural". It is necessary to quote this crucial passage at length:

In homage to Guillaume Appollinaire...Soupault and I baptized the new mode of pure expression which we had at our disposal and which we wished to pass on to our friends, by the name of SURREALISM. I believe that there is no point today in dwelling any further on this

word and that the meaning we gave it initially has generally prevailed over its Appollinarian sense. To be even fairer we could probably have taken over the word SUPERNATURALISM employed by Gerard de Nerval in his dedication to the Filles de feu.^{*} It appears, in fact, that Nerval possessed to a tee the spirit with which we claim a kinship, Appollinaire having possessed on the contrary, naught but the letter, still imperfect, of Surrealism, having shown himself powerless to give a valid theoretical idea of it.

* And, Breton adds, "also by Thomas Carlyle in Sartor Resartus Book III, Chapter VIII, "Natural Supernaturalism", 1833-34.⁸⁹

After this specific identification of the meaning of Surrealism with supernaturalism, Breton goes on to quote two passages by the Symbolist poet, Gérard de Nerval, and states that they are "extremely significant" in defining Surrealism. The first passage describes the complete identification of imagination and reality experienced by the poet:

I am going to explain to you my dear Dumas, the phenomenon of which you have spoken a short while ago. There are, as you know, certain storytellers who cannot invent without identifying with the characters their imagination has dreamt up...⁹⁰

The second speaks of the "supernaturalistic" state of mind in which the work is conceived:

... And since you have been indiscreet to quote one of the sonnets composed in the SUPERNATURALISTIC dreamstate, as the Germans would call it, you will have to hear them all. You will find them at the end of the volume. They are hardly any more obscure than Hegel's metaphysics or Swedenborg's MEMORABILIA, and would lose their charm if they were explained, if such were possible; at least admit the worth of the expression...⁹¹

This passage is essential for an understanding of Surrealism. It reflects the original self-definition of the movement as internally akin to a type of Romantic supernaturalism. Indeed, the identification of the surreal with the supernatural points up the occult (as opposed to scientific) significance of the dream state, with its omens, premonitions, and intimations of a world of meaning beyond rational grasp. This same identification of the Surreal with the supernatural implies, too, a transformation and further development of the Swedenborgian ideal of "correspondences" between the natural and supernatural worlds.⁹² However in his Les Filles du Feu, Nerval expressed perceptions channeled through a state of dreaming madness, and was preoccupied with a descent into hell ("un descent aux enfers")⁹³ rather than an ascent to an angelic, supernatural heaven. This sudden reversal of meaning -- from Swedenborgian angelology to Decadent demonology -- will prove central to the new meaning of the supernatural as developed by Surrealism. Indeed, Breton defines "Surrealism" in the special sense of **the supernatural** as employed by Nerval. And as if to fend off all pretenders to usage, he conclusively appropriates the term in a polemical closing note:

Those who might dispute our right to employ the term SURREALISM in the very special sense that we understand it are being extremely dishonest, for there can be no doubt that this word had no currency before we came along.⁹⁴

Thus, Breton decisively rejects the Apollinarian understanding of the Surreal, and states that Apollinaire possessed "naught but the letter" of the Surreal -- a word that delineates the area of experience that they wished to explore. Why then was a mutual decision made among the original members of the Surrealist movement to adopt as the name for their new movement this orphan term bequeathed by Apollinaire?

That ultimately they rejected the name "supernaturalism", despite its appropriateness to their perceived aims, demonstrates a need to say something new, to define Surrealism against the background of Romantic and Symbolist thought from which it emerges yet from which it so radically differs in its approximation of a modern sensibility.

* * *

If the meaning that the Surrealists pursued was that of "the supernatural", why did they choose another name to define their movement? We have recognized their need to say something new that would correspond to the new reality they sought. But they also needed to frame their creative activity in a setting wholly new. In order to understand the aspirations of the Surrealists, we must penetrate further into these two terms -- the "surreal" and the "supernatural" -- to uncover their intrinsic similarities and differences, and thus conclusively to define the idea of the surreal.

2. Etymological Analysis and Comparison of the "Surreal" and the "Supernatural".

An etymological analysis of these two terms yields remarkably divergent results. If we compare the terms "surreal" and "supernatural" in both English and the original French, some obvious differences appear. The chart below opposes them visually as well as semantically:

ENGLISH	Supernaturalism	Surrealism	N.
	Super/natural	Sur/real	ADJ.
FRENCH	Sur/naturalisme	Sur/réalisme	N.
	Sur/naturel	Sur/réal	ADJ.
	Super/naturel		ADJ.
	Super/naturalisme		N.
	Supra/naturel		ADJ.
	Supra/naturalisme		N.

The difference that immediately leaps to mind is that the term "supernatural," when broken apart into the prefix "super", and noun, "natural", suggests something that is set over and above the natural; whereas at first glance the term "surreal," seemingly so clear and distinct, is curiously opaque, without exact definition and meaning. The "surreal" appears to be a contradiction in terms, for what can be both real and beyond (sur) the real? An antithetical meaning is embedded in the very term itself, for whatever is real cannot also transcend the real without becoming non-real. Yet there it exists, a double-edged meaning whose disarming ambiguity must serve some purposeful means.

In pursuing the etymology of the word "supernatural", we find its origin in the writings of the medieval scholar and saint, Thomas Aquinas. Its general meaning, according to the Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology is "transcending the natural."⁹⁵ A break between the natural and the supernatural worlds is thereby indicated. This separation is buttressed by the Swedenborgian ideal of "correspondences" between the natural and supernatural worlds: correspondences that could not exist without a clear distinction.

A break in space from the natural to the supernatural realms is implied by the Latin prefix super, from which the French sur is derived, which means something is "set over and above the natural". Its specific meanings are "over," "above," "on top of," "beside," or "up".⁹⁶ In a general sense then, the use of the prefix super signifies something "higher in rank or quality" and a final aspect of its meaning is "to the highest degree" or "in excess of".⁹⁷ It is especially this last, more qualitative, aspect of its meaning that informs the French prefix, sur.

It is common to find the prefixes sur, super, and supra, used interchangeably in modern French. But with regard to le supernaturalisme, the term super is more popularly employed, particularly when referring to supernaturalism as a belief system linked to Romanticism. This apparently antiquated usage appears frequently in modern French, and its occurrence must be attributed to the emergence of supernaturalism as an expression of the mystical beliefs of German Romanticism during the late eighteenth century. In fact, this is the case. It was not until 1836 that the word supernaturalisme appeared in French in a translation of Goethe's Faust

by the visionary poet Gérard de Nerval. Nerval refers to: "Representants des différentes sectes qui se partagent l'Allemagne, et ont de tems en tems partage le monde"... that is "Un dogmatique, un idéaliste, un réaliste, un supernaturalist, un sceptique."⁹⁸ According to Claude Pichois, "Le supernaturaliste...est ici par reprendre une expression connue, celui qui croit au ciel. Pichois adds that"...le mot est un calque d'origine allemande plutôt qu'un composé de 'super' et de 'naturalisme' ou 'naturaliste': il est en relation directe avec le surnaturel au sens théologique..."⁹⁹

It was only in 1855, some twenty years after Nerval's adoption of the German term, Supernaturalist, that the word surnaturalisme, was introduced into the French language by the poet, Charles Baudelaire. "Les répertoires étymologiques...font honneur à Baudelaire d'avoir introduit dans la langue Française les mots 'surnaturaliste' en 1846, et 'surnaturalisme' en 1855."¹⁰⁰ From Heinrich Heine's dictum of 1831, "In der Kunst bin ich Supernaturalist", Baudelaire newly translated the word as surnaturaliste in 1855. This change in composition signified a final break with a traditional theological understanding of the supernatural. Hence, "'Surnaturaliste' a permis de couper le cordon ombilical qui attachait encore le surnaturalisme à la théologie."¹⁰¹ Supernaturalism became the visionary, mystical chord that reverberated sympathetically with the reveries of the decadent poets.

In short, the term "supernatural" is older and more complex historically than the neologism, "surrealiste." Although strictly speaking, the concept, "the supernatural" originates in medieval thought, the miraculous, inexplicable, and non-rational presence which it indicates is recognized much earlier in archaic words such as hagios in Greek, and is similar in meaning to the Polynesian mana.¹⁰² Throughout its early usage, the "supernatural" indicated the extraordinary, the miraculous, and the inexplicable, even though this domain was increasingly encroached upon by the continual expansion of knowledge and belief in reason. In "All's well That Ends Well," Shakespeare observed that "They say miracles are past, and we have our Philosophicall persons to make moderne and familiar, things supernatural and causeless." (1601).¹⁰³

During the Enlightenment, the term supernatural acquired a collectivist slant, as the name for belief in the non-rational and the miraculous. "Supernaturalism" came to signify a religious belief system that countered the prevailing elevation of reason, empiricism, and positivism. These latter attitudes in turn established the Enlightenment "clockwork universe" -- a deterministic, mechanistic world that functioned on the principle of rational causality. Romanticism railed against this narrow view, and "the supernatural" was the weapon with which it beat back Enlightenment ideology. Especially in Germany, the belief in the supernatural was early cultivated and developed by thinkers such as Stendhal, Planche, and Heine. From there it was transmitted to France

through the auspicious efforts of Madame de Stael, whose journal De l'Allemagne (c. 1810)¹⁰⁴ popularized Romantic precepts throughout France and Europe. By the late 1880's, it was commonly held that "rationalism has as its antithesis...supernaturalism and naturalism."¹⁰⁵ "Romantic supernaturalism" held the belief that ultimate reality could only be discerned by the power of revelation. And it is this particular notion of the supernatural, which originates in medievalism and is cultivated later in Romanticism that forms the background to Surrealist thought.

We have seen that the Surrealists adopted as their own the concept of the supernatural espoused by the Romantic poet, Gérard de Nerval. But the use of the prefix sur in surréal places the word in curious opposition to the Romantic notion of the supernatural. The Latin super generally signifies that which is set over and above, whereas the prefix sur has an additional meaning of "hyper" or "in excess of". While it derives from the Latin super a similar meaning as "that which is above," "beyond" or "in excess of", a recent development in its usage during the late nineteenth century altered the emphasis in its meaning to "in excess of".¹⁰⁶

Decadent writers such as Baudelaire, Huysmans, and Gide, employed the term sur interchangeably with hyper, super, extra, or supra¹⁰⁷ to signify their personal preoccupation with luxuriance, intensity, and excess. Huysmans, in particular, employed the term to emphasize a voluptuarian's delight in the sensual and the artificial:

Huysmans use avec une prédilection évidente des préfixes sur, supra, extra qui traduisent sa passion des extrêmes et correspondent à son aspiration à sortir des ornières de son siècle. Il aime à multiplier les termes tel que surhumain et surhumanité, surnaturel et surnaturalisme, supranaturalisme et suprasensible, superessence et supernaturel, de même qu'extrahumain et extranaturel. Ce goût, sensible dans A rebours et dans la critique d'art, s'accuse encore dans là-bas et dans les oeuvres postérieures, au moment où l'écrivain a rompu ouvertement avec le naturalisme de Zola et de ses disciples.¹⁰⁸

The intensification, exaggeration, and heightening of physical and mental sensations was a method of expressing the Decadent devotion to excess or luxuria. It is this particular sense of the prefix sur which informs the Surrealist understanding of the word surréal.

In comparing the noun of both these terms -- the real or the natural, we find once again a similar discrepancy in meaning. The real or le réel is a far more inclusive and ambiguous term than the natural (le naturel), which has an obvious meaning as "that which is natural and innate".¹⁰⁹ "Natural" is also defined as "natural law; having a basis in the normal constitution of things; not unusual, marvelous, or miraculous", whereas the real is defined simply as "that which exists and is real."¹¹⁰ This further degree of abstraction objectified in the idea of the "real" both encompasses and transcends the natural, because it includes all that is "actually existing and present". Variations of this basic definition of "the real" include: "having an objective existence; actually existing as a thing; actually occurring or happening."¹¹¹ Hence "the real" is what is

"genuine, undoubted, or natural; that is, actually present or involved as opposed to apparent."¹¹² The French term réel holds the same definition as its English counterpart, but in modern usage it has become synonymous with l'actuel. According to Le Robert Dictionary, le réel means "qui existe effectivement; qui existe actuellement; actuel; concret; effectif".¹¹³ The interchangeable meaning of le réel with l'actuel ("that which already exists and is real") is crucial to our understanding of Surrealism. For the essence of the real, in all its definitions, is the principle of recurrence or return -- and it is this particular sense of le réel, in that we return to what is authentic and genuine and not merely apparent, that is increased by the etymology of the term itself. For the real stems from the Latin re, which has the general sense of "to return, back, or again".¹¹⁴ In this sense, the Surrealists attempted a recovery of the real, the authentic, and the genuine, in a return to a world beyond mere appearances.

Thus, the contraction of these two terms, sur and réel, in the name, surréal, makes doubly manifest the contradiction which was apparent on its first reading. This contradiction in terms is intensified by the alternate meanings of the prefix sur and the noun réel: for, bearing in mind that the modern French usage of sur can mean an intensification or an excess of, (hyper, extra), as exemplified in the writings of Huysmans, then the word surréal must be understood as an intensification or excess of the real. It is the ordinary made extraordinary, as in the peculiar emotions raised by the weird, the uncanny, or the supernatural. Compounded with the alternate meaning of le réel as l'actuel -- "that which actually is manifest and exists" -- then the idea of the surreal, seemingly so elusive, points

towards the real **in excess of itself**. Like a riddle, it encloses the real within the real: the surreal. It is an intensification of the real to the point of an infinite, immanent power. As "the real which surpasses the real," paradoxically it cannot be perceived objectively with retinal vision, but must be seen only through the eye of the imagination, an eye that can imagine its infinite dimensions.

And finally it is only in this sense of infinite recurrence that we can understand Maurice Nadeau's classic statement of the Surrealist state of mind as "a certain tendency not to transcend, but to penetrate reality, 'to arrive at an ever more precise and ever more passionate apprehension of the tangible world.'" ¹¹⁵ It is in this precise sense of the real in excess of itself -- the extra-real, if you will -- that we must see in the idea of the Surreal a harbinger of a certain change towards immanence within modern culture. At the threshold of the sacred, all things profane become imbued with immanent, infinite significance. As with the sacred, the Surreal returns us to an actual existence as the sole arena in which our spiritual salvation or damnation exists, for it is only **through** the real that one can attain the **surreal** .

That the Surreal points towards an immanence is clearly expressed by André Breton in Surrealism and Painting:

Everything I love, everything I think and feel,
predisposes me towards a particular **philosophy of**
immanence according to which surreality would be
embodied in reality itself and would be neither

superior nor exterior to it. And reciprocally, too, because the container would also be the contents. What I envisage is almost a communicating vessel between the container and the contained. Which means of course, that I reject categorically all initiatives in the field of painting as in that of literature, that would inevitably lead to the narrow isolation of thought from life, or alternatively, the strict dominion of life by thought. (1939)¹¹⁶

Summary

In this chapter, we have seen how the Surreal and a related nexus of phenomena, each uniquely provoking and bizarre, all participate in the sense of the sacred. In particular, the ambivalence of the sacred informs the peculiar emotional tone of the Surreal, the weird, and the uncanny, as it shoots through multiple levels of experience to delineate the religious emotion at its most extreme and elemental. On a phenomenological level, then, the sacred and the surreal are inextricably linked through a common ambivalence. Historically, this is supported by the Surrealists' adaptation of the word "supernatural" and its eventual transformation into the new meaning of the Surreal. These two terms -- the Surreal and the supernatural -- are fraternal but not identical; semblances with unexpected if irregular symmetries revealed through careful analysis. A subtle transformation of the transcendent supernatural into the equally powerful concept of the immanence of the surreal ultimately has occurred. We shall now turn to the historical transitions that effect this change in meaning.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

THE ARCHAIC,

THE OCCULT,

AND THE DAEMONIC

IN MODERN ART

**THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT:
The Archaic, the Occult, and the Daemonic in Modern Art**

In the previous chapter, we discussed the nature and quality of the Surreal and found the concept of the supernatural pivotal to its self-definition. In this chapter we will trace the development of the concept of the supernatural from its inception in the Romantic movement to its later transformations in the Symbolist movement during the late nineteenth century in France. Throughout this period, the concept of the supernatural remains the sustaining impulse that draws large parts of society, and in particular the bohemian fringe, towards the occult, the archaic, and the heterodox. The decadent imagery of evil -- Les Fleurs du Mal of Baudelaire, the satanism of Huysmans' Là-bas, and the ubiquitous and malevolent femme fatale of Symbolist art -- expresses and confirms the prevailing trends in French intellectual circles to embrace magic, miracle, and the inexplicable: in short, to embrace the supernatural. The current and often superficial delimitation of the art of this period as "decadent" needs to be enlarged (and, one might add, revisioned) to encompass the accelerating crisis in the French Catholic tradition, which ultimately finds its full expression in the religious reversals of Surrealism. Indeed, the parallel development and mutual influence of the Occult Revival in ideas, (c. 1850-1900) and the Symbolist movement in the arts (c. 1886-1900) is singularly important in understanding the origins of Surrealism. In this

chapter we shall address these multiple themes of the occult, the heterodox, and the daemonic, in order to elucidate the unusual migrations of ideas that coalesce into the unique historical moment in which Surrealism is conceived. We shall therefore see how Surrealism stands out of the French Catholic tradition, to continue a long prevalent European tradition of mystical anarchism,¹ impelled by religio-utopian vision.

We have already seen that the mystical anarchism implicit in Surrealism is utopian -- for a millennialist vision animated many early modern art movements with the idea of a progression of history towards ultimate, utopian ends.² That this is, in fact, a religious vision is at first less apparent. However, it is generally accepted that the utopian vision, in all its permutations, has at its core the image of the archaic "Golden Age" juxtaposed with a future "New Jerusalem."³ Here too, we find an ambivalence of meaning in the conflicting visions of history -- as utopian progress or primeval perfection -- held by the Surrealists. From what does this ambivalence stem? We must look to the immediate precursors of Surrealism, to find, in a single term "the supernatural", the seminal roots of the Surreal.

A. PRECEDENTS: SUPERNATURALISM, THE "PRELUDE" TO SURREALISM

1. Romanticism

Much current scholarship has maintained the view that Surrealism is but a pale reflection of the Romantic movement, an identification which misconstrues the radically dissimilar ideas and images that inform these diffuse movements. One must speak instead, of a Romantic tendency in Surrealism, but this tendency is a selective one, which varies according to the tastes of André Breton and various members of the movement. In their search for signs of other practitioners of the Surreal, the Surrealists found in the visionary poets and artists of the Romantic period numerous ancestors who express a similar feeling for the irrational, the marvelous, and the supernatural.⁴ They claimed these precursors as their own⁵ and paid homage to them in their writings and exhibitions. Thus the Surrealists assembled for their own purpose an "ideal museum"⁶ composed of works that they admired. A large component of these works were Romantic in origin. In Surréalisme au Service de la Revolution, Tristan Tzara revives themes that he found in the poetry of the nineteenth century: "the cult of the phantom, magic, vice (sexual liberty), the dream, insanity, passion, folklore, and real and imaginary voyage."⁷ In fact, this intentional and self-conscious selection of the art of the past has compounded the conceptual confusion that surrounds the origins of the Surreal.

While the Romantic proclivity for the visionary, the grotesque, and the sublime played a central role in Surrealism's discovery of the dream state, these themes were also recovered by the movement from other historical periods of art. The archaic, primitive, oriental, and medieval

styles of art provided languages that expressed all that was unconventional and inimical to Western Classical civilization. From the medieval period, too, the Surrealists retrieved an intense emotionalism and revolutionary aesthetic sensibility, which they re-interpreted in their own works.

In the visionary art of Hieronymus Bosch (c.1450-1516) and Heinrich Füssli (1741-1825), the grotesque and the esoteric co-mingled to whet Surrealist appetites. In Bosch in particular, they found a figure of towering imagination whose secret iconography was by definition a Surrealist form of painting.⁸ Bosch's The Garden of Earthly Delights (c.1500), presents an excessive crowding of diabolical images, often sensuous, yet psychologically disturbing, which pointed the way towards the power of the dream and the imagination to create a new reality -- a **surreality** (Figure 13). On closer inspection, Bosch's historical situation provides a remarkably close parallel to the ideological position of Surrealism. From the obsessive sexuality and the opaquely esoteric symbols of Bosch's great works, it has been suggested that Bosch was associated with a heretical nudist sect called the Adamites, a radical faction of the Brethren of the Free Spirits.⁹ The Free Spirits represented a type of aberrant, esoteric mysticism whose millennial teachings fell outside the dominion of the Catholic Church. They had many followers in the Brabant region. Their beliefs opposed church orthodoxy, mingling alchemical and antique themes in a millennial vision of ritual nakedness and sacramental eroticism. They believed in the establishment at an earthly paradise -- a New Jerusalem -- in the here and now, and advocated nudity in worship and free conjugal love.¹⁰

According to Wilhelm Franger, Bosch's The Garden of Earthly Delights expresses in esoteric and alchemical symbolism the prophecy of a

Figure 13. Hieronymus Bosch. The Garden of Earthly Delights c. 1500
(detail).

Bosch's The Garden of Earthly Delights presents an excessive crowding of diabolical images, often sensuous, yet psychologically disturbing, which pointed the way towards the power of the dream and the imagination to create a new reality -- a "surreality."



new spiritual paradise --- a return to a primeval "state of innocence" -- which later encouraged anarchic and egalitarian tendencies in medieval society.¹¹ Within this heterodox tradition, one may discern the hirsute profile of the modern bohemian, whose free-spirited dissent seems somewhat tarnished when seen against the medieval esoteric tradition. The secret meaning of Bosch's iconography may indeed indicate a heretical and hermetic mysticism developing from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries, which only recently has been illuminated, yet which strangely prefigures the iconoclastic and anarchic dissent of Surrealism.

Within the work of Johann Heinrich Füssli, too, the Surrealists found the iconography of the dream and the nightmare. Fussli lingered on the gargoyle's visage of the nightmare, linking the supine, voluptuous forms of his maidens to awakening daemonic sexuality (figure 14).¹² His preoccupation with the **grotesque** resonates thematically with the Romantic preference for the **ruin**, part of the early picturesque tradition, which is finally and fully expressed in the bizarre animalian forms of the Victorian topiary. In the first Manifesto of Surrealism, Breton remarked:

The marvelous is not the same in every period of history: it partakes in some obscure way of a sort of general revelation only the fragments of which come down to us: they are the romantic **ruins**, the modern **mannequin**, or any other symbol capable of affecting the human sensibility for a period of time.¹³

The gargoyle, the grotesque, and the ruin thus were harbingers of a "pleasing dread" and horror that so attracted the Romantics in their conception of the sublime. All that was immense, vacuous, or disturbing,

Figure 14. Johann Heinrich Füssli. The Nightmare. 1781. (above)

Within the work of Johann Heinrich Fussli, too, the Surrealists found the iconography of the dream and the nightmare. Fussli lingered on the gargoyle's visage of the nightmare, linking the supine, voluptuous forms of his maidens to awakening daemonic sexuality.

Figure 15. William Blake. The Ancient of Days. 1794. (below)

From Fussli, too, the great Romantic poet and visionary William Blake drew anatomical inspiration for the illustrations to his poetry, endowing his etchings with a muscular vigor which, although seen through the mannerism of Fussli, originally derived from Michelangelo.



anything evoking excessive emotions, appealed to the Romantic imagination. From Füssli, too, the great Romantic poet and visionary, William Blake, drew anatomical inspiration for the illustrations to his poetry, endowing his etchings with a muscular vigor which, although seen through the mannerism of Füssli, originally derived from Michelangelo (Figure 15). No evolutionary principle can be seen to operate here, where the medievalism of Bosch and a thrice-perceived Michelangelo prove fertile coincidences en route to Surrealism.

But what distinguishes the Surrealists from these mythologically-inspired visionaries? Sarane Alexandrian has observed that "the Surrealists wanted to invent their own mythology,"¹⁴ a mythology that would subvert the Biblical typologies and Graeco-Roman content that were the backbone of the academic classical tradition. In "In Quest of the Myth: An Investigation of the Relationships Between Surrealism and Primitivism," Evan Maurer finds the search itself significant, believing that a fundamental conflict between Surrealist individualism and collective belief rendered the movement impotent¹⁵-- a negative presupposition which can be questioned. Whereas, in Myth in Surrealist Painting, 1929-39, Whitney Chadwick details various thematic fragments of Graeco-Roman myths as the inspiration for much Surrealist work;¹⁶ an issue that would seem to be denied by the movement's avowed intention of creating "a new mythology."¹⁷ In fact we may understand the mythology embedded in Surrealism as a response to Schlegel's romantic requisite for "a new mythology" to be formed, "out of the uttermost depth of the spirit."¹⁸ How the Surrealists answered this need in a uniquely modern, and therefore seemingly ambiguous language, is the subject of the remainder of our discussion.

a) *Romantic Supernaturalism*

Since a confusion between Romantic supernaturalism and Surrealism still prevails, especially in literary studies of Surrealism, we turn to the history of Romanticism in order to clarify the various transformations of ideas which, in bivalent directions, seem to inform both traditions.

The term "romantic" first emerged in reference to the archaistic tendencies of medieval romances, "chivalric tales",¹⁹ which had persisted through the Renaissance and were called romantic in contradistinction to the then-prevailing classical models. The word developed its full implications very gradually. It "derives from the romances of the Middle Ages...suggesting what is imaginative and ideal after the pattern of medieval chivalry."²⁰ The term "romantic," at first pejoratively referring to medieval sentimentality, eventually became a key phrase for all unconventional intellectual tendencies during the Enlightenment. Emotionalism and irrationalism, spiritualism and supernaturalism, were especially singled out as romantic characteristics.

In aesthetics, the romantic first was manifested in the predilection for nature worship, a love of gardens, and pantheism; in "the wild and overgrown ruin", and in "the contriving of bizarre and weird effects."²¹ This was expressed in the aesthetic of the "picturesque" which culminated in the Gothic revival in architecture of the nineteenth century, with its concomitant resurrection of the gargoye and the grotesque. In painting, the infinite spaces of Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1850)

precisely delineated the Romantic love of nature and the sublime, while the mythological universe of Blake proved foil to the exoticism and gestural brushwork of Eugene Delacroix (1798-1863). Each indicated in diverse ways the Romantic cult of individual imagination.

As previously noted, the vogue for supernaturalism was imported into France mainly through the exposure of Madame de Stael's L'Allemagne,²² which became the platform for the popularization of German Romantic thought throughout Europe. Supernatural and mystical themes attracted the majority of bohemian and radical thinkers, already emotionally disaffiliated from the scientific, positivistic attitudes of Enlightenment thought.

In the subsoil of Romanticism, then, one finds a protean multiplicity of themes, dynamically converging to form what may loosely be called the Romantic movement, attitude, or temperament. Among these themes are discerned several key components -- medievalism, archaism, exoticism, primitivism, and the occult -- all of which provided styles for Romantic spirituality and emotionalism. A latent medievalism proved inspirational for Romantic sentimentality, and impelled the eventual idealization of "national temperament" into the cult of neo-barbarism and Germanic Völkisch ideology.²³ On the other hand, archaicism, primitivism, and exoticism bespoke the myth of the Golden Age -- a state of grace in nature from which man had fallen through his overdependence on "the meddling intellect" of Reason, as expounded by the Swiss-born Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He proposed the concept of the noble savage to express the "goodness of nature and the original virtue of the human heart"²⁴ an original state of freedom and innocence to which modern man might return.

b) The Romantic "Flight from Reason"

The concept of the supernatural develops from the medieval period and is reaffirmed in Romanticism. The Romantics pointed towards the supernatural as another dimension of human life which they believed transcended analysis by reason. As a sign for this transcendent realm, the supernatural became the banner under which Romantic thinkers embraced the irrational and the occult as antidotes to the hegemony of Reason. Both the non-rational and its ally, the occult, flourished in the medieval period in the form of diabolism, magic, and the occult sciences. The hermetic philosophies of medieval mystics such as Jacob Boehme²⁵ (1575-1624) revealed a cosmology composed of a strange secret symbolism, partly Biblical and partly alchemical in inspiration. The occult sciences, (alchemy, the tarot, and hermetic or Gnostic philosophies) later became relegated to the domain of secret "rejected knowledge."²⁶ These rejected beliefs were decisively degraded and abandoned in the new Enlightenment spirit of scientific inquiry, empiricism, and rationalism. The Romantic struggle for the irrational and the occult was a symptom of a historical development called "the Flight from Reason"²⁷ -- the reaction to a causal, mechanistic universe best symbolized by Newtonian physics. The Romantic "Flight from Reason" proved all-important to the Romantic temperament in its elevation of the imagination and the non-rational. "The rejection of reason as a category of thought involved the rejection of a society whose weapon reason was."²⁸

Ironically, Enlightenment rationalism and anti-clericism fueled Romantic pantheistic spirituality, which in turn envisioned an ineluctable

universe expressed in archaic and occult mythologies. Many French authors in the late nineteenth century "became attracted to the occult ideas, mythologies, and practices made popular by Eliphas Lévi, Papus, and Stanislas de Guaita. From Baudelaire and Verlaine, Lautréamont and Rimbaud, to our own contemporaries, André Breton and his disciples, all these artists utilized the occult as a powerful weapon in their rebellion against the bourgeois establishment and its ideology."²⁹ The Romantic cult of the bohemian rebel, doubly inspired by the high theatre and egalitarian idealism of the French Revolution of 1789, allowed an identification of the divinely inspired outsider, the rebel, with occult as well as anarchic tendencies. The curious affiliation between occultism and the political left, which at its further reaches develops into the uneasy marriage between "esoteric" Surrealism and radical Communism,³⁰ paradoxically is expressed and unified in the French term, sinestre (sinister, uncanny) which refers to the directional "left" and also to the secret or occult.³¹ While Carlyle's 1837 The French Revolution first refers to the radical left as gauche,³² the atmosphere of paranoia which has long surrounded the history of magic and the occult, as well as anarchic and communistic philosophies, must be viewed in terms of our former analogy with sinestre, for only this constellation can explain the cumulative symbolic power of the "left" to evoke the popular epithet, "witch-hunting", which was employed during the McCarthy era, for example.

In 1837, John Stuart Mill wrote, "Romanticism represented a reaction against the narrownesses of the eighteenth century".³³ He was referring to the European Enlightenment which "accepted a world too narrow because of its addiction to geometric thinking and the allied doctrine of

neo-classicism, or else to Lockean empiricism."³⁴ Human knowledge, the Romantics felt, could not be limited to an empiricism of the senses. The causal, mechanistic universe of Newtonian physics offended the Romantic conception of the range and grasp of human experience. This "clock-work universe" was only the sensible surface of perception, according to the visionary William Blake (1757-1827). Blake prayed:

*...May God us keep
From Single vision & Newton's sleep*³⁵

To the Romantic eye, scientific "single vision" was one-dimensional, and could never encompass the infinite potentiality of the world and its objects. For "if the doors of perception were cleansed, every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite."³⁶ Overdependent on reason and mechanistic in understanding, Enlightenment man seemed to the Romantic vision to be held back by his own positivistic and causal reasoning. In Jerusalem (1804) Blake imagines himself tortuously enwrapped by "Reasonings like vast serpents", and Albion, his England, driven by a compulsive logic, inexorably, and meaninglessly:

*For Bacon and Newton, sheathed in dismal steel, their terrors hang
Like iron scourges over Albion: Reasonings like vast Serpents,
Infold around my limbs, bruising my minute articulations.*

*I turn my eyes to the Schools and Universities of Europe
And there behold the Loom of Locke, whose woof wages dire,
Wash'd by the Water-wheels of Newton: black the cloth
In heavy wreathes folds over every Nation: cruel Works
Of many wheels I view, wheel without wheel, with cogs tyrannic
Moving by compulsion each other, not as those in Eden, which,
Wheel within wheel, in freedom revolve in harmony and peace.*³⁷

The Newtonian "clock-work universe" would be crushed by the Edenic vision.

c) *The "Natural Sublime"*

To Enlightenment rationalism, the Romantics opposed the concept of the supernatural. The supernatural could be perceived only with the eye of the imagination, which found in nature correspondences to the divine presence. In Book III of The Prelude (1798-1805), Wordsworth attempted a renewal of vision in which a pantheistic concept of nature and a sense of the extraordinary in the humble images of everyday life, anticipates the later Surrealist preoccupation with the **marvelous**. Even the Surrealist predilection for the "found object" (objet trouvé) expressed in their "cult of stones,"³⁸ is early delineated by Wordsworth, who saw his stones animated by a "quickenning soul":

*...To every natural form, rock, fruit, or flower,
Even the loose stones that cover the high-way,
I gave a moral life: I saw them feel,
Or linked them to some feeling: The great mass
Lay bedded in a quickening soul and all
That I beheld respired with inward meaning.*³⁹

The Prelude Book III, 130-135.

The imagination alone could reveal the meaning of human experience in nature. Only through the imagination could the "Natural Sublime" be perceived. The infinite reaches of nature -- Alpine mountains, thunderous skys, and the eternal, cavernous abyss -- empowered the imagination to

understand infinity. Strikingly distinct from "the beautiful", the quality of the sublime leads to "terror, obscurity, difficulty, power, vastness, leading to magnificence and infinity."⁴⁰ The attraction of infinity was above all located in the vacuity of space and the abyss, which excited an analogous density of emotion in the human imagination. It is described by Edmund Burke: "The passion caused by the great and sublime in nature, when their causes operate most powerfully is Astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror".⁴¹

The imagination, then, became the telescope to the "natural sublime", which generated intensively ambivalent emotions -- "a delightful Horror; a terrible Joy"⁴²-- in the human heart. The theoretical writings of Coleridge reflect the belief in the power of the imagination to transform life:

*The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power
and prime agent of all human perception, and as a
repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of
creation in the infinite I AM.*⁴³

Similarly, Wordsworth enshrined in The Prelude those "spots of time" in which a heightened poetic perception remembers and illumines reality as the poet senses the presence of the infinite sublime in the natural world:

*There are in our existence spots of time,
That with a distinct pre-eminence retain
A renovating virtue, whence...
our minds
are nourished and invisibly repaired;
A virtue, by which pleasure is enhanced,
That penetrates, enables us to mount,
When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen.*⁴⁴

The Prelude, Book XII, 208-18

The "spots of time" crystallize into the Romantic **epiphany**, the moment which expands time into infinitude, refracting prismatically multiple shades of meaning.

d) "Natural Supernaturalism"

The idea of "the natural sublime" introduces the concept of the supernatural as it first appears and is developed in Romantic thought. It is through **nature** that Swedenborg's idea of correspondences is expressed:

...All things which exist in Nature from the very least to the greatest are correspondences. The reason they are correspondences is that the natural world with all that it contains exists and subsists from the spiritual world, and both worlds form the Divine Being.⁴⁵

Emmanuel Swedenborg
Heaven and Hell

The analogy between natural and supernatural worlds reflects the Romantic tendency to employ Biblical design and paradigms, which, according to Swedenborgianism, inexorably command the pattern and destiny of human life. Everything visible that exists does so because of a spiritual force: "The key is the scripture understood allegorically."⁴⁶ Events taking place in the everyday world could thus be understood as a re-enactment of archaic, eternal myths. The interpenetration of the natural and the supernatural worlds was named "Natural Supernaturalism" by Thomas Carlyle, who defined it

in Book III of Sartor Resartus, 1833-34. In the first Manifesto of Surrealism, Breton refers expressly to Carlyle's "Natural Supernaturalism" as the type of supernaturalism pursued by the Surrealists. The aims and iconography of Surrealism can therefore be understood as an attempt to answer Carlyle's vision of the great need of his age "to embody the divine spirit of that Religion (Christianity) in a New Mythus."⁴⁷ This endeavor was Natural Supernaturalism, "for the general tendency of the age was, in degrees and ways, to naturalize the supernatural and humanize the Divine."⁴⁸

In Blake's famous hymn Jerusalem, we find precisely this use of a Biblical typology. The new Jerusalem is transformed in the poet's mystical vision of England:

*And did those feet in ancient times
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?*

*And did the Countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic mills?⁴⁹*

B) ROMANTICISM, PRIMITIVISM, EXOTICISM, AND THE PURSUIT OF "ORIGINS"

Just as the imagination opened the pathway upwards to the supernatural, so too it liberated from authoritarian reason archaic stratas of thought expressed in the perceptions of the child, madman, mystic, or savage. Romantic thought reasserted the value of childhood experience against more rigid conceptions of adult behaviour. The child-like characteristics of spontaneity, dream, and wonder were channeled into a "cult of childhood" which supported the Romantic concept of complete aesthetic freedom. In The Prelude, or the Growth of a Poet's Mind, Wordsworth traces his obscure intimations of an immanent power in nature through his childhood memories of the landscape -- epiphanies which later empower the poet's creative imagination:

...Blest the infant Babe,

 For feeling has to him imparted power
 That through the growing faculties of sense
 Both like an agent of the one Great Mind
 Create, creator and receiver both,
 Working but in alliance with the works
 Which it beholds. -Such, verily, is the first
 Poetic spirit of our human life...⁵⁰

The Prelude, Book II, 233-260

Wordsworth finds the child's vision of reality more authentic than the jaded sensibility of adulthood. As such, he anticipates the later development of primitivism in modern and especially Surrealist aesthetics:

.....Our childhood sits
 Our simple childhood sits upon a throne
 That hath more power than all the elements.⁵¹

The Prelude, Book V, 506-509

Blake, also, in Songs of Innocence and Experience, suggests that the fresh perceptions of childhood transcend the preconceptions that both enslave and are generated by the experienced mind. But underlying this ostensibly secular exaltation of the child lies the New Testament vision of the simplicity and holiness of the child:

Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven.
Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

St. Matthew, 18: 3,4 54

The child's simplicity, clarity of perception, and directness inspired the Romantic rebel, who found parallels to the child's vision of reality in his own existence; both saw the horizon from a special marginal status in society. It was inevitable, then, that this Biblical paradigm would also support Jean-Jacques Rousseau's ideal of a state of grace in nature to which both the noble savage and the simple, free-spirited child belong. In fact, the confusion of pagan and Biblical motifs in the archaic myth of the Golden Age and the Judaeo-Christian Kingdom of Heaven gives rise to the mythic character of the child/savage, uniquely creative and free. This image is reiterated and confirmed in early ethnological studies, which find in the savage's art of the origins of a later, more "developed", (they would have said "progressive") civilization. In The Grammar of Ornament (1868) Owen Jones wrote: "If we would return to a more healthy condition we must even be as little children or as savages."⁵⁵ And it is this peculiar visage which lies behind all Romantic elevations of the child, mystic, or savage, and which impels the varying forms of exoticism, orientalism, and primitivism that progressively saturate European culture.

Of these movements, exoticism appealed earlier to the European appetite for luxurious, controlled decoration, appearing first in the taste for Chinoiserie in the furniture and interiors of the late eighteenth century. By the early nineteenth century Near Eastern subjects and settings soon held sway, and appeared in the paintings of Delacroix (1798-1863) and Ingres (1780-1867) who used the exotic as a vehicle to express both classical -- that is, Biblical -- and foreign and provocative -- that is, exotic -- themes. The proximity of North Africa and the colonies piqued the interest in things exotic, which lead to the later idealization of the primitive and the non-western. The Near East, too, inspired an interest in pre-Christian religions and their deities. Isis, Seraphita, Cybele, Herodias and Salomé were later to dominate Symbolist literature and art with their sphinx-like presence. The Old Testament themes of Leviathan and the abyss captured the Symbolist imagination with their exotic, violent flavor. The resurgent interest in the myths and cults of the Near East and Asia Minor is evident in the parallel development of ethnology and archaeology, and, especially in Germany, the new discipline of "the history of religions."⁵⁶ It was from historical sources that many archaistic Symbolist poets gathered the material for their esoteric poetry. Notably, in the work of Gérard de Nerval, one finds a continuing and recurrent treatment of themes from archaic pagan religions; the cults of Cybele, Demeter and Persephone, and Artemis figuring prominently in his exploration of what we may initially call (and not without some hesitation) "the archetypal feminine."⁵⁷ In the obscure

poetry of Nerval, to which we shall shortly return, these archaic elements are interfused with the image of the Madonna or the Virgin Mary, lending credence to the cult of Mariolatry as a latter-day extension of pagan frames of reference.

Museums of ethnology sprang up to house the many artifacts imported from the colonies, at first collected not for their formal or aesthetic qualities, but as curiosities. In 1878 a major ethnological museum, The Trocadéro, was founded in France.⁵⁸ Many artists such as Gauguin, would visit these museums to study the art of non-western cultures. By the 1890's the implicit assumptions of Darwinian evolutionary theory were commonly applied in ethnological studies. Scholars were in pursuit of the origins of language, myth, and religion; it was felt that these native artifacts might reveal some intrinsic pattern in the nature of thought itself. The concern for decoration and ornament motivated a similar search for basic visual structures, such as the spiral, the circle, or the square, which were felt to contain some innate significance.⁵⁹ Explorations of these themes, such as Wilhelm Worringer's Abstraction and Empathy (1907), laid the ground for modern art theory, however speculative or even occultist in outlook they later proved to be.⁶⁰ The Symbolist artists' simultaneous search for an Arcadian vision through non-western art and culture must be attributed to the burgeoning interest in the history of religions which was pursued most keenly by those poets such as Nerval, who sought a new idiom with which to express their vision.

The new "comparative religion", as it was called, similarly sought the underlying unity among all religions, using induction, comparison, and a preference for a mythological view of religion as a more "scientific" approach.⁶¹ The great German scholar, Max Müller (1823-1900) helped to establish the academic study of Eastern religions through his edition of the

Rig Veda; his translation in the series, The Sacred Books of the East during the 1870's; and his 1857 publication of Comparative Mythology, which, incidentally, coincided with the the first publication of Baudelaire's Les Fleurs du Mal. Müller was well-suited to the popularization of the history of religions. "His father was Wilhelm Müller (1794-1827), the Romantic poet, who is chiefly remembered outside Germany as the writer of the poetry set to music by Schubert."⁶² Eric Sharpe has deftly observed that: "In Max Muller, three streams met. First, the stream of German romantic idealism; secondly, the stream of comparative Indo-European philology; and thirdly the stream of post-Hegelian philosophy of history (not to be identified with evolutionism, which Max Muller mistrusted)."⁶³ Müller must be credited with the impetus toward Eastern philosophy, which was felt simultaneously by scholars and artists in Europe. His connection with the German Romantic tradition was intrinsic to his concept of "the perception of the infinite"⁶⁴ as the source of all religion. The Vedas, according to Müller, contained the seeds of the one, original religion:

We see in the Vedic hymns the first revelation of Deity, the first expression of surprise and suspicion, the first discovery that behind this visible and perishable world there must be something invisible, imperishable, eternal and divine....these so-called deities and heroes became the centres of mythological traditions, wherever the Aryan speakers settled, whether in Asia or in Europe. This is a result gained once for all, and this light has shed its rays far beyond the Vedic mythology and religion, and lightened up the darkest corners in the history of the mythological and religious thoughts of other Aryan nations, nay of nations unconnected by their language with the speakers of Aryan speech.⁶⁵

Muller had engaged an entire generation of scholars, editors, translators, and commentators in his Sacred Books of the East enterprise. He wrote with an appealing elegance which made his work more accessible to the amateur and the artist.⁶⁶ An apocryphal tale about the poet, Stéphane Mallarmé, illustrates this artistic interest in the East: "Stéphane Mallarmé declared that a modern poet must go beyond Homer, because the decadence of Western poetry began with him. And when the interviewer asked, 'But what poetry existed before Homer?' Mallarme responded, 'The Vedas.'" ⁶⁷

1. Max Muller, Gérard de Nerval, and the history of religions

The career of Max Muller meshes curiously with that of the French poet, Gérard de Nerval, who from an early age professed an extraordinary interest in the history of religions. Muller pursued his studies in Leipzig, Berlin and finally in Paris in 1845, leaving France for London in 1846. He spent the remainder of his career in England, except for short trips to Germany. Gérard de Nerval (1808-1855) early expressed an interest in German romantic thought. A German specialist at the age of twenty, he visited Germany in 1839, 1840, and then continually from 1844 to 1851. It is generally accepted that, "Nerval, had, from an early age, an extraordinary interest in the history of religions; his concern with deities other than the Christian one was to characterize his mature poetic imagination."⁶⁸ He studied the cult of Isis while traveling in the Near East, and published an account of his trip in Voyage en Orient of 1851,⁶⁹ he also published Loreley: Souvenirs d'Allemagne, an account of his trip to Germany in 1852.⁷⁰

Nerval's acquaintance with German Romanticism began at an early age. His father taught him German, and he first became known for "writing an amazing translation of Goethe's Faust while still in his teens, a feat which caused Goethe himself to write: 'I have never understood myself so well as in reading you.'"⁷¹ Unfortunately, Nerval never knew of the great poet's assessment of his work. Although his statement was published in Germany in 1838, in a forward to the French edition, it did not appear in France until 1857, two years after his death.⁷² Nerval moved in intellectual circles that enjoyed a high vogue for German Romanticism. Laurent Le Sage has shown that:

Madame de Stael must have served him as guide in his investigations of the Germans; in some of his writings there are remarks that are too reminiscent of De l'Allemagne to permit any doubt. He read widely and made translations that appeared in magazines and in volumes.... After Faust, he undertook ballads (including Burger's Leonore) and a quantity of other pieces. **Hardly more than twenty years old, Gérard de Nerval was considered the chief German specialist, in the milieux of the Jeune France.**⁷³

Would it have been possible for Gérard de Nerval to have met Max Muller? As we have seen, early in his career he became a key translator and authority on German romanticism, producing the definitive French translations of Faust and many German poetic ballads, some of which may even have been written by Muller's father. He visited Germany continually, and

employed elements absorbed from his study of the history of religions in his poetry, which we will later explore. As much as he was considered a "fol deliceux",⁷⁴ a delightful madman, he was not intellectually incompetent, but rather underwent periods of "illumination" and then of lucidity; then he would record his visions, interpreting and amplifying them with what he could recognize from his religious and occult awareness. An adept at occult philosophy, he became absorbed in the symbol of the star, multiplying its meaning to signify his vision; his secular love, Jenny Colon; and his fate.⁷⁵ "The star is the archetypal symbol of Hermetic mediation between the other world and this, the star of the seventeenth card of the tarot trumps."⁷⁶ Like Nerval, André Breton took the seventeenth card of the tarot and its symbol, the star, as the title of one of his last works, Arcane Dix-Sept.⁷⁷ Thus, the incipient influence of Nerval pervades to an extraordinary degree the psychological makeup of Surrealism.

Nerval's madness was seen by some of his contemporaries as incompetence, a view which does not accord with his many journalistic activities and his obvious preparations for his own death: an attempt to clarify, withhold, and order the literary output he had thus far completed. A friend of Heinrich Heine, he translated the poet's work during the late 1840's and the early 1850's. Nerval lived and worked in a more flexible milieu that easily accommodated scholars, intellectuals, journalists and artists, (unlike our contemporary compartmentalization of knowledge). Thus it seems entirely possible that Nerval would not only have made the acquaintance of Muller, but that he would have just as avidly read his work, if even for suspect -- that is, occult -- reasons.

2. Nerval, Symbolism, and Surrealism

What does this mean for Surrealism? Nerval's use of altered states of consciousness, of the dream and self-induced psychosis through meditation on the multiplicity of images within the single figure of a woman, seen as the Virgin Mary, Artemis, or Cybele,⁷⁸ was premature for his time. Too radical for the Symbolist movement, his deliberate induction of para-normal psychological states proved to be extremely important in the theoretical structure of the Surrealist movement. They adopted his use of **the supernatural**, the transcendent ideal which he had filtered through is knowledge of German romanticism and the history of religions, yet which he could only understand in a uniquely poetic way, finding pagan and Christian paradigms immanent in the very stuff of daily life. For Nerval, the dream was the only true reality; the other, mundane existence - mere dross. By contrast the Symbolists preferred the safer side of consciousness, adopting instead the iconography of the dream as part of the self-conscious posturing of the dandy-artist, a hopeful visionary inspired by nostalgic and melancholy dreams. Baudelairean reflective dandyism prevented any loss of control by this group, and thus for the Symbolist, the dream is always seen framed within the picture as if an allegorical reference or, indeed, sometimes as separate as a comic-strip bubble, as in Puvis de Chavanne's The Dream of 1883; Gauguin's Vision after the Sermon, (1888) or Ferdinand Knopff's I lock My Door Upon Myself, 1891 (figures 16 and 17). Distanced somewhat above the central figure, so often characterized by a suffocating narcissism, head thrown back in self-absorption, the dream remains prescient

Figure 16. Pierre Puvis de Chavannes. The Dream. 1883. (above)

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Figure 17. Ferdinand Khnopff. I lock my Door upon Myself. 1891. (below)



in the background, in the foliage or in the everpresent swans and peacocks which populate the Symbolist terrain. Only in Surrealism do we find that complete interpenetration of dream and reality that removes the inner frame of the dream, dispenses with the Symbolist narrative setting, and achieves that complete objectification of perception which we so commonly respond to as "strange," "weird," or "uncanny."

The perception that empowers the Surrealist vision is strikingly ambivalent, irrationally calling forth a disturbing response from the viewer. Therefore, it is curious to note the many incidences of "doubleness" in Symbolist art. For example, in Théodore Chassériau's The Two Sisters of 1843, the women are depicted with an unexpected and identical symmetry (figure 18). Similarly, in The Friends, (1895), by Corbineau, the women bear an amazing resemblance to each other (figure 19). The preoccupation with twins, sisters, lesbians, and brother-sister alliances in Symbolist art stems in part from the Hermetic tradition of "coincidentia oppositorum",⁷⁹ (the coincidence of opposites) which reunited the two halves of the divine essence in the creation of the *rebis* or philosopher's stone, as, for example in The Kiss, by Joseph Granie, c.1900 (figure 20). Is it possible that this iconography of doubleness in Symbolist painting may, in some way, anticipate the ambivalent meaning which inheres in the singular Surrealist object?

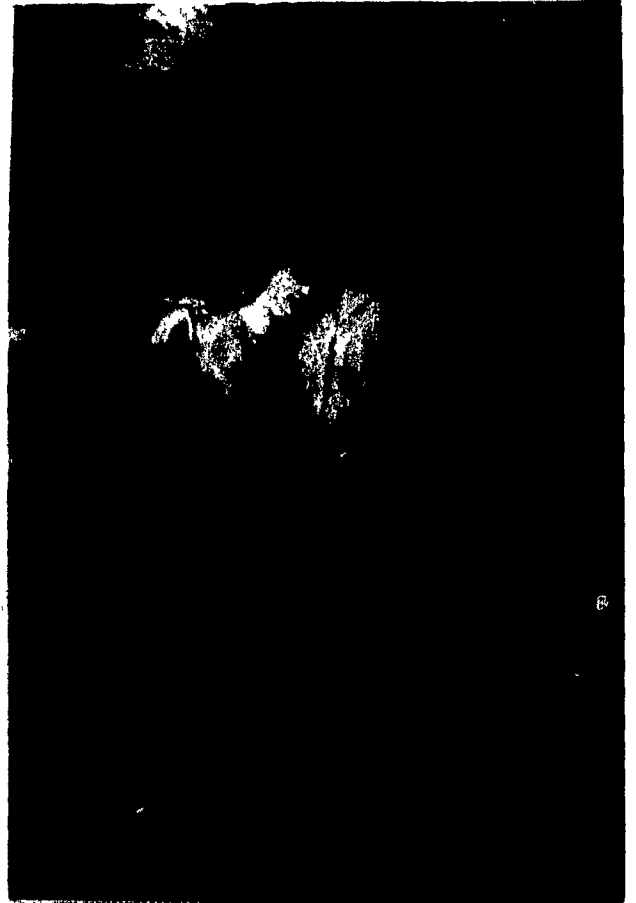
Figure 18. Theodore Chassériau. The Two Sisters. 1843. (left)

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Figure 19. Corbineau. The Friends. 1895. (right)

Figure 20. Joseph Granié. The Kiss. c 1900. (below)

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C. DECADENCE, SYMBOLISM, AND THE DAEMONIC IN LATE 19th CENTURY FRANCE

1. The Perpetrators of Decadence

The great shifts in ideas generated by the Romantics in the early nineteenth century played themselves out in the Decadent and Symbolist movements of the latter part of that century. The period from 1850 onwards saw all the themes previously engendered by Romanticism -- occultism, exoticism, medievalism, and especially supernaturalism and the imagination -- each successively transformed into a new artistic language. The maturation of these themes, which radiate from the central hub of the supernatural, demonstrated in their more developed forms a remarkable complexity of meaning, radically and even antithetically different from their romantic origins. The Decadents took the beneficent and sublime power of Romantic infinity, and cast it into the abyss, from whence they contemplated sexuality, the nature of evil, and questioned the existence of God.

Several key figures furthered the infiltration of occult and esoteric ideas into popular French culture: Gérard de Nerval (1808-1855) Charles Baudelaire (1821-61) and Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848-1907). These personalities were central in the popularization of occult and archaic spirituality in the bohemian milieu. Baudelaire collaborated with the famous French occultist, Eliphas Lévi, in a piece of pornography called Les

Mysteres galans.⁸⁰ He read Swedenborg and introduced the idea of correspondences into Symbolist thought, thus paving the way for the later metaphysical understanding of colour and space in Symbolist painting. His posthumously published art criticism (c.1868) also proved to be influential in the development of Symbolism. Gérard de Nerval engaged in journalism as well. His accounts of travels in Germany and the Orient did much to popularize the tradition of German supernaturalism in France, though he colored it with his personal vision of a dream-like exoticism. Huysmans, perhaps a more easily understood character than the others, pursued occultism and Satanism with a rarely matched intensity. A disenchanted Catholic who was fascinated by occultism, Huysmans associated with a group of prominent occultists including the defrocked Catholic priest, the Abbé Boullan, who perpetuated Satanic black masses.

These three personalities are chosen here not only for their involvement with occult and esoteric thought, but for their role in its perpetuation through their art-critical writings. As journalists and art critics, they play a central part in the positive evaluation of art which deals with esoteric or demonic subjects. They are merely the brightest stars in a whole firmament of occult practitioners and thinkers, which includes Eliphas Lévy (1810-1875), Stanislas de Guaita, (1861-1897) and Josephin ("the Sâr") Péladan, (1815-1918) whose occult thought is characterized by a flamboyant individualism, as much self-seeking as it is charismatic.⁸¹ Huysmans, especially, championed the work of Gustave Moreau and Odilon Redon, and thus was instrumental in familiarizing the larger art world with the type of visionary work that he favoured.

For this generation, the quest for the material, tangible proof of the supernatural was imperative; raised in an age of science, they hoped to find as empirical proof the raps on the seance table or the premonitory warnings of tarot cards. Hermetic philosophy, ancient pagan images and alchemical symbolism -- all were enmeshed in the expectant aura of supernaturalism, yet a supernaturalism sea-changed by Enlightenment skepticism peaking through Romantic irrationalism. This supernaturalism is the obverse of "Natural Supernaturalism", which found in nature a beneficent, if awe-inspiring, deity. The Symbolists focussed on the unpredictable, malevolent, and uncontrolled aspect of the supernatural, a symbol of the poet's chaotic imagination and especially his incipient madness, which resisted confinement in conscious control. This gradually deepening reversal of meaning, from the correspondences of Swedenborgian angelology to the abysses of Decadent demonology, provides the key to the understanding of the supernatural as it develops in Surrealism. And it is the seminal figure of the poet, theorist, and critic, Gérard de Nerval, who bridges the Romantic background and the Symbolist foreground.

a) Gérard de Nerval (1808-1855): The Goddess, the Muse, and the Imagination

Gérard de Nerval is an elusive figure, whose poetry forms a crucial link between German Romanticism and French Symbolism. The Surrealists adopted him as their own, finding in his invocation of the muse and the dream precedents for their own "Cult of Love"⁸² and "psychic

automatism." Unique among the Symbolist poets, Nerval alone avoids the usual decadent dichotomy between the sweet and the sinister. Rather, in his poetry he creates a living world whose kaleidoscopic transformations reveal a vibrant reality in which the shadows of old pagan deities mingle and finally interfuse with the elements of his everyday life. For Nerval, there was no separation between his work and his life. He believed that he had no imagination; what he saw in his visions was a palpable reality. "He meant that what we normally call the imagination was for him so strong it invaded his ordinary life and transfixed it. Imagination was reality."⁸³ This was the substance of Nerval's madness, but also, he believed, his true divinity: he courted it in the occult belief in the transformation of life. His adaptations of pagan mythology were no mere literary conceit; rather he really saw what he described. It is this belief in the power of the imagination to transform life which became such a powerful theoretical influence in the development of Surrealism.

While Baudelaire and his followers revived the daemonic image of Satan, Gérard de Nerval reflected an altogether different sensibility in his positive preoccupation with the Goddess, whose visage is reflected throughout his poetic works. Nerval's interest in the history of religions informs much of his life and work with obscure images and allusions to pre-Christian deities. We shall now examine to what extent these archaic elements are creatively transformed in his work, planting the seeds of a new mythology which the Surrealists would later pursue even more intentionally.

All of Nerval's oeuvre is animated by a peculiar personal mythology that derives from a combination of Gnostic and Kabbalistic

sources. He employed elements of archaic pagan myths: in particular, one may discern in the collection of poems titled Les Chimères (1854) the lineaments of an ancient fertility religion which surrounded the Mediterranean Goddess **Cybele**, also commonly referred to as the **Magna Mater**. In Les Chimères Nerval opposes pagan and Christian elements, implying the struggle between robust archaic deities and a lingering, sickly Christianity.⁸⁴ Nerval's journal, Aurélia (1855) records his visions and the stages of his derangement in a hallucinatory tone that anticipates later automatic writing by the Surrealists. It is a record of his "descente aux enfers,"⁸⁵ which he understood as a series of trials that ultimately would enable him to achieve complete illumination through the interpenetration of dream and reality. Aurélia contains a critical passage that illuminates Nerval's attitude to religion. He prays to the Goddess Isis:

Je reportai ma pensée à éternelle Isis, la mère et l'épouse sacrée; toutes mes aspirations, toutes mes prières se confondaient dans ce nom magique, je me sentais revivre en elle, et parfois elle m'apparaissait sous la figure de la Vénus antique, parfois aussi sous les traits de la Vierge des Chrétiens.⁸⁶

For Nerval, Isis and the Virgin are but different manifestations of one eternal principle which we may tentatively call "the creative feminine." His absorption of the new "comparative method" of the early history of religions allowed him to view these images simultaneously, with neither

figure achieving a hierarchical position of power. This attitude, which allows for the simultaneous meanings of his visions, is expressed even more explicitly in the revelation that he narrates in Aurélia. The Goddess speaks to him:

Je suis la même que Marie, la même que ta mere, la même aussi que sous toutes les forms tu as toujours aimée. A chacune de les épreuves, j'ai quitté l'un des masques dont je voile mes traits et bientôt tu me verras telle que je suis.⁸⁷

For Nerval, the identity of this female deity was continually changing, expressed at one time as the Virgin Mary, another as the Goddess Isis. His complete transmutation of archaic elements allows him the imaginative freedom to perceive all these figures not only in their unique identity, but as part of a common power which inexorably attracts him. It is this very emphasis on the power and attraction of the feminine that invades Surrealist art and poetry in the cultivation of "amour fou" by André Breton, Paul Eluard, and Dali, and in the "Cult of Love" which elevated desire as the single factor in the liberation of man's imaginative powers.⁸⁸

The larger conceptual pattern through which Nerval's poetry is channeled is based on a confusion of archaic, Gnostic, and mythological motifs that conspire to form a visionary tale; a drama enacted between the forces of the earth -- the chthonic deities -- and the forces of sky --

the angels of Jehovah and the Judeo-Christian heritage. These two forces are opposed not in the usual paradigm of good and evil, but instead are seen as the struggle between pagan circularity and regeneration and Judaeo-Christian linearity. The latter, which is seen as an eventual diminishment of man's creative powers is suggestively paralleled in Nerval's use of intense colours to signify paganism and pale colors to signify Christianity.⁸⁹ In The Demonic Imagination, John Porter Houston aptly describes Nerval's mythology:

The legend, told by Nerval in the Voyage en Orient, is that the Children of Clay descend from Adam (whose name means clay) while the Children of Fire have Cain as their ancestor. Jehovah of course protects the former, who are identified with Christianity, whereas the Children of Fire worship the pagan gods.⁹⁰

In the ensuing battle between the Children of Clay and the Children of Fire, the Children of Fire are driven far beneath the earth's surface, where they seat themselves off to work their alchemical and cabalistic knowledge in the hidden depths.⁹¹ The Children of Fire dwell within the earth: "They belong to a restricted geographical area, Southern Italy, Greece, and the Orient, and, their element, far from being opposed to earth, is inseparable from it....The Children of Fire not only dwell within the earth, lurking in caves and volcanoes, but the fertility of the land - colored flowers and Mediterranean foliage - betokens their presence."⁹²

Nerval contradicts the usual opposition of the daemonic versus supernatural (the chthonic versus the sky deities) which also is paralleled thematically by the opposition of irrational (and lusty) pagan deities against the rational illumination of the Judaeo-Christian cosmology. For him, the Children of Fire will rejuvenate a dying civilization. We can therefore discern in his myth of the two opposing forces of Clay and of Fire, a unique understanding of the **demonic** as the **daemonic** -- a subterranean chthonic power linked to pagan deities such as **Pan** and **Cybele**. The daemonic is not evil, but is that unpredictable force that pervades both the holy and the demonic with an electric, amoral power. R.D. Stock illuminates this important difference:

The word daemon or demon has several meanings... Commonly today it means 'fiend' or 'devil', and even in this sense it retains something of the weird and the uncanny. The Greek daimon is something rather, but not altogether, different: it is neither god nor anti-god, but a kind of pre-god, 'the numen', Otto says, 'at a lower stage'....Otto identifies as the most authentic form of these daemons 'those strange deities of ancient Arabia, which are properly nothing but wandering demonstrative pronouns, having no specific shape or mythology, but nonetheless felt as mighty forces'. Daemon can be applied to be human character, too...⁹³

We shall adhere to this lucid definition of the daemonic:

The daemonic, either in its personal or transcendental sense, is mysterious, energetic, non-rational, non-moral. Otto suggests that at an early stage of religious consciousness the daemonic may be closely

joined with the numinous as expressing the Numen's horrendousness and ethically ambiguous vitality. In the creature it is the 'Dionysiac' or frenzied element, as contrasted with the rational, orderly 'Appollonian' side. When alluding to actual fiends or devils, or to their possession of human beings, I shall use demon, demonic. In all other instances, in consideration of clarity and etymology, I shall use daemon, daemonic.⁹⁴

The Mediterranean geographical area to which Nerval restricts the Children of Fire was in ancient times the domain of the **Magna Mater** or the Goddess **Cybele**, whose cult migrated from its sources in Asia Minor (Nerval would have called it the Orient) to Greece and then Rome over a period of a thousand years, 500 B.C. -- 500 A.D..⁹⁵ In the development of her cult in the Mediterranean Basin the figure of Cybele became syncretistically identified with that of Demeter, Artemis, and the Goddess of Fate or of Fortune, **Tellus Fortuna**. In this guise she wears the crenellated "mural crown" of cities, and therefore became the protectress of cities.⁹⁶ She is directly comparable with the goddess Tyche or Fortune, who governs cities⁹⁷. Here we uncover Cybele's relation to the Goddesses of the weird -- The Celtic **Moirae** -- who govern men's fate and the uncanny events in their lives.⁹⁸ From this association with the phenomena of fate or fortune, it is possible that the cult of Cybele was carried through its various manifestations in the Roman empire to an identification with the indigenous deities of the **Wyrd** in the Gaulic and Celtic regions.

Nerval's familiarity with the cult of Cybele and related pagan deities is demonstrated in the third sonnet of Les Chimères. "Horus" relates the rebirth of the son Isis, and implicitly identifies the adoring son with the poet himself:

Le voyez-vous, dit-elle, il meurt, ce vieux pervers.

...
*L'aigle a déjà passé, l'esprit nouveau m'appelle,
 J'ai revêtu pour lui la robe du **Cybele**
 C'est l'enfant bien-aimé **d'Hermès et d'Osiris!** 99*

In the sonnet "Myrtho", The Oriental Goddess and the Muse coalesce into a single romantic figure. The name "Myrtho" signifies the myrtle plant held sacred to the goddess Aphrodite.¹⁰⁰ He evokes her seductive presence:

*C'est dans ta coupe aussi que j'avais bu l'ivresse,
 Et dans l'éclair furtif de ton oeil souriant,
 Quand aux pieds d'Iacchus on me voyait priant,
 Car la Muse m'a fait l'un des fils de la Grece. 101*

The muse is identified with an archaic pagan goddess "Myrtho", who reclaims the wine-drink poet as her own. The poet is made "one of the children of Greece" by the "divine enchanteresse", Myrthro. Similarly, in "Horus", the poet, by reclaiming the robe of Cybele, becomes a devotee of the goddess. In these lines we find the premonitions of a complete identification of the imagination, the muse, and the archaic goddess that informs both the decadent fixation with the female sphinx and the Surrealist "Cult of Love." But in another direction, Nerval's invocation of the muse also filled him

with fear and longing: "La Muse est entrée dans ma coeur comme une déesse aux paroles dorées, elle s'en est échappée comme une pythie en jetant des cris de douleur."¹⁰² The sonnet "Delfica" of 1843, also included in Les Chimères, provides startling insight into Nerval's complete transformation of pagan mythological motifs. The title "Delfica" refers to "matters delphic" and hence to the Oracle at Delphi. The epigraph of the poem provides the key to the mystery; it alludes to a prophecy of the Cumaean Sibyl that predicts a return of the Golden Age, cited in Vergil:

Ultima Cumaei venit jam caminis aetas 103

This poem is unusual for its extensive allusions to the cult of the goddess. The references to the Latin Sibyl, "La sibylle au visage latin," is most curious, because the ancient sibyls were followers of the goddess Cybele. The cult of Cybele was carried to Rome through the advocacy of the Sibylline Oracles, who suggested in their epigrammatic books that the Goddess be brought from her home in Asia Minor. The curious tale of her migration is as follows:

The Romans were losing the Punic wars to Hannibal (c. 205 B.C.). At home they were beset with bizarre phenomena such as showers of stones. The Sibylline books were consulted, which told that that 'the enemy would be driven from Italy if the Great Mother of Ida could be brought to Rome.' Ironically, the Sibyls were from Asia Minor, and they personally recommended their own religion to the Romans. The injunction to 'bring the Great Mother from Asia Minor' was successful; King Attalus of Pergamum was co-operative, and it is said that the original black meteorite in whose form she was worshipped was given to the Romans.¹⁰⁴

The poem suggests the continuity of the archaic pagan cult in the subterranean mysteries that will reemerge triumphant in the recreation of a new Golden Age. The sonnet is as follows:

DELPHICA

Ultima Cumaei venit jam carminis aetas

*La connais-tu, Dafné, cette ancienne romance,
Au pied du sycomore, ou sous les lauriers blancs,
Sous l'olivier, le myrte, ou les saules tremblant
Cette chanson d'amour qui toujours recommence?*

*Reconnais-tu le TEMPLE au péristyle immense,
Et les citrons amers où s'imprimaient tes dents,
Et la grotte, fatale aux hôtes imprudents,
Où du dragon vaincu dort l'antique semence?...*

*Ils reviendront, ces Dieux que tu pleures toujours!
Le temps va ramener l'ordre des anciens jours;
La terre a tressailli d'un souffle prophétique...*

*Cependant la sibyle au visage latin
Est encore endormie sous l'arc de Constantin...
Et rien n'a dérangé le sévère portique. ¹⁰⁵*

Nerval senses in the earth the tremors, "un souffle," of the antique religion. Underneath the temple is a grotto where the goddess was worshipped, in niches and in caves, that signify her fertile presence.¹⁰⁶ The archaic gods will awaken and return with the Golden Age:

*Ils reviendront, ces Dieux que tu pleures toujours!
Le temps va ramener l'ordre des anciens jours...*

Meanwhile, the Cumaean Sibyl sleeps under the arch of Constantine, waiting until the chthonic power will re-emerge.

John Porter Houston comments perceptively on this poem:

Godhead is female for Nerval; the figure of Appollo vanishes behind these feminine ones: one can sense an implied contrast with the overwhelmingly masculine deity of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Female gods are usually associated with nature and fertility, whence that plant imagery and also that of the seed in the cave. Despite the fact that the Children of Fire are opposed to those of Clay, the former possess the fecund depths of the earth and the subterranean regions of grottoes and caverns. They have an emblematic beast - the fire-breathing and cave-dwelling dragon, who, as in the myth of Cadmus, will be the author of their reborn race. The nexus of analogies in the quatrains of Delfica seems to imply that the rite of Fire has gone underground during the Christian era, and has drawn new strength from its chthonic, female origins. 107

Hence we find in Nerval's poetry a complete reversal of the Judean-Christian heritage, calling forth new images of the archaic as a vital and vibrant force. Even his image of the dragon, usually seen as the incarnation of evil and chaos, heralds the fecund rejuvenation of the ancient culture.

b) *Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867): The Satanic and the Supernatural*

Charles Baudelaire is a pivotal figure, whose Les Fleurs du mal (Flowers of Evil) of 1857, introduced the diabolic as a new canon of beauty fit for aesthetic contemplation. His employment of the occult and the supernatural set in motion a chain reaction in late nineteenth century French culture -- a development which culminates in the Surrealist's anarchic rejection of the French Catholic tradition. His curiously moralistic imagination saw in the material world, not the robust and realistic physicality of his contemporary, Courbet, but a deterioration and decay of the flesh and the soul, once potentially wholesome and good, but now unavoidably corrupted by melancholy, isolation, and ennui. All that was modern, "the modern city, with its ugliness, vice and misery, and the modern temperament, with its taste for the morbid, the unnatural, and the eccentric,"¹⁰⁸ fascinated him, just as conventional neo-classicism for him lacked all interest.

His poetry reflects an ambivalence directed towards life itself, "le horreur ou l'extase de la vie"¹⁰⁹ which essentially is the polarity of the holy/daemonic, with its extraordinary moral elasticity. It is this infusion of the daemonic in Baudelaire's work that has so often lead to the current superficial categorization of whole segments of late nineteenth century thought as "decadent," a characterization that reduces the exceptional complexity of self-conscious moral evil and decay. But the "descent aux enfers" of which the poet Nerval wrote would lead, in its emphasis on excess, to a final renunciation of life itself. Baudelaire envisioned the daemonic as a baptism by fire through which it was necessary to descend in order to find divine illumination.

Baudelaire's poetry is animated by the antagonism of spleen and the ideal: an antithesis of a "profound weariness and disgust" and the ideal order of art.¹¹⁰ This symmetry is carried throughout his world-view. In Les Fleurs du Mal, he turns to the image of **Satan Trismégiste** based on the archaic god **Hermes Trismegistus** the messenger between the spiritual and the corporeal worlds.¹¹¹ For Baudelaire, because man must live in the corporeal world, he is fallen, and the God who created him must also be fallen:

Qu'est ce que la chute? Si c'est l'unité
devenue dualité c'est Dieu qui a chuté. En d'autres
termes, la création ne serait-elle pas la chute de Dieu?¹¹²

A dandy rejects the natural, and prefers instead an arbitrary artifice; hence Baudelaire rejects woman as an example of nature, for because she is natural, she is vulgar.¹¹³ For Baudelaire, God was Satan, and Satan inhabited woman. The cliché, "the devil is a woman", is no more clearly expressed than in his description of his relations with women as a "descent":

L'invocation à Dieu ou spiritualité est un désir de monter
en grade; celle de Satan, ou animalité, est une joie de
descendre. C'est à cette dernière que doivent être rapportées
les amours pour les femmes.¹¹⁴

The tales of Baudelairean excess can hardly be equated with a joyous carnality but with spleen, a feeling of "no escape" and a final descent into ennui. In the poem of the same title (Spleen) Baudelaire describes his loss of hope:

*Des cloches tout à coup sautent avec furie
Et lanant vers le ciel un affreux hurlement,
Ainsi que des esprits errants et sans patrie
Qui se mettent à geindre opiniâtrement.*

*- Et des longs corbillards, sans tambours ni musique
Défilent lentement dans mon âme; l'Espoir,
Vaincu, pleure, et l'Angoisse atroce, despotique,
Sur mon crâne incliné plante son drapeau noir. 115*

Against spleen, he opposes the ideal order of art, seen in the symmetry of ocean and sky:

*Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
Luxe, calme, et volupté. 116*

It would be impossible in this context to examine all aspects of the daemonic in Baudelaire. Nevertheless he is important to the development of Surrealism in his reaction to traditional French catholicism. His evocation of evil in the figure of "Satan Trismégiste" is an ambiguous one, which interlocks the sinister and the sorrowful. "Il y a dans tout heure, à toute homme, deux postulations simultanées, l'une vers Dieu, l'autre vers Satan."117

Les Fleurs du Mal is inhabited by the figure of Satan Trismégiste who leads the way to the "descente aux enfers." "Like Heraclitus in reverse he declares that the way down is the way up."118 Satan/Hermes is the communicating figure between two worlds. His is an alchemical symbol,

transmuting the material world into sinister destruction. In "Alchimie de la douleur", Baudelaire describes this transformation into the daemonic:

*Hermès inconnu qui m'assistes
et qui toujours m'intimidas,
Tu me rends l'egal de Midas
Le plus triste des alchimistes*

*Par toi je change l'or en fer
Et le paradis en enfer;
Dans le suaire des nuages.*

*Je découvre un cadavre cher,
et sur les célestes rivages
Je bâtis de grands sarcophages.¹¹⁹*

Baudelaire's invocation of alchemical core is not merely esoteric in implication: he suffered from an incurable disease (syphilis) and, as Roger Williams has suggested in his study of Baudelaire,¹²⁰ must have felt the need both to justify this decay and to make of it the substance of a transmutation into diviner essence. The archaic god Hermes-Trismegistus of the Corpus Hermeticum¹²¹ is implied here, as Satan Trismégiste dissolves the personal will in his will to descent:

*C'est Satan Trismégiste
Qui berce longuement notre esprit enchanté
Et le riche métal de notre volonté
Est tout vaporisé par ce savant chimiste.¹²²*

In the myth of Hermes Trismegistus from which Baudelaire's Satan Trismégiste is derived, man is created from the fusion of opposite elements. Baudelaire employed Hermetic philosophy, but indirectly so, so that a certain complexity of meaning is established in his work. Basically,

Hermetic philosophy, whether derived from Kabbalism or Gnosticism, allows for the correspondence of all things, which are seen as the differentiation of the one primal unity. But because of the fall of the original man, **Adam Kadmon**, the world has been shattered into multiplicity.¹²³ This separation was caused by evil, and creates an increasing isolation and separation of all beings. According to Gershom Scholem, "moral evil according to the Zohar is always something which becomes separated and isolated, or something which enters into a relation for which it was not made. Sin always destroys a union..."¹²⁴ For Baudelaire, this fallen world was in and of itself evil. And it is only by a further descent into materiality that he can return to the spirit. He writes:

J'ai pensé bien souvent que les bêtes malfaisantes et dégoûtantes n'étaient peut-être que la vivification, corporification, éclosion à la vie matérielle, des mauvaises pensées de l'homme. Ainsi la nature entière participe du péché originel.¹²⁵

Everything in nature reflects this original evil. M.H. Abrams succinctly describes the basic conceptual framework of Hermeticism:

Hermeticism did not draw the modern sharp division between the animate and inanimate, but applied the categories of living things to all nature; it also posited a correspondence between the human and the non-human, but in such a way that the human serves as the paradigmatic form. With reference to Hermetic writings, therefore, it is more accurate to speak of the cosmos as a macro-anthropos than to speak of man as a micro-cosm. In this scheme there is a strong emphasis on polarity, conceived on the model of sexual opposites and regarded as the force that compels all natural processes. In addition, the overall course of things is envisioned as a circular movement from unity into multiplicity and ultimately back to unity.¹²⁶

For Baudelaire, "the created world is the fall of God; God fallen, is therefore ce **savant chimiste** Satan Trismégiste, materiality is the necessary emanation of the spiritual, and the only way back to the original condition of the All-God (Adam Kadmon) is through materiality."¹²⁷ Hence Baudelaire's emphasis on the sensual surface of things, finding within pleasure and even the sublime Romantic epiphany the subtle expansion of the sinister.

Baudelairean supernaturalism, with its curiously inverted religiosity, perceives the poet as a seer, a visionary who grasps analogies where other fail to see them. Rimbaud acclaimed him "premier voyant; roi des poets; un vrai Dieu,"¹²⁸ furthering the growing belief in the "religion of art"¹²⁹ in the late nineteenth century. The imagination became "queen of the faculties -- that power given man to perceive secret analogies in nature."¹³⁰ His conception of the role of the artist as a divinely inspired visionary opened the path to occultism and the psychological experimentation which would be taken by the Surrealists. The symbol and the supernatural were reunited in Baudelaire's personal vision:

Dans certains états de l'âme presque surnaturels, la profondeur de la vie se révèle tout entière dans le spectacle, si ordinaire qu'il soit, qu'on a sous les yeux. Il en devient le symbole. ¹³¹

c) *Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848-1907): Occultism, Satanism, and the Bohemian Milieu*

Of the three figures who influenced the development of Symbolist supernaturalism into daemonic ideology, Huysmans is perhaps the least complicated. He incarnated in his life that decadent push towards the satanic and the daemonic, and thus demonstrated a typical bohemian revulsion towards the conventional in religion, art, and mores that so characterizes symbolist thought. He began as a naturalist, an adherent of Emile Zola, and at first wrote naturalist novels full of sordid details in which he took particular delight, especially in descriptions of the olfactory sense.¹³² Naturalism was not enough. He craved the total revolt of the senses against the hegemony of the banal and the conventional; against the conventional he opposed the occult; and the occult became the avenue -- on might say, the ladder -- on which he descended to the hellish excesses described in his satanic novel Là-bas ("Down There") of 1891. But first, he had to actualize his revolt against nature. His "decadent" novel, A Rebours ("Against nature") of 1884, pursues the life of super-sensuality from naturalism to supernaturalism. In it, he describes the exploits of a thinly veiled alter-ego, Durtal, who like himself was a quintessential lapsed Catholic whose descent into hell was but a prelude to a greater ascent to Catholic spirituality and medieval occultism. Medievalism appealed to him mostly for its occult elements; in his re-conversion to Catholicism which began in 1891, he was guided skilfully by the Abbé Mugnier who introduced him to

ascetic and mystical medieval practices.¹³³ His occultism served as the passage from satanism to a renewed Catholicism: it is the hermetic, the mystical and the super-sensual channel which guides him through these opposing religious routes. Indeed, in his life Huysmans expresses the cultural paradigm of the bohemian reaction to bourgeois Catholicism, resulting in the total religious reversal from Catholicism into an explicit satanism and the elevation of evil. His importance for Surrealism lies in his fusion of the supernatural and the supersensual into a single entity, finding in daemonic excess the common boundary of the Surreal and the supernatural. His later return to Catholicism is not in itself important to Surrealism; however, his popularization of the occult and the satanic through his art criticism and novels forms the larger background to Surrealist iconography.

As art critic for Le Figaro throughout the 1880's, Huysmans championed the impressionists and naturalism.¹³⁴ He also advocated the work of Odilon Redon (1840-1916) and Gustave Moreau (1826-1898) finding Moreau's *Salome* of 1886 the epitome of Symbolist values.¹³⁵ In A rebours, Huysmans describes the disturbing effect of Moreau's paintings as "disquieting and sinister allegories made more to the point by the uneasy perceptions of an altogether modern neurosis...forever sorrowful, haunted by the symbols of superhuman perversities and superhuman loves."¹³⁶ In Huysmans' review of the Salon exhibition of 1880 he wrote enthusiastically about Moreau's work, describing succinctly the combination of oriental and mystical influences which he found so attractive. He writes:

Figure 21. Gustave Moreau. The Apparition (Salome) 1876.

Huysmans advocated the work of Odilon Redon and Gustave Moreau, finding Moreau's Salome of 1876 the epitome of Symbolist values. In A Rebours, Huysmans describes the disturbing effect of Moreau's paintings as "disquieting and sinister allegories made more to the point by the uneasy perceptions of an altogether modern neurosis...."



M. Gustave Moreau is unique, an extraordinary artist.... after having been haunted by Mantegna, and by Leonardo whose princesses move through mysterious landscapes of black and blue, M. Moreau has been seized by an enthusiasm for the hieratic arts of India and from the two currents of Italian art and Hindu art, he has, spurred forward too by the feverish hues of Delacroix, disengaged an art which is peculiarly his own, created an art which is personal and new, whose disquieting flavor is at first disconcerting.¹³⁷

Years later, the young André Breton alone frequented the Musée Gustave Moreau after the indulgences of Symbolism had fallen into modernist disfavour. He found in the disquieting and ritualized images of Moreau the "saving grace" which he was to call Surrealism.

In addition to Huysmans' occult and satanic pursuits, which he described with prurient interest in the novels À Rebours and Là-bas, he personally became involved in one of the more celebrated occult scandals of the late nineteenth century which was paralleled only by similar theosophical developments in neo-orthodox Russian society, which welcomed such spiritual charlatans as Grigory Rasputin, Helena Blavatsky, and the French magus "Papus" (Gérard Encausse, 1856-1916). Papus had travelled from France to Russia in 1901, 1905, and 1906, to pay ingratiating and ostentatious visits to the Tsar and Tsaritsa Nicholas and Alexandra, with whom he had established initial contact in France in 1896.¹³⁸ Papus was also on the council of Stanislas de Guaita's "Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix,"¹³⁹ and with the Sâr Péladan formed part of the occult power structure with whom Huysmans took exception (figure 22).

John Senior provides an apt description of the feud between the Rosicrucian Brotherhood and the Abbé Boullan in which Huysmans became

embroiled:

Huysmans and Jules Bois publicly accused Guaita, Papus, the Sâr Péladan, and Oswald Wirth, the leaders of the "Cabalistic Rosicrucian Brotherhood" of having murdered one Abbé Boullan of Lyons by means of black magic. Charge and countercharge were made in the Paris press until the Marquis felt obliged to defend his honour by more aristocratic means.¹⁴⁰

Consequently, a duel was fought between the Marquis Stanislas de Guaita, and Jules Bois (a disciple of Huysmans), that was followed by yet another duel with swords between Bois and Papus, who was an associate of de Guaita. It was several years later that Huysmans, having obtained the papers of the Abbé Boullan, his mentor in occultism, learned that all the accusations made by Boullan against Papus and the Rosicrucian Brotherhood were, in fact, fabrications of a deceitful nature, intended to transfer the wayward Abbé's burden of guilt to Stanislas De Guaita.¹⁴¹ A strange thing had happened: for Huysmans, Bois, Boullan, and the others involved, the supposed curses thrown by the Rosicrucian brotherhood were real, and they each experienced forms of physical and psychic attack -- "fluidic hurlings, cuffs about the head, and even attacks on the liver"¹⁴² -- which to them were real and caused suffering. Public accusations were made in Le Figaro with seriousness that today we find astounding. In an interview Huysmans related that:

Il est indiscutable que le Guaita et Péladan pratiquent quotidiennement la magie noire. Ce pauvre Boullan était en lutte perpétuelle avec les esprits méchants qu'ils n'ont cessé pendant deux ans de lui envoyer de Paris. Rien n'est plus imprécis que ces questions de magie; mais il est tout à fait possible que mon pauvre ami Boullan ait succombé à un envoiement suprême.¹⁴³

The popularization of the occult had begun in earnest. This type of documentary evidence excited and appealed to the spiritual longings of disaffiliated artists and writers, who reached for meaning through personal experience of the occult. In 1890, the writer Anatole France observed that: "a certain knowledge of the occult sciences became necessary for the understanding of a great number of literary works of this period. Magic occupied a large place in the imagination of our poets and our novelists."¹⁴⁴ Similarly, popular posters of the period depict an occult interest in black magic, as in the large portrait of a magus, Mérodâk, c. 1890 (Figure 23).

One may trace the trajectory of the occult from Baudelaire's Les Fleurs du Mal, whose censorship served only to increase its notoriety, to A Rebours, when Huysmans has his hero Des Esseintes place Les Fleurs du Mal as a sacred text on an altar before a Byzantine triptych. This action is merely the indices of the descent into satanism which is the subject of Là-bas, and which puts forth Huysmans' nostalgic attraction to the simpler spirituality of the medieval period. Là-bas is rife with the tension between doubt and belief, dandyism and naturalism, and between the occult and the church. One senses a strangely distant ambivalence in the historical observations of the protagonist, Durtal:

'What a queer age,' said Durtal, conducting him to the door. 'It is just at the moment when positivism is at its zenith that mysticism arises again and the follies of the occult begin.'

'Oh, but its always been that way. The tail ends of all centuries are alike. They're always periods of vacillation and uncertainty. When materialism is rotten-ripe magic takes root. This phenomenon reappears

Figure 22. Carlos Schwabe. Poster for the first Salon de la Rose-Croix. 1892. (left)

Papus (Gérard Encausse), the Sâr Péladan, and Stanislas de Guaita were part of the occult power structure of the "Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix".

Figure 23. Mérodâk poster, c. 1890. (right)

In 1890, the writer Anatole France observed: "a certain knowledge of the occult sciences became necessary for the understanding of a great number of literary works of this period. Magic occupied a large place in the imagination of our poets and our novelists." Similarly, popular posters of the period depict an occult interest in daemonic magic, as in the large poster of a magus, Mérodâk.



every hundred years. Not to go further back, look at the decline of the last century. Alongside of the rationalist and atheist you find Saint-Germain, Cagliostro, Saint-Martin, Gabalis, Cazotte, the Rosicrucian societies, the infernal circles, as now...¹⁴⁵

The self-consciousness of Huysmans' exploration of occultism as the immediate antidote to materialism is revealed in this perceptive and philosophical passage. His questioning spirit demanded answers that neither materialism nor naturalism could supply. But his complete understanding of the daemonic as the other avenue to the holy is implicit in a related passage from Là-bas:

'Mad? Why? The cult of the Demon is no more insane than that of God. One is rotten and the other resplendent, that is all. By your reckoning all people who worship any god whatever would be demented. No. The affiliates of Satanism are mystics of a vile order, but they are mystics. Now, it is highly probable that their exaltations into the extraterrestrial of Evil coincide with the rages of their frenzied senses, for lechery is the wet nurse of Demonism...'¹⁴⁶

If satanism was daemonic it was, at least, supernatural: Huysmans found in it what would suffice. His "decadence" is expressed in his novels of ideas, that uphold the satanic and the sensual as the escape from bourgeois complacency. As we shall see, this reaction to conventional religious Catholicism was to have far reaching ramifications for the development of Surrealism.

2. The Symbolist Movement

While Symbolism was originally a literary movement, it provided a forceful impetus to the art world in the form of mythological and dream-inspired images that countered the prevalent school of naturalism, by then in seeming affiliation with middle-class attitudes.

Several key developments in Symbolist iconography were to have a profound influence on Surrealist art. From a conceptual standpoint, Symbolism's preoccupation with the occult and the supernatural encouraged artists to express moods and images metaphorically, liberated from a strict adherence to the optical reality attempted by the Impressionists. Iconographically, the fin de siècle propensity for decadence and the satanic engendered a new view of woman. From Baudelaire and Nerval the idea of the feminine is colored with a daemonic power, expressed as either the chthonic and natural, or the evil and unnatural. Because for Baudelaire, woman was natural she was, even more than man, an example of the fallen universe in which he was condemned to exist. Relations with women were a descent into base animality. Nerval, on the other hand, imbues her with the sacred power of the archaic goddess and the muse. These conflicting views merge in the new image of woman as the seductive femme fatale,¹⁴⁷ the mystical alluring sphinx of Symbolist art. Indeed, the "sphinx" often appears as the subject of much international Symbolist art, as in Ferdinand Khnopff's The Caresses of the Sphinx, of 1896 (figure 24) or Alexandre Seon's The Chimaera's Despair of 1892 (figure 25). One may superficially

Figure 24. Ferdinand Khnopff. The Caresses of the Sphinx. 1896. (above)

The seductive "femme fatale", the mystical alluring sphinx of Symbolist art. The "sphinx" often appears as the subject of much international Symbolist art, as in Ferdinand Khnopff's The Caresses of the Sphinx of 1896, or Alexandre Séon's The Chimaera's Despair of 1892.

Figure 25. Alexandre Séon. The Chimaera's Despair. 1896. (below)



read these works as examples of the growing social emancipation of women from a predominantly patriarchal society. However, many of these images reveal a power and ambivalence that is quite out of proportion to solely social developments.¹⁴⁸

Dante Gabriel Rossetti's (1828-1882) pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood started the tumble downwards with images of a languorous sexuality and a longing for surcease that were often sexually provocative. Rossetti's Beata Beatrix of 1876 precisely crystallizes the "Saint Teresa in ecstasis" look of soulful ecstasy and unbridled sensuality (figure 26). His Astarte Syriaca of 1877 depicts the omnipresent Janie Morris (the wife of his colleague William Morris) in the guise of the pagan goddess, Astarte (figure 27). Besides confirming the new role of individual women such as Elizabeth Siddal or Janie Morris as the "soul-mate"¹⁴⁹ or muse of the artist (no longer the obedient bride) the massive painting Astarte Syriaca conveys a symbolically complex mélange of the femme fatale, the vamp, and the pagan goddess.

Similarly, Edvard Munch's Madonna of 1895 combines the image of the Madonna with a sinister sensuality that is even furthered amplified by the symbolic red and black coloring with which she is drawn (figure 28). The tiny fetus in the left hand corner, so reminiscent of a death's head, only serves to emphasize her destructive power. The idea of the femme fatale is pushed here to an extraordinary depth of meaning, for Munch describes the Madonna, the mother of Christ, as innately sexual and evil. Franz Stuck's Eve (1893) likewise shows the "mother of men" as a decadent femme fatale, her evil nature expressed so graphically in the head of the snake with which she is identified (figure 29). This evaluation of the

Figure 26. Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Beata Beatrix. 1876. (left)

Rossetti's Beata Beatrix precisely crystallizes the "St. Teresa in ecstasis" look of soulful ecstasy and unbridled sensuality.

Figure 27. Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Astarte Syriaca. 1877. (right)

The massive painting Astarte Syriaca conveys a symbolically complex mélange of the femme fatale, the vamp, and the pagan goddess.

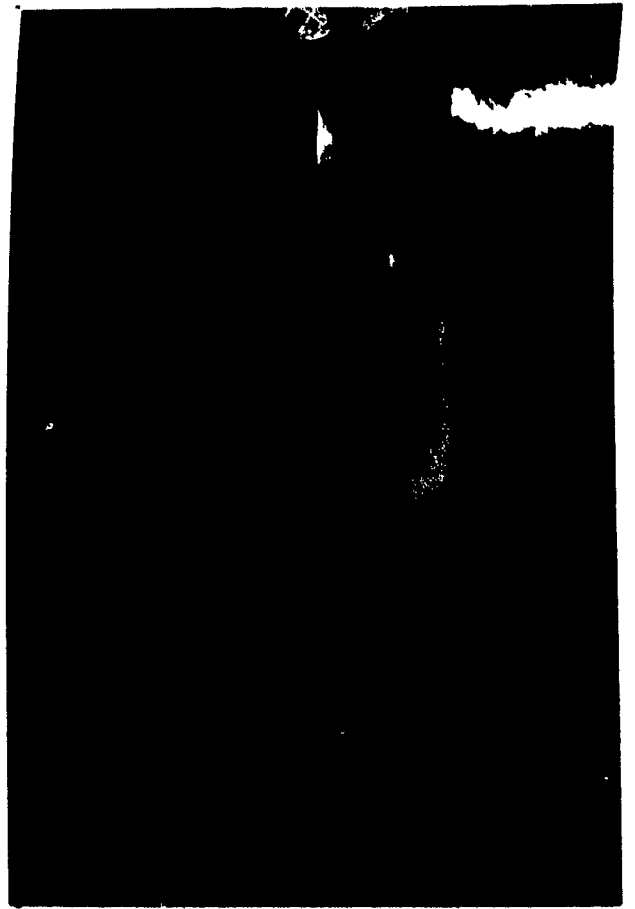
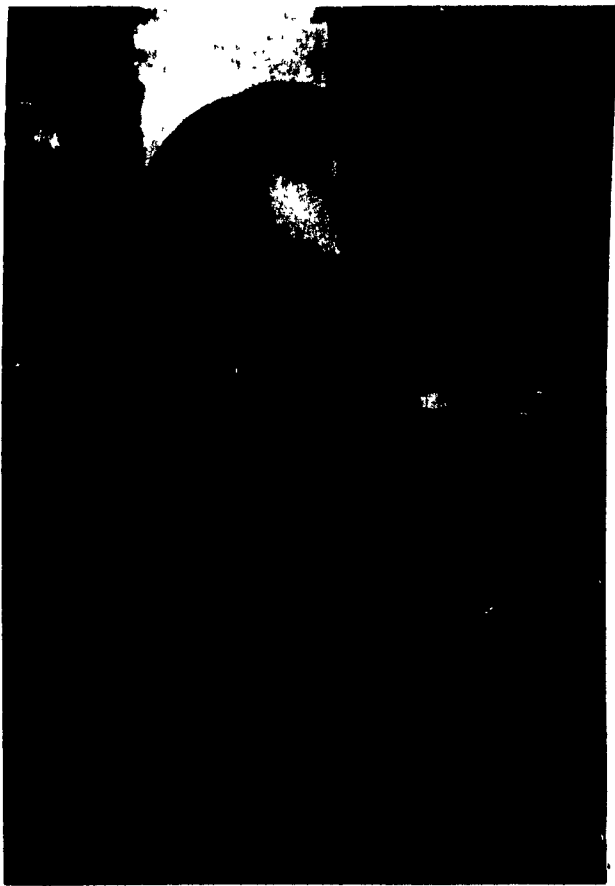
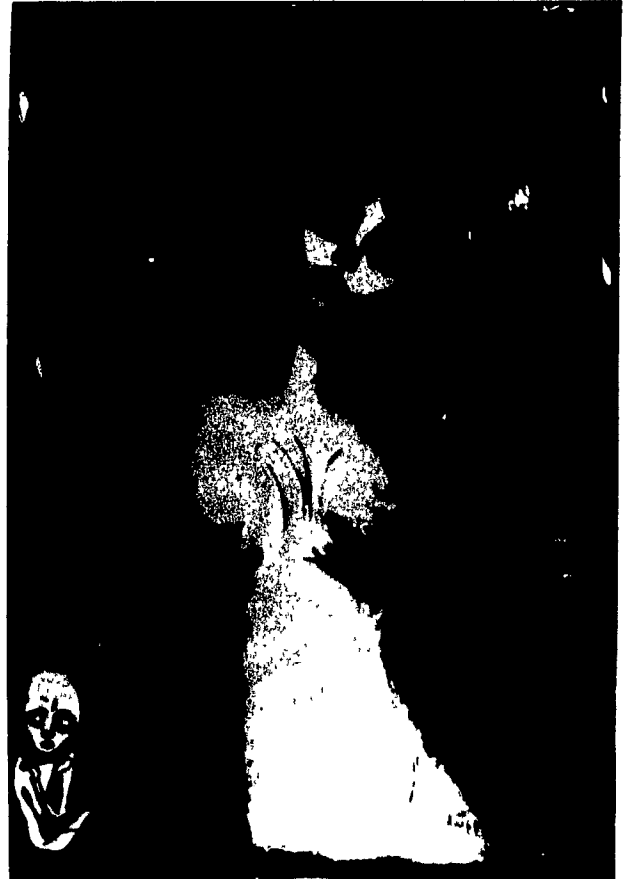


Figure 28. Edvard Munch. Madonna. 1895-1902. (right)

Edvard Munch's Madonna of 1895 combines the image of the Madonna with a sinister sensuality that is even further amplified by the symbolic red and black coloring with which she is drawn....The idea of the femme fatale is pushed here to an extraordinary depth of meaning as Munch describes the Madonna, the mother of Christ, as innately sexual and evil.

Figure 29. Franz Stuck. Eve. (or "Original Sin"). 1893. (left)

Franz Stuck's "Eve" likewise shows the "mother of men" as a decadent femme fatale, her evil nature expressed so succinctly in the head of the snake with which she is identified. This elevation of the daemonic energy of woman can be seen as a form of sexual attraction at its most extreme (and guilt-ridden) perhaps best expressed in these lines from Blake, "Energy is Eternal Delight."



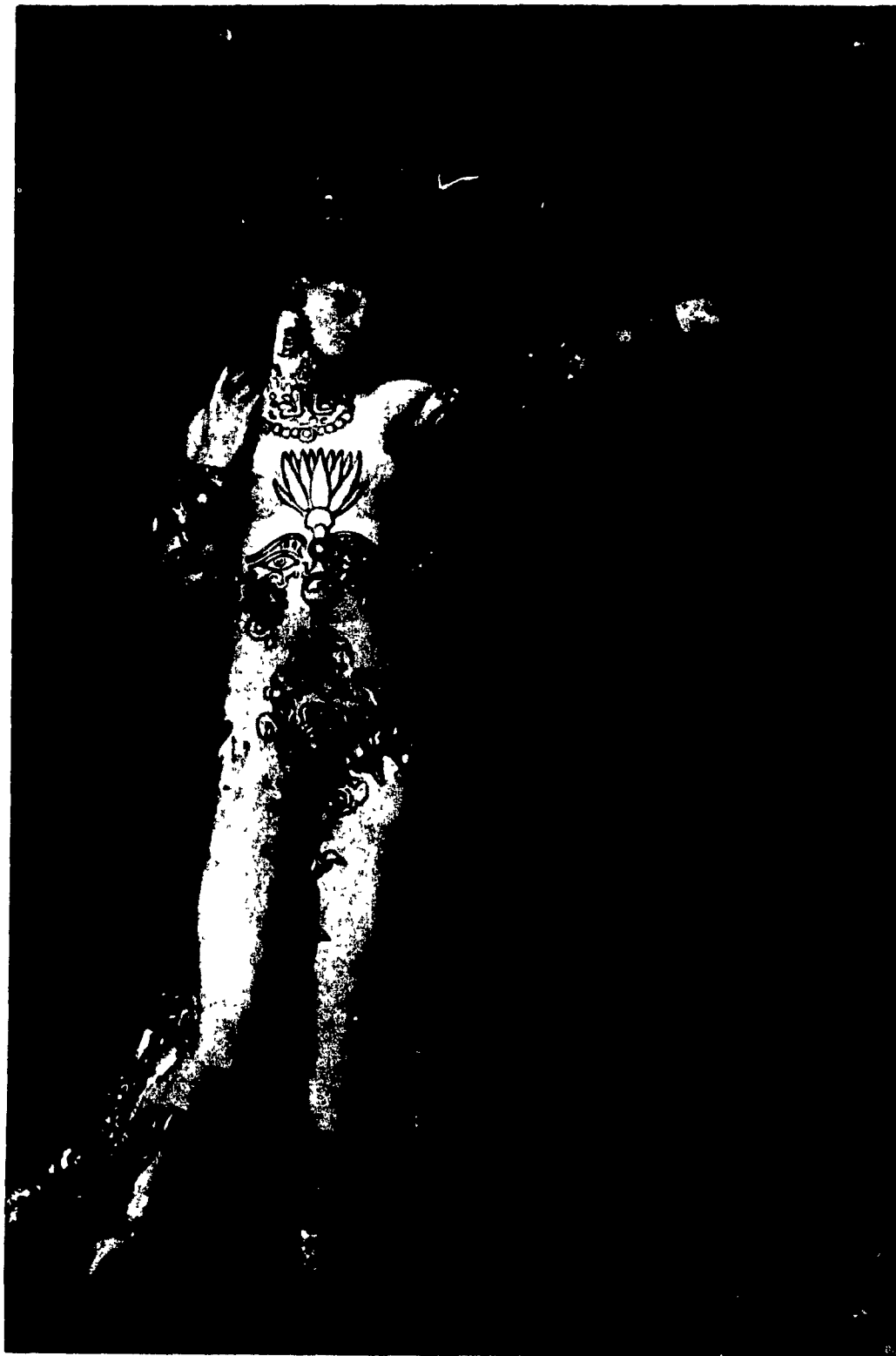
daemonic power of woman can be seen as a form of sexual attraction at its most extreme and guilt-ridden: for the attraction of evil is created by a type of amoral energy which is perhaps best expressed in these lines from Blake, "Energy is Eternal Delight". Lucifer, or the Devil, embodies this daemonic energy, and, through him, Blake suggests that it is always more attractive than a morally superior supernaturalism.

All these themes come to fruition in the image of Salome, who brings together sexuality, death, and the orient in the essential image of the Symbolist époque.¹⁵⁰ As in the painting of 1876 by Gustave Moreau, The Apparition (figure 21) she is an exotic figure who is threatening and destructive. She has acquired a new power for the weak sex, and ruthlessly dispenses with male virtue. Her image fascinated the Symbolists, who saw in it an expression of the daemonic energy of the occult and the orient that so compelled them (figure 30).

Finally, in a painting by Rochegrosse, we find a culmination of the Symbolist religious reversal of Catholicism in an image that is derived from Flaubert. The painting, titled Deesse et Chimère (figure 31) depicts the Babylonian Goddess encrusted in jewels like Salome, riding the back of the beast from the Abyss, the sea-serpent Leviathan. It is a depiction of the Apocalypse but totally transformed: here the ancient "Whore of Babylon"¹⁵¹ is none other than the archaic Goddess, Cybele, Demeter, or Isis, arrayed in a fantastic exotic costume, her foot on the head of the Beast from the abyss. The Beast rises from the abyss, and is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone; it is identified with "the dragon, that old

Figure 30. Gustave Moreau. Salome Dancing. 1874-6 (detail).

All these themes come to fruition in the image of Salome, who brings together sexuality, death, and the orient in the essential image of the Symbolist epoque....She has acquired a new power for the weak sex, ruthlessly dispensing with male virtue. Her image fascinated the Symbolists, who saw in it an expression of the daemonic energy of the occult and the orient that so attracted them.



serpent, which is the Devil and Satan"¹⁵² who heralds the imminent apocalypse in the Book of Revelations.

This constellation of images symbolizes the evil and chaos that will rule the earth at the time of the apocalypse. The "Déesse" of Rochergrosse's painting also symbolizes the daemonic, chaotic energy of the abyss. In this startling, if literal, image, we find the lineaments of a complete religious reversal in the elevation of images of chaos and the daemonic as the positive animating element that will find even fuller psychological expression in the iconography of Surrealism.

Figure 31. Rochegrosse. Déesse et Chimère. 1895.

In a painting by Rochegrosse we find a culmination of the Symbolist religious reversal of Catholicism in an image which derives from Flaubert. Déesse et Chimère depicts the Babylonian Goddess, encrusted in jewels like Salome, riding the back of the beast from the Abyss, the sea-serpent Leviathan....Here the ancient "Whore of Babylon" is none other than the archaic Goddess (Cybele, Isis) arrayed in a fantastic exotic costume, her foot on the head of the Beast from the Abyss.



IN THE MODERN CONTEXT:

DADA,

SURREALISM,

AND THEIR

IMMEDIATE PRECURSORS

Chapter IV

IN THE MODERN CONTEXT: Dada, Surrealism and their Immediate Precursors

A. HENRI ROUSSEAU, PRIMITIVISM, AND NAIVE ART

After the prolonged opulence of the Symbolist decade, many artists found themselves fascinated with primitive and naive art. The art world craved a fresh presence. They found new inspiration in the personage of Henri Rousseau (1844-1910), a charmingly naive painter commonly known as the "Douanier" in the mistaken belief that he had once been an customs inspector.¹

The Symbolist questioning of naturalism had opened the possibility of new formal languages of art. Primitivism -- that is, the emulation of primitive, traditional, or aboriginal motifs and languages of art from other cultures, without knowledge of the intrinsic purpose in the native context -- with its explicit if often derivative geometrization of form, provided the main avenue of exploration. The other route was that of naive art, personified in the work of Rousseau. The cult of the child, introduced by Romanticism and implicit in the impulse towards primitivism, initiated a new appreciation of naive art which was often referred to as "innocent", "curious", or "sincere".² Rousseau was the first of these naive artists to be recognized; unschooled by the academies, he created a startling new vision of the world that was to have a profound effect on Surrealist painting.

1. Rousseau and Surrealism

Rousseau's paintings exerted a direct influence on Surrealist art, their oddly precise realism inspiring many illusionistic Surrealist painters with the fresh and novel perceptions that they embodied. De Chirico, Tanguy, Dalí, and Magritte were each involved in the early Surrealist researches into the dream state, and their preoccupation with a dream-like transformation of perception extended into its communication in art. Rousseau's strange manner of painting sheer smooth surfaces with no obvious brushwork to detract from his vision, made each object appear to be made of the same substance. His unusual vision suggested new modes of depiction to the Surrealists, who felt the simplicity and innocence expressed in his painting were indices of "the marvelous".

Thus the paintings of Rousseau, at first scoffed at as monstrosities or sheer buffoonery by incomprehending critics, provided the initial impetus for the appreciation of naive art by the early modern artists. His work demonstrated what the Italian and Flemish primitives, also adopted by Surrealism, had only implied: the power of precise delineation (in Rousseau an exact and almost fussy realism) to create a heightened sense of reality. By its subtle plastic transformations of traditional genres of academic art -- the portrait, the still-life, the figure in a landscape -- Rousseau's work achieved a whimsical sense of disorientation and dislocation that suggested a "Surreality". The "Douanier", as he was often patronizingly called, was proclaimed one of the heroes of Surrealism. In Surrealism and Painting, André Breton writes of

the strange attraction of Rousseau's work, which he describes as "a magnetic flux which spreads towards us from his images, a quality which is... unique to his work."³ He continues:

But my investigations always pulled up sharply at the edge of Rousseau's jungle, for fear of getting lost in that inalienable adjunct of the unconscious. The strangeness of the imagery in these compositions would suffice on its own to demolish the assertion that the nature of Rousseau's most typical works was dictated by a pure and simple concern for truth (in the positivist sense of the term) in the service of a mind immune to distrust. ROUSSEAU'S WORKS HAVE ALMOST NO INTEREST WHATEVER IN TERMS OF REALISM, BUT MUST BE CONSIDERED ABSOLUTELY VALID PRECURSORS OF SURREALISM (which applies equally to Chirico's earliest paintings).⁴

Rousseau's work struck deep resonances in the Surrealist spirit, not only in their manner of depiction but in their content. He expressed an innocent conviction in the reality of the dream and the fantasy, describing exotic visions derived from the botanical and zoological texts of the era. His painting Le Rêve of 1910, (figure 32) juxtaposes the real and the imaginary in one unified vision. Rousseau wrote with simplicity to the critic who had questioned the appearance of the sofa in the jungle:

This woman, (Yadiwigha) sleeping on the sofa, dreams she is transported into the middle of the forest, hearing the notes of the charmer's pipe. This gives the motive for the sofa being in the picture.⁵

Similarly, Rousseau was to take the mundane exercise of the still life or the landscape and transform it with an aura of fantasy.

Roger Shattuck describes the particular sensibility that enters Rousseau's paintings and separates them from traditional genres of art:

Ever since Rembrandt, the intense portrayal of human character has tended to eliminate the natural world as a distraction. The face should tell all....Rousseau set his highly formal compositions against pastoral or semi-pastoral backgrounds. His refusal to separate portraiture from landscape and genre painting characterizes the 'primitive' sensibility which sees a person and the objects that surround him as a single entity. Rousseau treated his canvas as a surface upon which to combine and relate the material parts of a person's life, rather than as a means of dramatically isolating a face from all the incidentals.⁶

The sense of solitude, stillness, and mystery in Rousseau's larger works, such as The Snake Charmer, The Sleeping Gypsy, and Night of the Carnival, became an important element of Surrealist painting. Few scholars have understood the strange, Surreal effect of Rousseau's paintings, with the exception of Roger Shattuck, who contributes a persuasive analysis of their uncanny effect in his book The Banquet Years.⁷ Shattuck points out that the central contributing factor which creates the uncanny effect in Rousseau's painting stems from a certain formal device, later adopted by the Surrealists. This was to create a deep psychological tension, a sense of expectation with "a distinct feeling of awe and catastrophe",⁸ which intensifies the real into a feeling of the unreal, or the surreal. In many works by Rousseau, "a living creature confronts a mysterious presence",⁹ while only one element implies movement. His paintings are characterized by

"a stillness and formality...in the absence of normal motivation of the events taking place".¹⁰ This sense of stillness, instead of projecting a calm quietude, evokes the unsettling and uneasy effect of the uncanny. In fact, this is due to a formal technique employed by Rousseau and exploited later by the Surrealists. It was to contrast an apparently moving element, such as the flickering of the lion's tail in The Sleeping Gypsy or the movement of the snakes in The Snake Charmer,¹¹ with the hieratic formal stillness of the rest of the composition. Rousseau's use of precise delineation and the equally sharp focus which he disperses evenly across his canvas serves to create a disarming immediacy in the perception of the object for by giving the same attention to each detail, each becomes equally important. This technique was adopted by Surrealist painters to create a similar poetic tension, increasing the feelings of unease, disquietude and doom.

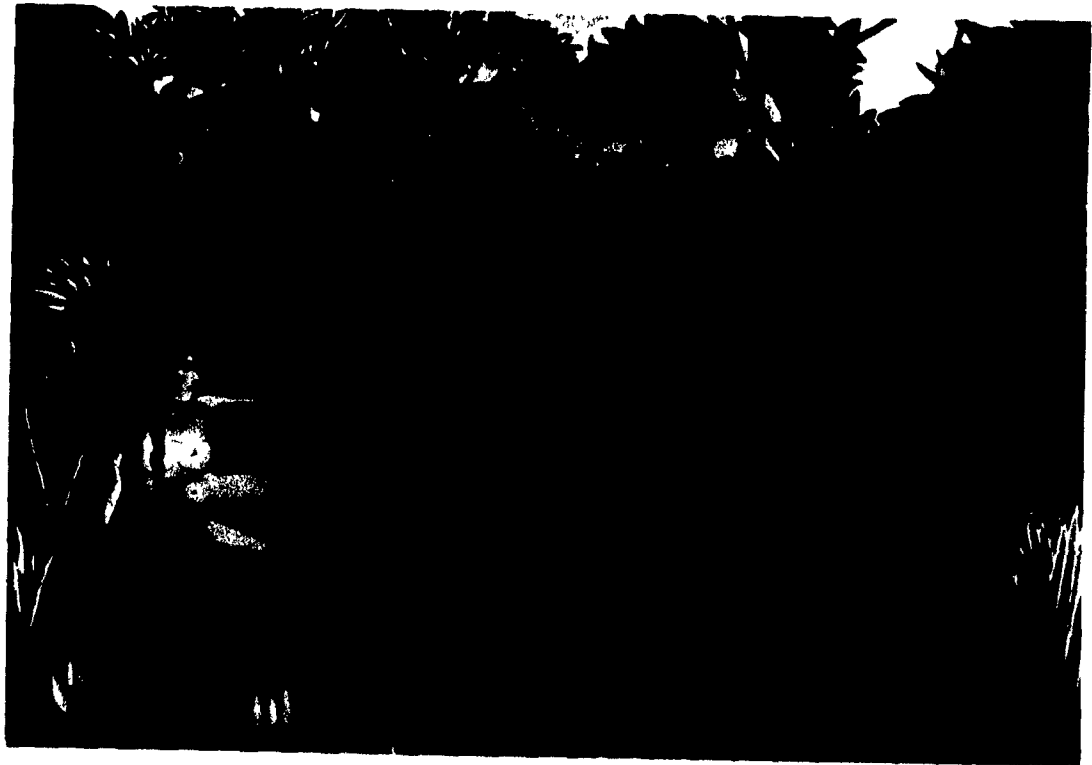
One finds a certain innocence on the part of the Surrealist painters who, like Rousseau, were willing to forgo modernist formal aesthetics in order to achieve their goal: to transform life into art. The magic realist paintings by de Chirico, Tanguy, Dali, Magritte, and Max Ernst point us back towards the real world, but **more so**. It is the real world, but transformed, intensified: a heightened sense of reality is achieved by inexplicable juxtapositions and precise delineation. By turning our awareness back towards a lived reality, their art reveals a search for authenticity, for the ultimately real; in short, for the marvelous.

Figure 32. Henri Rousseau. Le Rêve. 1910.

Rousseau's work struck deep resonances in the Surrealist spirit, not only in its manner of depiction but in its content. He expressed an innocent conviction in the reality of the dream and the fantasy, describing exotic visions derived from the botanical and zoological texts of the era. His painting Le Reve of 1910 juxtaposes the real and the imaginary in one unified vision.

Figure 33. The Surrealist Map of the World. 1929.

The Surrealist attachment to archaic art is conclusively defined by the Surrealist Map of the World, drawn in 1929, which shows the peculiar Surrealist orientation with regard to the world of Western culture. All the developed countries are depicted diminished in scale while what is currently known as the "Third World" forms the central part of the map. In this example the Surrealists prefigure the contemporary political evaluation of non-Western civilizations with a spiritual evaluation of their own.



The surrealist map of the world.

2. Rousseau, Picasso, and Primitivism

During this time (1895-1914), the increasing interest in naive art is characterized by the number of figures who claimed to be the first to have discovered Rousseau. The critic Remy de Gourmont "discovered" Rousseau, according to Philippe Jullian;¹² Apollinaire, Picasso, and Alfred Jarry each were enchanted by Rousseau's work and personality, and each have been credited with his popularization. However, as Roger Shattuck has pointed out in his insightful characterization of Rousseau, no one actually "discovered" him, for he naturally drew attention to himself through his extraordinary work. Rousseau was a long-time friend of the avant-garde writer Alfred Jarry, and perhaps met him during the time they were neighbours on the Boulevard de Port Royal in 1895.¹³ In 1896 Jarry stayed with Rousseau for three weeks after his eviction from his quarters, and it is possible that Jarry was the first to popularize Rousseau's work in the bohemian milieu that could appreciate its eccentricities. Similarly, Picasso was drawn to this unusual personality. In 1908 he hosted a banquet in honor of Rousseau at le Bateau Lavoir where he lived and worked.¹⁴ The occasion celebrated by the banquet was the acquisition of Rousseau's Portrait de Mlle. M. (1897) which Picasso found in a shop window and bought for a pittance. Picasso admired and collected the work of Rousseau, and along with the enthusiastic Apollinaire, helped to introduce his work in artistic circles. Picasso had absorbed elements from traditional primitive art as early as 1906; now he adapted and modified for his own purposes elements of unintentional overmodelling, precise delineation, and acidic

local color borrowed from the paintings of Rousseau. He found in Rousseau's unintentional distortions the inspiration for many of his own explorations into the distortions of form.¹⁵ One feels the surprisingly deep influence of Rousseau in many paintings by Picasso, as, for example, in the iconography, detail and color of —————→ Rousseau's L'enfant a la poupée of 1905 and Picasso's Maia with a Doll 1938.¹⁶ The academic aspirations of Rousseau, whose unintentional over-modelling created an effect of exaggeration that achieves a distortion rather than an illusionistic chiaroscuro, were ironically adopted by Picasso, who deliberately made use in the technique of his monumental classic period (1921-26).

2. Primitivism

While Picasso and the Cubist painters studied primitive art for formal reasons, attempting to emulate its powerful designs, by contrast the Surrealists were fascinated with archaic art primarily for its mythic content. In 1914 in New York, a show was held of African wood carvings at the Little Gallery of the Photo Secession, the first time that primitive art was shown "solely from the point of view of art"¹⁷ and not as curiosities of ethnological origin. Until then the dissemination of primitive art had been part of the general fascination with exotica exerted by Romanticism.

Archaic art offered, for several reasons, an ideal point of departure for the Surrealists. First, the content of traditional or archaic artifacts challenged the power structures of Western society, its religion, culture, and values, with new mythologies and symbolism. Exotic art offered

I a new artistic language, emulated by artists who wished to dissociate themselves from middle-class values and ideologies; for those who followed its lessons in formal structure it marked a new substantially anti-Western mode of expression. Primitive art also appealed to a snobbish esotericism practised by those in the bohemian milieu, for only those initiates to its manner of expression could grasp its secret intimations. Finally, the art of Oceania and Africa provided compelling new modes of artistic expression that proved equally appealing to both Cubism and Surrealism, if for formal and spiritual reasons respectively. The Surrealist attachment to archaic art is conclusively defined by the Surrealist map of the world, drawn in 1929, which shows the peculiar Surrealist orientation with regard to the world of Western culture (figure 33). All the developed countries are depicted diminished in scale and importance, while what is currently known as the "Third World" forms the central part of the map.¹⁸ In this example the Surrealists again prefigure the contemporary political recognition of non-western civilizations with a spiritual evaluation of their own. For them, the world was founded in the archaic stratas of thought, which coalesced conclusively with their expectations of a new psychological universe transformed by the Surreal.

The Cubists understood the tension of African carvings to stem from the aesthetics of the work alone, whereas the Surrealists were more preoccupied with the kind of vision that created such compelling work. To the Surrealist, the hierarchical space found in Australian aboriginal art as well as in psychotic art affirmed the possibility of new formal languages of art to be created. They found a drama in primitive art in its use of

lines of tension, rather than an abstraction that was commonly believed to be based on anatomical exaggeration.¹⁹ New themes were suggested by archaic art. These coincided with Freudian investigations of human instinctual drives, until the nostalgic attraction to traditional art appears to have resulted in a complete misconception of its intrinsic purposes. However, this was not the case. The Surrealists found the resemblances between Freudian theory and academic ethnology mutually illuminating. They anticipated the academic development of Freudian anthropology through their researches into myth and the human psyche. Several Surrealists were active professionally in the field of ethnology: Wolfgang Paalen, a Surrealist sculptor, was an ethnologist involved with North American Indian art; the Surrealist Michel Leiris, was an amateur anthropologist who studied the Dogon language of West Africa and possession rites in Ethiopia.²⁰ Kurt Seligmann, a long-time Surrealist painter, wrote an academic treatise on magic. Hence, the Surrealist preoccupation with non-Western cultures extends far beyond the formal considerations that were the concern of the Cubist; by contrast, they wished to learn as much as possible from these art forms, if even ultimately to transform them into a new language of art. It is this transformation of the motifs and materials of primitive art (feathers, wood, fur) that has so often lead to the belief that the Surrealists did not comprehend archaic art, but in fact, their understanding and popularization of primitive art may have initiated developments later refined by anthropology.

In attempting an revolutionary art, the Surrealists became fascinated with the function of fetishes and powerful objects in archaic religion. They were especially drawn to the art of Oceania, because of its

fantastic imagery and mythology.²¹ The fertility themes of archaic Oceanic religion seemed particularly relevant after the prolonged atrocities of World War I, when the self-destruction of Western civilization became apparent to many artists and intellectuals. The Surrealists preferred the art of Oceania and Australia to that of Africa because the latter had been adopted by Cubism. Oceanic art stems from a matriarchal culture, and its attraction for the Surrealists must also be attributed to its parallel preoccupation with the feminine. In Amour Fou, (1957) André Breton elucidates the relationship between woman and nature, yet places it within a transformed chivalric tradition of courtly love, or amour fou.²² The all-encompassing love for one woman would light the artist's imagination. The cult of the feminine in the Oceanic culture resonates thematically with the Surrealist preoccupation with heterosexual love (amour fou) and with woman as the inspiration for the artist's imagination. Thus the Surrealist preoccupation with Oceanic art extends far beyond mere aesthetic or formal considerations, into an affirmation of the mythical dimension of archaic thought.

B. DADAISM AND THE ORIGINS OF SURREALISM

The Surrealist movement grew directly from the nihilistic anti-art ideology of the Dada movement (ca. 1916-1919). Dada began in Zurich, 1916, with the opening of the Cabaret Voltaire by the poet Hugo Ball, Emmy Hennings, and fellow participants Jean Arp, Tristan Tzara, and Marcel Janco.²³ Other centres of Dada activity soon developed in Paris, Rome, Munich, Brussels and New York. The international scope of Dadaism must be seen against several concurrent historical and intellectual developments

that rapidly contribute to its mandate for anarchism and destruction. Among these factors we find implicit the change from a Copernican to an Einsteinian cosmology, paralleled only by the internal universes revealed by Freud and Jung. Psychoanalysis became established as a science in 1906 at "The First International Congress of Psychoanalysis". Einstein had formulated his theory of relativity in 1905;²⁴ with its publication in 1916, the intellectual conception of the world would change. Non-Western cultures were becoming increasingly important, intellectually and economically, to European cultural life, while colonialism faced a slow deterioration. Many different conceptions of the world were now made possible. The relative certainty with which previously given truths could be expressed sharpened a growing spiritual doubt. This so-called "crisis of faith" seemed to herald an imminent apocalypse for Western civilization.

The vogue for primitivism brought into public view an extraordinary range of archaic and traditional objects that exerted a profound effect on the Dada vision. Despite their cynicism, the Dada artists were enthralled by vague ideals of a return to a state of innocence, a primal "noble savagery", through the destruction of the decadent Western civilization. The Dadaists sought a new beginning in the psychological "tabula rasa" that they would create through the final destruction of artificiality of Western values and civilization. They were not alone in this apocalyptic view. The millennial vision of history preoccupied many scholars and thinkers after the first World War, when the apocalyptic character of "a war to end all wars" seemed to represent the nemesis of Western civilization. Oswald Spengler (1880-1936), among others, espoused the view that Western civilization was facing a dying "winter", and unfavorably compared his society with the late Roman Empire.²⁵

World War I fueled a dissolution of values keenly felt by the Dadaist artists. Dada was in essence an intentional outcry at the prolonged butchery of World War I. Jean Arp, a former Dadaist and later a Surrealist, writes of the origins of the movement in Zurich:

Revolted by the butchery of the 1914 World War, we in Zurich devoted ourselves to the arts. While the guns rumbled in the distance, we sang, painted, made collages, and wrote poems with all our might. We were seeking an art based on fundamentals, to cure the madness of the age, and a new order of things that would restore the balance between heaven and hell. We had a dim premonition that power-mad gangsters would one day use art itself as a way of deadening men's minds.²⁶

Western society, with its complacency, its bourgeois values, and its clichés, was found hollow and suspect. In its stead the Dadaist adopted primitive motifs and combined these with an anarchistic typography and design with which they expressed the absurdity and the senseless character of modern life. Tristan Tzara's sound poems emanate from his fascination with African rhythms and a misconception of foreign linguistics; his poems rely on the power and internal rhythm of sound itself to convey meaning and emotional force.

In the informal setting of the Cabaret Voltaire, the Dada group originated "performance art" the alliance of theatre, dance, poetry, and design of which Apollinaire had spoken. Theirs was an art of transience; they dispensed with art for profit or art for art's sake, because they intended to employ art to create the peculiar mental frisson that was Dada: to enthrall, horrify, challenge, entertain, enchant, and above all to shock the audience into a new way of seeing and feeling the world. Dada was a

new, modern attitude to life which exploited the absurd and the ambiguous as the threshold between reason and the irrational. Thus the Dadaists refused to accept any ideology or position except the negation of all ideologies and values. It is this complete negation of any ideological stance which differentiates Dadaism from Surrealism, yet which gives it as a movement a curiously amoral tone -- an almost Buddhistic attitude of non-attachement, which the high moral seriousness of Surrealism never truly achieves.

In rebelling against the decadence of Western civilization, Dadaism saw the supremacy of Reason as the arch-villain that had engineered the war. The efficacy of reason had been conclusively disproved by the barbarism of the war. Thus the Dadaists developed methods of creation that paralleled their own experience of the modern world:

The Dadaists felt that the means that had been adequate for describing a medieval battle, for example, could no longer be used for a delineation of the frightful experience of organized, mechanized, mass-murder. The search for a form commensurate with experience must not be bracketed with a formalism which regards as decisive the means in themselves, not the new reality that must find expression.²⁷

Chance and the absurd were the weapons with which Dada sought to destroy the pernicious logic of the era. The Dada artists experimented with methods such as automatic writing and painting, later claimed by Surrealism, which were based on Freud's research in free association. They "disintegrated the word in the 'sound poem'; in typography, traditional forms and compositions were ignored; in music 'bruitisme' (noise music) appeared".²⁸ Dada iconoclasm therefore prepared the way for later

Surrealist innovation, for it discarded all artistic conventions in its anti-ideological program. In 1918, Richard Huelsenbeck wrote of the founding of the Club Dada as an expression of chaos itself:

EINE ERKLÄRUNG DES CLUB DADA

Dada ist das Chaos, aus dem sich tausend Ordnungen erheben, die sich wieder **zum Chaos Dada verschlingen**. Dada ist der Verlauf und der Inhalt des gesamten Weltgeschehens gleichzeitig. Der Club Dada lädt die ersten Vertreter des besten deutschen Geistes zum Streit über die dadaistischen Grundsätze...²⁹

The absurd antics of the Dadaists were the reverse of an existential despair. The movement espoused a return to the origins of consciousness through the progressive elimination of mental and cultural debris; by demolishing aesthetic canons of art, bypassing the preoccupations of technique, and avoiding any attachments to philosophies or ideologies, the Dadaists hoped to reveal the **tabula rasa** of the human mind. In 1920, Richard Huelsenbeck published the following statement of the Dada motives:

...Dada ist der tänzerische Geist über den Moralen der Erde. Dada ist die grösste Parallelerscheinung zu den relativistischen Philosophien dieser Zeit, Dada ist kein Axiom, Dada ist ein Geisteszustand, der unabhängig von Schulen und Theorien ist, der die Persönlichkeit selbst angeht, ohne sie zu vergewaltigen. Man kann Dada nicht auf Grundsätze festlegen. Die Frage "was ist Dada?" ist undadaistisch und schülerhaft in demselben Sinn wie es diese Frage vor einem Kunstwerk oder einem Phaenomen des Lebens wäre...

Dada ist unmittelbar und selbstverständlich. Dada ist man, wenn man lebt. Dada ist der Indifferenzpunkt zwischen Inhalt und Form, Weib und Mann, Materie und Geist indem es die Spitze des magischen Dreiecks ist das sich über der linearen Polarität der menschlichen Dinge und Begriffe erhebt.³⁰

Dada called politics, ideology, art, religion, and ultimately the nature of European culture itself, into question. It favored instead, a direct, if even inarticulate, response to human experience: "Dada ist man, wenn man lebt". The immediacy of the artist's response was revealed in the new forms and materials which were spontaneously created by the Dadaists, often with the principle of chance as the primary operative factor in the decision-making process. But while obviously inventive, it conclusively differentiated itself from other forms of modern art. Willy Verkauf writes: "Dadaism was opposed to cubism, futurism, and expressionism; it refused them above all as 'formalism', as a degeneration of anti-naturalism, though it used their formal elements for the expression of its own message."³¹

1. Schwitters, Duchamp, and the Dada Object

The Dadaist attempted to expose the poverty of Western philosophical thought and to develop, in the face of the chaos engendered by World War I, a more empathetic humanism. The obviously inverted romanticism of Dada thought is apparent in their entirely modern dramatization of the object and the machine. For example, in 1920 the Dada artist Kurt Schwitters began his experimentations with Merz (roughly, refuse or discards) referring to the material with which he would create a poetic art that interfused the materials of everyday life with those of art.³² His sound poem, Die Ursonate reveals a typical Dadaist preoccupation with the nature of primal sound, yet another aspect of the search for primal consciousness. In his Merzbau, (Hanover, 1920-27)³³ Schwitters reconstructed the entire interior of a two story house with discarded objects and refuse and thus demonstrated a new appreciation of humble or

rejected materials. This developed into the later Surrealist predilection for the "found object". His personal philosophy of Merz expresses the Dadaist desire for the reunification of art and life. Schwitter's approach decisively challenged the limited conventions of beauty and the restriction of "artistic" materials. In 1918, he wrote:

All values exist only by virtue of their relation to one another...all limitations imposed upon a material are petty. Out of this recognition I created Merz, at first as the sum of single branches of art, Merz-painting, Merz-poetry...my final ambition is the unification of art and non-art to result in a universal Merz philosophy of life.³⁴

The Merz constructions of Schwitter's were closely allied in spirit to Marcel Duchamp's readymades. The readymades, which he began in New York in 1914, were mass-produced ordinary objects which he elevated and displayed as non-utilitarian art objects. They exemplified Duchamp's anti-art position, favoring instead a return to the substance of everyday life in an iconoclastic aesthetic of **the banal**. Duchamp proposed a kind of Buddhist non-discrimination³⁵ to radically transform modern awareness, declaring that "the worst danger is that one might arrive at a form of taste."³⁶ To avoid both good and bad taste, he advocated the "irony of affirmation" and put forward with black humour, "absurd propositions intended to disturb rather than provoke laughter."³⁷ In revisioning the ordinary, Duchamp created a disturbing feeling of the extraordinary. He thereby attempted to create "a new thought for the object",³⁸ distancing it from mundane concerns in a poetic dramatization of the machine and modern production. Similarly, his word games and riddles intentionally confront

and disrupt the linear organization of thought: "Take a cubic centimetre of tobacco smoke and paint its interior and exterior surfaces with waterproof paint."³⁹

2. Dada/Surrealism

Duchamp's riddle-poems and conundrum objects form an important link between Dada and Surrealism. Whereas the Dadaists used riddles and the absurd to provoke, the Surrealists began to use them to provoke laughter -- that feeling of recognition that we call the Surreal. Both movements were grounded in the nature of the riddle, which, being both playful and serious, absurd and profound, seems intentionally obscure because it offers no literal answers. But it offers something else: a recognition -- the peculiar mental frisson that so delighted the Dadaists or the eerie, oneiric presence that fascinated the Surrealists. These elements, which are part of the phenomenon of the riddle, have no better description than that given by Johan Huizinga in Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture:

A riddle is a sacred thing full of secret power, hence a dangerous thing. In its mythological or ritual context it is nearly always what German philologists know as the Halsrätsel or "capital riddle", which you either solve or forget your head. The player's life is at stake. A corollary of this is that it is accounted the highest wisdom to put a riddle nobody can answer.⁴⁰

From this perspective one must view Duchamp's role for many years as high-priest of the avant-garde. His Large Glass reflects darkly his obsession with the mechanization of life, combining serious reflection with absurdist play. For many years it has been a cult object among younger

members of the avant-garde. His refusal to succumb to either finance or fame earned him a shamanic persona. It is, in fact, his consistent employment of the riddle as the philosophical clue to his art, in the non-functional readymades, or in his provocative statements, or in his life itself that distinguishes his activity from sheer absurdity and grants it an emotional and philosophical depth. His paradoxical statements are indeed intended to provoke that sudden laughter of recognition which occurs in moments of illumination; these moments -- epiphanies of extended time and space -- were isolated and called the marvelous by André Breton and the Surrealists.

Dada's iconoclasm ultimately annihilated the movement itself. It was doomed to self-destruct, for after it had disrupted the aesthetic conventions of academic art, shocked the bourgeoisie, and triumphed in the absurd, the committed Dadaist had "only two honest alternatives open to him: suicide or silence."⁴¹ Dada itself had been co-opted by a jaded public hungry for new sensations and amusements which the movement had initially provided. At first the Dada happenings actually shocked the public (as they were intended to do), but after a while their nonchalant absurdities acquired the unmistakable aura of a fashionable "radical chic". Ironically, the movement whose mandate was to "épater le bourgeoisie" itself became but a diversion for a bored public.

3. After Dada, Surrealism

This development did not occur unnoticed. In 1919, Tristan Tzara, the seminal leader of the Dada movement arrived in Paris, "awaited like a

messiah".⁴² Since its inception in 1916, Dada had become an international movement. A large group of Parisian devotees eagerly awaited his visit. Paris saw an ever-spiralling series of Dada performances, rife with Dadaesque non-sequiturs, that ultimately began to tire the populace; but long before that they began to peeve the serious young André Breton. The break with Dada became official in 1922, when Breton, a participant in the French Dada movement, called a conference on the direction of the modern spirit, titled "Congrès International pour la Détermination des Directives et la Défense de l'Esprit Moderne."⁴³ The very idea of the conference seemed to contradict the motives of Dada, and as Tristan Tzara stated in protest: "Dada is not modern. Dada repudiated modern art as well as traditional art, and art itself."⁴⁴ Consequently, dissension broke out between the Dadaists, lead by Tristan Tzara, and the proto-Surrealists, lead by André Breton and his followers. The seminal Surrealist group was formed by the ideological encounter of these two personalities, who defined the character of these movements through their own vision. Tzara's Dadaism has always smacked of a rough-and-ready eclecticism, with a sardonic reply to every cultural event, while Breton's definition of Surrealism has always been characterized by a high moral seriousness, nearly Byzantine in its philosophical complexity.

André Breton, Louis Aragon and Philip Soupault had founded the avant-garde magazine Littérature in 1919, in Paris. Dedicated to Apollinaire, it published Dadaist and avant-garde literature, along the order of Dada periodicals imported from Germany. A supporter of the Dada movement, Littérature rebelled when they observed that Dada had been usurped by fashion. They felt it had sacrificed its integrity for the entertainment of the bourgeoisie.

A series of contentious encounters between Izara and Breton, which continued throughout their acquaintance since 1919, culminated in the ideological stand-off surrounding the 1922 "Congrès International pour la Détermination des Directives et la Défense de l'Esprit Moderne." Consequently, Littérature under the guidance of Breton took a new ideological stance and espoused a philosophy of poetic inspiration and hope: Surrealism.

Despite its negation of Dadaism, Surrealism found its basis in the iconoclasm of the Dadaists. Surrealism as envisioned by Breton was to be a totally new activity -- the play of man's mind within the territory of the unconscious. Dada's negation of all accepted systems of thought provided the platform from which Surrealist fantasies could spring. As poets, they pursued the mytho-poetic dimension of life, finding the marvelous immanent in the very process of life itself. Hence, Surrealism saw itself as "a negation of negation; a new affirmation"⁴⁵ a radical act of the mind that afforded regeneration to the European soul after the prolonged crisis of World War I. Michel Carrouges, a peripheral Surrealist who has always pursued religious meaning, observes:

Surrealism is above all a movement of revolt.
Every truly strong doctrine is based upon a vital
experiment, an experiment which had known and won out
over despair. No one can reach the foundations of life
who has not felt the old forms break apart.⁴⁶

Surrealism attempts to reach the foundations of life and to orient the world from the uniquely creative resource which it mines: the unconscious mind. It used methods that had been employed for centuries:

the occult, seances, and meditation, newly imported from the East by the seeress Madame Helena Blavatsky; it also used new resources such as dream-reading, mesmerism, and trances. Above all, it advocated an entirely new method of insight revealed by their scientific hero, Sigmund Freud.⁴⁷ This was psychoanalysis. It was the route through which one could bypass the domineering, egotistical demands of Reason (Freud would have called it the superego) and enter the delightful domain of the imagination and the dream. It offered solace to mankind in the form of the dream -- rather, of many dreams, each equally important, each offering a multiplicity of the Surreal. As Johan Huizinga has remarked:

In principle there is only one answer to every question....It can be found if you know the rules of the game....On the other hand, a thing may be figuratively represented in so many ways as to allow of concealment in the most diverse riddles. Often the solution depends wholly on the knowledge of the secret or sacred names of things.⁴⁸

These multiple facets or revelations of the Surreal were also the signs of a shift in consciousness from the world of conscious, rational order, to an unconscious multiplicity of meaning. Thus, the concept of Freudian unconscious and the Surrealist unconscious became interfused in the movement's self-definition.

Ever since the public has taken this self-definition of Surrealism as a formal truth. But it is immediately apparent from the proclamatory tone of most histories of Surrealism, most often written by Surrealists, that the tenor of Surrealism was a decidedly non-scientific one. Instead, it depended on poetry -- that is, the metaphors of a direct response to experience -- to define its goal.

Maurice Naudeau observes that Surrealism

was envisaged by its founders not as a new artistic school but as a means of knowledge, a discovery of continents which had not been systematically explored: the unconscious, the marvelous, the dream, madness, hallucinatory states -- ...the other side of the logical decor.⁴⁹

Freudian dream theory was but one facet in the nexus of influences which were collected by the Surrealists in their exploration of the imaginal, the non-logical, and the Surreal.

C. SIGMUND FREUD, "MAGUS OF SURREALISM"

It is generally accepted that Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) is the major ideological influence on Surrealist thought, and more specifically that his concept of the unconscious was the single motivating factor in Surrealist activity. Although it must be acknowledged that Freud exerted a strong influence on Surrealist thought, his influence was neither as extensive nor as singular as has previously been believed. In this section we will clarify the nature of this influence, and demonstrate that an equally strong impulse was contributed by the painter Giorgio de Chirico which rivals even that of Freud. De Chirico's poetic theory of the imagination contributed a radical new mysticism to the Surrealist vision but his substantial contribution to theoretical Surrealism has been obscured by time, neglect, and the politics of the art world.⁵⁰

In pursuing further the common presupposition that Freud supplied the major intellectual influence on Surrealism, one finds that it is based primarily on a small though prominent passage in the first Manifesto of Surrealism of 1924. In it, Breton puts forth his pivotal definition of Surrealism as "pure psychic automatism":

SURREALISM, n. psychic automatism in its pure state by which one proposes to express - verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner - the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.

ENCYCLOPEDIA. Philosophy. Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested play of thought. It tends to ruin once and for all, all other psychic mechanisms and to substitute itself for them in solving all the principal problems of life.⁵¹

It is this passage that is most frequently cited with reference to the Freudian basis for Surrealism, because Freud was one of the first scholars to experiment with automatic writing techniques -- although only in the medical context of psychoanalysis. This passage has since acquired a kind of life of its own, for any mention of "psychic automatism" immediately calls forth the name of Freud, who used the word "automatism" to define his psychoanalytic method of free association as the loosening of conscious control over the "automatic" expression of the unconscious.

Immediately before giving his proclamatory definition of Surrealism, and thereby asserting his territorial rights over the use of the term,⁵² Breton refers to his initial encounters with Freudian theory. He describes his experiments with automatic monologue as the introduction to his understanding of the Surreal:

Completely preoccupied as I still was with Freud at that time, and familiar as I was with his methods of examination which I had had some slight occasion to use on some patients during the war, I resolved to obtain from myself what we were trying to obtain from them, namely, a monologue on the part of the critical faculties, a monologue consequently unencumbered by the slightest inhibition and which was, as closely as possible, akin to spoken thought.⁵³

Hence, Breton derives his concept of "psychic automatism" from Freud, but it was not in essence Freudian. Breton, it must be remembered, was an eclectic thinker who drew from many diverse sources. His experience as a medical orderly during the war ignited his interest in the human unconscious.⁵⁴ However, he was equally prone to experiments with the occult, in the form of seances, trances, and mind-reading, as can be induced from his rather free-form interpretations of Freudian "automatism". Indeed, it is also common knowledge that the Surrealists used the new science of Freudian theory, as well as Einstein's researches in theoretical physics, to lend to their own movement a gloss of the scientific which colored it with a certain serious glamour. This also served to justify their explorations in the eyes of skeptics, who would be more likely to believe a scientific theory. In fact, the headquarters of the movement, the "Bureau des Recherches Surréaliste", and its platform "Le Révolution Surréaliste", are characterized by an intense identification with the scientific method, the former by the very ponderousness of its name, and the latter by its stark black and white presentation and scientific format. This type of presentation and self-definition seems vaguely familiar, and indeed on further analysis it is highly reminiscent of Madame Blavatsky's "scientific" explorations of human consciousness or the mystification surrounding Mesmeric hypnosis as "animal magnetism", or even the "orgone" theories of Wilhelm Reich.⁵⁵ It is, in fact, a kind of **scientism** rather than the rigour of the scientific method which is equally characterized by the concurrent development of the Prague School of semiotics, which also drew from mystical ideas of "sign" and gesture⁵⁶ -- the whole domain surrounded by the unmistakable miasma

of occultism. And it is within this context of the Occult Revival that the work of Freud must also be placed.

1. Freud and the Occult

We have already seen that Freud shared certain interests with practitioners of the occult, who, like him, sought the invisible reality behind the visible one.⁵⁷ Freud's interest in the uncanny, dreams, and telepathy may be traced throughout his career, and becomes a preoccupation from the time of the publication of The Psychoanalysis of Dreams (Die Traumdeutung) in 1900 until the mid-nineteen-twenties, at which point he was adamantly trying to dissociate himself from Jung and other occultists, while simultaneously attempting to legitimize his fledgling new science.⁵⁸ Today, with the excessive popularization of Freudian psychology, the very invocation of his name provokes the image of the voo-doo-like psychiatrist-priest, finding solutions to complex riddles within the unconscious human mind. Part of the popularization of Freud is, in fact, due to the efforts of the Surrealists, who bandied his name throughout Europe and later, in America, in order to establish sources and justify Surrealist activity: hence the fascination with psychology in intellectual and artistic circles described in contemporaneous novels such as Aldous Huxley's Point-Counterpoint of 1928.⁵⁹ But behind the popular image of Freud, another still rigorous and scientific profile emerges which must be seen within its historical context, undistorted by the specialization of contemporary social science.

The context of **mind research** within which Freud worked had been dominated for centuries by the occult, by the parapsychological researches

and spiritual marginality of the seers, psychics, and mystics who populated the bohemian milieu at the fringes of academe. They often adopted new scientific research when the results buttressed their own concerns for the invisible life of man; hence Mesmerism's marginal position between occultism and modern science at the end of the nineteenth century.⁶⁰ The spillover of scientific ideas into the bohemian milieu of late nineteenth century Vienna is further compounded by the fact that Freud was the first to establish psychology as a science. Indeed, it had existed before him in that domain of parapsychological research called wissenschaftliche Okkultisten⁶¹: the domain of hidden, secret knowledge. Psychic research was populated by figures such as Mesmer, Madame Helena Blavatsky, Papus, and Rasputin, each of whom professed to hold open the doors of perception. The occultists were eager to absorb Freud's empirical research into the human unconscious when it served their purpose, while Freud, in turn, condemned occultism as "that black tide of mud"⁶² in his abhorrence of a civilization based on superstition and the irrational. His later revulsion towards the occult (c. 1910) may stem from his troubled relationship with Jung, who looked at occultism more favorably and continued to study it throughout his life. But as we shall see, Freud was inescapably involved with occult issues, if only due to historical circumstance and the esoteric nature of his interests.

It is common knowledge that Freud drew from the teachings of Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815) to develop the medical applications for hypnosis.⁶³ The pioneering work of Mesmer into the trance state had been explored previously by Freud's mentor, Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893) in the application of hypnotic trances to treat various neurophysiological disorders. Charcot laboured under the mistaken belief that a subject

easily hypnotized was for all intents and purposes physically ill.⁶⁴ When the young Freud went to study with Charcot in 1885, the elder doctor's theories had already been disproved, namely by Hippolyte Bernheim (1840-1919), who in 1884 questioned the notion that hypnosis was related to illness, and demonstrated instead its relation to human suggestibility. Therefore, in allying himself with Charcot and the scientific uses of hypnosis, Freud had already placed himself in a precarious position which was likely to be challenged by the medical establishment, as indeed it was only a year later in 1886, when Freud presented a paper, "On Male Hysteria", to the Vienna Medical Society. By pursuing the study of hypnosis even after the barrage of criticism that ensued, Freud perhaps unwittingly located himself at the fringe of academic respectability, for hypnotism also was exceedingly attractive to the various occult thinkers, theosophists, and faith-healers who used it to establish Mesmer's theories of animal magnetism and spirit-healing. The situation was even further confused by the immense popularity of Mesmerism in America where it had travelled under the guise of **Spiritualism** since 1850. It is illuminating to note that the Spiritualist, Dr. John Bovee Dods presented nine lectures on his "Electrical Psychology" to the American Senate,⁶⁵ illustrating the enormous appeal of occult hypnosis to the general populace at the time. While Freud eventually withdrew from the use of hypnosis because of its embarrassing side effect of provoking desirous advances on the part of his patients,⁶⁶ his interest remained in the invisible and unknown dimension of human experience that he named **the unconscious**.

Another area in which the usual characterization of Freud's scientific logic and linearity can be questioned is his definition of **the**

soul. In a controversial article titled "Freud and the Soul", published in 1982, Bruno Bettelheim argues that Freud's use of the word soul (Seele) has been incorrectly translated and reduced to **mind** by Freud's English translators.⁶⁷ He points out that such clinical Latin terms as ego, super-ego, and id have been substituted for Freud's use of the familiar German ich, es, and uber-ich, thus distorting and dehumanizing the richness of the essentially humanistic nature of Freud's enterprise. He argues that Freud has been made to seem an unfeeling and coldly logical thinker, whereas in fact the opposite is true:

In his work and in his writings, Freud often spoke of the **soul** - of its nature and structure, its development, its attributes, how it reveals itself in all we do and dream. Unfortunately, nobody who reads him in English could guess this, because nearly all his many references to the soul, and to matters pertaining to the soul, have been excised in translation.⁶⁸

Bettelheim supports his argument with many examples of Freud's poetic vernacular German being squeezed into tight scientific boxes. In particular, he cites the dogmatic suppression of the term **soul** from Freud's English translations:

Of all the mistranslations, not one has hampered our understanding of Freud's humanistic views more than the elimination of his references to the soul (die Seele). Freud evokes the image of the soul quite frequently - especially in crucial passages where he is attempting to provide a broad view of his system...⁶⁹

The humanistic nature of Freud's inquiries is supported by the following excerpt from Freud's "Psychical Treatment" (Treatment of Souls) of 1905:

"Psyche" is a Greek word and its German translation is 'soul'. Psychical treatment hence means 'treatment of the soul'....Psychical treatment wishes to signify much more; namely, treatment originating in the soul, treatment -- of psychic or bodily disorders - by measures which influence above all and immediately the soul of man.

(Psyche ist ein griechisches Wort und lautet in deutscher Übersetzung Seele. Psychische Behandlung heisst demnach Seelenbehandlung....Psychische Behandlung will vielmehr besagen: Behandlung von der Seele aus, Behandlung - seelischer oder Körperlicher Störungen - mit Mitteln, welche zunächst und unmittelbar auf das Seelische des Menschen einwirken).⁷⁰

2. Freud and the Scholars

The reception to Bettelheim's thesis has been controversial, to say the least. Many scholars claim that the English translations of Freud are necessarily more scientific because English is a more specific, scientific language.⁷¹ Some feel that the English translation is even an intellectual improvement on Freud's conceptually muddy German. But the main exception to a new, more humanistic portrait of Freud derives from the fact that Freud picked his English translators himself, the most important of whom is James Strachey, brother of the English author Lytton Strachey and translator of the definitive collected works of Freud. Bettelheim acknowledges that Freud was aware of the technical nature of his English translations but suggests that perhaps he felt this more positivistic approach was more appealing to a materialistic American society:

Most of Freud's writings were published in English during his lifetime and all existing translations of his work into English were authorized either by Freud himself or by his estate. Since Freud read and wrote English fluently, it is hard to understand how he could have permitted translations that, in the words of Ernest Jones, his associate and biographer, were 'not only seriously inaccurate', but 'unworthy of Freud's style and gave a misleading impression of his personality.' Perhaps his low esteem for the materialism of American society had something to do with his indifference in this matter. Jones reports that when he remarked to Freud that it was 'a pity'

that his work was not being presented to the English speaking world in 'a more worthy form,' Freud replied, 'I'd rather have a good friend than a good translator.'⁷²

It is curious to note that the main opposition to Bettelheim's revisioning of Freud has come from none other than the American Psychoanalytic Association, the very organization that would have a vested interest in maintaining a positivistic approach to psychoanalysis -- "positivism being the most important English philosophical tradition".⁷³

The issue of Freud and the scholars cannot stop here, for the simple reason that Freud, like that other great figure of modernism, Picasso, has been seen isolated and out of context from his historical background for too long. As in recent reassessments of Picasso (such as John Berger's insightful The Success and Failure of Picasso⁷⁴) Bruno Bettelheim has attempted a new perspective on Freud, sensitive to his language, his cultural background, and his concerns. He too has been caught by the protean quality of the man himself, and perhaps is over-zealous in "humanizing" Freud, for he has neglected to look for more ordinary human motivations such as ambition and self-preservation, which Freud, from all accounts, certainly had in plenty.

A salient quality of Freud's life is his intense need to legitimize his new science of psychoanalysis as **science**, over and against the occult affiliations of psychic research. His overriding concern to differentiate himself from the occultists stems from the time of his break with Jung, who had always professed an interest in the occult. In fact, Freud's use of the term "soul" is very much in line with the occult Theosophical use of the term to signify the total summation of the human personality. This is confirmed by Freud's early and continuing association with certain Viennese occultists, such as Friedrich Eckstein, "the devoted Wagnerian

and follower of Madame Blavatsky,⁷⁵ and author of an occult work titled Cosmogony (1916); and with Dr. Wilhelm Fliess (1858-1928) the originator of scientific theories of "periodicity" and several astrological and numerical works on prediction such as The Course of Life (1906) and Of Life and Death (1909), the latter published under the theosophical and Volkisch publisher Eugen Diedricks of Jena.⁷⁶ Freud still maintained an interest in occult thought after the break with Jung demonstrated by his membership in the London-based "Society for Psychical Research" from 1911 on, and by his several publications concerned with the occult including "The Occult Significance of Dreams" of 1925, and "Dreams and Telepathy" of 1922.⁷⁷

In short, despite his early affiliations with occult and scientific thinkers, through which he recognized their common goals, Freud preferred instead to legitimize psychoanalysis in the medical establishment as **science**. A more clinical English translation such as those cited by Bettelheim, would serve only to further enhance the scientific respectability of his work and encourage its wide-spread acceptance. Freud himself was not unaware of this: in fact, he is responsible for it--he encouraged it in his ambition to firmly establish the **new science** of psychoanalysis.

3. Freud and the Surrealists

We have seen how Freud's interest in the hidden and secret areas of the psyche was traditionally shared by certain practitioners of the occult, especially Wilhelm Fliess, Friedrich Eckstein, and by implication, C. G. Jung, although they pursued these interests with entirely different methods. In contrast to occult superstition, Freud employed a type of

scientific empiricism in his reasonings about the irrational, developing the method of psychic automatism to reveal subconscious thoughts through free association. In turn, Breton and the Surrealists had early recognized that the study of madness, dream, and automatic thought could reveal an undiscovered territory of the mind that held promise for the future in the meaning it concealed--and they made use of both occult and scientific or empirical methods. Freud's techniques of free association and automatic writing provided fodder for the Surrealists in their polemic against the conventional mentality. "Pure psychic automatism" as derived from Freud was a method that would allow the Surrealist artist or writer to become a recording device for the subconscious: thoughts were allowed to travel untrammelled from the subconscious mind through the hands, and thence through the brush or pencil.

This technique, however, was but one element in the combination of occult and scientific motifs that were used to construct the edifice of Surrealism. The phenomena of the dream, upon which Freud had cast a scientific intelligence, pointed towards "the presence of a new reality which seeks to make its way into the reality frozen by our conventions":⁷⁸ a **Surreality**. The Surrealists were just as willing to pursue this new reality through traditional supernaturalism as through Freudian automatism, and hence they resorted to unusual combinations of means to stimulate the creative imagination: trances, chanting, seances, and a new spontaneous element of surprise in order to achieve a glimpse of the Surreal.

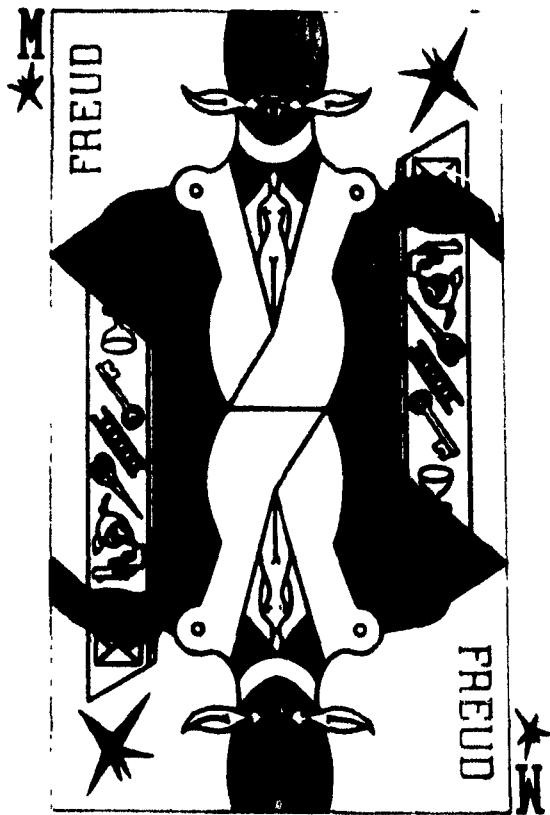
Ironically, the Surrealist view of Freud is succinctly and humourously summarized by the Surrealist playing card, Freud, Magus of Dream, created by Oscar Dominguez at a meeting of the central Surrealist

Figure 34. Oscar Dominguez. Surrealist Playing Card: Freud, Magus of Dream. 1940. (right)

Ironically, the Surrealist view of Freud is succinctly and humourously summarized by the Surrealist playing card, Freud, Magus of Dream, created by Oscar Dominguez at a meeting of the central Surrealist group in Marseilles, 1940, where they invented a new set of playing cards. The suit of spades was replaced with that of dream, which was headed by Freud, the Magus of Dream. The Freud card perhaps irreverently illustrates the great master with a head of wood grain, his personage overgrown with punning images of the female body which provocatively make up his tie, mustache, and torso. The whole image is framed by suggestive allusions to The Psychoanalysis of Dreams, with the symbols of a revolver, a key, a scissors, and a ladder flanking the figure.

Figure 35. Giorgio de Chirico. Self Portrait: And What Shall I Worship Save the Enigma? 1911. (left)

Just as Freud provided the scientific basis for Surrealist thought, so too the artist Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978) simultaneously provided in both his art and his writings the theoretical subtext for Surrealism. His early self-portrait of 1911 prefigures the movement's transcendent aim: he inscribed it with the motto, "And what shall I worship save the Enigma?"



group in Marseilles, 1940, where they invented a new set of playing cards.⁷⁹ The cards illustrated the four cardinal points of Surrealist thought by replacing the four conventional suits with those of Love, Dream, Revolution, and Knowledge, and depicted some of the intellectual heroes of the movement such as Freud, Hegel, and Baudelaire. The suit of spades was replaced by that of **dream**, which was headed by Freud, the Magus of Dream. The Freud card (Figure 34) perhaps irreverently illustrates the great master with a head of wood grain, his personage overgrown with punning images of the female body which provocatively make up his tie, mustache, and torso. The whole image is framed by suggestive allusions to The Psychoanalysis of Dreams, with a revolver, a key, a scissors, a ladder, a rose and a wine glass flanking the figure.

What kind of attitude must we take in order to understand this idealistic yet irreverent expression of Surrealism? The committed iconoclasm of the Surrealists demands an attitude of ironic detachment, a willingness to be amused by their absurd antics yet to recognize the underlying idealism which impels the movement. The four major preoccupations of the group, seen in the card deck as Love, Dream, Revolution, and Knowledge, express the interpenetration of occult and scientific motifs -- revolutionary utopianism and supernatural spiritualism -- that characterize the history of Surrealism. These tensions are reflected in the Surrealist approach to Freudian thought. While originally the focus of the movement lay in the use of experimental methods to invoke creativity, a rift began to appear between the logic of the scientific method and the sudden inspirational aspect of creative activity. The literary men who dominated the early formulation of Surrealism, Breton, Louis Aragon and Paul Eluard, at first advocated these

more scientific methods, which in turn were radically modified by Surrealist artists who found that too strict an adherence to Surrealist doctrine as defined by Breton was detrimental to the Surreal effect of their art. In contrast to the scientific character that Freudian theory contributed to Surrealism, an equally powerful and influential theory of the imagination was derived from the poetic musings of the artist Giorgio de Chirico.

The resolution of Freudian scientific empiricism and de Chirico's poetic theory of the imagination ultimately proved confusing to the movement. According to Maurice Nadeau:

Surrealism mistrusted the habitual procedures of scientific method, in this case the logical apparatus, and resorted to the means habitually used by poets: intuition, inspiration, chiefly concretized in images.⁸⁰

The Surrealist conception of the creative imagination by necessity exceeded the rigid delimitations of scientific experiment. The imagination itself was elevated as the key to dream and to Surreality. A new philosophy of "poetic empiricism" was suggested through the writings of Giorgio de Chirico. In Surrealism and Painting, Breton wrote of the painter Jean Miro:

Empiricism can achieve almost miraculous results in the healing of certain spiritual ailments. Behind the incantations...it is possible to see a pitchfork in every star...to see a feathered animal in terms of its feathers, a furred animal in terms of its hairs...to demand nothing from reality but the super-expressive.⁸¹

Thus the scientific empiricism of Freud seceded to the poetic empiricism initially espoused by Giorgio de Chirico.

Inevitably Surrealist painting has gained a more widespread recognition than its philosophy, despite doubts that painting could

express intellectual paradox in the same way as language. The fascination exerted by much Surrealist painting stems largely from an enigmatic use of images, especially remarkable in view of comparable developments in geometric abstraction. This inexplicable use of the image stems both from the philosophy and the paintings of the young Giorgio de Chirico.

D. GIORGIO DE CHIRICO: "ENGIMA" OF SURREALISM

Just as Freud provided the scientific basis for Surrealist thought, so too the artist Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978) simultaneously provided in both his art and his writings, the theoretical subtext for Surrealism. His early self-portrait of 1911 prefigures and precisely crystallizes the movement's transcendent aims: he inscribed it with the motto, "And what shall I worship save the enigma?" (figure 35).

1. De Chirico and Surrealist Painting

De Chirico's work appealed to the Surrealists on many levels. Collectively, the Surrealists felt that de Chirico had been transformed by a divine inspiration which they defined as "the Surreal". To them, he was a sentry opening the gates to Surreality. In Surrealism and Painting (1929) André Breton wrote:

....men like Chirico took on the appearance of sentries stationed along a road of perpetual challenges. Certainly, when we reached the point where he was standing guard, we found it impossible to turn back, it became a point of honour for us to pass.⁸²

Many Surrealist painters followed the lessons set by de Chirico's early work. The disquieting, premonitory sense of apprehension of his

early paintings confirmed Surrealist intimations of a power and fascination in the ordinary and seemingly insignificant event. The overwhelming impact of de Chirico's work on Surrealist thought and art is confirmed by the following passage from Surrealism and Painting:

...for a few years Chirico enjoyed a rare faculty of discrimination that exerted itself on the most disquieting aspects of external appearances, particularly on all those things around us that share simultaneously the characteristics of life and death, and that he had the gift of bathing these things in a propitious light of storm, eclipse, or twilight.... it was not in vain that Chirico, in his youth, completed what was for us the most extraordinary journey ever undertaken...⁸³

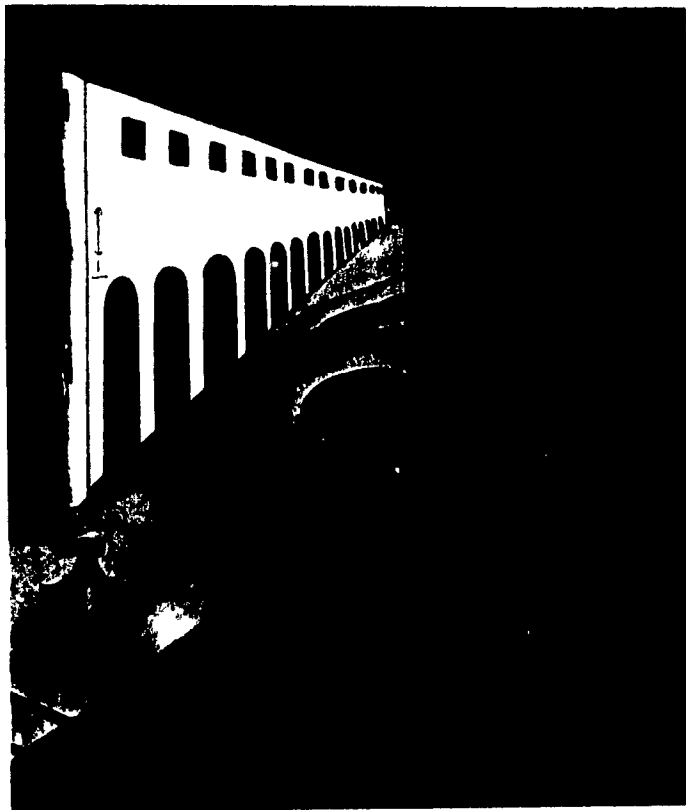
In painting, de Chirico's unusual compositions, choice of dislocated subject matter, and the economy of means he employs to describe his forlorn subjects coalesce to create a sense of omen and mystery that became the heart of Surrealist conceptions of the marvelous. In The Mystery and Melancholy of a Street of 1914, (figure 36) the figure of a small girl rolling a hoop advances towards a sinister shadow whose source is concealed. The planes of the street are tilted upwards, as if we were viewing the scene from an impossibly high vantage point, and the whole composition is based on series of oblique lines whose vanishing points conflict, creating an atmosphere of psychological ambiguity and tension.⁸⁴ The late afternoon light and the intensified colour conjure a hallucinatory, nightmarish vision, whose overriding effect is one of disturbing ambiguity and foreboding. Similarly, in the equally famous Disquieting Muses of 1917, (figure 37) de Chirico juxtaposes the modern mannequin with elements of the antique classical statue. The figures seem disconcertingly alive, the mannequins animated by uncanny relationships that we cannot decipher, with the whole esoteric event taking place on a

Figure 36. Giorgio de Chirico. The Mystery and Melancholy of a Street. 1914 (above)

In The Mystery and Melancholy of a Street of 1914, the figure of a small girl rolling a hoop advances towards a sinister shadow whose source is concealed. The plane of the street is tilted upwards, as if we were viewing the scene from an impossibly high vantage point. The whole composition is based on a series of oblique lines whose vanishing points conflict, creating an atmosphere of psychological ambiguity and tension. The late afternoon light and intensified colour conjure a hallucinatory, nightmarish vision; the overriding effect is one of disturbing ambiguity and foreboding.

Figure 37. Giorgio de Chirico. The Disquieting Muses. 1917. (below).

In the equally famous Disquieting Muses, de Chirico juxtaposes the modern mannequin with elements of the antique classical statue. The figures seem disconcertingly alive, the mannequins animated by uncanny relationships that we cannot decipher, with the whole esoteric event taking place on a stage overlooking the backdrop of a Renaissance city. De Chirico's jumps in time and in space create a psychological ambiguity with multiple associations that is remarkably similar in principle to the visual ambiguity and punning of the Cubist painters.



stage overlooking the backdrop of a Renaissance city. Here de Chirico's jumps in time and space create a psychological ambiguity with multiple associations that is remarkably similar **in principle** to the visual ambiguity and punning of the Cubists.

De Chirico thus provided a new iconographic vocabulary for the language of modern art. In the brief period of his direct involvement with the Surrealists (1917-25) he was a source of inspiration to almost every Surrealist, including Salvador Dalí, who added scatological elements of his own style to de Chirico's precise depiction, and Yves Tanguy, who was so impressed with the sight of a de Chirico painting that he saw from a bus window that he forthwith became a painter, as well as Max Ernst, who alternated between a precise delineation of dream images inspired by de Chirico's painting, and the more abstract techniques of frottage or collage. In short, the inventions of de Chirico's poetic imagination have influenced Surrealist painting at every level. The following description of de Chirico's contributions to Surrealism from Surrealism and Painting (1941), reads as a litany of Surrealist dream images itself:

Chirico's fixation upon **eternal** places where the object was retained only as a function of its symbolic, enigmatic mean (**period of arcades and towers**) which in turn gradually became haunted places (**ghosts and omens**) soon conferred upon the human being a superstructure which excluded all individual characteristics and reduced him to a masked framework (**period of the mannequins**). Then this superstructure was itself dismantled and the living being vanished and was evoked thenceforward merely by inanimate objects related to the role he played (as a king, general, a sailor, etc.). Finally these objects themselves became compounded with instruments of measurement ... and the great Chirico cycle closed with the period of '**metaphysical interiors**.' ⁸⁵

The eternal, the haunted, arcades and towers, ghosts and omens, mannequins, the inanimate object, metaphysical interiors: it is indeed

difficult to find an image from the oeuvre of de Chirico that has not had an impact on Surrealism. Even more than the heightened, supernal effect of his paintings, de Chirico's writings and pronouncements on the nature of creative activity exerted a strong influence on the formulation of Surrealist ideology. Breton's conclusion to the previously cited passage, despite his later rejection of de Chirico, delineates the enormity of de Chirico's influence on Surrealism:

Because of the ever-increasing importance it assigned to the world of the dream, this evolution had to be retraced quite separately. Had we failed to take it into account...we should have lacked the historical basis for an understanding of the meaning and scope of Surrealism's demands in the field of plastic art.⁸⁶

2. De Chirico and the Scholars

In the light of such abundance, is it not then, surprising that scholars of modern art in general and Surrealism in particular have almost unanimously failed to take into account the substantial parallels between the correspondence of Giorgio de Chirico and the Surrealist Manifestoes? And is it not even more astonishing that this correspondence has itself been available in published form for well-nigh thirty years, since the 1955 publication of the manuscripts of de Chirico in James Thrall Soby's classic text, Giorgio de Chirico, not to mention the same author's significant work, The Early Chirico, of 1941? ⁸⁷ This oversight is indeed remarkable in view of the fact that in 1982 the Museum of Modern Art held a major retrospective of the paintings of Giorgio de Chirico, accompanied by the publication of a catalogue containing articles by international

scholars, all of whom neglected to consider the determinant role of the letters of de Chirico in the development of Surrealism, relying instead on the conventional notion that Freud was the inspiration for Surrealism and quoting scantily from the works in translation published by James Thrall Soby in 1955.⁸⁸ Thus, while most contemporary art historians have recognized de Chirico as a major artistic influence on Surrealism, with the exception of James Thrall Soby few have paused to pursue his intellectual influence on the movement, despite the ever-increasing importance of his paintings, and the manifold paraphrasing of his writings and references to his images both in the Manifestoes of Surrealism of 1924 and Surrealism and Painting of 1929--references that are in fact much more numerous than comparable ones to Freud.⁸⁹

In The Early Chirico, (1941) James Thrall Soby discusses the influence of de Chirico's early period on modern art. He observes his important ideological influence on the Surrealists:

Far more important than the matter of Chirico's specific technical or iconographical influence is the ideological direction which his early period began to impose on painters and writers alike in the early 1920's. What Ernst was beginning to accomplish in practice as a result of his discovery of Chirico, Breton and Eluard were beginning to proclaim in theory.... So far as the pictorial arts were concerned, these tenets (of Surrealism) were based on Chirico's accomplishments to a degree which cannot possibly be exaggerated...⁹⁰

In his later Giorgio de Chirico of 1955, Soby includes translations (by Louise Bourgeois and Robert Goldwater) of the letters of de Chirico (c. 1911-1915) to Appollinaire--these taking the form mainly of notes on art. In 1918, Chirico had begun a correspondence with André Breton, his dealer, Paul Guillaume, and Paul Eluard. These manuscripts are statements of artistic intent in the form of poetic musings on the nature

of art and perception, that may also have formed a written directive for Appollinaire's philosophy of "sur-réalisme", later adopted by André Breton.⁹¹ Appollinaire had befriended de Chirico as early as 1911, the time of the artist's first arrival in Paris. His writings, therefore, would have been available to the young André Breton through Appollinaire at the same time, if not before, Breton's exposure to Freudian thought in the psychiatric hospital at Nantes, c. 1916. Thus the manuscripts of de Chirico were available to the Surrealists for some time before the actual formation of the movement in 1924, and they were circulated through the medium of Appollinaire, accompanied by an aura of reverence for the artist's personal vision. After the Surrealists rejected de Chirico in 1925, the letters presumably were collected by Paul Eluard and Jean Paulhan, from whence they entered the Museum of Modern Art Library through the estate of James Thrall Soby.

Outside of the previously mentioned studies, little research has been done which adequately explains the specific influence of de Chirico on Surrealist thought. And so the question remains: Why was de Chirico's theoretical influence neglected for so long? The answer may be partly in the strife-ridden relationship between de Chirico and the Surrealists.⁹² By 1925 a long feud was ignited between the artist and the members of the movement as lead by Breton. The Surrealists rejected de Chirico's later work because he changed his style of painting from the "metaphysical" preoccupations of his youth to an avid interest in techniques and historical styles. It is possible that the Surrealists deliberately confused the issue in their attempt to dissociate themselves and their movement from de Chirico. It is possible, too, that scholars of modern art have neglected the ideological influence of de Chirico in an emphasis

on sources from literary or intellectual history, an attitude that in itself belies a certain preference for the verbal sources and affinities of Surrealism from contemporaneous scholarship -- that is, the work of Freud - rather than looking for the closest intellectual sources in the work of the artists themselves. Whatever the implications of this preference, the ensuing result is that the special philosophy of art as revelation, espoused by the artist Giorgio de Chirico, has been obscured by time, the politics of the art world, and the hidden premises of the art historical enterprise.

3. De Chirico and the Surrealists

De Chirico's relationship with the Surrealists must be viewed against the power politics and group psychology of the modern art world.

In 1911 de Chirico moved from his home in Italy to Paris, to pursue a career as an artist. At first he lived with his brother, the musician Albert Savinio (Andrea de Chirico). He grew acquainted with Appollinaire, and soon became a frequent visitor at the poet's weekly soirées in his apartment on the Boulevard Saint-Germain. In 1913 he exhibited three paintings at the Salon des Indépendants, and that fall showed four more works in the Salon d'Automne. Appollinaire became the painter's first patron, recognizing in the artist's oeuvre the lyrical and supernatural effects he too was striving for in his poetry. He popularized de Chirico's work in his reviews and art criticism, as well as through his contacts and acquaintances in the Parisian intelligentsia. In 1913, Appollinaire wrote:

Monsieur de Chirico is exhibiting in his studio,
115, rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs, some thirty

canvases whose inner art should not leave us indifferent. The art of this young painter is an inner and cerebral one that has nothing in common with the art of painters who have emerged in recent years.

It possesses nothing of Matisse, nor of Picasso, it does not come from Impressionism. This originality is new enough to deserve to be pointed out. Monsieur de Chirico's very sharp and very modern perceptions generally assume an architectural form. There are railroad stations adorned with clocks, there are towers, statues, large deserted squares, railroad trains go by the horizon. Here are some of the singular titles for these strangely metaphysical paintings: The Enigma of the Oracle, Solitude, and The Whistling of the Locomotive.⁹³

The artist was soon accepted in the avant-garde circle that included Paul Valéry, Pierre Reverdy, Jean Cocteau, Frances Picabia, Picasso, and others. It has even been suggested that Apollinaire created the titles for many works of de Chirico, although the artist's manifest poetic talents would seem to deny this. Nevertheless, in his enthusiasm for de Chirico's work, Apollinaire soon acquired several paintings, including The Great Tower (1913), Portrait of Guillaume Apollinaire (1914), and possibly the famous Mystery and Melancholy of a Street of 1914. These hung in his apartment to be viewed by all.

Let us construct a modest scenario: the scene is Apollinaire's apartment in 1917; the evening, one of his soirées. The guests -- the young modernists of the Paris art world -- who include Pierre Reverdy, Louis Aragon, André Breton, Picasso, Jean Paulhan, Juan Gris, Max Jacob and others, listen to Apollinaire hold forth on the unusual qualities of the absent de Chirico, (stationed in Ferrara, Italy for the duration of the war) on his poetic frame of mind, his enigmatic aphorisms. It is as if the paintings themselves became the place where this discourse on the enigma occurred. And, in fact, this is the case. When André Breton later

acquired the de Chirico painting The Enigma of the Day (1914), it became the vehicle for Surrealist excursions into the imagination: the artists studied the painting, imagining mysterious happenings that could occur or had occurred within its boundaries, as if to explain the uncanny spirit that infused the work. Breton writes of this experiment:

How often have we found ourselves in that Square where everything seems so close to existence and yet bears so little resemblance to what really exists! It was here, more than anywhere else, that we held our invisible meetings. It was here that we were to be found--hand in hand with heartlessness.... At that time men like Chirico took on the appearance of sentries stationed along a road of perpetual challenges...⁹⁴

Appollinaire had anticipated the future "organization of lyricism", which Surrealism, with its deliberate provocation of the imagination, seemed to fulfill. De Chirico's paintings, too, revealed a strange and profound lyricism that attracted the movement. His statements were viewed as directives to the Surreal. Thus his early writings of 1911-15, his correspondences with Appollinaire (1915-1918) and later with André Breton (1922), achieved an unprecedented attention from the Surrealists. The theory underlying his visionary work, mystical, interior, and intense, could not fail to aid in the formation of their thought.

a) Affiliation

During the formation of the Surrealism (1918-1924), the paintings of de Chirico exerted a poetic appeal on the literary men who dominated the early stages of the movement. During de Chirico's absence from Paris after 1915, his work was exhibited with the Surrealists through the agency

of his dealer, Paul Guillaume, with the enthusiastic support of André Breton.⁹⁵ De Chirico became one of the first artists to be published in La revolution surréaliste, the journal of the movement, which in its first issue contained de Chirico's account of a dream included immediately after the magazine's preface. De Chirico was admired for his visionary proclivities, including his uncanny ability to see ghosts. Although these figures undoubtedly seemed real to him, it is also probable that de Chirico cultivated their presence, perhaps only to emphasize his morbidly sensitive psyche. Breton writes:

Ghosts... However reticent he may show himself to be today on this point, Chirico still admits that he himself has not forgotten them. In a sudden burst of confidence that he must regret by now he even named two of them to me: Napoleon III and Cavour, and gave me to understand that he had extensive dealings with them.⁹⁶

Breton relates an amusing incident concerning de Chirico's relations with ghosts, in which we find implicit the attraction of the occult for the Surrealists. The occult found its vehicle in the neurotic personage of de Chirico:

Louis Aragon and I both remember well an evening when we were sitting in a cafe on the place Pigalle, and a child was going from table to table selling flowers, Chirico had his back to the door and did not see him come in, but Aragon had been struck by the new arrival's strange appearance and wondered out loud if it was not perhaps a ghost. Instead of turning round, Chirico brought out a little pocket mirror and after studying the young boy intently in it for some minutes replied that it was in fact a ghost. He certainly seems exceptionally well-trained in the recognition of ghosts with human features; he has even assured us that his picture dealer, M. Paul Guillaume, resembles in every respect the descriptions furnished by his imagination.⁹⁷

The Surrealists later pursued these occult interests through seances or the method of trance, in which the supernatural would be revealed.⁹⁸

As previously stated, the theories of de Chirico exercised a force on the Surrealist imagination that was antithetical to the scientific tendency of the movement as symbolized by Freud. Parallel to this opposition, Dada's anti-rationalism, adopted by the Surrealists, also proved problematic in the light of the rational understanding of the unconscious proposed by Freud. The tabula rasa of the human mind, uncovered by Dada, allowed the Surrealists freedom to play in the world of the dream and the imagination. De Chirico's statements affirmed the existence of this interior world: "What I hear is worth nothing; there is only what I see with my eyes open, and, even more, what I see with them closed" (1913).⁹⁹ Furthermore, the world that de Chirico created -- some have called it "Chirico-city"¹⁰⁰ -- required no method of entry, whereas automatism was always the intermediary between the self and the imagination for the Surrealist writers.

De Chirico's writings appeared at a pivotal point in the development of Surrealism, exactly parallel to the researches of Freud into the unconscious. His thought thus formed a bridge between the scientific or logical approach of Freud and the visionary intuition traditionally employed by mystics. By offering a "science-free" mode of thought his vocabulary and concepts nurtured the anti-rational bias of Surrealism. Hence, he provided alternatives to the pose of scientism taken by the Surrealists, and his manuscripts suggest a shift in the emphasis from psychoanalytic experimentation to poetic inquiry. The "poetic empiricism" of which Breton wrote henceforth became the modus operandi for a whole generation of Surrealist painters, from Miro to Tanguy. De Chirico's

poetic conception of art, his insistence on the superiority of the imagination, the dream, and the mentality of the child thus established, in large part, the ideological direction of Surrealism.

b) Discord

While the Surrealists were systematising their theories in the transitional period of 1917-24, de Chirico was experiencing an artistic crisis. After his prolonged military sojourn in Ferrara, where he was stationed with the Italian metaphysical painter Carlo Carrà, he became preoccupied with problems of method and technique in painting, and especially the problem of illusionistic, perspectival space. He moved to Rome to study the Renaissance masters more closely, and began making copies of Renaissance art in order to understand it more fully. This was Giorgio de Chirico's "conversion" to traditional painting, a form that had always eluded his grasp. In many ways de Chirico can be characterized as "naive", much like the beloved and child-like Douanier Rousseau. De Chirico, stubborn by temperament, and wilfully so, persisted in his attempts to grasp Renaissance realism. It was as if he were over-compensating for the very quality his work lacked -- the illusion of continuity, rather than ambiguous discontinuity, a simulcrum of "ordinariness" that his own extra-ordinary work denied. The Surrealists, who had been astounded by the powerful sentiment, somehow peculiarly modern, that was generated by his early work, reluctantly withdrew their support of his later work which they saw as predictable and reactionary. They rejected his new work--first in puzzlement, then in abhorrence, and finally in disgust.

In 1923, Paul Eluard went to Rome to see de Chirico and obtain some of his newer work which ultimately was rejected by Breton. The Surrealists countered a show of his new paintings in 1925, picketing the gallery, and organizing an exhibition of their own "early Chiricos", versus "the new vulgar Chiricos".¹⁰¹ De Chirico, however, was determined to follow his chosen course. He would retain his individuality against the ideological pressure of the Surrealist group. In his memoirs of 1945, he later wrote: "They had in no way understood the exceedingly solitary and profound lyricism of these paintings. Moreover nobody has ever understood them, either then or now."¹⁰² His memoirs suggest, too, that he did not want his unique work to be subsumed by a movement. The Surrealists openly repudiated and then ridiculed him. De Chirico responded with diatribes against the Surrealists and modern art in general. He denied his previous interests, even to the point of denying that he titled his work of the early period, and replacing the poetic names with more obvious titles. To make money he occasionally plagiarized his earlier work, making copies or versions of his earlier mannequins and empty squares. These works are fairly easy to spot, as the paint application is smoother and more luminous than the rough intensity of his earlier period.¹⁰³ He continued to hurl abuse at his former Surrealist colleagues, especially through his later and more vindictive Memoirs, (1945) which spew monstrous diatribes against the Surrealists, whom he claimed have always misunderstood the goals of his painting. With his death in 1978, and the early demise of Breton in 1966, almost fifty years of squabbling were brought to an end.

c) *Theoretical Influence: Text Comparison*

Even a brief survey of the manuscripts and letters of de Chirico from his early period shows a remarkable resemblance to the direction and contour of Surrealist thought. De Chirico's writings embody several themes, all of which intertwine around his central vision of the imagination as revelation. For him, the dream and the unspoiled vision of the child were potent messages, revelations to be deciphered only by the imagination. These ideas are omnipresent in the first and second Manifestoes, which employ the idea of the dream not in a Freudian sense, but in the sense of an occult and secret message. Both the Surrealists and de Chirico agree that the message will be indecipherable logically. De Chirico writes:

It is essential that the revelation we receive, the conception of an image which embraces a certain thing, which has no sense in itself, which has no subject, which means ABSOLUTELY NOTHING from a logical point of view....I repeat, it is essential that such a revelation or conception should speak so strongly in us, evoke such agony or joy, that we feel compelled to paint, compelled by an impulse even more urgent than the hungry desperation which drives a man to tearing at a piece of bread like a savage beast.¹⁰⁴

By 1930, in the second Manifesto of Surrealism, Breton was to call for the "profound occultation of Surrealism",¹⁰⁵ and rail against the scientific materialism of doctors. He speaks of an "alchemy of the word"¹⁰⁶ as the beginning of Surrealist endeavor. Similarly, de Chirico's explicit rejection of logic provided the key to the Surrealist imagination. The imagination would be free to envision the world as it willed. This common frame of reference was negated by the fighting which ensued between the

artist and his Surrealist colleagues in the 1930's and 40's. Despite their dispute, a comparison of the major themes of de Chirico's written correspondence and the basic tenets held by the Manifestoes of Surrealism reveals an identity between these two factions that calls for further investigation. These themes are:

- 1) Against logic, rationality, and religion
- 2) The dream, the child, and the imagination
- 3) The imagination as revelation
- 4) The power object: premonition, immanence, and omen.

The following chart, then, presents an overview of the themes of Giorgio de Chirico derived from his manuscripts written between 1911-1918, compared with the basic tenets of the first and second Manifestoes of Surrealism written by André Breton and published in 1924 and 1930:¹⁰⁷

THEME I AGAINST LOGIC, RATIONALITY, AND RELIGION.

Giorgio de Chirico	André Breton
<p>To be really immortal a work of art must go completely beyond the limits of the human: good sense and logic will be missing from it.</p> <p>I experienced all the mystery that drives men to create certain things. And the creations seemed still more mysterious than the creators. It is <u>futile to explain certain things scientifically</u>, nothing is achieved.</p> <p>Pour qu'une oeuvre d'art soit vraiment immortelle il faut qu'elle sorte complètement des limites de l'humain: le bon sens et la logique y feront défaut. Je sentis alors</p>	<p>We are still living under the reign of logic: this...is what I have been driving at.</p> <p>But in this day and age logical methods are applicable only to solving problems of secondary interest. The absolute rationalism that is still in vogue allows us to consider only facts relating directly to our experience.... Experience itself has found itself increasingly circumscribed.</p> <p>Nous vivons encore sous le règne de la logique, voilà, bien entendu, à quoi je voulais en venir. Mais les procédés logiques, de nos jours, ne s'appliquent plus</p>

THEME I AGAINST LOGIC, RATIONALITY, AND RELIGION.

Giorgio de Chirico	André Breton
<p>tout le mystère qui pousse les hommes à créer certaines choses. Et les créations me parurent encore plus mystérieuses que les créateurs. <u>On a beau expliquer scientifiquement certaines choses, on n'arrive à rien.</u></p>	<p>qu'à la résolution de problèmes d'intérêt secondaire. Le rationalisme absolu qui reste de mode ne permet de considérer que des faits relevant étroitement de notre expérience. Les logiques, par contre, nous échappent.</p>
<p>The revelation we have of a work of art, the conception of a picture <u>must</u> represent something which has sense in itself, has no subject, which from the point of view of human logic <u>means nothing at all</u>. I say that such a revelation (or if you like, conception), must be felt so strongly, must give us such joy or such pain, that we are obliged to paint, impelled by a force greater than the force which impels a starving man to bite like a wild beast into the piece of bread he happens to find.</p> <p><u>il faut</u> que la révélation que nous avons eue d'une oeuvre d'art, que la conception d'un tableau représente telle chose qui n'a pas de sens par elle-même, qui n'a pas de sujet qui du point de vue de la logique humaine <u>ne veut rien dire du tout</u> il faut, je dis qu'une telle révélation ou conception comme vous voulez soit tellement forte en nous, qu'elle nous procure une telle joie ou une telle douleur, que nous soyons obligés de peindre, poussés par une force plus grande de celle qui pousse l'affamé à mordre comme une bête le morceau de pain qui lui tombe sous la main.</p>	<p>Under the pretense of civilisation and progress we have managed to banish from the mind everything that may rightly or wrongly be termed superstition or fancy; forbidden is any kind of search for truth which is not in conformance with accepted practices.</p> <p>Sous couleur de civilisation, sous prétexte de progrès, on est parvenu à bannir de l'esprit tout ce qui se peut taxer à tort ou à raison de superstition, de chimère; à proscrire tout mode de recherche de la vérité qui n'est pas conforme à l'usage.</p>
<p>One of the strangest and deepest sensations that prehistory has left with us is the sensation of foretelling. It will always exist. It is like an eternal proof of the senselessness of the universe. The</p>	<p>Everything tends to make us believe that there exists a certain point of the mind at which life and death, the real and the imagined, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, high and low, cease</p>

THEME I AGAINST LOGIC, RATIONALITY, AND RELIGION.

Giorgio de Chirico	André Breton
<p>first man must have seen auguries everywhere, he must have trembled at each step he took.</p> <p>Une des sensations les plus étranges et les plus profondes que nous ait laissée la préhistoire est la sensation du presage. Elle existera toujours. C'est comme une preuve éternelle du non-sens de l'univers. Le premier homme devait voir des présages partout, il devait frissonner à chaque pas qu'il faisait.</p>	<p>to be perceived as contradictions.</p> <p>Tout porte à croire qu'il existe un certain point de l'esprit d'où la vie et la mort, le réel et l'imaginaire, le passé et le futur, le communicable et l'incommunicable, le haut et le bas cessent d'être perçus contradictoirement. Or, c'est en vain que l'on cherchait à l'activité surréaliste un autre mobile que l'espoir de détermination de ce point.</p>
<p>What is needed above all, is to rid art of all that has been its familiar content until now; all subject, all idea, all thought, all symbol must be put aside.</p> <p>Ce qu'il faut surtout c'est débarrasser l'art de tout ce qu'elle contient de connu jusqu'à présent, tout idée, toute pensée, tout symbole doit être mis de côté.</p>	<p>We combat, in whatever form they may appear, poetic indifference, the distraction of art, scholarly research, pure speculation; we want nothing whatever to do with those, either large or small, who use their minds as they would a savings bank.</p> <p>Nous combattons sous toutes leurs formes l'indifférence poétique, la distraction d'art, la recherche erudite, la spéculation pure, nous ne voulons rien avoir commun avec les petits ni avec les grands épargnants de l'esprit.</p>
<p>There are many more enigmas in the shadow of a man who walks in the sun than in all the religions of the past, present and future.</p> <p>(Sur la terre il y a en plus d'énigmes dans l'ombre d'un homme qui marche au soleil que dans toutes les religions passées, présentes, et futures.)</p>	<p>Everything remains to be done, every means must be worth trying, in order to lay waste to the ideas of family, country, religion.</p> <p>Tout est à faire, tous les moyens doivent être bons à employer pour ruiner les idées de famille, de patrie, de religion.</p>

THEME II THE DREAM, THE CHILD, AND THE IMAGINATION

Giorgio de Chirico	André Breton
<p>To be really immortal a work of art must be completely beyond the limits of the human: good sense and logic will be missing from it.</p> <p>In this way it will come close to the dream state, and also to the mentality of children.</p> <p>Pour qu'une oeuvre d'art soit vraiment immortelle il faut qu'elle sorte complètement des limites de l'humain: le bon sens et la logique y feront défaut.</p> <p>De cette façon elle s'approchera du rêve et aussi de la mentalité enfantine.</p>	<p>Can't the dream also be used in solving the fundamental questions of life?</p> <p>Le rêve ne peut-il être appliqué, lui aussi, à la résolution des questions fondamentales de la vie?</p>
<p>I believe and have faith that, from certain points of view, the sight of someone in a dream is proof of his metaphysical reality -- in certain accidental occurrences that sometimes happen to us; in the manner and the arrangement that things appear to us and awaken in us unknown sensations of joy and surprise: the sensations of revelation.</p> <p>Je <u>crois</u> et avec foi, peut être que comme la vue en rêve d'une personne est, à certains points de vue une preuve de sa réalité métaphysique de certains hasards qui nous arrivent par moments; de la façon, de la disposition dont quelquefois des choses se présentent et réveillent en nous des sensations inconnues de joie et de surprise: les sensations se la révélation.</p>	<p>I believe in the future resolution of these two states, dream and reality, which are seemingly so contradictory, into a kind of absolute reality, a SURREALITY.</p> <p>Je crois à résolution future de ces deux états, en apparence si contradictoires, que sont le rêve et la réalité, en une sorte de réalité absolue, de <u>surréalité</u>.</p>
<p>The work possesses a strangeness similar to the strangeness that the sensation of a child sometimes has,</p>	<p>From childhood memories, and from a few others, there emanates a sentiment of being unintegrated,</p>

THEME II THE DREAM, THE CHILD, AND THE IMAGINATION

Giorgio de Chirico	André Breton
<p>but at the same time that he who created it did so consciously. In the same way I believe that in order to be truly profound a picture must attain this ground.</p> <p>Etrange ressemblance qui nous révèle la profondeur de l'oeuvre: la naïveté n'y a rien à voir; rien de la grâce naïve de l'artiste primitif: l'oeuvre a une étrangeté qui s'approche de l'étrangeté que peut avoir la sensation d'un enfant, mais on sent en même temps que celui la créa le fit sciemment. De même, je crois qu'un tableau pour être vraiment profond doit atteindre ce terrain.</p>	<p>and then later of <u>HAVING GONE ASTRAY</u> which I hold to be the most fertile that exists. It is perhaps childhood that comes closest to one's real life; childhood beyond which man has at his disposal only a few complimentary tickets; childhood where everything nevertheless conspires to bring about the effective, risk-free possession of oneself.</p> <p>L'esprit qui plonge dans le surréalisme rev avec exaltation la meilleure part de son enfance. C'est un peu pour lui la certitude de qui, étant de train de se noyer, repasse, en moins d'une minute tout l'insurmontable de sa vie. On me dira que ce n'est pas très encourageant. Mais je ne tiens pas encourager ceux qui me diront cela. Des souvenirs d'enfance et de quelques autres se dégage un sentiment d'inaccaparé et par la suite de <u>dévoir</u> que je tiens pour le plus fécond qui existe. C'est peu-être l'enfance, qui approche le plus de la "vraie vie", l'enfance au-delà de laquelle l'homme ne dispose, en plus de son laissez-passer, que de quelques billets de faveur; l'enfance où tout concourait cependant à la possession efficace, et sans aléas, de soi-même.</p>
<p>in this participle -- surprise, is contained the whole enigma of sudden revelation. -- When (on the other hand) a revelation grows out of the sight of an arrangement of objects, then the work which appears in our thoughts is closely linked with the circumstance that provoked its birth. One resembles the other, but in a very strange way,</p>	<p>And since it has not been proved in the slightest that, in doing so, the reality with which I am kept busy continues to exist in the state of dream, that it does not sink back down into the immemorial, why should I not grant to dreams what I occasionally refuse reality, that is, this value of certainty in itself which in its own time, is</p>

THEME II THE DREAM, THE CHILD, AND THE IMAGINATION

Giorgio de Chirico	André Breton
<p>like the resemblance there is between two brothers, or rather between the image of someone we know seen in a dream, and that person in reality; it is, and at the same time it is not, that same person; it is as if there had been a slight and mysterious transfiguration of the features.</p> <p>dans ce participe surpris se trouve toute l'énigme de la révélation qui vient soudainement. Lorsque la révélation résulte de la vue d'une disposition de choses, alors l'oeuvre qui se présente dans notre pensée est liée d'un lieu étroit avec ce qui à provoqué sa naissance; elle lui ressemble aussi, mais d'une façon fort étrange comme la reassemblance qu'il y a entre deux frères -- ou plutôt entre l'image que nous voyons en rêve d'une personne que nous connaissons et cette personne dans la réalité; c'est, et en même temps, ce n'est pas la même personne, il y a comme une légère et mystérieuse transfiguration dans les traits.</p>	<p>not open to my repudiation? Why should I not expect from the sign of the dream more than I expect from a degree of consciousness which is daily more acute? Can't the dream also be used in solving the fundamental questions of life?</p> <p>comme il n'est aucunement prouvé que, ce faisant, la "réalité" qui m'occupe subsiste à l'état de rêve, qu'elle ne sombre pas dans l'immémorial, pourquoi n'accorderais-je pas au rêve ce que je refuse parfois à la réalité, soit cette valeur de certitude en elle-même, qui, dans son temps, n'est point exposée à mon désaveu? Pourquoi n'attendrais-je pas de l'indice du rêve plus que je n'attends d'un degré de conscience chaque jour plus élevé? Le rêve ne peut-il être appliqué, lui aussi, à la résolution des questions fondamentales de la vie?</p>
<p>All this has <u>vanished</u>. Yet our minds are haunted by visions. They are anchored to everlasting foundations. In public squares shadows lengthen their mathematical enigmas. Over walls rise nonsensical towers decked with little multicolored flags; infinitude is everywhere, and everywhere is mystery. One thing remains, immutable as if its roots were frozen in the entrails of eternity: our will as artist-creators.</p> <p>Will we regret the <u>other</u> things? Never. Our joy is only greater. Let us work!</p>	<p>The most effective means...POETIC INTUITION...finally unleashed by Surrealism, seeks not only to assimilate all known forms, but also to create new forms....it alone provides the thread that can put us back on the road of gnosis as knowledge of a suprasensible reality, invisibly visible in an eternal mystery.</p>

THEME II THE DREAM, THE CHILD, AND THE IMAGINATION

Giorgio de Chirico	André Breton
<p>Maintenant tout cela <u>n'est plus</u>. Des visions hautent pourtant nos esprits: elles sont rivées à des bases éternelles. Sur les places carrées les ombres s'allongent dans leur énigme mathématique; derrière les murs les tours insensées apparaissent couvertes de petits drapeaux aux mille couleurs; et partout c'est l'infini et partout c'est le mystère. Une seule chose reste immuable comme si ses racines s'étaient figées dans les entrailles de l'éternité: c'est notre volonté d'artistes-créateurs.</p> <p>Regretterons-nous les <u>autres choses</u>? Jamais. Notre joie n'en est que plus grande. Travaillons.</p>	<p>Pour cela, le grand moyen dont il dispose est l'intuition poétique. Celle -- ci, enfin débridée dans le surréalisme, se veut non seulement assimilatrice de toutes les formes connues mais hardiment créatrice de nouvelles formes -- soit en posture d'embrasser toutes les structures du monde, manifeste ou non. Elle seule nous pourvoit du fil qui remet sur le chemin de la gnose ren tant que connaissance de la Réalité suprasensible, "invisibly visible dans un éternel mystère".</p>

THEME III THE IMAGINATION AS REVELATION

Giorgio de Chirico	André Breton
<p>The problem of what an artist should do becomes more and more disturbing. Nothing is profound enough, nothing pure enough. Everything that has satisfied painters until now to <u>us</u> seems child's-play; this is why <u>we</u> look behind barriers in search of <u>something new</u>. Is it a dream, or a vision? Artists used to like to dream; their sweet souls fell asleep in the moonlight, to the sound of a flute, on a woman's scented breast.</p> <p>Le problème de ce qu'un artiste doit faire devient de plus en plus inquiétant. Rien n'est assez profond, rien n'est assez pur. Tout ce qui a rassésie jusqu'à présent les peintres <u>nous</u> semble jeu d'enfants; c'est pourquoi <u>nous</u> jetons nos regards derrière les murs</p>	<p>I shall simply reaffirm my unshakable confidence in the principle of an activity which has never deceived me, which seems to me more deserving than ever of our unstinting, absolute, insane devotion, for the simple reason that it alone is the dispenser, albeit at intervals well spaced out one from the other, of transfiguring rays of a grace I persist in comparing in all respects to divine grace.</p> <p>Je ne ferai qu'affirmer ma confiance inébranlable dans le principe d'une activité qui ne m'a jamais déçu qui me paraît valoir plus généreusement, plus absolument, plus follement que jamais qu'on s'y consacre et cela parce qu'elle seule est</p>

THEME III THE IMAGINATION AS REVELATION

Giorgio de Chirico	André Breton
<p>et cherchons <u>quelque chose de nouveau</u>. Est-ce un rêve, est-ce une vision? Autrefois les artistes aimaient rêver: leur âme edulcorée s'endormait au clair de lune, à la plainte d'une flûte près d'une femme au sein parfumé.</p>	<p>dispensatrice, encore qu'à de longs intervalles, des rayons transfigurants d'une grâce que je persiste en tout point à opposer à la grâce divine.</p>
<p>...but the real value of such a work of art will lie in its new song, for more important than all these will always be the new thing that the artist has brought out of the void, something which did not exist before.</p> <p>...mais puis ce qui fera la vraie valeur d'une telle oeuvre d'art ce sera sa nouvelle chanson; car avant tout ceci sera toujours quelque chose de nouveau que l'artiste aura. Fait sortir du <u>néant</u>; quelque chose qui avant, <u>n'existait pas</u>.</p>	<p>Imagination alone offers me some intimation of what <u>can be</u>, and this is enough to remove to some slight degree the terrible injunction:</p> <p>La seule imagination me rend compte de ce qui peut être, et c'est assez pour lever un peu le terrible interdit;</p>
<p>What I listen to is worthless: there is only that I see with my eyes open -- and even better closed.</p> <p>Ce que j'écoute ne vaut rien, il n'y a que ce que mes yeux voient ouverts et plus encore fermés.</p>	<p>It is living and ceasing to live that are imaginary solutions. Existence is elsewhere.</p> <p>C'est vivre et cesser de vivre qui sont des solutions imaginaires. L'existence est ailleurs.</p>
<p>In my way of thinking and working, the problem is different. Revelation always plays the principal role. A picture reveals itself to us, while the sight of <u>something</u> does not reveal a picture; but in this case the picture will not be a faithful copy of <u>that</u> which has caused its revelation, but will resemble it vaguely, as the face of someone seen in a dream resembles that person in <u>reality</u>. And in all this, technique plays no role; the</p>	<p>The idea of Surrealism aims quite simply at the total recovery of our psychic force by a means that is nothing other than the dizzying descent into ourselves, the systematic illumination of hidden places and the progressive darkening of other places, the perpetual excursion into the midst of forbidden territory, and that there is no real danger of its activities coming to an end so long as man still manages to distinguish</p>

THEME III THE IMAGINATION AS REVELATION

Giorgio de Chirico	André Breton
<p>the whole <u>sensation</u> will be given by the linear composition of the picture, which in this case always gives the impression of being something unchangeable, where chance has never entered.</p> <p>Dans ma façon de sentir et de travailler il s'agit d'autre chose. C'est toujours la révélation qui joue le principal rôle. Un tableau se révèle à nous sans que la vue de <u>quelque chose</u> nous révèle un tableau mais dans ce cas le tableau ne sera pas une reproduction fidèle de <u>ce</u> qui a déterminé sa révélation mais il lui ressemblera vaguement comme le visage d'une personne qu'on voit en rêve et cette personne <u>dans la réalité</u>. Et dans tout cela la technique n'aura rien à voir, toute la <u>sensation</u> sera donnée par la composition des lignes dans le tableau, qui dans ce cas fait toujours l'impression de quelque chose d'immuable où il n'y a jamais eu de <u>hasard</u>.</p>	<p>an animal from a flame or a stone -- heaven help, I say, the Surrealist idea from beginning to progress without its ups and downs.</p> <p>rappelons que l'idée de surréalisme tend simplement à la récupération totale de notre force psychique par un moyen qui n'est autre que la descente vertigineuse en nous, l'illumination systématique des lieux, cachés et l'obscurcissement progressif des autres lieux, la promenade perpétuelle en pleine zone interdite et que son activité ne court aucune chance sérieuse de prendre fin tant que l'homme parviendra à distinguer un animal d'une flamme ou d'une pierre...le diable préserve, dis-je, l'idée surréaliste de commencer à aller sans avatars.</p>
<p>one final effort and painting too will have it, the picture that will carry us <u>beyond all pictures</u>.</p> <p>encore un effort et la peinture aura aussi son tableau qui nous proterait <u>au delà de tous les tableau</u>.</p>	<p>The imagination is on the point of reasserting itself, of reclaiming its rights.</p> <p>L'imagination est peut-être sur le point de reprendre ses droits.</p>
<p>Thought must so detach itself from all human fetters that all things appear to light anew -- as if lit for the first time by a brilliant star.</p> <p>Il faut que la pensée se detache tellement de tout ce qu'on appelle</p>	<p>And yet I am living. I have even discovered that I care about life. The more I have sometimes found reasons for putting an end to it the more I have caught myself admiring some random square of parquet floor: it was really like silk, like the silk that would have been as beautiful as water. I</p>

THEME III THE IMAGINATION AS REVELATION

Giorgio de Chirico	André Breton
<p>la logique et le sens, qu'elle s'éloigne tellement de toutes les entraves humaines, de sorte que les choses lui apparaissent sous un aspect nouveau comme illuminées par une constellation brillante pour la première fois.</p> <p>A revelation can be born of a sudden, when one least expects it, and also can be stimulated by the sight of something -- a building, a street, a garden, a square, etc. In the first instance it belongs to a class of strange sensations which I have observed in only man: Nietzsche.</p> <p>Une révélation peut naître tout à coup quand nous l'attendons le moins, et peut-être aussi provoquée par la vue de quelque chose comme un édifice, une rue, un jardin, une place publique etc. Dans le premier cas elle appartient à un genre de sensations étranges que moi, je n'ai observé que dans un seul homme: Nietzsche.</p>	<p>liked this lucid pain, as though the entire universal drama of it had then passed through me and I was suddenly worth the trouble. But I liked it in the light of, how shall I say, of new things that I had never seen glow before. It was from this that I understood that, in spite of everything, life was given, that a force independent of that of expressing and making oneself heard spiritually presided -- insofar as a living man is concerned -- over reactions of invaluable interest, the secret of which will disappear with him. This secret has not been revealed to me.</p> <p>Et pourtant je vis, j'ai découvert même que je tenais à la vie. Plus je me trouvé parfois de raisons d'en finir avec elle, plus je me suis surpris à admirer cette lame quelconque de parquet, c'était vraiment comme la soie, de la soie qui eût été belle comme l'eau. J'aimais cette lucide douleur, comme si tout le drame universel en fût alors passé par moi, que j'en eusse soudain valu la peine. Mais je l'aimais à la lueur, comment dire, de choses nouvelles ou ainsi je n'avais encore vues briller. C'est à cela que j'ai compris que malgré tout la vie était <u>donnée</u>, qu'une force indépendante de celle d'exprimer et spirituellement de se faire entendre présidait, en ce qui concerne un homme vivant, à des réactions d'un intérêt appréciable dont le secret sera emporté avec lui. Le secret ne m'est pas dévoilé à moi-même...</p>

THEME IV THE POWER OBJECT: PREMONITION, IMMANENCE, AND OMEN

Giorgio de Chirico	André Breton
<p>Above all a great sensitivity is needed. One must picture everything in the world as an enigma, not only the great questions one has always asked oneself -- why was the world created, why we are born, live and die, for after all, as I have said, perhaps there is no reason in all of this. But rather to understand the enigma of things generally considered insignificant. To perceive the mystery of certain phenomena of feeling, of the character of a people, even to arrive at the point where one can picture the creative geniuses of the past as things that we examine from all sides. To live in the world as if in an immense museum of strangeness, full of curious many-colored toys which change their appearance, which, like little children we sometimes break to see how they are made on the inside, and, disappointed, realize they are empty.</p> <p>C'est une grande sensibilité qu'il faut surtout. Se représenter tout dans le monde comme des énigmes, non seulement les grandes questions qu'on s'est toujours posé, pourquoi le monde a-t-il été créé, pourquoi nous naissons, nous vivons et nous mourons, car peut-être après tout comme je l'ai déjà dit il n'y a aucune raison en cela. Mais comprendre l'énigme de certaines choses qui sont considérées en général comme insignifiantes. Sentir le mystère de certains phénomènes des sentiments, des caractères d'un peuple, arriver au point de se figurer même les génies créateurs comme des choses, des choses fort curieuses que nous retournons de tous les côtés. Vivre dans le monde comme dans un immense musée d'étrangeté, plein de jouets curieux bariolés, qui changent</p>	<p>From the moment when it is subjected to a methodical examination, when by means yet to be determined, we succeed in recording the contents of dreams in their entirety...when its graph will expand with unparalleled volume and regularity, we may hope that the mysteries which really are not will give way to the great Mystery.</p> <p>De l'instant où sera soumis à un examen méthodique, où, par des moyens à déterminer, on parviendra à nous rendre compte du rêve dans son intégrité...où sa courbe se développera avec une régularité et une ampleur sans pareilles, on peut espérer que les mystères qui n'en sont pas feront place au grand Mystère.</p> <p>And am I not talking about the <u>poetic consciousness of objects</u> which I have been able to acquire only after a spiritual contact with them repeated a thousand times over.</p> <p>Et je ne parle pas de la <u>conscience poétique des objets</u>, que je n'ai pu acquérir qu'à leur contact spirituel mille fois répété.</p>

THEME IV THE POWER OBJECT: PREMONITION, IMMANENCE, AND OMEN

Giorgio de Chirico	André Breton
<p>d'aspect, que quelquefois comme de petits enfants nous chancelions pour voir comment ils étaient faits dedans. - et déçus, nous nous apercevons qu'ils étaient vides.</p>	
<p>...for I believe that one must never forget a picture must always be the reflection of a profound sensation, and that profound means strange, and strange means uncommon or altogether unknown.</p> <p>...car je trouve qu'il ne faut jamais oublier qu'un tableau doit toujours être le reflet d'une sensation profonde et que profond veut dire étrange et qu'étrange veut dire peu commun ou tout à fait inconnu.</p>	<p>Let us not mince words: the marvelous is always beautiful, anything marvelous is beautiful, in fact only the marvelous is beautiful.</p> <p>ranchons-en: le merveilleux est toujours beau, n'importe quel merveilleux est beau, il n'y a même que le merveilleux qui soit beau.</p>
<p>I had a presentiment that this was the way it must be, that it could not be different. An invisible link ties things together and at that moment it seemed to me that I had already seen this palace, or that this palace had once, somewhere already existed.</p> <p>Moi, j'avais trouvé le palais tel que je me le figurais j'avais un pressentiment qu'il devait être comme cela, qu'il ne pouvait pas être autrement. Un lien invisible lie les choses entre elles, il me semblait en ce moment d'avoir à déjà vu ce palais.</p>	<p>The marvelous is not the same in every period of history. It partakes in some obscure way of a sort of general revelation only the fragments of which come down to us: they are the romantic ruins, the modern mannequin or any other symbol capable of affecting the human sensibility for a period of time...For today I think of a <u>castle</u>, half of which is not necessarily in ruins; this castle belongs to me, I picture it in a rustic setting, not far from Paris.</p> <p>Le merveilleux n'est pas le même à toutes les époques; il participe obscurément d'une sorte de révélation générale dont le détail seul nous parvient: ce sont les ruines romantiques, le mannequin moderne ou tout autre symbole propre à remuer la sensibilité humaine durant un temps...Pour aujourd'hui je pense à un château dont la moitié n'est pas forcément</p>

THEME IV THE POWER OBJECT: PREMONITION, IMMANENCE, AND OMEN

Giorgio de Chirico	André Breton
	en ruine; ce château m'appartient, je le vois dans un site agreste, non loin de Paris.

It should now be immediately obvious from the overlapping themes and closely allied phrasing of these documents that de Chirico was indeed a major theoretical influence on Surrealism, whose theories had a greater effect on the development of the movement than the single method of automatism that was derived from Freud.

Summary

In this chapter we composed an image of early modernism through the multiple themes of primitivism, Dadaism, and the pursuit of origins. Two extraordinary thinkers, Sigmund Freud, and Giorgio de Chirico, each had an overwhelming impact on Surrealist thought. Their thought, too, reveals a common search for the origins of thought -- Freud, through the vehicle of hypnosis and de Chirico, through his experience of the imagination as revelation. In these contradictory impulses of science and occultism, rigorous logic and intuitive inspiration, that are so characteristic of the twentieth century, we may discern the ambivalent nature of Surrealist thought. This ambivalence was, in turn, expressed in their perception of the object. We now turn to the Surrealist object itself, found in the form of the ready-made, the found object, or the altered object, to search out the perception it embodies, and hence to elicit how it achieves the distinctive tone and flavour of the Surreal.

THE
SURREALIST
OBJECT:
POWER
IMMANENCE
AND THE
DAEMONIC

Chapter V

THE SURREALIST OBJECT

Power, Immanence, and the Daemonic

A. THE PERCEPTION OF THE OBJECT

Consider, if you will, a group of objects on a table. If you were to pick up just one object, and concentrate on that one only, you may find a change in your perception of space occurring. The surrounding objects will seem to disappear as they occupy only your peripheral vision, while the focus of your attention may appear larger and more unique as you concentrate on it. As you continue to focus your attention on that one object -- say, an apple, for example -- one of the things you may discover is a quality of presence or a manner of existing that we call "appearance". This quality of appearance is a composite of seeming, seeing, feeling, and reasoning that can be characterized as a gestalt.¹ If you continue to maintain your visual attention on that one object (the apple) you will notice that it begins to appropriate more psychological space as well as visual space. This is an unavoidably subjective response that donates to the object of perception a certain significance or meaning beyond its usual functional connotation in a relative context. When isolated and seen "in vacuo", so to speak, the object presents an "expression" to the mind of the beholder. By disregarding or nullifying the surrounding space, the impression of the size of the object will vary, for no relative context defines its size or function. In short, by

isolating the object you have removed the accepted frame of reference, and hence changed the context of your perception.

This visual isolation opens a new perception of the object, and grants it a meaning out of proportion to its functional origin. It is precisely this principle of perception that the Surrealists employ in their quest for a new vision of reality.

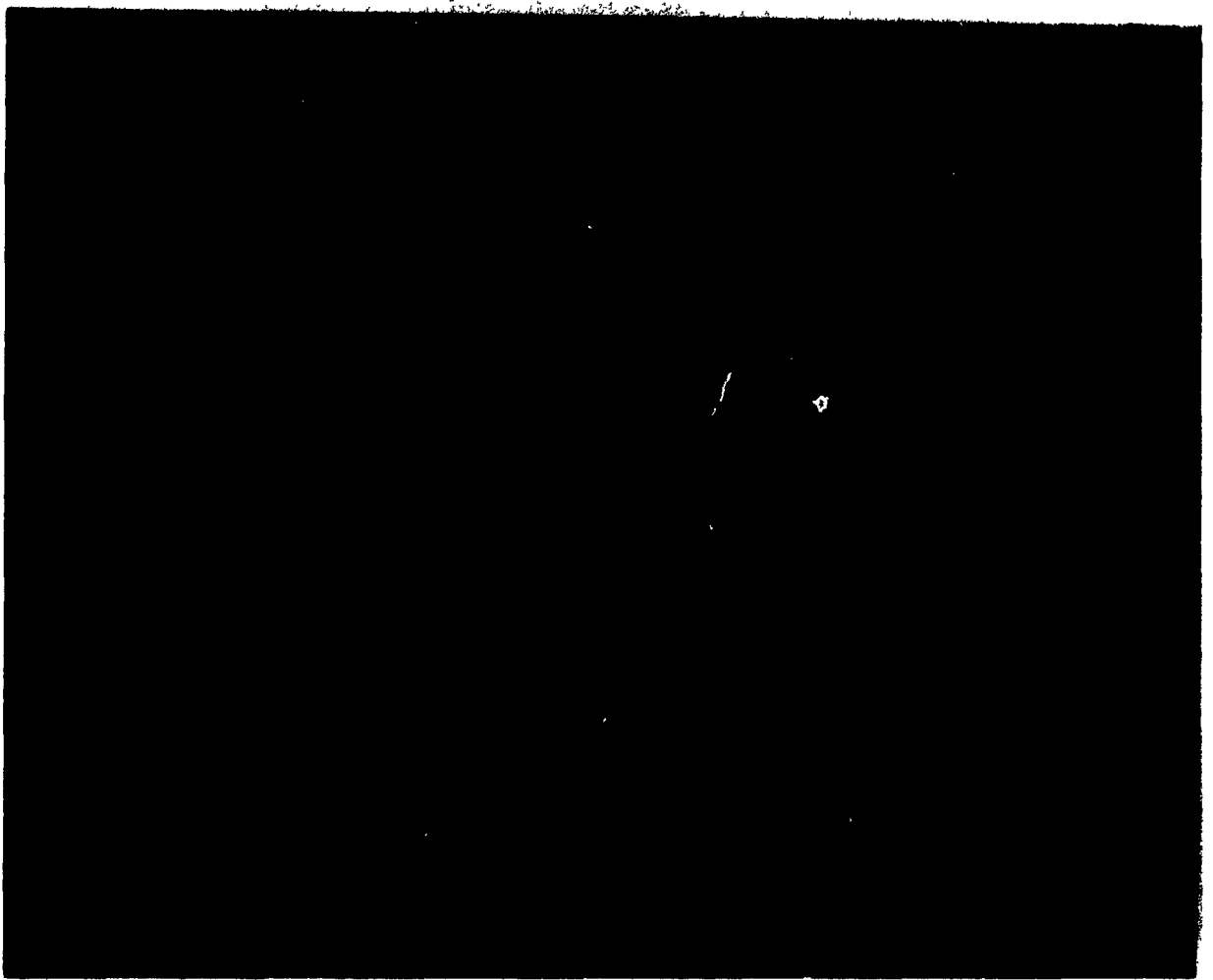
Some may call this an "aesthetic response",² although that term is too confining with regard to the density of the perceptual response to reality. It does not encompass that aspect of meaning experienced as "expressive form". Some may call it a behavioural response,³ but this category neglects the element of self-determination in personal judgement, and hence the choice that occurs in immediate perception. Also, we cannot call it a historical response, because it occurs primarily in a cognitive context. We may, in fact, call the region of this response **the imagination**. The "aesthetic emotion" it most resembles is **"the uncanny"**.⁴

This extra-ordinary object is, then, the Surrealist object. The new frame of reference created by its isolation is circumscribed by the imagination. Because it is defined by the imagination, the new meaning of the object becomes infinitely flexible. And it is the imagination that forms the threshold between the real and the Surreal.⁵

If we consider a painting by Rene Magritte titled The Listening Chamber 1953, we find that this new quality of perception is expressed in the artist's vision. (Figure 38). Magritte teases us with changes in scale and context to create an impression which only on the surface resembles a verbal paradox: instead, he convincingly presents us with a

Figure 38. René Magritte. The Listening Chamber. 1953.

Magritte teases us with changes in scale and context to create an impression which only on the surface resembles a verbal paradox; instead, he convincingly presents us with a visual impression that is both contradictory and believable. Magritte here toys with our perception of reality by amplifying and intensifying a change in scale from the conceivable, empirical, or possible ways in which the apple may be viewed, to a point of extreme exaggeration whereby the inconceivable and impossible is made plausible.



visual impression that is both contradictory and believable. For example, if you were to pick up an apple and bring it close to your eyes, it would appear larger, weightier, and more opaque -- just as it does in the painting. A change in scale from foreground to background is in this manner, accomplished in the painting. Magritte here toys with our perception of reality by amplifying and intensifying a change of scale from the conceivable, empirical, or possible ways in which the apple may be viewed, to a point of extreme exaggeration whereby the inconceivable and impossible is made plausible. He thus achieves an expressive, rather than an illusionistic use of space. Try as we may, it is well-nigh impossible to imagine such a radical shift in scale as is depicted here, and yet this conception of the event is made real through the artist's imagination.

The contrary effect is achieved through specific artistic conventions employed by the artist: these include the use of a vanishing point; one point perspective; illusionistic modelling of the apple and its surrounding space achieved by the medium of oil paint; and the use of consistently believable light source from a well-defined window, depicted at the side of the painting. These conventions achieve an atmosphere of illusion and believability that is contradicted by the illogical nature of the event depicted. Not only has Magritte created a visual contradiction, but it is stated in the form of a visual paradox, where both possible and impossible meanings must be entertained simultaneously. The size of the room is acceptable only when one suspends disbelief about the enormous scale of the apple (which conceivably can occur at close-range perception.) The context contradicts the subject. Intellectually, we are forced to conceive of both the near and the far perceptions of space as

inextricably linked. Both perceptions are intrinsically correct, must be maintained simultaneously, and therefore must be conceived of as a unit. The subtext of the painting is itself this ambivalence.

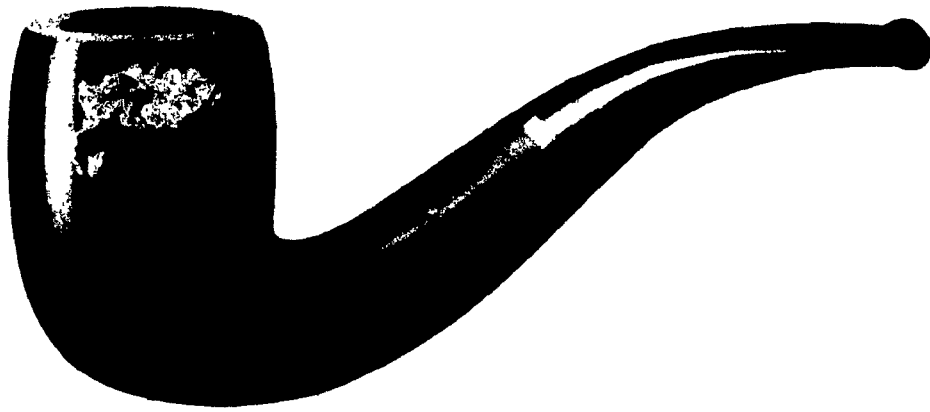
A work which pursues this type of contradiction even further is Magritte's Personal Values, of 1952 (Figure 39). This work, too, plays with transformations of scale and changes of relationship to pose an extraordinary visual riddle. In it we see a group of objects deriving from the intimate act of daily grooming, each portrayed in adequate relation to each other. The scale, each to each, is empirically correct, recognizable, and true. But a radical change has taken place. The context is not the expected setting of a dressing-room table, but the unexpected, impossibly small bedroom, with walls of open sky. The objects assume a gigantic scale in this "extra-ordinary" context. However illogical this image seems at first reading, these objects do have an internal logic of their own -- for through a kind of inverted reasoning their scale is determined by their proximity to the body in the familiar activity of grooming. By placing these intimate objects in an unfamiliar context, Magritte accomplishes the seeming impossibility of making the familiar and intimate become strangely unfamiliar and concealed. The enormous scale of the objects and their relationship to one another contradicts our usual expectations of the environment. The sensation of estrangement is intensified by the personal space of the bedroom that becomes an open field of sky, suggestive of dream and reverie. Not only is this familiar context made strange through a radical shift in scale, but the antithesis of the closed wall as the open sky is indicated. And the summation of this series of contradictions emerges as the sense of **the uncanny, the unfamiliar, and the Surreal**. Magritte thus destroys our

Figure 40. Rene Magritte. The Perfidy of Images. 1928-29.

This deliberate provocation of the imagination -- a questioning of the content of daily experience -- is triumphantly stated in a painting allusively titled The Perfidy (or Treachery) of Images. The painting features a rather blandly painted pipe on an empty ground, underneath which is written the message, "ceci n'est pas une pipe"...The contradiction invoked, then, is the distinction between our verbal construction of reality, expressed in the words, "une pipe", and the inexplicable presence of the material object itself.

Figure 39. Rene Magritte. Personal Values. 1952.

This work, too, plays with transformation in scale and changes of relationship to explore an extraordinary visual riddle. In it we see a group of objects deriving from the intimate act of daily grooming, each portrayed in adequate relation to each other. However illogical the image seems at first reading, these objects do have an internal logic of their own -- for through a kind of inverted reasoning their scale is determined by their proximity to the body in the familiar activity of grooming. By placing these intimate objects in an unfamiliar context, Magritte accomplishes the seeming impossibility of making the familiar and intimate become strangely unfamiliar and concealed.



Ceci n'est pas une pipe.



preconceptions of the possible and the familiar, for by breaking the relative context of our everyday perception, he challenges our sense of reality. He intentionally evokes a sense of **sur-reality**.

This deliberate provocation of the imagination -- a questioning of the content of daily experience -- is triumphantly stated in a painting allusively titled The Perfidy (or Treachery) of Images, 1928-29 also by Magritte. (Figure 40).⁶ The painting features a rather blandly painted pipe on an empty ground, underneath which is written the message, "ceci n'est pas une pipe": "this is not a pipe". The conventional interpretation of this aphorism, hence the work as a whole, is that it refers to the fact the painted image of the pipe is not the same as the real pipe, because it is an image of an object.⁷ This sort of interpretation barely scrapes the surface of Magritte's challenge to our perception. It is of course, obvious, that a painted image is not the object itself, but Magritte's use of an illusionistic style in depicting the pipe, combined with the didactic message underneath suggests instead that the artist intended an actual suspension of disbelief, which allows us to identify the painted image with the real object. If this is indeed the case, as must be deduced from the formal elements of the work, then the painting is intended to question our very conception of reality as it is conceived through language. In effect, Magritte effectively draws a distinction between the idea of the pipe, expressed in the verbal construct (or "sign" as the semioticians would have it⁸) "une pipe", and the palpable, visual reality of the thing itself. The contradiction invoked then, is the distinction between our verbal construction of reality, expressed in the words "une pipe", and the inexplicable presence of the material object itself. The very notion that we can understand the

physical, visual world intellectually, through language, is brought into question. It is as if Magritte were saying, "Observe this -- but without naming it".

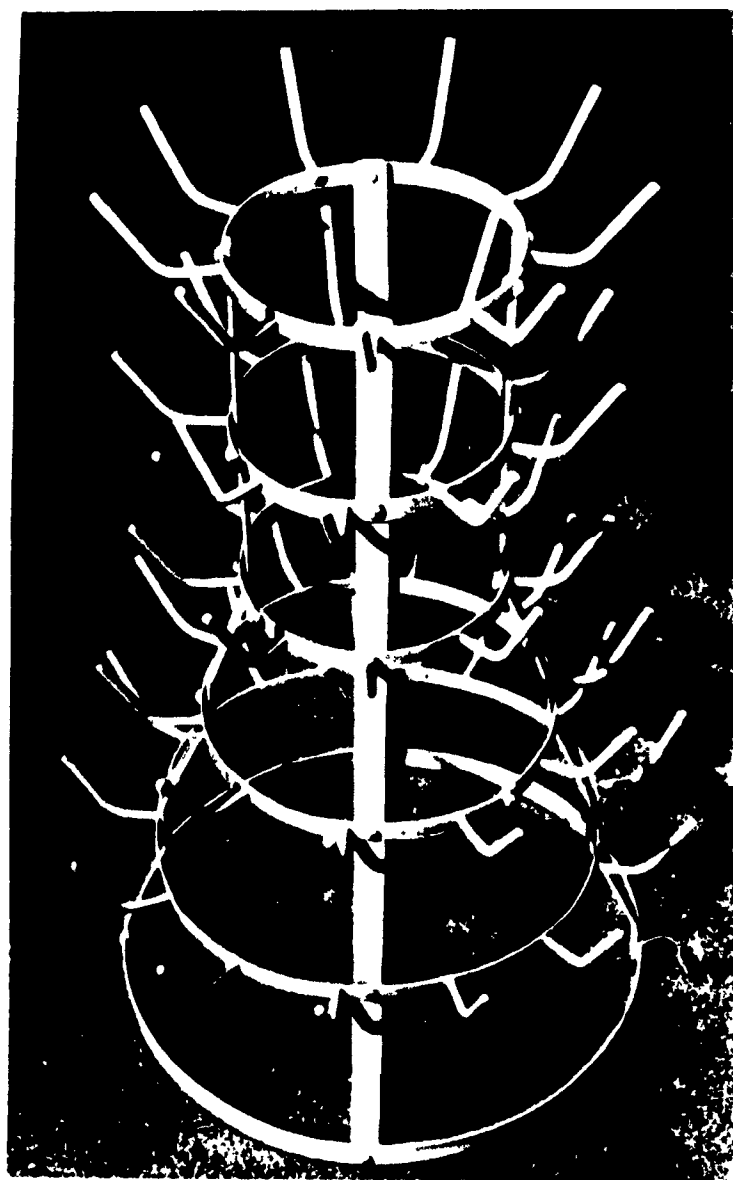
1. The Crisis of the Object

The Surrealist "crisis of the object"⁹ was precipitated by the Dadaist activities of Marcel Duchamp. Duchamp was the first artist to engage in the production of "readymades". These were mass-produced, industrial objects, which the artist acquired and then exhibited, decisively remaking them as his own with the addition of his signature and a title. Duchamp has noted "Specify readymades...by planning for such a moment to come (on such a day, such a date, such a moment) to inscribe a readymade".¹⁰ This seemingly redundant activity was itself the ironic butt of a gesture that had less to do with the obvious banality of the object than with the transcendence of that banality.¹¹

Aware of modern man's increasing alienation from his manufactured environment, Duchamp took to exhibiting lonely mass-produced objects, which he retrieved from their utilitarian context. These objects most frequently elicit a peculiar fascination in the beholder; their alienation from the functional environment places the perceptual emphasis on the qualities of visual form, which are then perceived in all their uniqueness. In exhibition they acquire a bizarre internal life, a kind of disassociated sense of significance, suggestive of an elusive sign language that confounds the beholder. Jean Bazaine, a critic and contemporary of Duchamp, observes:

Figure 41. Marcel Duchamp. Bottle Rack. 1914.

Duchamp's enshrinement of the Bottle Rack, an ordinary object that he placed on a pedestal so that it stands out of its relative context, creates a new perception of the object. By placing the object within boundaries, isolating it on the pedestal, Duchamp breaks the continuity of mundane space and introduces a point of absolute interest. Removed from its utilitarian context, the mass-produced object loses its relative value, and the unique quality of visual form becomes more accessible. By distancing the object from its functional origin, a corresponding psychological distance takes place in the mind of the viewer, and a new thought for the object is born.



This bottle rack, torn from its utilitarian context and washed up on the beach, is invested with the lonely dignity of the derelict. Good for nothing, there to be used, ready for anything, it is alive. It lives on the fringe of existence its own disturbing, absurd life. The disturbing object -- that is the first step to art.¹²

Duchamp's enshrinement of the Bottle Rack, 1914 (Figure 41) an ordinary object which he placed on a pedestal so that it **stands out** of its relative context, creates a new perception of the object. By placing the object within boundaries, isolating it on the pedestal, Duchamp breaks the continuity of mundane space, and introduces a point of absolute interest, that exists in imaginal or essential space. This imaginal space is what Bazaine refers to as the "fringe" of existence -- it is the margin between the real and the unreal. Removed from its utilitarian context, the mass-produced object loses its relative value, and the unique quality of its visual form becomes more accessible. In this way, the object becomes charged with significance; it becomes intrinsically interesting as a "thing-in-itself".¹³ By distancing the object from its functional origin, a corresponding psychological distance takes place in the mind of the viewer, and a new thought for the object is born.

This new perception of the object was entirely intentional on Duchamp's part. His Fountain of 1917 (Figure 42) exemplifies his iconoclastic elevation of the **banal** to a penultimate point of non-banality. Marcel Jean aptly points out that Duchamp follows the principle of dissociation favoured by that saint of the Surrealists, Isadore Ducasse, le Comte de Lautréamont: "Whenever a thought presents itself to us as a commonly accepted truth, and we take the trouble to develop it, we will find that it is a discovery."¹⁴ Duchamp's Fountain was an ordinary urinal that he entered in the 1917 Salon des Independants,

New York, under the plebian name of a "Mr. R. Mutt". Far more than just a hilarious gesture to "epater le bourgeoisie", (a respectable Dada motive, in any case) Duchamp's entry reveals an underlying seriousness of purpose that he calls "the irony of affirmation".¹⁵ Its rejection from the exhibition prompted the following response from the artist, who answered to accusations of "plagiarism" and "immorality" as follows:

Now Mr. Mutt's fountain is not immoral, that is absurd, no more than a bath tub is immoral. It is a fixture that you see every day in plumbers' show windows.

Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has not importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view -- **created a new thought for that object.**

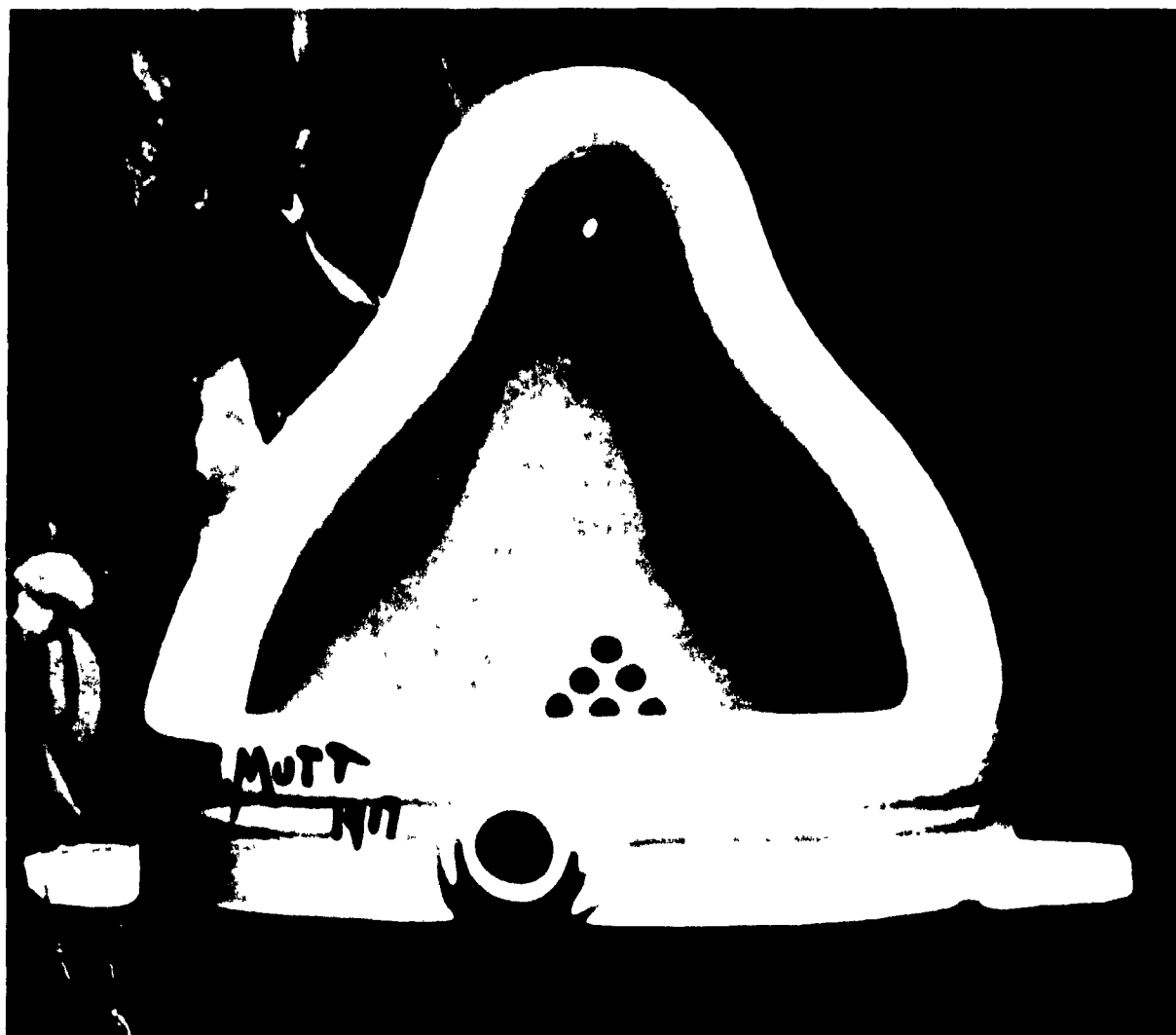
As for plumbing, that is absurd. The only works of art America has given are her plumbing and her bridges.¹⁶

The implicit intention of the Fountain, as functional an object as one may hope to find, was to make the ordinary unknown and unfamiliar. These readymades require a return to the substance of everyday life, but with a new appeal to the imagination. In revisioning the ordinary, Duchamp creates a disturbing feeling of the extra-ordinary, and fulfills his goal in creating "a new thought for the object". Through the attraction of this "unknown ordinary", the perception of the object is imbued with new power and significance.

The formal principle that Duchamp exploits here is that of dissociation, whereby the familiar is made unfamiliar through a change of the context of perception.¹⁷ The object, removed from its mundane context, surprises the viewer with the unexpected and the unique quality of its form. But the response it evokes is not merely aesthetic. In an article titled "The Crisis of the Object", 1936, Andre Breton observes:

Figure 42. Marcel Duchamp. (Richard Mutt). Fountain. 1917.

Duchamp's Fountain of 1917 exemplifies his iconoclastic elevation of the banal to a penultimate point of non-banality. The Fountain was an ordinary urinal that he entered in the 1917 Salon des Independents, New York, under the plebian name of a "Mr. R. Mutt". Far more than just a hilarious gesture to "epater le bourgeoisie (a respectable Dada motive, in any case) Duchamp's entry reveals an underlying seriousness of purpose that he calls "the irony of affirmation". The implicit intention of the Fountain, as functional an object as one may hope to find, was to make the ordinary unknown and unfamiliar. In revisioning the ordinary, Duchamp creates a disturbing feeling of the extra-ordinary, and fulfills his goal in creating "a new thought for the object".



It must be clearly understood, to start with, that both mathematical 'objects' and poetic 'objects' commend themselves to those who created them for entirely other reasons than their plastic qualities, and even if they should happen to satisfy certain aesthetic standards it would be wrong to try to judge them from this standpoint.¹⁸

In Duchamp's readymades, we see that the object -- the Fountain or Bottle Rack -- by its introduction into the museum or exhibition space, breaks the continuity of mundane space and begins to inhabit essential or extra-ordinary space. In this new context, it becomes a vehicle for the imagination, which can then imbue it with potential significance. The same uncovering of a heightened significance in the ordinary object is seen in another late Dadaist work, a collage by Max Ernst titled, The Hat Makes the Man of 1919. (Figure 43). The piece is composed from collaged magazine advertisements for hats, aligned in a progression across the paper. The hat is, of course, a powerful cultural symbol. Breton writes that this work stems from an experience in which Ernst saw many hats on a coat rack move from one side of the room to another.¹⁹ Absurdly witty, The Hat Makes the Man explores the strange powers of identity that such objects as hats exert over us.

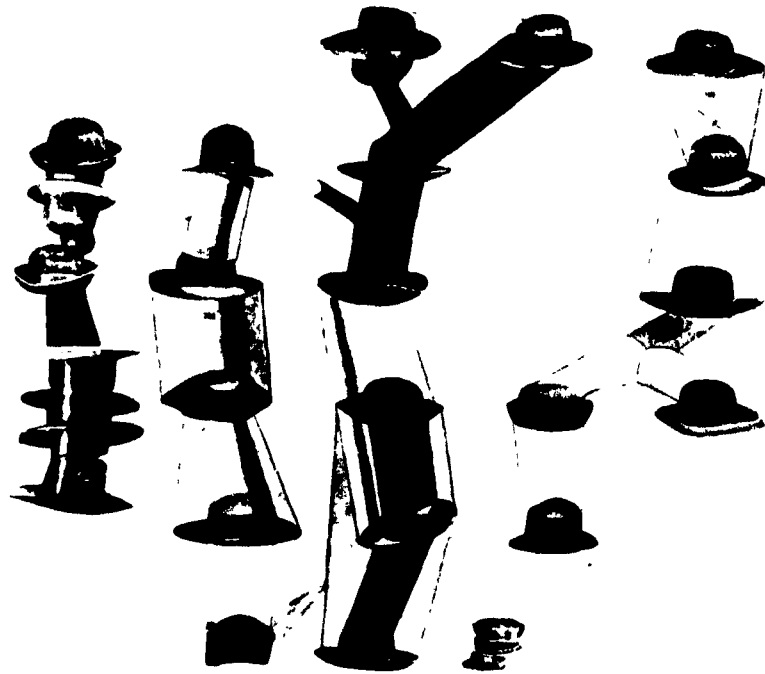
The Surrealist predilection for the objet trouvé, or found object is seen in the Surrealist Tray of Objects, compiled by Salvador Dalí for the "Exposition Surrealiste d'Objets", in 1936. (Figure 44). Discards from the flux of life, remnants of experience, the original function of these objects, too, has become discarded. Objects such as the worn slipper at the right command interest as things in themselves, as potentially significant forms that carry some unknown or immanent meaning. This much has been said, and is generally accepted, of Surrealist art. But the

Figure 43. Max Ernst. The Hat Makes the Man. 1919. (above)

The Hat Makes the Man is composed of collaged magazine advertisements for hats, aligned in a progression across the paper. The hat is, of course, a powerful cultural symbol. Breton writes that this work stems from an experience in which Ernst saw many hats on a coat rack move from one side of the room to another. Absurdly witty, The Hat Makes the Man explores the strange powers of identity that such objects as hats exert over us.

Figure 44. Salvador Dali. Surrealist Tray of Objects. 1936.

The Surrealist predilection for the objet trouve or found object is seen in the Surrealist Tray of Objects, compiled by Salvador Dali for the "Exposition Surrealiste d'Objets", in 1936. Discards from the flux of life, remnants of experience, the original function of these objects too, has become discarded. Objects such as the worn slipper at the right command interest as things in themselves, as potentially significant forms that carry some unknown or immanent meaning. By framing his Surrealist Tray of Objects, Dali distances the viewer from its relative context, and, separated from functional existence, the objects assume a new poignancy of meaning: far more than nostalgic or aesthetic, they remain ambiguously mysterious.



question, "What is the nature of this new meaning?" has yet to be asked, because our response is commonly classified under that remarkably ambiguous term, the Surreal.

a) Ordinary and Extraordinary Objects

Our previous explorations into the history and etymology of this term, **the Surreal**, demonstrated a certain duality of meaning whereby the natural and the supernatural become interfused. From an etymological standpoint, then, the Surreal is the domain where the natural and the supernatural meet. This definition is in line with the Surrealist "philosophy of immanence", according to which, "Surreality would be embodied in reality itself, and would be neither superior nor exterior to it."²⁰ The Surreal, then, is not a domain **outside** of the realm of everyday experience, but is a special dimension **within** it. As Breton states, "...the container would also be the contents. What I envisage is almost a communicating vessel between the container and the contained...I reject categorically all initiatives that would inevitably lead to the narrow isolation of thought from life, or alternately, the strict dominion of life from thought."²¹ Surreality and reality, are, then, completely interfused. Is this a philosophical perspective that was applied to the Surrealist object? Or does it emerge from the object itself?

If we consider Duchamp's Bottle Rack or Fountain, Ernst's The Hat Makes the Man or Dalí's Surrealist Tray of Objects (Figures 41, 42, 43, 44), we discover that a common feature of each is the isolation of the object from its mundane context. Mircea Eliade suggests that "the profane experience...maintains the homogeneity and hence the relativity of

space."²² By analogy, extra-ordinary or sacred experience breaks the continuity of mundane space. Discontinuity and boundary, then, are the features of the experience of the sacred. If we extend this analogy, the elevation of the ordinary object in the form of the readymade or objet trouve breaks the continuity of mundane space, and introduces a new potential of meaning for that object. The Surrealist object thus becomes the vehicle for all sorts of unexpressed feelings, perceptions, and knowledge. The extra-ordinary, essential or imaginal nature of this perception allows us to see the object as a thing-in-itself, imbued with latent meaning as a vehicle for thought. Hence, in the extra-ordinary domain of the Surreal, the object may assume a potential significance that is infinitely flexible.

b) The Sense of Significance

But the new meaning of the Surreal object has its root in a nexus of responses that we have called the weird, the uncanny, or the extra-ordinary. This dimension is characterized by a response to reality that is found in both archaic and modern experience, that we have previously characterized as the "numinous". The nature of this perception is illuminated by Susanne Langer:

A mind to which the stern character of an armchair is more immediately apparent than its use or its position in the room, is oversensitive to expressive forms. It grasps analogies that a riper experience would reject as absurd. It fuses senses that practical thinking must keep apart. Yet it is just this crazy play of associations that exercises the powers of symbolic transformation. To project feelings into outer objects is the first way of symbolizing, and thus of conceiving those feelings.²³

Langer is describing the process by which we come to know something, and she suggests that a "sense of significance" is essential to the learning process. In fact, it is the one constant in our knowing. This "sense of significance" is indescribable in logical terms. It is the common root of reason, rite, and art:

The earliest manifestation of any symbol-making tendency is likely to be a mere sense of significance attached to certain objects, certain forms or sounds; a vague emotional arrest of the mind...aesthetic attraction, mysterious fear...are probably the first manifestations of that mental function which in man becomes a tendency to see symbolically...²⁴

The Surrealists employ the principles of juxtaposition and isolation to arouse a fresh perception of the ordinary object. Perhaps inadvertently, they stumbled onto a primary phenomenon that we have called the uncanny, the weird, or the extra-ordinary. The common denominator linking these phenomena is **the sense of significance:** a sense of unspecified power or danger created by the dual attack of surprise and juxtaposition. Thus the primary characteristic of the Surreal is an irrational potency of meaning that grants it power. Power is a "quality of existence that distinguishes the unusual or extra-ordinary from the usual and ordinary."²⁵ For example, by framing his Surrealist Tray of Objects, Dalí thereby distances the viewer from its relative context and, separated from functional existence, these objects assume a new poignancy of meaning: much more than nostalgic or aesthetic, they remain ambiguously mysterious. Herein lies their power, for "when no sign manifests itself it is provoked. A sign is asked to put an end to the tension and anxiety caused by relativity and disorientation -- in short, to reveal an absolute point of support."²⁶

The experience of an unspecified power is generally accepted as the essential element of archaic religious experience. Archaic man experiences his environment in terms of power. Gerardus Van der Leeuw has observed:

We moderns have accustomed ourselves to regard things as mere objects with which we deal exactly as we please. To the primitive mind, on the contrary, the thing is the bearer of a power; it can effect something, it has its own life which reveals itself...During an important expedition an African Negro steps on a stone and cries out: "Ha! You there?" and takes it with him to bring him good luck. The stone, as it were gives a hint that it is powerful.²⁷

In archaic or mythic perception, the object is taken as a pure presentation of the perceiver's imagination, and thus becomes a vehicle for all sorts of unconscious knowledge and fears. Ernst Cassirer suggests that "in mythic conception, however, things are not taken for what they mean indirectly, but for their immediate appearance; they are taken as pure presentations, and embodied in the imagination."²⁸ The Surrealists purposely explored this domain of the imagination in their art. Dadaism had prepared the path by declaring all cultural conceptions null and void; Surrealism, in turn attempted a fresh and direct vision of reality through the deliberate provocation of the unconscious. According to Andre Breton, the Surrealists aimed at "a total revolution of the object" based on the belief that, "one will discover more in the reality concealed within the entity than in the immediate data surrounding it."²⁹ In fact, Breton systematized the aims of the Surrealist artists: to bring about a new perception of the object.

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Figure 45. Meret Oppenheim. Fur-lined Tea-cup (Object). 1936. (above)

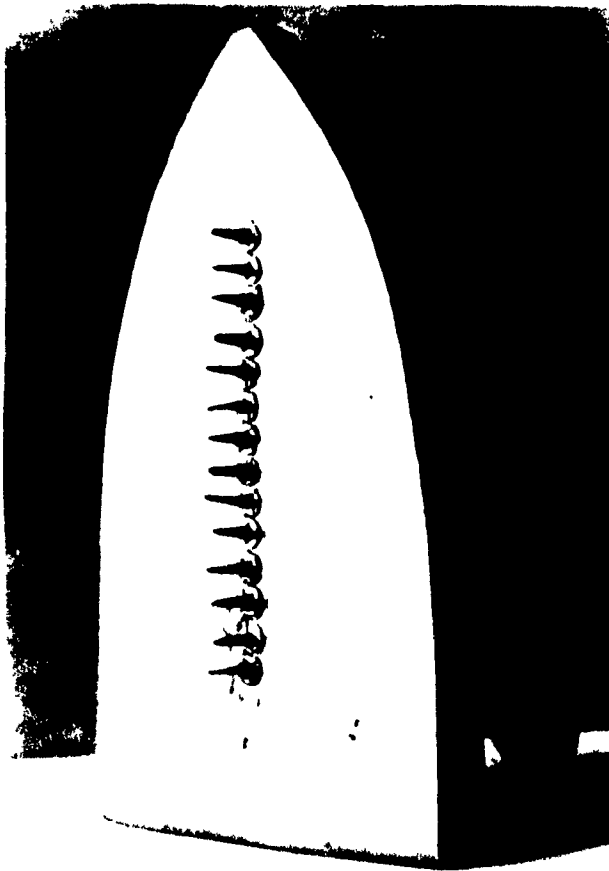
Meret Oppenheim's uncomfortable Fur-lined Tea-cup of 1936 is composed of a cup, saucer, and spoon covered with fur. The combination of these elements evokes a disconcerting sensation that refutes the usual function of the tea-cup. Deliberately shocking, the juxtaposition of the fur and the cup empowers the object by breaking the boundary between the object's utilitarian or vernacular meaning, and its new hidden and occult purpose.

Figure 46. Man Ray. Gift (Flat-iron). 1921. (left)

Similarly, Man Ray's ominous Gift of 1921, an iron studded with nails, contrasts the simple mass-produced flat-iron with an irrational element -- the nails -- which contradict its usual function. The implicit violence of this seemingly innocuous object is apparent in the denial of its role through the intellectual contradiction of **smoothing** or **tearing** aroused by the object's new form.

Figure 47. Man Ray. Object to be Destroyed. 1932. (right)

In Object to be Destroyed the metronome is transformed by the addition of an eye attached to its pendulum. The disturbing presence of this "eye of time" is deliberately invoked; in addition to this literal embodiment of the archaic or mythic image, it also evokes the equally disconcerting feeling that "time is watching you".



2. The Altered Object

In addition to the found object and the readymade, the Surrealists made composite objects that we may call the **altered object**. The "altered object" features an ordinary object transformed through the addition of some new, irrational element. This combination achieves a new meaning through the juxtaposition of disparate things. Artists such as Meret Oppenheim, Man Ray, or Dalí appropriate some cultural icon, usually a household object, and radically transform it with the addition of some new and surprising element. Meret Oppenheim's uncomfortable Fur-lined Tea-cup, (*Dejeuner en fourrure*) of 1936, is composed of a cup, saucer, and spoon covered with fur. (Figure 45). The combination of these elements evokes a disconcerting sensation that refutes the usual function of the tea-cup. Deliberately shocking, the juxtaposition of the fur and the cup empowers the object by breaking the boundary between the object's utilitarian or vernacular meaning and its new hidden and occult purpose.

Similarly, Man Ray's ominous Gift of 1921, an iron studded with nails, contrasts the simple mass-produced flat-iron with an irrational element -- the nails -- which contradict its usual function. (Figure 46). The implicit violence of this seemingly innocuous object is apparent in the denial of its role through the intellectual contradiction of **smoothing** or **tearing** aroused by the object's new form. The malevolent purpose of this object is all the more intensified by its title -- Gift -- and its emergence from the mundane realm. In Object to be Destroyed, 1932 also by Man Ray, the metronome is transformed by the addition of an eye attached to its pendulum. (Figure 47). The disturbing presence of this

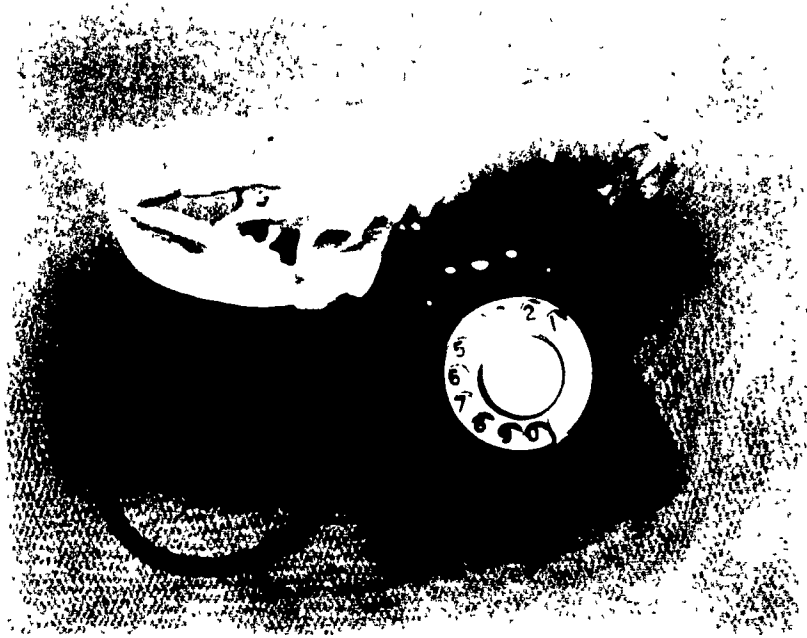
"eye of time" is deliberately invoked; in addition to this literal embodiment of the archaic or mythic image, it also evokes the equally disconcerting feeling that "time is watching you".

The implicit violence of these composite objects is made explicit in two Surrealist objects by Victor Brauner and Salvador Dalí. Both Dalí's Lobster-telephone (1938-39, New York) and Brauner's The Wolftable (1939-47) oppose a manufactured object with an apparently alive animal. (Figure 48, Figure 49). It is the conjunction of these two elements that intrigues us, for the new meaning that ensues grants a clue to the nature of the Surreal. Dalí's Lobster-telephone (Figure 48) supplants the telephone receiver with the crusty pink body of a live lobster, and the union of these two produces a new creature that is both industrial and animal. The formerly functional nature of this bizarre object demands that we imagine the activity of picking up the receiver to answer a call. It thereby creates a feeling of potential violence that calls forth the prerequisite shudder of dread. By contrast, Victor Brauner's The Wolftable, (Figure 49) exhibited in the "Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme" in Paris 1947, is even more directly violent. The Wolftable confronts the viewer with a simple mass-produced table transformed by a snarling wolf's head. The wolf turns back on its tail: the legs of the table have become wolf's legs. The entire object twists in on itself in a paroxysm of vicious anxiety. The overwhelming feeling of one of uncontrolled violence and danger.

Figure 48. Salvador Dali. Lobster-Telephone. 1938-39.

The implicit violence of these composite objects is made explicit in two Surrealist objects by Victor Brauner and Salvador Dali. Both Dali's Lobster-telephone (1938-39) and Brauner's Wolftable (1939-47) oppose a manufactured object with an apparently alive animal. It is the conjunction of these two elements that intrigues us, for the new meaning that ensues grants a clue to the nature of the Surreal. Dali's Lobster-telephone supplants the telephone receiver with the crusty pink body of a lobster, and the union of these two produces a new creature that is both industrial and animal...By contrast, Victor Brauner's The Wolftable is even more directly violent. The entire object twists in on itself in a paroxysm of vicious anxiety. The overwhelming feeling is one of uncontrolled violence and danger. The wolf burst through the table; the lobster overtakes the telephone: these apparently irrational conjunctions uncover the eruption of animal nature in the dull realm of the artificial, the industrial, and the commonplace. From this combination of elements we may draw forth the central metaphor of Surrealist thought: the animation of the inanimate.

Figure 49. Victor Brauner. The Wolftable. 1939-47.



These altered objects do more than just violate the viewer with the intensity of a "cerebral revolver-shot",³⁰ although that, too, is part of their motive. In addition to the deliberate effect of shock, they also evoke a special emotion of rage and fear combined. The uncanny alliance of these disparate objects erupts into new emotion, the basic metaphor of which is the coincidence of the natural and the artificial. The wolf bursts through the table; the lobster overtakes the telephone: these apparently irrational conjunctions uncover the eruption of animal nature in the dull realm of the artificial, the industrial, and the commonplace. From this combination of elements we may draw forth a central metaphor of Surrealist thought, that is, the animation of the inanimate by inchoate, immanent power. The metaphor can also be distinguished and characterized by this constellation of themes: the destruction of reason by the irrational, the overcoming of rigid convention by exuberant nature, and the triumph of fecund chaos over sterile order. These "fields of tension" are described in a statement by Andre Breton from "The Crisis of the Object" 1936:

Here, as elsewhere, the **mad beast of convention** must be hunted down. There are weapons at hand, since common sense cannot prevent the world of concrete objects, upon which it founds its hateful regime, from remaining inadequately guarded or from being effectively undermined on all sides. Poets and artists join forces with scholars at the heart of these 'fields of tension' created in the imagination by the reconciliation of two different images. This ability to reconcile the two images allows such people to transcend the generally limiting factor of the object's manifest existence. With this new focus, on the contrary, the same object, however complete it may seem, reverts to an **infinite series of latent possibilities** which are not peculiar to it and therefore entail its transformation...³¹.

a) *The Motive for Metaphor*

The principle of metaphor invoked in The Wolftable and the Lobster-telephone is central to Surrealist art. In these examples as in others, we see the metaphorical identification of two disparate elements, the animal and the manufactured or the natural and the artificial. The resulting combination conveys a new meaning that envelops and transforms the intrinsic qualities of each. The arbitrary nature of these astonishing unions recalls the classic statement of Surrealist intent, expressed in Lautréamont's injunction to employ **chance** or **coincidence**: "He is as beautiful as the coincidence on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella."³² The contradiction of these apparently unrelated elements creates the new sensation of the Surreal.

According to André Breton, Surrealism desires to precipitate a "crisis of the object" through "the same kind of transcended contradiction which Lautréamont and Rimbaud used...as a means of achieving a total disruption of sensibility by routing all rational habits, erasing the distinction between good and evil, expressing strict reservations about the hegemony of the cogito...and revealing the marvellous in everyday life".³³

The process through which this transformation of the object is effected demonstrates a fundamental principle of the creative imagination that we may call **metaphorical identification**. Metaphorical identification is a function of the poetic imagination whereby external reality is transformed into its subjective, symbolic equivalent in the life of the mind.³⁴ As we have seen, the isolation of the object in Surrealist art arouses a sense of significance by calling our attention to the quality of

expressive form. In this way, the artist elicits the intrinsic qualities of the thing itself, and a new role for the object is created. This new meaning is conveyed through metaphorical thinking. In metaphor:

the attitude is compressed...distilled into a single point...only by this process of distillation is the peculiar essence found and extracted which is to bear the special accent of significance. All light is concentrated in one focal point of meaning, while everything else that lies outside these focal points of verbal or mythic conception remains practically invisible.³⁵

In the altered object as in the readymade, each part is distilled into its corresponding symbolic essence. But in the altered object, the component parts are blended into a new meaning with a strangely ambivalent result. The object has accumulated symbolic power, for the juxtaposition of the two images creates an unnatural, extra-ordinary presence. Mircea Eliade observes that, "the unknown and the extra-ordinary are disturbing epiphanies -- they indicate the presence of something other than the natural; the presence, or at least the call of that something."³⁶

Through the juxtaposition of foreign elements, the altered object surprises the viewer with its unusual presence, and therefore acquires symbolic power and latent meaning. The usual function of the table or telephone is shattered by the introduction of the animal form. In this way the object is animated by the presence of a new reality. The utilitarian context is destroyed, the continuity of ordinary space broken, and the object, set apart from its usual frame of reference, is isolated and elevated to new meaning. The Wolftable is, in a sense then, barking at the world. A disturbing new creature is born. The transformed object implies the uncanny animation of the inanimate that surrounds the Surrealist mannequin, the doll, and the double. The principle employed is that of **metaphorical identification**.

b) *Metaphor and Magic*

Ernst Cassirer suggests that metaphor, "being the circumlocution of one idea in terms of another, has definite motives arising from a magical view of the world."³⁷ Metaphorical identification compresses two or more images to form a new construct of the imagination. In this manner, the juxtaposed images are symbolically transformed into new meaning. In the magical view of the world, the fundamental principle is **pars pro toto** or the part suggests the whole. This is demonstrated by the archaic magic of toenails or other body parts that have the power to evoke, by association, the whole person. Sympathetic magic operates through the assumption that "things act on each other at a distance through a **secret sympathy**, the impulse being transmitted from one to another by invisible power."³⁸ Similarly, the Surrealist altered object provokes by the "secret sympathy" immediately created by the juxtaposition of its dual essences. In these transformed objects the animal parts alone suggest an instinctual violence breaking through rigid convention. The new, hybrid form characteristically elicits a premonition of potential violence, blended with a sensation of gruesome fascination for the extra-ordinary sight. The addition to the commonplace object of doll, mannequin, or animal parts, fur, feathers, or an unblinking eye evokes all the gothic attraction of the monstrous and the daemonic:

A particularly cunning animal, anything novel, any monstrosity, all these are clearly marked out as exceptional.... Anything unusual, unique, perfect or monstrous at once becomes imbued with magico-religious powers and becomes an object of veneration or fear according to the circumstance...³⁹

3. The Daemonic/Divine Object

Surrealism effects a magical world-view whereby the ordinary object is imbued latent meaning and extraordinary, inchoate power. This is the power of the daemonic: "mysterious, energetic, non-rational, non-moral".⁴⁰ The daemonic has no specific shape or form; it is, rather, chaotic and formless. It is felt as a primary force that inspires "daemonic dread" or fear:

This fear or dread is not like natural fear, for it is imbued with the weird, the eerie, the uncanny. But like natural fear, it can assume a major or minor form. Still, it remains distinctive. For example, our shudder at a well-told ghost story, though less urgent than our natural fear in a burning building, remains nevertheless different in kind: it is a minor numinous feeling. So intensity is not essential to the numinous itself, although the most striking instances...will naturally be intense.⁴¹

The fear and anxiety that the Surreal object provokes is accomplished through a disconcerting change in orientation that threatens the viewer with the danger of violent disorder. It is the exceptional and unusual quality of the Surrealist object that points to the amorphous potency of the daemonic; for "this same fear, this same scrupulous reserve applies to everything alien, strange, new -- that such astonishing things should be present is the sign of a force that, however much it is to be venerated, may be dangerous."⁴² The emotional attraction and repulsion aroused by the Surrealist object, combined with its visual contradictions, is perceived as threatening and dangerous. And within this implied danger we find a parallel to the idea of "the weird".⁴³ In Taboo, Franz Steiner notes:

All situations of danger, not merely those created by taboo-breaking, are socially or culturally defined, and it is precisely this relationship between the defined danger and the restrictive pattern which we should study...

Danger is not a quantitative concept...To face danger is to face another power. The older meaning of the English word 'danger' is 'power', 'jurisdiction', 'dominion', the 'power to dispose of or to harm'".⁴⁴

In short, "danger" possesses exactly the same quality of ambivalent power that we found in the Old English term, the wyrd.

a) *Wilfredo Lam and Haitian Voodoo*

A work by the Cuban Surrealist, Wilfredo Lam⁴⁵, brings all the themes thus far discussed together in a new urgency of meaning. Lam's Altar for 'La chevelure de Falmer' (an allusion to Lautreamont's Les Chants de Maldoror) was exhibited in the 1947 "Exposition Internationale du Surrealisme" in Paris. (Figure 50). According to Sarane Alexandrian, the exhibition was conceived as a series of initiations into the ineluctable meaning of Surrealism. The visitor had to pass through several passages including the "degrees of ideal knowledge" which was represented by "a red staircase made up of twenty-one steps in the forms of spines of books, whose titles -- the Sermons of Master Eckhardt, Fraser's Golden Bough, Rousseau's Les Reveries du promeneur solitaire, Swedenborg's Memorabilia -- indicated the degrees of ideal knowledge."⁴⁶ The viewer then passed through a "Hall of Superstitions", and continued through several passages until he entered the "initiatory labyrinth, where visitors were guided by a transparent Ariadne's thread."⁴⁷ Alexandrian, who was an active Surrealist during the post-war period, points out:

Here, twelve octagonal recesses, like the cells of a honeycomb, were set out as altars, dedicated, after the pattern of pagan cults, to beings or to objects capable of being endowed with a mythical life. So they were consecrated to animals...to phantom objects...and to fictional characters...⁴⁸

It was here that one could find Wilfredo Lam's Altar and The Wolftable by Victor Brauner.

The 1947 "Exposition Internationale du Surrealisme" was organized to express the Surrealists' need to develop a collective myth, a new myth for the modern period. Many of the Surrealists had studied myth and magic formally: Kurt Seligman wrote a treatise on magic, Michel Leiris was a professional ethnographer, Miró had become fascinated by the anthropological theories of Levy-Bruhl, and Andre Breton himself had become a devotee of alchemical and occult ideas, which he described in his book Arcane Dix-Sept of 1945.⁴⁹ Of Wilfredo Lam, Breton writes:

Lam, who starting from the primitive myth he bore within him, and assimilating on his way the most learned disciplines of European art, had attained the highest point of consciousness, which was his point of contact with the artist -- Picasso -- who, starting from the most complete mastery of the disciplines of art, had come to posit the necessity of a continual return to first principles in order to renew contact with the myth. (1941).⁵⁰

Lam was born of a Cuban-black mother and a Chinese father. His exotic past certainly appealed to the Surrealists, whom he joined upon his arrival in Paris in 1942.⁵¹ Picasso became a great admirer of Lam's work, and virtually adopted the gifted young artist, introducing him to his Surrealist colleagues. He was fascinated in particular with Lam's direct knowledge of Haitian voodoo that was expressed in totemic

compositions in the work of the 1940's. The myths and magic of voodoo, expressed in the concretized forms of human limbs or animal parts, formed the primary inspiration for Lam's art. His objects and his paintings make use of abstracted human limbs combined with ambiguous references to animal parts, suggestive of the practice of voodoo rituals. In the Altar, the positioning of the figure on the elevated platform, and its strategic location within the Surrealist labyrinth intentionally suggests an improvisation on the theme of archaic Haitian magic.

One takes hold of the thread, then, and wanders into the labyrinth. In the Altar one is confronted by the astonishing sight of a humanoid creature that holds aloft two menacing butcher-knives. This ambiguous creation is feminine in gender, yet is without individuality. The faceless head is covered by a mass of hair that renders the object unrecognizable, yet which grants it an undeniably human presence. The bilateral symmetry of this bizarre figure reinforces the impression of a religious icon, albeit of an improbable and crude sort, for symmetry establishes the pattern of hieratic art: its purposeful, if simple and even primitive geometry delivering a palpable visual strength. The creature's four breasts are bound around with a large sash, placed so as to confirm the hieratic function of the figure. The four breasts are bound and thereby withheld; yet displayed through the very configuration of the binding. This binding alludes to nothing so much as archaic fertility carvings, including the stalactite breasts in the prehistoric caves at Le Combet, or even more so, the Venus of Willendorf. But Lam's Altar is beyond allusion; it possesses a visual impact and an emotional urgency directly related to Lam's associations with Haitian magic from his

Figure 50. Wilfredo Lam. Altar for 'La chevelure de Falmer'. 1947.

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Figure 51. Joan Miro. Head of a Woman. 1938. (below)

Joan Miro's Head of a Woman is remarkably similar in form and content to Lam's Altar. Both works employ the idea of the feminine as a sign for daemonic power. Miro's painting describes a figure which is only nominally that of a woman. He presents us instead with a primordial beast, half-animal, half-insect, that is a visual embodiment of emotional rage.



childhood in Cuba. The Surreal intent of the Altar is made all the more forceful through the magical use of body substances which call forth a human presence, and by the elevation of the figure, as well as its direct reference to some imaginary magic ritual. Holding aloft the knives, the figure is naturally threatening and repellent; nevertheless, the addition of female body parts makes it intentionally seductive and perversely attractive. The ambivalent meaning of this object creates the feeling of the Surreal.

The sexual references and magical intent of the Altar by Wilfredo Lam are not an isolated example in the development of a Surrealist iconography. The "cult of love" or amour fou was an essential motif for the Surrealists that referred to the all-consuming love of a man for a woman.⁵² It was described in the publication of Andre Breton's alchemical treatise Arcane Dix-Sept, in 1945. But it also presages the Surrealist fascination with the image of woman, not commonly depicted as an individual person but as an archetypal ideal. In Surrealist thought, the feminine is linked to the fecundity of the imagination. The individual woman may inspire romantic love, but the idea of woman as a mysterious procreative force that somehow was closer to the mysteries of the universe took frantic hold of the Surrealist imagination. The plethora of Surrealist art, poetry, and literature that deals with the subject of the feminine, if often in ambivalent ways, suggests that the image of woman is a key concept in Surrealist thought. In fact, most of these works present the idea of the feminine as something powerful, something to be reckoned with, and something "wholly other" than the mundane life of men and women. The representation or allusion to the

feminine through select body parts in Surrealist art is often shocking and sometimes horrific, and certainly has less the impact of sexual allure than that of the severing of the idea of sexual vitality from personhood. Thus the feminine is seen as a magical holy/daemonic entity that transcends the purely erotic and secular ideals of playful and compliant female sexuality that are presented in other artifacts of Western culture such as pornography.

b) Miro, Prehistory, and Magic

Joan Miro's Head of a Woman of 1938 is remarkably similar in form and content to Lam's Altar. (Figure 51). Both works employ the idea of the feminine as a sign for daemonic power. Miro's painting describes a figure which is only nominally that of a woman. He presents us instead with a primordial beast, half-animal, half-insect, that is a visual embodiment of emotional rage. Painted in colours of black, red, and yellow, the insectlike figure flails its arms in ferocious anxiety. The horrific character of this image is not intended to shock or to gratify aesthetically; rather, Miro suggests that it is a sign for a state of psychic menace:

When I make a large female sex image it is for me a goddess, as the birth of humanity.

...It is a fecundity figure, but all the same it is menacing, on the right and on the left, above and below, we are menaced.⁵³

Miro's acquaintance with prehistoric art has recently been documented.⁵⁴ From the writings of the French anthropologist, Levy-Bruhl, Miro derives the idea of "sign" with which he buttresses his

own visual sign-language. The "signs" that Miro creates to convey his meaning are not, however, one-dimensional messages to be decoded and answered, but are rather an attempt to institute an entirely new cosmology in his art.⁵⁵ Intrigued by the origins of thought and art, Miro conceived of his painted universe as representing certain impulses towards magic and metaphor that could communicate emotional meaning to the subconscious or untutored mind. Everything is explicit in this art, nothing is veiled; but the viewer must become accustomed to the expressive sign language that the artist uses. Like traces of atom-movement, Miro repeats the patterns of waves or clouds; he uses child-like symbols to represent stars, lips or appendages to stand for people. The whole image operates in a kind of floating or dreaming space that has no definite horizon line or boundaries. The effect of space is achieved by transmutations of layers of colours that merge in and out of each other in different tones. But the backdrop resembles nothing so much as **hypnagogic imagery**:⁵⁶ those visions seen by the mind's eye just before falling to sleep or when looking up at the sun through closed eyelids. This dream-vision is the most obvious effect of Miro's "surreality", although its source in phenomenal visual experience has seldom been noted.

In two works that date from 1934, both titled Woman, Miro portrays an agitated, semi-humanoid figure that is beset by anxiety. (Figure 52, Figure 53). The drawings are completed in chalk pastel, a pliable medium that permits much erasure and movement of the forms on the paper.⁵⁷ No doubt this medium aided Miro in his automatic and spontaneous

searching-out of the forms of these figures. Some have suggested that Miro's images of women from this period reflect his growing apprehension at the development of Fascism in Europe,⁵⁸ but this seems a too simplistic correlation of external politics with the internal search for the "marvelous" that Miro and other Surrealists expressed as the root of their art. And an analysis of Miro's political intent cannot account for the decidedly daemonic characterization of these figures.

In the two drawings, the gender of the figure is exaggerated in an expressive style. The female sex is seen as a dark, devouring orifice that recalls both archaic fertility imagery and Baudelaire's satanic conception of woman.⁵⁹ The figures are not human, but are rather configurations of natural objects, that are, in fact, rather closely allied to Picasso's simplistically titled "bone and stone series" of the same time period (1928-38).⁶⁰ Like Picasso, Miro composes the figures from bone-like elements, or from amorphous shapes resembling microscopic biological creatures like the amoeba -- hence the title "biomorphic abstraction" often appended to this genre of Surrealist art. However, the similarities between the bone and stone series of Picasso and the work of Miro of this time are remarkably insistent: both Picasso and Miro compose a figure from still life elements, and the inanimate quality of these "bone and stone" fragments creates a strangely ambivalent presence. The still life has become the figure. If we consider this thought, we find a type of intellectual pun in French that would naturally appeal to the Surrealist sensibility: "Nature morte devient corps vivant".⁶¹ The

inanimate quality of the still-life parts contradicts the vehement emotional expression of the figures. The threatening character of these images, both in the disturbing nature of their visual contradictions and in the atmosphere of torrential distress, suggests a co-alignment of the feminine and the daemonic in Miro's work. Rudolf Otto describes the manner in which the daemonic is communicated in art:

the methods by which the numinous feeling is represented and evoked are indirect...one of the most primitive of these which is later felt more and more to be inadequate, until it is finally and altogether discarded as "unworthy" is quite naturally the "fearful" and horrible, and even at times the revolting and loathsome.⁶²

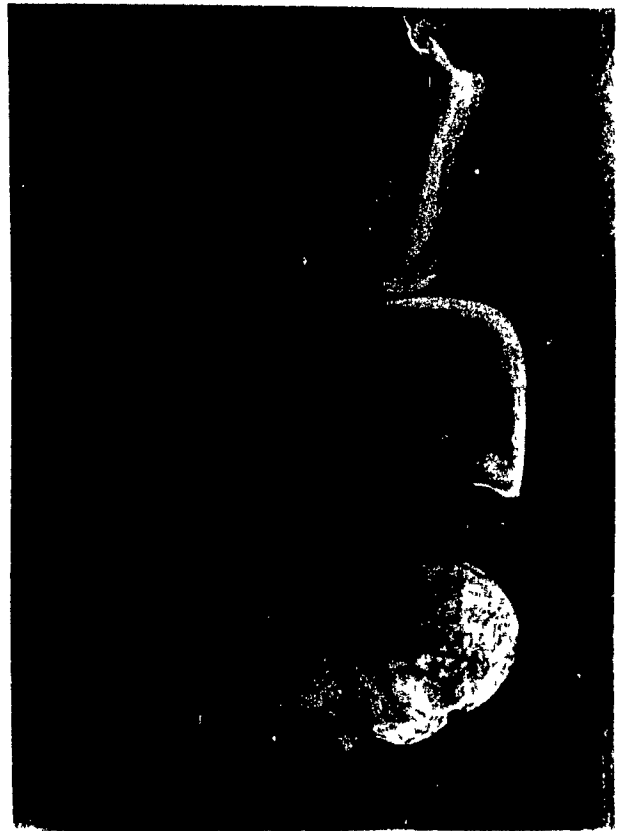
Miro intentionally evokes an aura of psychic menace in these signs of the feminine.

Figure 52. Joan Miro. Woman. 1934. (left)

In two works that date from 1934, both titled Woman, Miro portrays an agitated semi-humanoid figure that is beset by anxiety. The drawings are completed in chalk pastel, a medium that permits much erasure and movement of the forms on the paper. In the two drawings, the gender of the figure is exaggerated in an expressive style. The female sex is seen as a dark, devouring orifice that recalls both archaic fertility imagery and Baudelaire's satanic view of woman.

The threatening character of these images, both in the disturbing nature of their visual contradictions and in the atmosphere of torrential distress, suggests a co-alignment of the feminine and the daemonic in Miro's work. Miro intentionally evokes an aura of psychic menace in these signs of the feminine.

Figure 53. Joan Miro. Woman. 1934. (right)



B. THE DAEMONIC AND THE FEMININE IN SURREALISM

The daemonic view of woman had been present in European culture for some time before the development of Surrealism, but was ostensibly more visible since the surprisingly influential Symbolist movement of the late nineteenth century, when the image of the decadent "femme fatale" became popular in art and literature. Obvious references such as William Butler Yeats' "la belle dame sans merci", or the attractive and corrupted figures of Ferdinand Khnopff, Edvard Munch, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti immediately come to mind. This image of the femme fatale, the "dark lady" or the quixotic sphinx, (Figures 21, 22, 24 to 31) unfortunately has been seen more as indicative of social trends such as the emancipation of women, than as the symptom of a fundamental shift in attitude in the structure of European civilization.⁶³ The "femme fatale" bespoke a radical change in belief that was effected by the multiple occurrences of the breakdown of faith in organized religion, its secular and intellectual rejection, and the coming to fruition of several dominant and long-standing themes in European culture. These themes were the archaic, the occult, and the daemonic. The archaic, as we have seen, was an expression of that "search for origins" that had obsessed European man since the time of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and, before him, the Renaissance.⁶⁴ The propensity to go picking about in the bones of the past to recreate the classic Golden Age was an archaeological activity that consumed the Renaissance intellectual, and it opened new conceptions of the world, introducing the pagan Graeco-Roman world-view into sympathetic identification with the Bible. Occultism, in turn, had been present in European culture throughout the Dark Ages in the form of witchcraft, astrology, and alchemy -- pagan

remnants surviving from the Corpus Hermeticum and the mystery religions that had somehow been tolerated throughout the ascension of Christianity.⁶⁵ The daemonic had gone hand in hand with the other two. Of pagan remnants, it alone remained the most difficult to assimilate and incorporate into the Judaeo-Christian world-view. Although it is apparent in the Old testament images of "the wrath of God", the burning bush, the flood, and the Book of Job,⁶⁶ it resisted the theological proofs that preoccupied Christian scholastic thinkers in the medieval and early Renaissance periods. The daemonic therefore remained the most threatening element that had survived throughout Western intellectual history.

From the archaic Graeco-roman past came intimations of gods and goddesses who were neither good nor omnipotent, but among them each had special powers of control that could affect the life of man. Among these archaic beings one finds the goddess **Cybele**, dear to the French poet Nerval, who had been resurrected in the imagery of his poems Les Chimeres. **Cybele** is the "*sibyl au visage Latin*", the Latin sibyl who sleeps under the arch of Constantine in Nerval's poem Delfica. She is associated with the daemonic, with caves and grottos, and with the underworld, and she is known as "the Mother of Wild Beasts", or "the Great Mother of the Gods". But it is less the specific deity that is invoked in Nerval's poems than a composite of all the ancient gods and goddesses whom, he predicts, will return: "*Ils reviendront, ces Dieux que tu pleures toujours!/le temps va ramener l'ordre des anciens jours...*"⁶⁷ Michaelangelo, too, earlier had attempted a pagan-Christian cross-fertilization in the neo-platonic strategies of his Sistine Chapel Ceiling; here, the Cumaen Sibyl, the follower of Cybele, prophesies the birth of a new religion. But in Nerval's vision the two elements are

again sundered and the earth trembles with ancient prophecies: "*La terre a tressailli d'un souffle prophetique*".⁶⁸ In Rome, Cybele became the goddess of Fate or Iellus Fortuna who could pronounce the destiny of men. Her role was essentially the same as that of the indigenous Celtic goddesses of the Gaulic regions, the three Moirae, the goddesses of the wyrd. This latter triad figures prominently in later literature, more particularly in the "weird sisters" of Macbeth, where they are popularly conceived of as witches.⁶⁹ In the sixteenth century, then, we find the revulsion towards paganism, witchcraft, and the occult, as something heinous, blasphemous, and repugnant, although, it must be stated that Shakespeare did not always see it so, especially in The Tempest, where occult magic is elevated to supernatural power. Here the occult and the archaic meet, and reemerge in the insoluble problem of the daemonic. It was the daemonic element in both cultural formulations of the pagan past -- the occult sciences and the revival of antiquity -- that remained the least accessible, and the most fascinating in its blasphemous potential. Indeed, it is the threatening power of the daemonic that is objectified in the figures of the ancient goddesses, Cybele, the Moirae, or the Wyrd, that is seeded in the Symbolist image of the femme fatale.

That seductive yet curiously minor chord of Symbolist art, portrayed in alluring illustrations in the work of artists from Rossetti to Munch, proved palatable to Surrealist tastes whence it assumes a major role in their iconography. Incorporated into the Surrealist vocabulary, the daemonic view of woman, previously seen as the symbolist "femme fatale",⁷⁰

assumes a new morphology and meaning that reflects and prefigures certain religio-philosophical changes in outlook in the modern period. But unlike the Symbolist sphinx, the Surrealist incarnation of the daemonic as seen in Lam's Altar or Miro's Woman does not allude: it is. "The daemonic-divine object may appear to the mind an object of horror and dread, but at the same time it is no less something that allures with a potent charm. The mystery is not merely something to be wondered at but something that entrances..."⁷¹

1. The "Femme Fatale" and the Surrealist Image of Woman.

This difference between the Symbolist "femme fatale" and the Surrealist view of the feminine is illustrated by two works from the respective movements, Oedipus and the Sphinx 1864, by Gustave Moreau and The Robing of the Bride by Max Ernst, executed nearly ninety years later, in 1939. The difference is that of **allusion** as opposed to **immanence**. In Oedipus and the Sphinx (Figure 54) Moreau presents us with the moment in which Oedipus answers the sphinx's riddle: "What goes on four feet, on two feet, and on three, but the more feet it goes on the weaker it be?" Oedipus answers correctly, destroys the sphinx, and is thereby spared the fate of strangulation that has earned her the name of the "the throttler".⁷² His final fate is, however, suggested by the chasm beneath his feet from which a figure is vainly struggling to escape. The sphinx is depicted in an illustrative fashion, much like the sultry creature depicted in Ferdinand Knopff's The Caresses of the Sphinx (1896), but minus the siren-like demeanor. (Figure 24). Both creatures are the classic hybrid figure drawn from the established typology of

Figure 54. Gustave Moreau. Oedipus and the Sphinx. 1864. (above)

The difference between the Symbolist "femme fatale" and the Surrealist view of woman is illustrated in two works from the respective movements, Oedipus and the Sphinx, of 1864, by Gustave Moreau, and The Robing of the Bride (below) by Max Ernst, 1939. The difference is that between **allusion** and **immanence**.

In Oedipus and the Sphinx, Moreau presents us with the moment in which Oedipus answers the sphinx's riddle. The sphinx is depicted in an illustrative fashion, a classic hybrid figure drawn from the established typology of ancient Greek mythology. Despite his triumph Oedipus is a man unaware of his future fate, which is prefigured by the omnipresent symbolist abyss.

By contrast, in Ernst's The Robing of the Bride, we have passed through the abyss, and look back at the Symbolist past. For this work actualizes the Symbolist preoccupation with excess, evil, and the daemonic, especially of the Satanic, Baudelairean sort. All the figures depicted have undergone a bizarre transformation of their physiognomy that renders them unrecognizable by classical formulas. As in Bosch's hellscapes, everything is in a state of flux that creates a feeling of morbid uncertainty. Each figure in the painting is an anthropomorphic amalgam of the human and the ornithological.

Figure 55. Max Ernst. The Robing of the Bride. 1939.



ancient Greek mythology. Despite his triumph, Oedipus is a man unaware of his future destiny, which is perhaps prefigured by the omnipresent Symbolist abyss (an ironic reversal of the majestic "natural sublime").⁷³

By contrast, in Max Ernst's The Robing of the Bride (Figure 55) we have passed through the abyss and look back at the Symbolist past. (Figure 55). For this work actualizes the Symbolist preoccupation with excess, evil, and the demonic, especially of the satanic, Baudelairean sort. All the figures depicted have undergone a bizarre transformation of their physiognomy that renders them unrecognizable by classical formulas. As in Bosch's hellscapes, everything is in a state of continual flux, that creates a feeling of morbid uncertainty.⁷⁴ The space itself is prey to reversals and repetition, for the "attendant of the bride" (shown on the right) looks back at the image from which she emerges: a play on the infinite regression of reflections that intensifies the anxious feeling of compression and enclosure.

The central figure in The Robing of the Bride is a female figure whose face is masked by a large, bird-like head. The owl-like features of the bird, which also bear a marked resemblance to those of the artist himself, look piercingly out at the viewer. On closer inspection one finds a human eye peering out of the lower right side of the head. The central figure is the "bride" of the title; her robe of feathers flows down from the bird's head over her naked body. The addition of the bird's head to the female body renders the figure "feminine" only in a generic sense, for masked, she is non-specific, unrecognizable as an individual woman. Like the sphinx, she recalls images of archaic hybrid deities such as that depicted by Moreau. But the "Bride" is an entirely new creature,

unrelated to any known figure. At her left a female attendant whose hair resembles feathers looks back at a duplicate image of the whole painting, while at the right is a grotesque bird-like figure that carries a spear, painted in shades of bilious green. In the lower right corner is a small, heinous creature with four breasts and a bird's wing, remarkably reminiscent of Wilfred Lam's Altar of 1947. Each figure in the painting is an anthropomorphic amalgam of the human and the ornithological.

It should be mentioned that the method which Ernst employs to excite his imagination is "decalcomania",⁷⁵ invented by Oscar Dominguez in 1937. Decalcomania is a process of creating unexpected imagery. The artist presses a sheet of smooth paper against another sheet, which is painted randomly, and when the overlapping sheet is pulled away, it leaves unusual shapes, images and textures which can stand on their own as invented forms, or could become the support for bizarre personal imagery. Ernst's work from 1937 to 1945 is based largely on this method, which has the psychological effect of a Rorschach blot in inspiring his ritualistic fantasies. In The Robing of the Bride, the textural effect of feathers is achieved through this method.

In fact, the complex iconography of this work is related to Ernst's well-documented obsession with birds.⁷⁶ Instead of drawing types from the classic past, as in the work of Moreau, Ernst's The Robing of the Bride reflects his private universe; a universe where "Loplop, Superior of the Birds" reigns. "Lolop" is a creation of the artist's imagination and a recurrent motif in his work, designated as Ernst's alter-ego, a kind of ornithological "Doppelganger" that expresses the artist's personal

identification with birds.⁷⁷ According to the artist, his obsession with birds originates from a traumatic event of one evening in 1906: his pet cockatoo died the same time his younger sister was born.⁷⁸ This coincidence of events aggravated a state of mental confusion, in which birds and humans were fused in the artist's imagination. Hence, Ernst's almost totemistic identification with the bird, exemplified in his creation "Loplop".

a) Metaphorical Identification, Magical Association.

The iconography of The Robing of the Bride is hidden and esoteric. It has its source in the artist's imagination and is unrelated to any recognizable typology from the history of myth or art. Ernst's creation of a hybrid figure, half-human and half-bird, as the central image of the work, suggests the principle of metaphor through which it was created. We can understand the function of this principle of association more readily if we consider the nature of archaic hybrid creatures. The Greek mythological function of hybrid creatures such as the sphinx, the harpy, the griffon, or the minotaure, often has an ambivalent purpose whereby the creature is perceived as an extra-ordinary being and is therefore to be revered, yet it also appears repugnant and evil. Because of their repellent aspect, most of these beings served as guardians of the sacred. Besides such familiar imaginary beings as can be found in Greek myth, in ancient Mesopotamian culture, too, there exists numerous hybrid creatures known as genie or lamassu.⁷⁹ These are half-man, half-bull or composites of man, goat, bull, eagle or lion. They were 'guardian'

figures that served a protective role over the person (the ruler) for whom they were intended. They had the power to envelop the believer in an aura of protective magic that would shield them from malevolent spirits or forces. Without such protective **daemons**, as they were called, one became prey to evil forces.⁸⁰

These hybrid figures express a type of shamanistic identification with the attributes and powers of the totem animal that empower the resulting human-animal hybrid and grant it supernatural vitality. The Mesopotamian **daemons**, **genies**, or **lamassu** figures were not originally conceived of as evil, but were rather, "a kind of pre-god, 'the numen...at a lower stage'...Otto identifies as the most authentic form of these daemons' those strange deities of ancient Arabia, which are properly nothing but wandering demonstrative pronouns, having no specific shape or mythology but nonetheless 'felt as mighty forces...'"⁸¹ Analogously, in shamanistic trances, the shaman becomes identified with the spirit of the animal and hence is often depicted in art as a half-human and half-animal spirit-being. The juxtapositions of this hybrid image make it extra-ordinary, therefore powerful and sacred: it is something to be both revered and feared. The duality of such hybrid physiognomy is mirrored by the psychological ambivalence that it engenders.

It is precisely this principle of **metaphorical association** of the human and the animal that Ernst employs in "Loplop", and in his ornithological transformations of human-beings in The Robing of the Bride. His identification with the bird is so complete that it affects every figure in the painting, enveloping them with a non-human aura of "bird-ness". While Moreau's **sphinx** hearkens back to the familiar

iconography of a pagan, classical past, Ernst has grasped the first principle which the daemonic hybrid is created: that of metaphorical identification with the totem animal. Moreau's sphinx is referential, whereas Ernst's creature is. The artist produces a new being that does not allude, it is the embodiment of the magical, metaphorical, association.

b) The Feminine in Surrealist Iconography

The image of woman in Surrealist art has often led to its interpretation as pure eroticism, but this perspective cannot encompass the variegated nuances of feeling that the Surreal excites. Although the Surrealists intended to provoke their audience with shocking and even pornographic imagery, especially in the case of an artist such as Hans Bellmer,⁸² the fundamental motive for their iconoclasm was to change the viewer's perception of reality. Shock or surprise was a method designed to effect that break in the continuity of life, art, and convention, and hence to sharpen a sense of immanent mystery. We must therefore penetrate further into the image of woman in Surrealist art in order to understand more fully its contribution to the iconography of the movement.

The implementation of the element of the feminine in the Surrealist paintings (Figures 50, 51, 52, 53, and 55) is significant for an understanding of Surrealist art. The presence of woman is ubiquitous in Surrealist paintings, altered objects, and poetry, as even a cursory review of Surrealist art will show. (Figures 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10). That the idea of woman held a symbolic purpose for the movement has been

explored by scholars of the movement including Xaviere Gauthiere, who in book Surréalisme et sexualité explores a Freudian analysis of the movement.⁸³ More notably, Whitney Chadwick contributes a brilliant and insightful essay on the topic of the Surrealist view of woman, titled "Eros or Thanatos - the Surrealist Cult of Love Reexamined".⁸⁴ Chadwick delineates the ambivalence of the Surrealist view of woman as it is developed first through its Symbolist heritage, and then through the revival of mythological and alchemical lore, as well as the resurgence of interest in mother cults. He points out that the Surrealists became influenced by certain theories put forth by J. J. Bachofen in the 1861 publication of Mutterrecht und Urreligion, later published in 1926 as Myth, Religion, and Mother Right.⁸⁵ Chadwick also proposes that the ambivalence towards woman in Surrealism stems from a need to "shift the creative act from the physical to the spiritual realm".⁸⁶ Chadwick asserts that the myth of Oedipus and the Sphinx is one of the themes that illustrates the "conflict between male and female creativity"⁸⁷ in Surrealism, because the sphinx was both protective and destructive: "The sphinx also existed as a powerful symbol of the female principle the source and destroyer of man. She had entered Greek mythology carrying with her the earth/mother/female/life/death association of her Near Eastern origins."⁸⁸

2. The Daemonic, the Demonic, and the Surreal

The dismemberment of the female body and its co-mingling with the animal or the object is a primary feature of Surrealist iconography. In works such as Ernst's The Robing of the Bride, Lam's Altar, or Miro's Women of 1934 and 1938, we sense that the union of the feminine and the animal provokes a sensation of the daemonic. There are multiple reasons for the emergence of this daemonic/divine archetype: Historically, the symbolic association of human and animal images has lead to those imaginary beings known as **daemons** in Assyria, **chimeras** or **sphinxes** in Greece, and spirit-beings or **totem animals** in shamanistic religion. It is then, no coincidence, that the sphinx poses an unanswerable riddle, for the irrational composure of these creatures is itself a riddle of the human imagination. Surrealists such as Max Ernst sensed the **chimerical** meaning of this phenomenon, and grasped the fundamental principle of metaphorical identification in their work. From a phenomenological standpoint, then, the Surrealist hybrid being or object evokes disturbing feelings of the obscure, the exceptional, and the unnatural, from the simplest visual contradictions to the more complex effect of psychological ambivalence, that is, of attraction and repulsion combined.

Repulsion before the daemonic/divine object is a common phenomena in the history of religions, for in its primary, undifferentiated form the daemonic inspires terror and fascination. The sense of the daemonic also arises from the non-specific, masked or generalized form of the female that invokes the idea of the feminine principle rather than the person, and which comes to symbolize uncontrolled nature and regeneration. A

creature that seems an atavistic survival from the archaic past is born. From the symbolic associations of both realms emerges the metaphor of archaic birth from undifferentiated nature, represented by the daemonic hybrid being. The monstrous nature of the hybrid being itself inspires fear as something unnatural that injects itself into the profane world. Attraction, too, occurs through the addition of the female element, which fascinates through its excessive profanity. The resultant metaphor evokes a sense of daemonic, chthonic power which, in the language of the history of religions, is a **kratophany**,⁸⁹ and is henceforth perceived as evil.

The negative and demonic conception of the daemonic, and its concomittant manifestation in the hybrid deity, has its root in a series of historical developments that forced archaic paganism, with its alchemical and occult siblings, into the heretical subculture of the middle ages. From the eleventh century onwards we find a growing tradition of revolutionary millenarianism and mystical anarchism in Europe that combines with forms of social unrest to produce strains of a heretical mysticism expressed in movements such as that of the "Brethren of the Free Spirit".⁹⁰ This development has been forcibly delineated by Norman Cohn in The Pursuit of the Millennium, as well as in Frances Yates' Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition.⁹¹ Ancient pagan deities such as Cybele and Attis, Dionysus, Pan, and the nymphs, sirens, and sphinxes that populated the archaic forests of Greece and Rome were decisively and finally rejected by a Christianity that came to perceive the pagan in opposition to the Christian. The archaic and chthonic deities were therefore seen as threatening and demonic. In the medieval period, pagan lands were said to be beset by underworldly, chthonic beings such as the demonic dragon or serpent, that came from the depths of the earth.⁹²

The infinite potentiality of the formless daemonic urge, that could turn women into trees, impregnate with a shower of golden light, or cause the ground to spring forth with androgynous or hermaphroditic life, came to be seen as the simplistically one-dimensional demonic or devilish being that was often depicted in the conquered demons, grotesques, gargoyles, and chimeras that guard Gothic cathedrals and churches such as Notre Dame.⁹³ Even these demonic representations were regarded as "a profanation of sacred places"⁹⁴. They were either censured as frivolously fantastical or condemned as evil. "The Abbe Auber, to whom every stone of the cathedral has an exact meaning, considered them as representations of devils conquered by the church and made her slaves to perform menial tasks."⁹⁵ Archaic and occult themes later dominated the nineteenth century world-view and contributed to a growing schism, championed by the disaffiliated underground in France, that has been called "la crise de la conscience Catholique".⁹⁶ Its primary conduit in history was the Symbolist movement, and more particularly, the heterodox imagery of such figures as Nerval, Baudelaire, and Huysmans.⁹⁷ But the Surrealists eschewed the arcane references of the Symbolists in pursuit of a new mythology -- a new return to origins. No wonder the gothic imagination so appealed to the Surrealist vision, for it allowed a world populated by arbitrary and irrational beings whose function was often unknown. The Surrealists, in turn, adapted the strategies through which these fantastical monsters were created, and in applying the principle of **metaphorical identification** or **magical association**, returned to the fertile primary source of wonder, dream, and myth: the imagination.

3. Symbols of the Imagination as Feminine

Of daemonic figures, many are chthonic in origin: that is, they stem from the underworld, rather than the underground, and possess that configuration of characteristics that links Hades, death, regeneration, dream, and oracular vision in Graeco-Roman mythology.⁹⁷ The chthonic origin of the daemonic suggests the connection of the dream and the underworld, and in this way points to the impregnation of vernacular existence with hidden, occult meaning. The Symbolists sensed this, and exploited the archaic typology in their art -- especially the image of the abyss, with its implications of satanic excess: the "supersensualité" spoken of by Huysmans.⁹⁸ In Surrealism, the dream and the underworld are identified, and the archaic symbols of the underworld come to suggest an anarchic descent into personal imagination. But the Surrealists did not employ the arcane literary references of the Symbolists, and instead attempted a new mythology, a new return to origins.

The Surrealist cosmology originates in the imagination, it **reflects** the imagination, and it develops **symbols of the imagination** to represent the creative process. In Surrealism, these symbols often are connected to the ambivalence of the feminine principle as procreative and destructive, an image that we can more easily understand when we observe how it mimics the chaotic power of the imagination itself, that both conceives and receives images. The self-reflection of the imagination in Surrealist thought was partially unleashed by the inward-turning of Freudian psychology, and further developed through the philosophy of "the imagination as revelation" proposed by the artist, Giorgio de Chirico. In

Surrealist practice the imagination becomes infinitely self-reflective, as the creative process attempts to describe itself in an ever-fluctuating series of images. In this sense, then, the creative power of the imagination can suggest or even be experienced as the formless daemonic power of the underworld; certainly, the creative process has proven well-nigh undefinable by logical or linear categories -- as current epistemology has shown merely by the obscurantism of its language.⁹⁹

We have thus far demonstrated the latent potential of the Surrealist object, and its magical and daemonic conjunction with the image of the feminine. This impulse has as its direct historical antecedent the Symbolist "femme fatale"; the devouring, vampirish woman. The daemonic image of the feminine, adopted by the Surrealists as a metaphor for the chaotic power of the imagination, runs through the historical and phenomenological tensions that make up the warp and woof of Surrealism. But the multiplicity of meaning in the Surreal cannot be contained by a single image or entity, and any analysis must therefore be partial analysis.

The phenomenon of Surrealism provides an almost inexhaustible series of "fields of tensions" that we have described as "the uncanny", the weird, or fate; as the irrational, the holy, and the sacred; and as the Surreal and the supernatural.¹⁰⁰ Historically, we have observed the tensions between Christianity and paganism; between romanticism, primitivism, and decadence; and between supernaturalism and Surrealism.¹⁰¹ In art, as in thought, these tensions are provoked by numerous means, from the simplest visual contradictions of Magritte, to the intellectual polarity of "life in lifelessness" which is the animation of the inanimate that occurs in the sensation of the "uncanny". The

isolation and elevation of the object also provokes a curious of "sense of significance": a paradoxical sense of the extra-ordinary within the ordinary flow of life itself. The complementaries, polarities, contradictions and contraries of Surrealism establish the modernity of the riddle as a **sacred game**. Then too, the **ambivalence factor** of the paradox or riddle, with its hidden duality of meaning, creates a sense of unexpected danger that is the common denominator of Surrealist art and thought. Let us then grasp this ambivalence of the daemonic and the feminine, and in rotating it a full one hundred and eighty degrees, distinguish a final dimension of its ambivalent meaning.

C. THE NATURAL OBJECT AND THE "CULT OF STONES"

1. The Natural Object

The natural object of stone or wood held a peculiar and powerful attraction for the Surrealists. The natural object was a subspecies of the found object, that appealed to the Surrealist imagination through the very quirkiness of its features and its useless function; it was a delightful thing that could amuse by its very presence. A stone, an unusual shell or a delicately formed piece of wood, these were among the objects selected as signs of a "surreality" by André Breton in his article, "The Crisis of the Object". He describes the natural object as an implement of "surreality" -- a tool to effect that "crisis of the object" and bring about a fresh vision of reality that could be achieved in numerous ways:

...by diverting the object from its destination by attaching a new label to it and signing it, thus reclassifying it by the exercise of choice (Duchamp's readymades); **showing it in whatever state external forces such as earthquake, fire, or water may have left it;** retaining it just because of the doubt surrounding its original function; or because of the **ambiguity resulting from its totally or partially irrational conditioning by the elements,** entailing its dignification through chance discovery (the found object) and ambiguity which is sometimes amenable to extremely bold interpretations. 1936.¹⁰²

In this catalogue of the found object, Breton says that the natural object is distinguished by the chance markings of natural forces: "in whatever state external forces such as earthquake fire, or water may have left it...". Like the found object, the unusual rock or stone could strike the artist's imagination in a simple "twist of fate", a chance discovery that uncovered its latent possibilities. Dignified by this accidental discovery, the stone became a "sign" of the Surreal.

A "cult of stones" began in which members of the Surrealist group would travel on long afternoon expeditions, gathering rocks and stones which captured their imagination. The "cult of stones" was so called because it expressed the communal fascination with the natural object that the Surrealists experienced. Gradually, collections of natural objects were made, and exhibited in Surrealist compositions such as Dali's Surrealist Tray of Objects. (Figure 44). The natural object also is depicted in the biomorphic style of Surrealist painting, in works by artists such as Miro, Matta, Arp, Tanguy, and Ernst. To the Surrealists, the natural form possessed an impenetrable power that through its very muteness -- its lack of voice, role, or function--suggested inchoate meaning. Stone is the essential Surrealist object for it fully expresses, without literary contamination, the Surrealist **philosophy of immanence** whereby "surreality would be embodied in reality itself, and would be neither superior nor exterior to it."¹⁰³ The stone conceals within itself an immanent meaning which is only suggested but never conveyed: its very lack of meaning or specific function provokes a sense of surreality.

This fascination with the natural object has numerous precedents in human culture. Natural objects such as stone or wood have always been collected for their aesthetic qualities, and revered for their magical powers. Certainly through their suggestive amorphous shapes they have the power to excite images, dreams, and memories. How often does one not remark, picking up some melded or brittle stone, or burnished piece of driftwood, "This one looks like a person", or "see the eye in this one". In this sense, modern experience is not so distant from that of archaic man, for the imagination which incarnates gods in stones can also whimsically grant them a personality and protective powers.

Figure 56. René Magritte. Chateau des Pyrenees. 1953.

The sensation of stone as **that which strikes** is forecfully expressed in a painting by René Magritte, titled Chateau des Pyrenees. Magritte ironically evokes the quality of the stone by contradicting its usual context. In this way, the stone become something extra-ordinary, mysterious, and more intensely itself. Magritte has said, "in thinking the stone must fall, the viewer has a greater sentiment of what stone is than if the stone is on the ground".



The stone **strikes** by the hardness of its presence. Eliade has observed:

We need only to analyze the various religious values attributed to stones to understand what stones, as hierophanies, are able to show to man; they reveal power, hardness, permanence...above all, the stone is, it always remains itself, it does not change -- and it strikes man by what it possesses of irreducibility and absoluteness...¹⁰⁴

Stones appealed to the Surrealists for similar reasons, but more especially for the infinite possibilities of meaning that they seemed to contain. Shells and sand, too, were part of this lexicon of natural materials, employed by Surrealist artists such as Andre Masson or Dalí to create a variety of responses. They often elicit memories of idyllic holidays by beaches, or suggest intimations of a crustacean existence that we can only imagine yet which seems to hold some kind of confirmed enchantment, especially for children who delight in marine fantasies. It is hardly surprising then, that these objects would appeal to the Surrealist imagination, which loved to dwell on the mysterious dark side of consciousness, imbuing it with the irony of black humour.

The sensation of the stone as **that which strikes** is forcefully expressed in a painting by René Magritte, titled Chateau des Pyrenees, 1953. (Figure 56). Magritte ironically evokes the quality of stone by changing its usual context. In this way, the stone becomes something extra-ordinary, mysterious, and more intensely itself. Magritte has said, "in thinking the stone must fall, the viewer has a greater sentiment of what a stone is than if the stone is on the ground."¹⁰⁵ Magritte caps this mysterious image with the "chateau", posed at the top of the rock. It is a punning play on the stoney substance of which castles are composed, and it also is undeniably suggestive of the Surrealist

preoccupation with the Romantic ruins or the imaginary and haunted castle, of which de Chirico and Breton wrote so movingly: "An invisible link ties things together and at that moment it seemed to me that I had already seen this palace, or that this palace had once, somewhere, already existed."¹⁰⁶ A third and even more curious aspect of its meaning is that it resembles or at least suggests a meteorite: in nature an **exceptional** and awe-inspiring event.

a) *The Phenomenology of Stone*

The poetic imagination which by association finds beings in stones and voices in brooks, does not, of course, originate with Surrealism. Earlier, we saw that the Surrealist object acquires a certain "sense of significance" that endows it with extra-ordinary meaning, which is itself transformed into a new metaphor by the juxtaposition of disparate objects. In Surrealism, the "motive for metaphor" was attracted particularly to the substance of stone. The choice of stone as a primary metaphor of Surrealist meaning suggests its investment with a latent meaning that we shall now attempt to make manifest.

Stone has numerous metaphorical associations that link it to fertility, death, regeneration, and nature; themes that often have inspired the poetic imagination. The Surrealists were not the first to feel that impulse towards mute matter, although we must assert that they objectify it in a uniquely modern way. Earlier the Romantics, too, saw nature animated by an indwelling spirit, and they buttressed this intuition ideologically with the Swedenborgian idea of "correspondences". The attraction to the functionless, silent "natural object" is prefigured

by poets such as Wordsworth, who, as we have seen, saw his stones animated by a "quickenning soul":

*...to every natural form, rock, fruit, or flower
Even the loose stones that cover the highway,
I gave a moral life: I saw them feel
Or linked them to some feeling: the great mass
Lay bedded in a quickening soul and all
That I beheld respired with inward meaning.¹⁰⁷*

Precedents for this animistic world view are readily found in earlier traditions; one cannot help but feel the resonances of Wordsworth's Romantic pantheism expressed in Chaucer's moving rendition of the "daysies":

*Of alle the floures in the mede
Than love I most these floures whyte and rede,
Swiche as men callen daysies in our toun.
To hem I have so great affection
As I sayde erst, whan comen is the May
That in my bed ther daweth me no day
That I nam up, and walking in the mede
To seen these floures again the sonne sprede,
Whan hit upryseth erly by the morwe;
That blisful sighte softneth al my sorwe.¹⁰⁸*

This self-same isolation of the object that endows it with a curious sense of significance, is expressed in Chaucer's perception of the daisies, haloed against the sun's rays. But the benevolent consciousness that infuses Chaucer's vision with emotional self-awareness and direct affection for nature, is itself reversed in the Symbolist poet Gerard de Nerval's intuition of the "power of things". Here, Nerval's flower is a compressed manifestation of power that reaches out to the poet:

*Chaque fleur est une ame a la Nature eclose;
Un mystere d'amour dans le metal repose
"tout est sensible!" Et tout sur son ton est puissant. 109*

It is Nerval who most closely prefigures the Surrealist attraction to the natural object as a "thing-in-itself", as something intrinsically interesting and meaningful, because for him, even the insignificant and obscure stones of the street are inhabited by a "hidden deity", that beckons to him with a sinister and fearful power:

*Souvent dans l'etre obscur habite un Dieu cache,
Et comme un oeil naissant couvert par ses paupieres,
Un pur esprit s'accroît sous l'écorce des pierres!*¹¹⁰

As in this ominous vision, the Surrealists too experienced a transference of power from themselves to the object. The Surrealist object reaches out to the viewer with an immanent, uncanny meaning. Eliade describes the nature of this epiphany of the stone in terms of the tension between the sacred and the profane:

From the most elementary hierophany -- a manifestation of the sacred in some ordinary object -- a stone or a tree -- to the supreme hierophany...there is no solution of continuity. In each case we are confronted by the same mysterious act -- the manifestation of something of a wholly different order, a reality that does not belong to our world, in objects that are an integral part of our natural "profane" world.¹¹¹

We must now search out the meaning of this metaphor of stone, embodied in the Surrealist use of the natural object.

b) Yves Tanguy and "Objects by Illusion"

The Surrealist attraction to the stone and the natural object is fully expressed in many works that employ the object or substance of stone itself, or that depict it in paintings. Of these paintings, we find two genres: that of the biomorphic abstraction adopted by Miro and Masson; and that of the precisionist type, which depict stones as part of an illusionistic "dream-photograph" as in the work of Yves Tanguy or Dali,

for example. In Tanguy's work, the morphology of stone assumes an emotional connotation, and becomes a part of his biomorphic vocabulary, suggesting by nuance and association rather than by obvious or directly distinguishable meaning. The ambiguity of these associations is further heightened by Tanguy's use of titles to invoke surprise and disorient the viewer, such as the urgent Mama, Papa is Wounded! of 1927, for example. Tanguy has said, "I found that if I planned a picture beforehand, it never surprised me, and surprises are my pleasure in painting".¹¹²

In Tanguy's painting Mama, Papa is Wounded!, the artist presents precisely delineated biomorphic forms that resemble rocks in colour and texture, yet which are deliberately ambiguous. (Figure 57). These ne places in a "floating space", whose infinitely-distant horizons recall both the Romantic category of the sublime and suggest a "metaphysical" infinitude derived from the enigmas of de Chirco. The illusionistic space of Tanguy's work is made more ambiguous by the enigmatic lexicon of biological forms that are unrecognizable in logical terms. It is often suggested that these forms stem from Tanguy's memories of his native Brittany, where archaic cromlechs and dolmens are scattered throughout the landscape.¹¹³ His stones are delineated with an unnaturally sharp line that endows them with a hallucinatory clarity, further emphasized by the vacuous and infinite space with which they are surrounded.

In Tanguy's later paintings the preoccupation with stones as subject matter is made even more manifest, and the artist concentrates on surreal landscapes that closely resemble the rocky coasts of Brittany. The Multiplication of the Arcs, 1954, depicts a mass of biomorphic forms whose scale is uncertain and whose purpose is unknown. (Figure 60).

Figure 58. Meret Oppenheim. Green Spectator. 1933.

Meret Oppenheim's Green Spectator of 1933 unites in a single figure the daemonic aspect of the feminine with the regenerative power of stone. The Green Spectator is, in Oppenheim's words, "one who watches while another dies." According to the artist, it represents "nature itself looking at birth and death in the same impassive way." In this sense, the watchful figure of the Spectator embodies the amoral daemonic power of nature that unpredictably gives and receives.

Figure 57. Yves Tanguy. Mama, Papa is Wounded! 1927.

In Tanguy's painting, Mama, Papa is Wounded!, the artist presents precisely delineated forms that resemble rocks in color and texture, yet which are deliberately ambiguous. These he places in a "floating space", whose infinitely distant horizons recall both the Romantic category of the sublime and suggest the metaphysical infinitude of de Chirico. The illusionistic space of Tanguy's work is made more ambiguous by the enigmatic lexicon of biomorphic forms that are unrecognizable in logical terms.



Tanguy's employment of precise delineation to describe each object in an icy silhouette, isolates the object and creates that same "sense of significance" that informs the perception of the readymade, or the altered object. The isolation of the object within the painting is accentuated through the use of cast shadow, which is employed to create disturbing ambiguities in our perception of space. In this way, the "objects by illusion" in many Surrealist paintings of the precisionist type create a sense of the uncanny. Roger Shattuck has commented brilliantly on the psychological effect of precise delineation.

When Renaissance painting developed its miraculous representation of space, the objects portrayed tended to become segments of space more than individual entities. Their outlines were forever foreshortened and shadowed and modeled so as to lead the eye away to other volumes in space. In contrast, what characterizes modern painting more than heavy outline? It insists on the detachment of an object from its surroundings...The spectator can interpolate his own orientation. The important thing is that each object -- even each facet and feature of the object -- should occupy its separate space.¹¹⁴

In Mama, Papa is Wounded! Tanguy employs the techniques of precise delineation and isolation of the object, described above, to create a "surreal effect"; this disturbing effect is even more sharply accentuated by the bizarre title with which the artist has defined the work. Mama, Papa is Wounded! alludes to nothing so much as the transference of power from the male to the female, which is suggested equally by Tanguy's allusive images of "materia" in its primal state. A Freudian analysis could suggest that the work embodies a fear of infertility and an ambivalence directed towards the procreative power of woman. It is not known to what extent Tanguy was aware of Bachofen's researches into matriarchal societies that were popularized by the other Surrealists in their quest for a new mythology; however, this work does suggest Tanguy's ability to tap a fundamental paranoia in the perception of matter itself.

c) *Meret Oppenheim and the Daemonic Object*

Meret Oppenheim's Green Spectator of 1933 unites in a single figure the daemonic aspect of the feminine with the regenerative power of stone. (Figure 58). Oppenheim is known as the creator of the famous fur-lined tea-cup, although she has been sorely neglected since her initial contact with the Surrealists from 1930-1936. The Green Spectator is, in Oppenheim's words, "one who watches while another dies". According to the artist, it represents "nature itself looking at birth and death in the same impassive way." In this sense, the watchful figure of the Spectator embodies the amoral daemonic power of nature that unpredictably gives and receives. Oppenheim describes the genesis of this work:

Originally titled "**one who watches while another dies**", it represents "**nature itself looking at death and birth in the same impassive way**". In this finished state it appears as an impassive sentinel, whose green colour, slightly arched form, and spiral markings bear a remarkable resemblance the sacred cobra. The materials intended for its execution would seem to confirm this identification. Although the piece was done in wood, Oppenheim has remarked that "the sculpture should be larger, about doubled in size, and made out of green marble or **serpentine**. Is there such a large piece?"¹¹⁵

The Green Spectator is reminiscent of Minoan art both in its columnar motif and the spiral design of its eyes. In this sense, it deliberately hearkens back to the pre-Christian fertility cults of ancient Minoan culture, where female deities were represented holding snakes. In discussing another work, titled That Old Snake Nature, the artist refers to matriarchy as the original society:

One could imagine that the first state was matriarchal...And then the old big snake Nature in the tree of Knowledge told Eve to give an apple to Adam. ... The old snake Nature wanted him to take the way of intellectual development. Eve has been damned, and the snake with her by men (men had to leave the mother).¹¹⁶

The Green Spectator thereby meshes the themes of stone, nature, and fertility in a single object. The artist's selection of the material "serpentine" alone, effects a playful identification of word, idea, and substance that calls forth the daemonic entity of the serpent.

One is tempted to repeat the pattern, suggested by typologies of religion: **moon/serpent/fertility/regeneration/woman/birth/death/nature/fate.** ¹¹⁷ But typology cannot evoke the precise configuration that is woven through Oppenheim's work, which we must retrieve from the work itself.

The serpent is a complex chthonic image whose connection to earth, nature, and woman is well-documented in world mythology. The topic of the sacred serpent is necessarily too complex to deal with thoroughly here; however it is relevant to Oppenheim's vision in several aspects: in myth, the serpent is often identified with "prima materia", the origins of the earth, and the watery chaos from which all life merges. In Judaeo-Christian mythology the serpent is seen as evil and represents the Devil in its form as the seven-headed dragon, or the serpent **Leviathan**. In the Book of Revelations the appearance of the serpent Leviathan heralds the imminent apocalypse, which is the necessary turning point in the coming of the New Jerusalem: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world."¹¹⁸ The serpent or dragon "represented not only the Devil but also the infidel, the Devil's earthly equivalent."¹¹⁹ Hence medieval Christian geography envisioned pagan territories as blighted by the daemonic, chthonic serpent.

On the other hand, in pagan religion the serpent is a symbol of fertility, inextricably linked to rites of regeneration, women's mysteries, and mythology about the feminine. Archaic thought links serpents to both magic and matter: the Hebrew and Arabic words for "magic" come from words that mean "snake."¹²⁰ In many pagan myths, the dragon or serpent stems from the chaotic origins of the earth, and therefore has amoral, chthonic power; it was often believed to be the guardian of springs, lakes, or rivers -- sources of life. In this sense, the serpent or dragon was an unpredictable daemonic entity that performed a protective function, as in the dragons that drew the chariot of the goddess Ceres, or the serpent-haired Gorgon that guarded the temple of Artemis.¹²¹ The serpent also became a symbol of regeneration connected to the fertility of woman. Even in historical Greece, women were said to have been impregnated by snakes: "Alexander the Great's mother, Olympia, played with snakes. The famous Aratus of Sicyon was said to be a son of Aesculapius because, according to Pausanias, his mother had conceived him of a serpent."¹²² The snake therefore is a pagan symbol of fertility, wisdom, and unpredictable chthonic power that was later perceived by the Judaeo-Christian tradition as the embodiment of evil.

Ironically, the Judaeo-Christian reversal of the pagan motif is itself doubly reversed in Oppenheim's silent witness, the Green Spectator, who is "nature itself looking at death and birth in the same impassive way". Oppenheim identifies the serpent with the amoral regenerative power of nature. This identification of nature, snake, birth, and death could seem a survival from archaic myth -- but the Green Spectator is not a return to archaic forms, for the artist creates a new myth in the interpenetration of archaic and occult "rejected knowledge":

We, men and women, must become conscious that we are on the point of leaving a state, the patriarchal, which was very important for humanity to pass through. **It does not, of course, treat of a return to matriarchy, as some naive people say.**¹²³

The new myth embodied in Oppenheim's work, created from remnants of archaic and occult thought, suggests the image of nature as a fecund chaos, a creative disorder embodied in matter itself.

2. Stones and Fertility

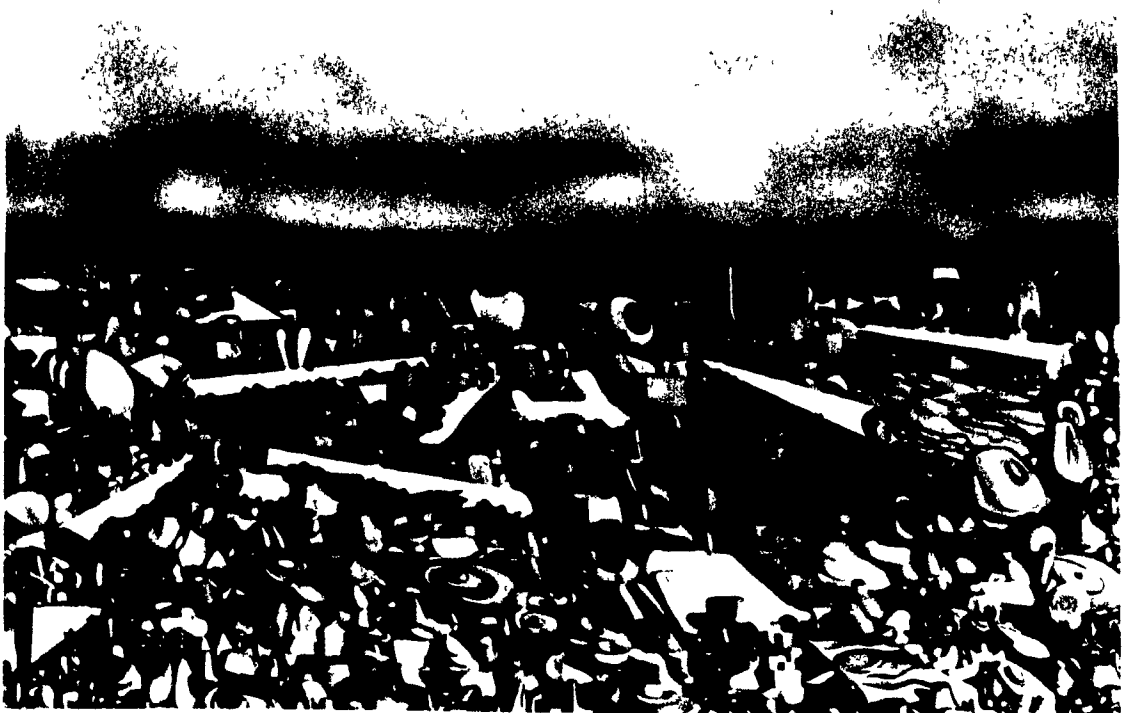
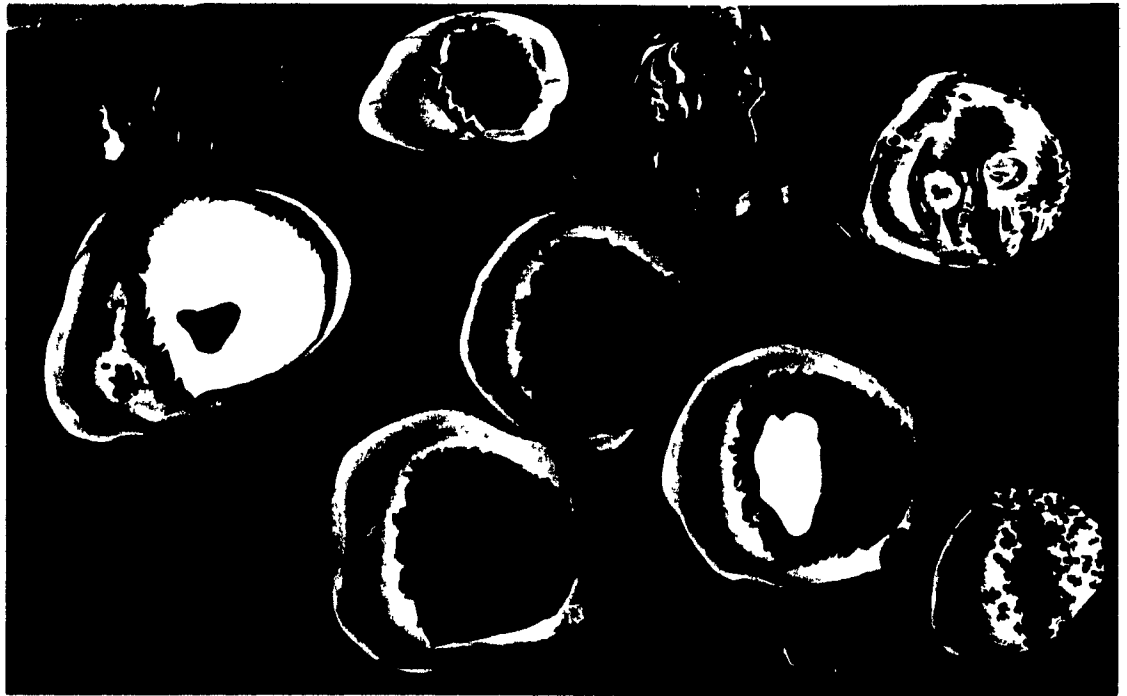
The power of stone to awaken fertility and to embody potency is deliberately invoked in Salvador Dali's Accommodations of Desire^m of 1929. (Figure 59). Dali created this work in his most inspired period, the time of his first association with the Surrealists (1926-39). The painting is executed in the tradition of medieval panel painting of oil on wood, that permits a highly illusionistic rendering of forms. In format, it resembles nothing so much as a small "retable" painting, yet it reflects Dali's inner visions rather than a familiar religious iconography. The painting depicts the daemonic conjunction of lion and stone -- an epiphany of the animate and inanimate. The lion is shown in "various stages of incompleteness"¹²⁴ that expose multiple layers of symbolic potential. The stone becomes an emblem of desire; animated by the presence of the lion, it is, in Dali's words, "intended to turn the desire inside out like a stocking in order to expose to the sun the smallest wrinkles of the terrifying pleasures which were inside".¹²⁵ Dali here fixes the ambivalence of attraction-repulsion in his grasp of "terrifying pleasures". The explosive ferocity of the lion is contained or "accommodated" by the stone that it inhabits. The object reaches

Figure 59. Salvador Dali. Accommodations of Desire. 1929.

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Figure 60. Yves Tanguy. The Multiplication of the Arcs. 1954.

In Tanguy's later work, the preoccupation with stones is made even more manifest, and the artist concentrates on surreal landscapes that closely resemble the rocky coasts of Brittany. The Multiplication of the Arcs depicts a mass of biomorphic forms whose scale is uncertain and whose purpose is unknown.



towards us with immanent meaning that is impossible to objectify because of its contradictory nature.

The elusive power of the stone to "accommodate desire", expressed in Dali's transformation of the natural object, is fundamental to the aims of the alchemical tradition which purports the existence of a mysterious **philosopher's stone** that is formed from the original substance or prima materia from which the world was created. The **philosopher's stone** conveys the identical power to expose the hidden and accommodate the secret desire that Dali speaks of in describing the intention of his painting. This magical property of the stone to actualize desire, reveal the concealed, and to penetrate the obscure language of all "things" is described in a seventeenth century alchemical treatise by Elias Ashmole:

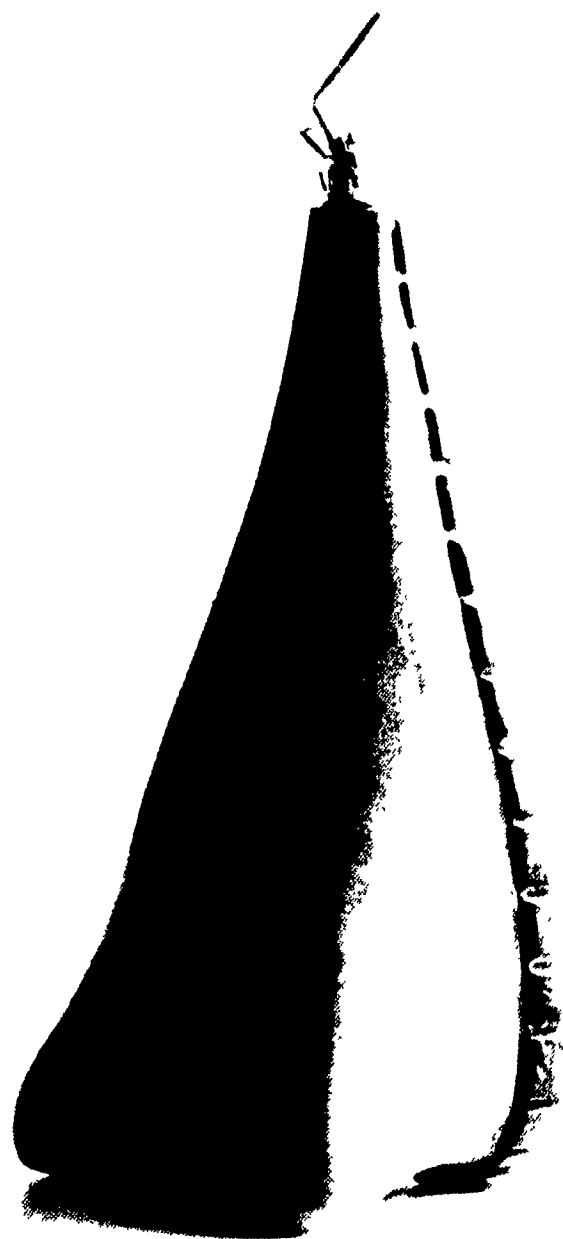
By the magical or prospective Stone it is possible to discover any person in what part of the world soever, although never so secretly concealed or hid; in chambers, closets, or caverns of the earth: For there it makes a strict inquisition. In a word, it fairly presents to your view even the whole world, **wherein to behold, hear or see your desire.** Nay more, it enables man to understand the language of the creatures, as the chirping of birds, lowing of beasts, etc. **To convey a spirit into an image,** which by observing the influence of heavenly bodies, shall become a true oracle, and yet this is not any way necromantical or devilish; but easy, wondrous easy, natural, and honest.¹²⁶

3. Matter, Mater, Prima Materia

Stone as an emblem of fertility is definitively embodied in Meret Oppenheim's sculpture, Urzeit Venus of 1933-62. (Figure 61) As its name suggests, Urzeit Venus refers to a time of origins and the primordial **Mater** from which the matter or prima materia of the universe is formed. Oppenheim's creation is surprisingly similar in scale, form, and intent to archaic fertility amulets; yet it is more minimal in form.

Figure 61. Meret Oppenheim. Urzeit Venus. 1933-62.

Stone as an emblem of fertility is definitively embodied in Meret Oppenheim's Sculpture, Urzeit Venus. As its name suggests, Urzeit Venus refers to a time of origins and the primordial Mater from which the matter or prima materia of the universe is formed. Oppenheim's creation is surprisingly similar in scale, form, and intent to archaic fertility amulets, yet it is more minimal in form. The small dimension of the sculpture establishes it as a magical presence; it can be held in the hand as a type of talisman. Oppenheim presents us with the essence of stone as a reservoir of procreative power.



Its simple pear shape suggests an abstract ideal of fecundity: the form itself is modelled of clay over a light bulb, whose filament whimsically protrudes at one end. The small dimension of the sculpture establishes it as a magical presence for it can be held in the hand as a type of talisman. Oppenheim presents us with the essence of stone as a reservoir of procreative power.

The power of stones to grant fertility has been thoroughly discussed by the history of religions. The fecundizing power of stones is especially apparent in the **lingam and yoni** representation of Hinduism. In archaic thought, stones are a manifestation of primal matter and the regenerative power of nature. Cognates of the word, "matter" -- "mater", "materia", encapsulate several ideas, including the fertility of nature, the nurturing feminine principle, and the generative power of the earth itself -- **prima materia**. The Magna Mater, Cybele, was originally worshipped in the form of an unsculptured black bethel stone, which was of meteoric origin.¹²⁷ The black, cubic stone, from which the prehistoric name **Kubaba-Cybele** arises, was said to have been embedded in the statue of Cybele where the face should be; this statue, brought to Rome during the Punic Wars (c. 200 B.C.) perhaps inspired the appellation of those archaic figures of pagan origin found buried beneath Romanesque churches, known as the "Black Madonna".¹²⁸ The Surrealist "cult of stones" thus is decisively linked to the cult of the Magna Mater, delineated through the etymology of the terms **matter/mater/materia**.

Traditionally, the Magna Mater **Cybele** or **Tellus Mater** is linked with the fecundity of the earth, and the principle of regeneration that also includes the sacred serpent. Regeneration occurs through time, it is a rhythmic principle; therefore the goddess became the deity of Fate or destiny, **Tellus Fortuna**.¹²⁹ In this context, it is curious to note that both the Anglo-Saxon wyrd, (destiny, lot), or the Old High German wurt (to become) compress the ambivalent power of fate with the action "to weave", for they all stem from the same etymological root as the Old High German wirt, wirtel -- "spindle", "distaff", or the Dutch worwelen "to turn": each refers to the "weaving" of man's destiny that preoccupies the personifications of Fate -- the Moirae, the wyrd sisters, Tellus Fortuna, or the Magna Mater.¹³⁰ These fertility deities "weave" the destiny of man into the inalterable pattern of fate.

Like the oracular power of the Magna Mater, or the principle of destiny objectified in the wyrd, the philosopher's stone granted the alchemist the gift of prophecy and premonitory insight into the fate of men. The visionary nature of alchemy, that employs the principle of transmutation of "gross" materia into gold by virtue of the philosopher's stone, possessed an internal appeal for the Surrealists. In the second Manifesto of Surrealism of 1930, Andre Breton called for the "profound occultation of Surrealism".¹³¹ He also wrote of "the alchemy of the verb",¹³² showing a basic familiarity with the alchemical tradition. The correspondences between the alchemical tradition and Surrealism, however arbitrary or unintentional, show a remarkable resemblance in the **revelation** of that which previously was **concealed**. This property -- to uncover the hidden, grant oracular powers, and to penetrate into the language of all things -- was described in alchemy as the "magical or

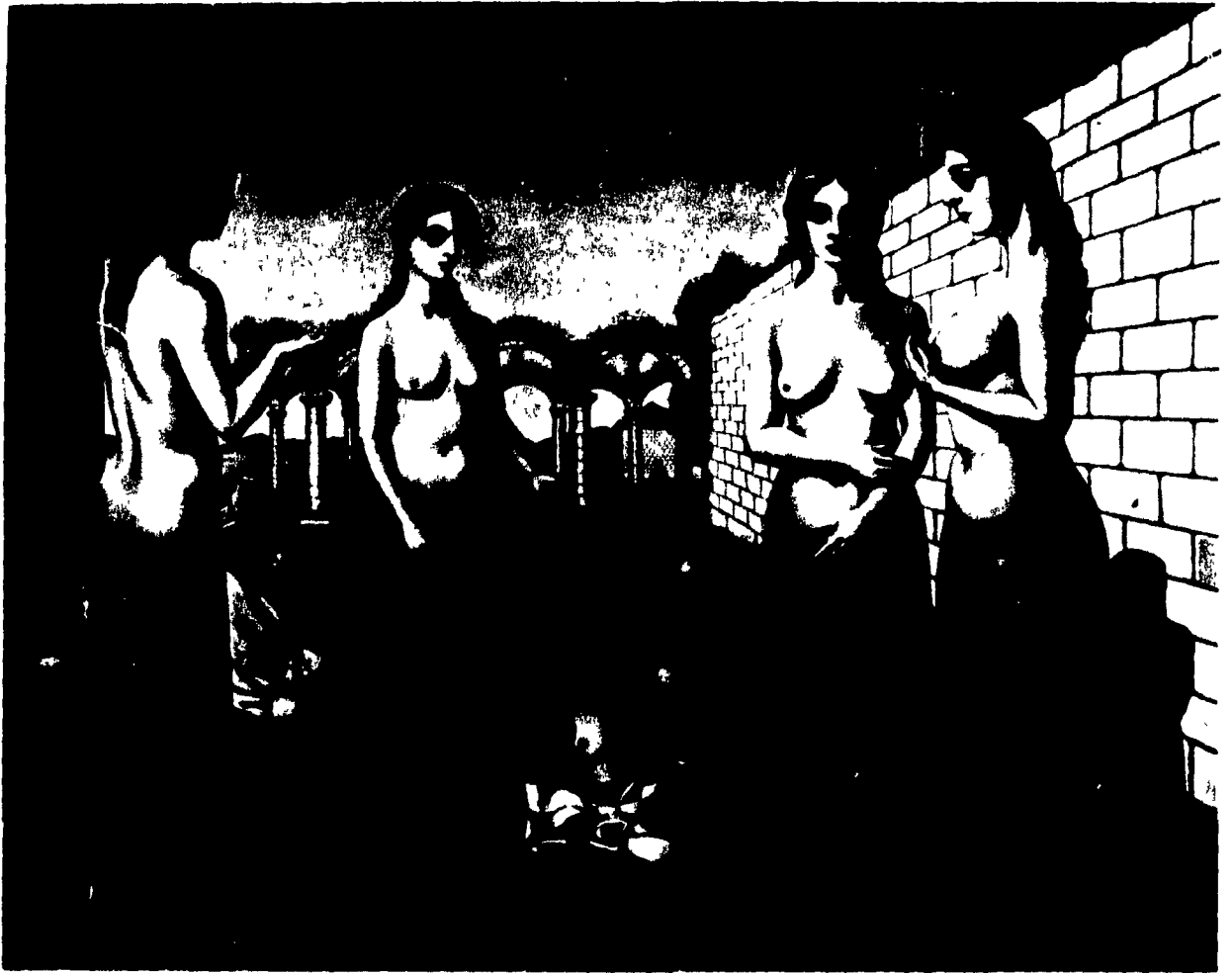
prospective stone" which could "convey a spirit into an image". The philosopher's stone is reproduced from "the unity of a quintessence": that is, from the potential prima materia which is "without form, structure, or specific content".¹³³ In Alchemy, Titus Burkhart observes:

Of materia prima, the primordial substance, one can only say that it is **purely receptive with regard to the form-giving cause of existence** and that at the same time it is the root of "otherness", for it is through it that things are limited and multiple. In the language of the Bible, materia prima is represented by the waters, over which, at the beginning of Creation, the Spirit of God moved.¹³⁴

Prima materia is formless, chaotic, and of a simple potency that we may liken to the idea of the "daemonic". It is the original substance from which the world was created. By virtue of its composition, the philosopher's stone thereby initiates the alchemist into the very substance of existence, which "restores the unified state of the prima materia on a new level".¹³⁵ The common denominator then, of the Surreal and the alchemical is the **symbolic transformation** of the ordinary, mundane, or "leaden" materia -- of the universe or of the unconscious -- into a new dimension of existence: a Surreality. And the constellation of matter, mater, and materia found in the Philosopher's Stone as well as in the Urzeit Venus and other Surrealist objects, opposes the daemonic view of woman to her procreative function, and establishes yet another polarity in the iconography of Surrealism.

Figure 62. Paul Delvaux. The Break of Day. 1937.

Paul Delvaux's The Break of Day depicts woman as literally "rooted in the ground", part of the earth and its natural substance.



D. PAGAN/CHRISTIAN OPPOSITIONS

1. The Ambivalence of the Feminine in Surrealism

We have uncovered a fundamental tension in Surrealism that expresses the ambivalence of the creative and destructive aspects of the feminine. Like an epiphany, this psychologically fluctuant image always threatens to become something else--to adopt yet another guise of its multiple outlines. To grasp the summation of this multiple image, then, would be to create an epiphany of an epiphany, that escapes single definition. And although the cumulation of these images is itself inexpressably complex, there is in fact, a common denominator that traverses the iconography of Surrealism in a single historical stream.

Much Surrealist art bears the marks of an ancient pagan/Christian opposition that can be traced throughout the history of art and religion. In the iconographic language of the middle ages it was expressed in images of demons, gargoyles, and grotesques who guarded the gothic cathedrals; and in the late nineteenth century it is found in the opposition of occultism and decadence, as seen against the hegemony of reason and the bourgeois morality. This theme is persistently played by many Surrealists, who deliberately employ references to paganism in their art to challenge the dominant religious tradition. An element of **full contradiction** in the image of woman, seen as fecund muse or as daemonically destructive, emerges as central to the Surrealist's transformation of archaic thought.

In traditional thought, the artistic imagination was inspired by the classical muse, who opened the pathway to the imagination through her

transcendent, ethereal presence. Similarities between the Surrealist view of woman and the classical muse, that ancient genie of the imagination, may be drawn; but the muse is a ghostly, asexual voice-in-the-ear, whereas the Surrealist woman is often seen as daemoniacally destructive or munificently procreative. She therefore is attractive and repellent--that is, psychologically ambivalent, and is definitely not the airy, sweet sprite of classical thought.

There are multiple reasons for the reemergence of this archetype, that reside in the history of religious tensions in Western Europe. The Surrealists grasped these tensions of the archaic and the occult, implicit in late nineteenth century thought, and amplified them with new and uniquely modern resonances. While it is true that the Surrealists often used images of the female nude (as in the use of mannequin or doll parts) to create a brutal, shocking effect, they also employed the idea of woman to evoke the creative power of the imagination. Then too, the dismemberment of the feminine that is invoked by many Surrealist objects, such as Kurt Seligman's Ultrafurniture, or Hans Bellmer's La Poupée, for example, can be seen to create a new, alchemical unity that creates the union of opposites expressed in the Surrealist altered objects (the animate and the inanimate) or in the uncanny premonitions of fate (accidental chance or purposeful destiny) sensed in many Surrealist paintings, such as those of de Chirico. (Figures 6, 8, 36, and 37).

To the deliberately daemonic images of Miro or Lam, we must oppose the view of woman as a procreative, chthonic deity. Implicit in the metaphorical associations of matter and the "cult of stones", the theme of procreation and fertility is given full definition in the work of André Masson and Paul Delvaux, who link woman to earth, nature, and fertility.

As in Paul Delvaux's The Break of Day of 1937, she is depicted literally as "rooted in the ground", part of the earth and its natural substance. (Figure 62). Her body is full, erotically explicit, and her face is idealized out of a specific individuality. We are presented with an ideal type that resembles nothing so much as archaic fertility deities, often represented in or with trees, as in the Hindu yaksha and yakshini figures that are linked to the earth and the origins of life.¹³⁶

a) The Archaic in Paul Delvaux

In the works of Paul Delvaux, in particular, we find many references to archaic myth. While The Break of Day depicts woman linked to the earth, as if an archaic fertility deity, another work, Venus Asleep, 1944, suggests antique goddesses. (Figure 63). It's bizarre, unnaturally luminous atmosphere depicts several agitated figures, who wander about "de Chirico city"--a city filled with ancient ruins and antique temples. The artist creates a feeling of magic, fear, and omen, that is reinforced by the distraught gesture of a figure at the right, while at the left, a skeleton stands guard for the "sleeping Venus". The archaic setting is animated by figures in the foreground and the middle ground, each of whom gesticulates in a supplicant gesture that recalls the ancient rites of Greece and Rome, implying fate and the imminent change of the world cycle. In fact, the wild, supplicant figures are nearly identical to the ones depicted in the pagan frescoes of the "Villa of Mysteries" of Pompei, that detailed the worship of an unidentified mystery cult, (probably that of the Great Goddess).¹³⁷ The crescent moon, to which these devotees pay obeisance in Delvaux's work, also implies fate, because the moon

"measures" or "weaves" destinies; as Eliade puts it, "the moon, because she is mistress of all living things and sure guide of the dead has 'woven' all destinies".¹³⁸

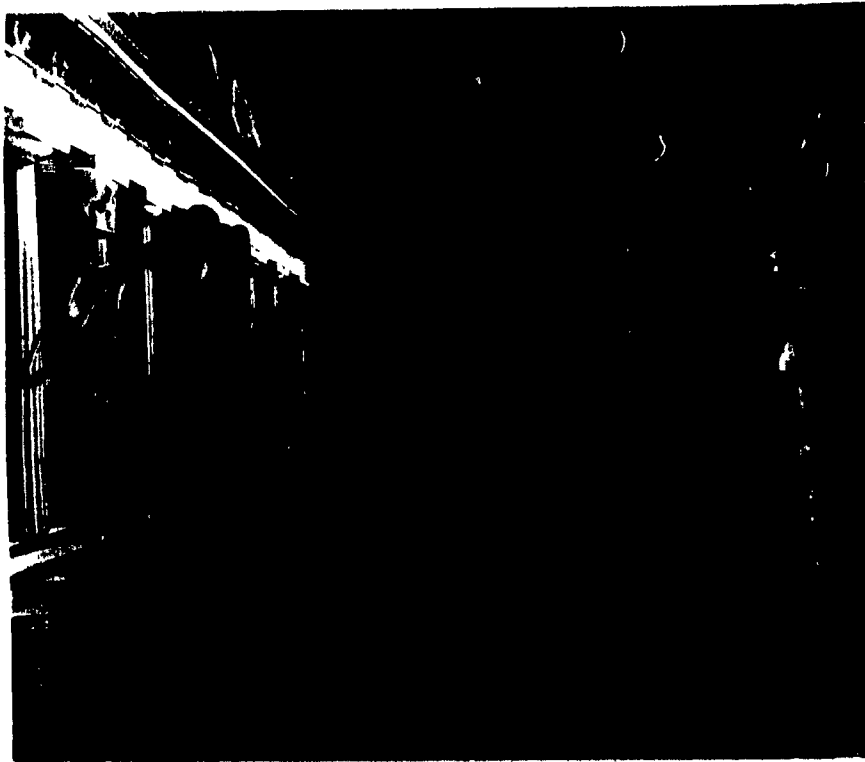
In a work titled Femme dans une Grotte of 1936, Delvaux draws on the mythological associations of chthonic, feminine deities with matter and the underworld. (Figure 64). Delvaux depicts a generic, buxom female, rapt in self-contemplation in the grotto. In this image, we find the mythological alliance of woman, the underworld, and the grotto that is also found in the poetry of Gérard de Nerval, discussed earlier. Nerval wrote of "the children of fire, who dwell beneath the earth's surface, lurking in caves and grottoes....They have an emblematic beast, the fire-breathing and cave-dwelling dragon, who, as in the myth of Cadmus, will be the author of their reborn race".¹³⁹ Historically, the Magna Mater, Cybele, was worshipped in caves and grottoes, especially at the Greek port of Piraeus, where her image is found in the rocky niches of caves.¹⁴⁰ In fact, Femme dans une Grotte effectively crystallizes the Surrealist constellation of woman, the grotto-esque underworld, and the grotesque--for the term "grotesque" stems from "grotto", referring to the archaic paintings of bizarre, hybrid creatures that were discovered in cave excavations in the late fifteenth century in Europe. The psychological implications of Delvaux's images, whether purely intuitive or acquired, suggest a revitalized perception of archaic paganism that is also represented in many other Surrealist works, such as those of Masson. Masson was particularly intrigued by the Greek myth of Gradiva, and explored the imagery of the nature goddess in his work.¹⁴¹

Figure 63. Paul Delvaux. Venus Asleep. 1944.

Venus Asleep suggests antique goddesses. Its bizarre, unnaturally luminous atmosphere depicts several agitated figures who wander about a city filled with ancient ruins and antique temples. The archaic setting is animated by figures in the foreground and the middle ground, each of whom gesticulates in a supplicant manner that recalls the ancient rites of Greece and Rome, implying fate and the imminent change of the world of cycle. In fact, the supplicant figures are really identical to the ones depicted in the pagan frescoes of the "Villa of Mysteries" in Pompeii.

Figure 64. Paul Delvaux. Femme dans une Grotte.

Femme dans une Grotte effectively crystallizes the Surrealist constellation of woman, the underworld, and the grotesque.



b) The Daemonic Image in Max Ernst

The caves and the underworld similarly are united through the sensation of **daemonic** power, that spontaneously springs from the ground. The dragon or serpent, that quintessentially daemonic entity, is said in archaic myth to live in springs, rivers, or caves. The daemonic serpent, then, like woman, springs from the earth, and guards the watery sources of life. This pagan image extends into the grotesque visage of the gargoyle, the personification of the archaic water spirits who controlled the flow of water: hence the gargoyle's function as water-bearer in the articulation of the gothic cathedral.¹⁴² This sense of the daemonic is itself objectified in the bizarre hybrid creature of Max Ernst's The Angel of the Hearth, 1935. (Figure 65). Ernst depicts a gargantuan dragon-like creature, complete with obligatory wings, horns and claws, in a paroxysm of uncontrolled daemonic violence. The title of the work ironically refers to this threatening creature as "the angel of the hearth", suggesting Ernst's eerie premonitions of the violence that was soon to overtake Europe, and that thoroughly colours his work of the nineteen-thirties and forties, as, for example, in his apocalyptic landscape, Europe After the Rain of 1940-42.

c) Meret Oppenheim and Fertility Imagery

The theme of fertility is given full expression in a work by Meret Oppenheim, titled Cannibal Feast, that was exhibited in the 1957 International Exhibition of Surrealism. (Figure 66). This piece, titled Fertility Feast at an earlier exhibition, contained a live woman, painted

gold, who reclined on a table covered opulently with fruit, food, and flowers. Oppenheim's explicit gesture directly unites the ideas of woman, plenitude, nurturance, and fertility, and thus provides a startling revival of archaic fertility imagery.

The ambivalence which attends the Surrealist idea of the feminine closely resembles the ambivalent, daemonic power of the archaic image of woman as a fertility deity: however, this neo-pagan formula became, in the hands of the Surrealists, the vehicle through which they could convey their perceptions of the creative process itself. Although originally ignited by the passionately romantic poetry of Breton and Eluard, the Surrealist image of woman, linked to the underworld, birth, and death, came to signify the chaotic energy of the imaginative unconscious with its potential for symbolic transformation. Many Surrealist works employ the idea of female procreative power as a metaphor for the creative process itself. The Surrealists chose the figure of woman to symbolize the unconscious, the realm of ghosts, dreams, and memories--fossils of lived experience that remain to irritate the imagination. Hence, the ambivalence that attends the image of woman in Surrealism expresses a fundamental tension directed against the primal energy of the unconscious mind itself. It is not surprising, then, that many Surrealists did experience forms of psychic distress and disorientation, due to their intentional unleashing of the creative imagination in dream, reverie, and art. Expressed iconographically, the many representations of women in Surrealism strongly resemble characteristic images of fertility deities in archaic religion. Surrealism's idealization of the imagination as the source of creativity, as the vehicle through which one may attain Surreality, links female

Figure 65. Max Ernst. The Angel of the Hearth. 1935.

Figure 66. Meret Oppenheim. Cannibal Feast. 1957.



procreative power with artistic creativity, and suggests the symbol of the imagination as feminine in Surrealism.¹⁴³ The image of woman is thus equated with the creative power of the imagination.

2. Taboo, Blasphemy, and Religious Reversal

Archaic, occult, and daemonic elements converge to create the unique historical moment in which Surrealist iconography is formed.

The ambivalent, suggestive image of woman is a pivotal point in Surrealist thought that attracts these elements, and forcibly reforms them into new meaning. The Surrealists' interest in archaic cultures was in part motivated by the Romantic "search for origins" which had brought about the successive vogues for exoticism and primitivism during the nineteenth century. The Surrealists, in turn, attempted to define a "new mythology" through the patchwork of these images and ideas collected from primitive art. They were particularly drawn to Oceanic art; its exoticism and foreign mythology inspired them to counter Western ideas with those of esoteric or archaic traditions. The Surrealist predilection for magic, occultism, and hermetic philosophy further encouraged the polarization of marginal and mainstream tensions in European culture. Although such marginal trends as demonism, Satanism, and theosophy had previously been adopted by the bohemian subcultures of the late nineteenth century, they are given a decidedly new twist by the Surrealists, who employ the occult and the archaic to create the peculiar mental frisson of iconoclasm and heresy.

Figure 67. Max Ernst. The Virgin Mary Spanking the Infant Jesus before
Three Witnesses: André Breton, Paul Eluard, and
the Artist. 1925.

This deliberately shocking reversal of accepted tradition is strikingly shown in an utterly perverse work by Max Ernst. In addition to the ironic, black humour of this work, Ernst extends the principle of contradiction and reversal into new dimensions of meaning, for the image **breaks** religious, social, artistic, and psychological taboos related to a major cultural icon.

Ernst's work intentionally challenges the accepted order of things. The heretical potential of this image must be seen within its historical context: that is, largely religious Catholic France.



This deliberately shocking reversal of accepted tradition is strikingly shown in an utterly perverse work by Max Ernst titled The Virgin Mary Spanking the Infant Jesus before Three Witnesses, André Breton, Paul Eluard, and the artist, Max Ernst, 1925. (Figure 67). As the title so blatantly suggests, the work depicts an enraged Virgin Mary spanking the infant Christ, whose halo has fallen to the floor. In addition to the ironic, black humour of this work, Ernst has extended the principle of contradiction and reversal into new dimensions of meaning, for the image breaks religious, social, artistic, and psychological conventions related to a major cultural icon. But Ernst's deliberate iconoclasm does not merely "break" established genres of art and religious conventions: to these, he opposes a new daemonic image that by virtue of its blasphemous potential perhaps contains more psychologically explosive power than its traditional model. It is, of course, power of a special order. It is the power of **taboo**.

This utter reversal of accepted religious iconography has the effect of a mental explosion of attack or **surprise**. It jolts the viewer out of an accepted frame of reference (the Catholic tradition) and introduces a dimension whose boundaries are not yet culturally defined. Paradoxically, this bursting forth from the religious tradition has as its source of power that very tradition. The **contradiction** of a cherished icon is tied to the image that it contradicts. An ambivalent situation of power and danger is created, whereby the viewer must maintain the contradiction and its antithesis simultaneously: the Virgin and her daemonic counterpart are one. The ambivalent meaning of the Surrealist image can be aligned to the power of taboo, in that it operates with the double mental sensation of attack and surprise. Ernst creates a disconcerting change in context

that threatens the viewer with the danger of implicit disorder and disorientation. The old frame of reference is reversed: a new, ironic meaning emerges. The old icon is diametrically opposed to a daemonic mirror reflection of itself, and the "mental juxtaposition of these two meanings creates a sense of violent dislocation and disorder that throws the viewer back upon a desperate effort of search and assimilation".¹⁴⁴

Ernst's work intentionally challenges the accepted order of things. The heretical potential of this image must be seen within its historical context; that is, largely religious Catholic France of the post-Victorian era. The problem of socially sanctioned taboos must still have been extraordinarily prominent at that time, for the Victorians had bequeathed a psychological baggage of rigorous restrictions of language, mores, and belief that must have seemed excessively limiting to the following generation. Like the curse or blasphemy, The Virgin Spanking the Infant Jesus conceals an attitude of angry revolt against accepted taboos, norms of representation, and iconography. The artist has specifically chosen this image for its incendiary potential to provoke, surprise, and anger the viewer--and thence to incite revolt. He has chosen the most valued icon of Catholic France--the Virgin Mary--and turned the symbol inside out to reveal daemonic meaning. Like the predisposition to employ references to God, church, and worship as curses, as in the Québécois profanities calice (chalice), hostie (host), or tabernacle (tabernacle), Ernst grasps a culturally defined "hot spot"--a taboo--and shatters it with the principle of contradiction.

This iconoclastic action of breaking the taboo has several social, psychological, and religious ramifications that converge to create a situation of danger:

All situations of danger, not merely those created by taboo-breaking, are socially or culturally defined, and it is precisely this relationship between the defined danger and the restrictive pattern which we should study in each case...¹⁴⁵

The psychological sensations of fear and disorientation in Surrealism stem from precisely this intention to break the established conventions and order of things. Taboo generates danger. In Freud's words:

Taboo is a very primitive prohibition imposed from without (by an authority) and directed against the strongest desires of man: the desire to violate it continues in the unconscious; persons who obey the taboo have an ambivalent feeling toward what is affected by the taboo. The magic power attributed to taboo goes back to its ability to lead men into temptation; it behaves like a contagion, because the example is contagious, and because the prohibited desire becomes displaced in the unconscious upon something else.¹⁴⁶

Like the Surrealists, Freud's strong interest in taboo may stem from the peculiarities of his own historical situation, which was riddled with rigid taboos that he continually confronted in his psychoanalytic practice.

(The hysterical female, whose sexuality was hidden even from herself, was a paradigm of Freud's research.) The taboo-ridden realm of sexuality that Freud uncovered was also revealed in Surrealism. The striking union of the pornographic, the iconoclastic, and the sacred in Surrealist art can be explained through the phenomenon of taboo: it is a manifestation of power, that when exploited creates the sensation of **danger**, characteristic of taboo.

a) Taboo, Omen and Doom

We may therefore equate the ambivalent power of Surrealist art with the breaking of societal taboos in religion, mores, and art. Taboo

exposes the same ambivalence that we saw in the uncanny, the weird, and the sacred. The power of taboo contains "the ambivalence of the sacred...not only in the psychological order (in that it attracts or repels) but also in the order of values; the sacred is at once 'sacred' and 'defiled'".¹⁴⁷ Taboo is at once sacred and forbidden. While we find in this polarity the association of the erotic and the elevated, the perverse attraction of the "danger" of the taboo situation also is important.

Freud has suggested that "taboo is a command of conscience, the violation of which causes a corresponding sense of uncovering and impending doom."¹⁴⁸ The sensation of presentiment that is so strongly objectified in Surrealist art can be related to the breaking of religio-social taboos--hence that daemonic, erotic view of women and the iconoclasm directed towards the church. The iconoclastic exuberance of the movement allowed for the **uncovering** of previously forbidden emotions, images, ideas, and attitudes: the perverse, the pornographic, and the daemonic were exact corollaries of that "motive for metaphor" that characterizes Surrealist art, which stems from the indigenous heterodox tradition of Western Europe. Pagan motifs naturally play a large role in iconoclasm and blasphemy, since their use had traditionally had been perceived as a direct threat to the church. The taboo imagery of the feminine as the archaic pagan goddess that is found in Surrealist art from Miro to Delvaux, can be traced to pagan survivals that had persisted through the middle ages, and were rejuvenated in the Renaissance as in the nineteenth century. The reactionary symbolization of the woman as archaic fertility deity or daemonic goddess in Surrealism indicates emotions that often accompany the breaking of taboos: a morbid exultation in a newly found

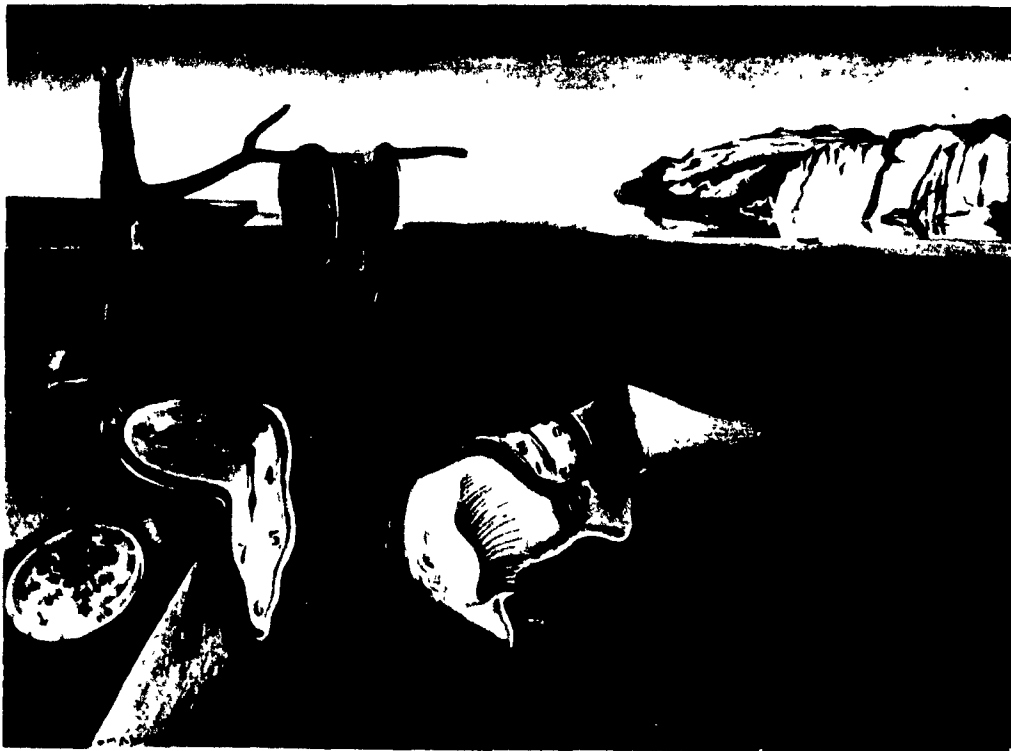
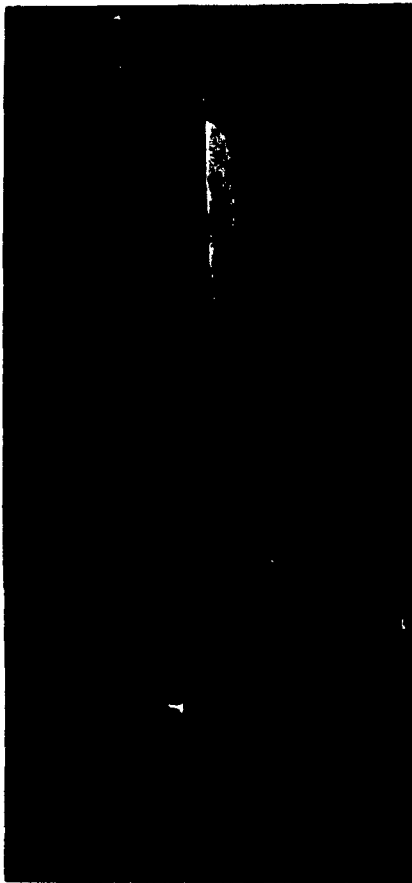
freedom, attended by feelings of fear, guilt and danger and that may contribute to the sensation of omen and presentiment expressed in so much Surrealist art.

On another level, the deliberate iconoclasm of Surrealist imagery can be linked to the emotional tone of much Surrealist art that we have previously characterized as "the weird" or "the uncanny". Surrealist art as a whole expresses a radical break with the traditional iconography, genres, and methods of art in its search for a "new reality". The precise delineation and ominous clarity of Surrealist works such as Giorgio de Chirico's Nostalgia of the Infinite of 1913-14, or Salvador Dali's The Persistence of Memory of 1931, suggests an atmosphere of omen and apocalyptic feeling that may be a larger expression of the iconoclasm of the movement. (Figures 68, 69). If we consider that the Greek root of the word "apocalypse" is "uncovery", then the uncanny, apocalyptic feeling that runs through Surrealist art can be related to its rejection of prevailing religious, social, and artistic taboos, and its concurrent transformation of cultural boundaries. The sensations of presentiment, omen, and doom expressed in Surrealism, then, have as their source the iconoclasm and power of taboo with its "corresponding sense of uncovery and impending doom". That Surrealism as a movement was above all successful, attests to its immense appeal on the popular level to excite the collective imagination of its time.

Figure 68. Giorgio de Chirico. Nostalgia of the Infinite. 1913-14.

The precise delineation and ominous clarity of many Surrealist works express an atmosphere of omen and apocalyptic feeling that may be a larger expression of the iconoclasm of the movement. The sensations of presentiment, omen, and doom expressed in Surrealism then, have as their source the ambivalence of taboo, with its "corresponding sense of uncovering and impending doom".

Figure 69. Salvador Dali. The Persistence of Memory. 1931.



CONCLUSION

We began by examining the phenomenon of the Surreal through its currently popular connotations as the weird, the uncanny, or fate. The essential relationship between these popular perceptions is the "extraordinary"; the dimension of fate, destiny, or coincidence that is objectified in the sensations of the weird. In each of these elements we found a curious thread of ambivalence that ties each firmly to the ambivalence of the sacred. The Surreal, then, forms a transition between the ordinary and the extra-ordinary that we may understand as the threshold of the sacred.

The origins of this impulse to transform the usual and ordinary into the marvelous and extra-ordinary can be found in the occult traditions of alchemy and hermetic philosophy, that attempt to transform life through the union of opposites. Historically, Surrealism stems from this ancient philosophical tradition of archaic, occult, and daemonic elements in European culture, yet it radically opposes them to the accepted tradition, and in so doing creates a new orientation founded upon the power of contradiction and ambivalence.

We may liken this radical change in orientation to the multiple "frames of reference" of quantum theory.¹ The elements of each opposition are, in themselves, intrinsically correct. But the very nature of the artistic expression molds various tensions into an indivisible whole: hence the Surrealist use of the arts of juxtaposition creates an indivisible unit of meaning that must, in itself, be grasped. As in gestalt theory,² the whole is more than the sum of its parts. We can then say that the opposing tensions of Surrealist art are subsumed into a

greater whole beyond the individual meaning of its component parts. The **ambivalent structure** of the surreal image itself creates the new meaning.

The ambivalence of Surrealist art, as seen through its phenomenology and its history, is linked to the sacred through its manifold similarities to sacred power in the ambivalence of taboo, the daemonic, and the weird. These elements may perhaps seem only peripherally religious, yet they are in essence sacred because they function as independent and unconditioned manifestations of power that burst through the boundaries of the profane. Into the usual sacred/secular dichotomy, then, we can interject a third element--the domain of the extra-ordinary, the uncanny, and the Surreal. Apart from the intriguing accidents of historical context and artistic tradition, the Surreal becomes the threshold of the sacred by virtue of its liminal position between the two realms of the marvelous and the mundane. This paradoxical position is intuitively grasped by its audience, who sense it as the bizarre, strange, or "weird".

At another level, the understanding of Surrealism in terms of the concepts of disorder, breakdown, and degeneration applied to Surrealist art by the fragmentation school of cultural analysis, cannot do justice to the new meaning that we expose. Surrealism, like other modern art movements, has been understood as a **change from** the art of the past, rather than a **change into** an intrinsically unique form. The problem of ambivalence, reversal, or "full contradiction" in Surrealist art can thus be seen in terms of positive, rather than negative, meaning. We also suggest that Surrealism employs the breaking of conventions, genres, and the disordering of culturally defined meaning in order to create a new modes of thought.³ As a movement, Surrealism intentionally attempts to

provoke disorder and break old orientations with stylistic disorder, and in this way to provoke new cognitive resolutions. This creates the jolt of **surprise** that makes it so attractive to the popular audience.

In the creative process, "a quest for order will be sterile and unproductive without a continual infusion of...an apparently undesirable disorder...we still require some ordered disorder or just plain disorder to get the Eureka event".⁴ The Surrealists recognized this principle of chance or discontinuity and intensified and enhanced their creativity through the employment of the methods of chance, accident, and the irrational, which introduce randomness into the creative process. The unpredictable elements of randomness and disorder provoke the new resolution through the principle of fortuitous coincidence; that is -- "serendipity".

In Surrealist art, as in other modern art, contradiction, discontinuity and ambivalence are employed to force the audience to entertain multiple readings, and from the tensions engendered by those ambiguities to create fresh perceptions of the world. The difference is that in Cubism and its derivatives, this ambivalence is largely visual, whereas in Surrealism it is also psychological. These common readings suggest a cohesive factor in modern art that we must recognize and call **the ambivalence factor**. It is delineated in modern art in the simplest visual juxtapositions of the collage principle, as well as the iconographically complex reversals of Catholicism attempted by Surrealists, such as Ernst. Then too, the employment of psychological ambivalence in art cannot be subsumed into current ideas of "sign", for the meaning that we uncover is not singular, and firmly resists anything other than a symmetrical formula. Similarly, we cannot subsume Surrealist art into the classical concepts of order, continuity, and transition established by the

earlier canons of art,⁵ because its fundamental structure is antithetical to sequential or linear thinking. Its inviolate kernel of ambivalence provokes a new meaning that is uniquely flexible, modern, and vital.

The modern experience that is expressed in the art of the Surrealist movement contains a central core of ambivalence whose traces must not be linked to the linear, degenerative chaos of modern historiography, but to the positive chaos of the creative experience. The Surrealist employment of discontinuity, contradiction, and reversal signifies the changing perspective of modern culture: it diffuses the boundaries between the secular and the sacred, and it is here, at their conjunction, that we must locate the Surreal. Like the manifestations of the sacred, the surprises and irrational juxtapositions of Surrealism are indescribable in other than antithetical terms. And despite the nearly inexpressable nature of the creative experience, Surrealism ultimately suggests that without the imagination, man becomes a cipher.

Chapter I

FOOTNOTES

1. André Breton, Manifestoes of Surrealism (1924) trans. by Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1974) pp. 12, 14, 26, 47. Henceforth referred to as Breton, Manifestoes of Surrealism.

2. Marcel Jean, The History of Surrealist Painting (New York: Grove Press, 1960); Maurice Nadeau, The History of Surrealism (New York: MacMillan, 1965).

3. See this dissertation, Ch. IV., Section C., Freud, "Magus of Surrealism."

4. Both Sarane Alexandrian, Surrealist Art, trans. Gordon Clough (New York: Praeger, 1970) and Patrick Waldberg, Surrealism (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, n.d.) mention many of the parallels between occultism, supernaturalism and Surrealism.

5. "Post-modern": This term has been used most frequently with reference to the contemporary, "post-modern" style in architecture; a reaction to the preceding International Style. For a discussion of this term and its ideological ramifications, see The Idea of the Post-modern: Who is teaching it? ed. Lawrence Alloway. (Seattle: Henry Art Gallery, 1981).

6. Methodology: An Interdisciplinary Approach to the Study of Art and Religion: The approach followed in this dissertation is based on the premise that the nature of religious experience can be illuminated by an analysis of religious and artistic "expressions." Modern art can be interpreted, then, as a visual reflection of contemporary consciousness. Several methods have been employed in the present analysis of the religious aspects of Surrealism in its art and philosophy. A religious studies hermeneutic has been applied to the phenomenon of art as an interpretive method which contributes a wider frame of reference, in order to disclose the more experiential aspects of artistic creation. The significance of the artist's experience that is described, recreated, or felt in the creation of art is essential to the understanding of art in its historical context. While chronological, categorical, or iconographic approaches are useful in determining a work's context, the questions and concerns of a "religious dimension" approach, using the perspectives and methods common to religious studies, may perforce illuminate the position of art within the broader spectrum of human thought and endeavour.

It is unfortunately one of the ironies of scholarship that many popularized art histories have defined art through the currents of connoisseurship, stylistic category, and chronology, leaving its cultural interpretation to those theorists less sensitive to the specificity of the historical situation. The problem is that the very employment of these useful historical methods has sometimes deflected attention away from the primary characteristics of the significance of art. The issue is more one of the confusion of method, with application, than one of misleading

categories or intentional oversight. The historical approach has allowed the very object of its study--the definition of historical significance --to become latterly confused with its methods of analysis. This is a problem which is rectified often by individual scholars--Panofsky, Venturi, Worringer, and Burckhardt, to name a few--but its popularization through progress-dominated art histories requires some large-scale revisioning, in order to reestablish an understanding of art within the uniqueness of its historical situation.

This dissertation employs an interdisciplinary methodology in visual art and religion. Surrealism provides a well-documented movement as a focus for this phenomenological and historical study. It is hoped, however, that the approach herein will be found viable in the study of other art movements and forms, and prove useful to both the disciplines of the history of religions and the history of art. A skeletal outline of the methodology employed in this dissertation is as follows:

1. the phenomenological approach
 - a) phenomenology of religion attempts to describe religious phenomena
 - b) phenomenology and art
2. Cross cultural comparison with transformative religious traditions:
 - a) Buddhism as a model of a religion seeking psychological transformation through meditation
 - b) religious epistemology
 - c) problems of cross-cultural comparison
3. Difficulties of Interpretive Language in an Interdisciplinary approach:
 - a) the need for a common vocabulary
 - b) Psychologically descriptive terminology--Western and Eastern
4. Psychology of Religion: a common language
5. Artistic Creativity and Religious Awareness: a common context
 - a) systems theory in art and religion--limitations of iconographic analysis
6. Some concepts of an interdisciplinary approach
 - a) art as the objectification of feeling
 - b) mythological conceptions of the world
 - c) metaphor: the principle of identification
7. Symbolic transformation in art and religion:
 - a) myth and metaphor
 - b) mythology, dream and art
 - c) parallel cognitive patterns or fundamental principles in the form-giving processes of art and religion:
 1. the sense of significance
 2. metaphorical identification
 3. The tendency towards ideation

8. A proposed method: the perception of the object as a comparative model.
9. Major aspects of religion as a basis for delineating a "religious dimension":
 - a) mythology
 - b) "Weltanschauung"--world view
 - c) tranformation--meditation and other methods
 - d) valuation--ethics, attitudes
 - e) theory and praxis
 - f) the aims of religion
 - g) iconography--symbolism in art and myth

7. Charles Van Doren, The Idea of Progress. Concepts in Western Thought Series, general ed., Mortimer J. Adler. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967) pp. 5-7, 16. In one sense, the idea of order within history may be defined simply as the sense of sequence, succession, or continuity. "Progress" implies a successive order of change manifested through history, and that this order can be known and is for the better. In short, the idea of progress is based on a belief in an order inherent in the historical process itself. It can be understood as implying the following four assertions:

1. A definite pattern of change exists in the history of mankind.
2. The pattern of change that is manifested in history is not only discoverable, but actually known.
3. The existent and known pattern of change in history is in the long run, irreversible in direction.
4. The direction of the irreversible pattern of change in history is toward the better.

8. See Elizabeth Hansot, Perfection and Progress: Two Modes of Utopian Thought (Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1974). Also Joyce Oramel Hentzler, The History of Utopian Thought, (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1965).

9. Guillaume Apollinaire, cited in Herschel B. Chipp, ed., Theories of Modern Art (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973) p.223. *this citation is taken from a different translation, Guillaume Apollinaire, Apollinaire on Art, p. 223.*

10. Apollinaire, cited in Chipp, ed., Theories of Modern Art, p. 223-224. *See my paper on Apollinaire, paper from a different translation*

11. Eric J. Sharpe, Comparative Religion: A History. (London: Duckworth, 1975) p. 26-35; Ch. III, "Darwinism makes it possible" p. 47-71. *(New York: Viking Press, 1972) p. 222-223*

12. On the Romantic search for origins, see this dissertation, Ch. III, The Historical Context: B., Romanticism, Primitivism, Exoticism, and the Pursuit of "Origins." See also M. H. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature. (New York: W. H. Norton, 1971).

(New York: Viking Press, 1972) pp. 222-223

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13. For an analysis of utopianism and Dada, see Alan C. Greenberg, Artists and Revolution: Dada and the Bauhaus 1917-1925. (Ann Arbor: U.M.I. Research Press, 1979) Ch. IV., "The Quest for Unity and Direction: Individual Community, and Utopia," p. 77-107.

14. Breton, Manifesto of Surrealism (1924), p. 26.

15. For a discussion of manifesto as a genre, see Sorel Thompson, "Manifesto: A Preliminary Model for Discourse Analysis," M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1981.

16. We use the term "historicism" here in the sense given it by Karl Popper, The Poverty of Historicism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957).

17. Karl Popper, The Poverty of Historicism (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1957) p. 130, 161.

18. Christine McCorkel, "Sense and Sensibility: An Epistemological Approach to the Philosophy of Art History." Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 1981. McCorkel connects the historiography of modern art with the logical positivism of the nineteenth century, and with Victorian ideals of progress: "But the Victorian faith in progress and assurance that the laws of nature could and would be discovered made that first positivism profoundly optimistic." pp. 37, 38, 41, 45, 48.

19. Ernst Fischer, "Chaos and Form: The Necessity of the New," Kenneth McRobbie, ed., Chaos and Form: History and Literature, Ideas and Relationships (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1972) p. 147.

20. Nathan Scott, The Broken Center: Studies in the Theological Horizon of Modern Literature (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

21. Scott, The Broken Center, p. 5.

22. Scott, The Broken Center, p. 1x.

23. Winthrop Judkins, Fluctuant Representation in Synthetic Cubism: Picasso, Braque, Gris, 1910-1920 (Garland: New York, 1978).

24. Katherine Kuh, Break-up: The Core of Modern Art (Connecticut: New York Graphic Society, 1969); also Erich Kahler, The Disintegration of Form in the Arts (New York: George Braziller, 1968).

25. H. C. Rookmaaker, Modern Art and the Death of a Culture (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973).

26. William Fleming, Art, Music, and Ideas (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970) p. 359.

27. The frontispiece for The Broken Center contains the following excerpt from Yeats' "The Second Coming":

Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

See also W. B. Yeats, Selected Poetry, ed. A Norman Jeffares (London: Macmillan & Co., 1969) "The Second Coming" p. 99.

28. Scott, The Broken Center, p. 1x.

29. Scott, The Broken Center, p. 5.

30. The view that equates secularism, relativity, and apocalyptic disorder is expounded by Eric Rust, Salvation History: A Biblical Interpretation (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962).

31. Van Doren, The Idea of Progress pp. 147-157. Also Ch. 7, "Denials of Progress: Types of Theories of Regress and of Cycles," p. 117-121, and Ch. 9, "Cosmogenic Regress," p. 153-157.

32. See M. H. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature, Ch. I, "The Design of Biblical History," pp. 32-37. Also Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millenium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages (London: Granada Publishing, 1978) Ch. I., "The Tradition of Apocalyptic Prophecy," pp. 19-36. Also G. Ernest Wright and Reginald H. Fuller, The Book of the Acts of God: Contemporary Scholarship Interprets the Bible. (New York: Anchor Books, 1960) especially "Apocalyptic" p. 231-233 or Joyce Oramel Hertzler, The History of Utopian Thought (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1965) Ch. 2, "The Ethico-Religious Utopians and their Utopianism," especially 2. The Apocalyptists, p. 7-99.

33. Hertzler, The History of Utopian Thought, p. 52.

34. This type of paradigm is characteristic of the religio-cultural interpretation of modern art. The same model is employed by Northrop Frye, The Great Code: The Bible and Literature (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1982), quoted by Naomi Bliven, "The Good Book," The New Yorker, May 31, 1982, pp. 104-106: "Biblical narrative is a series of comedies--a connected row of U shapes as Frye visualizes it--in which a man or people falls away, suffers, repents, and uses again. That series of U's has familiar counterparts: Pilgrim's Progress and Little Women, and of course, picaresque novels."

35. Hertzler, The History of Utopian Thought, p. 53.

36. The Revelation of John, 12:9, 10. Also Revelations 8:14.

37. J. Christian Beker, Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982). Cited in Fortress Press Journal, 1982, p. 12.

38. William Martin, "Waiting for the End: The Growing Interest in Apocalyptic Prophecy" The Atlantic Monthly, June, 1982, pp. 34, 31-37.

39. Kenneth McRobbie, Chaos and Form: History and Literature; Ideas and Relationships, p. x.

40. Van Doren, The Idea of Progress, Ch. 7, "Denials of Progress: Types of Theories of Regress and of Cycles," p. 17-121. Van Doren discusses the idea that all theories of history are related to progress:

"We have not...been able to find any argued theory of regress before modern times--and we have doubts about even these....Almost all theories of regress include a note of warning. In spite of the force of the affirmation of regress, which may be very great, almost all regress authors hold out some hope for man. Instead of saying flatly that the pattern of history is regressive and that things will go from bad to worse, if they seem to be saying that things will go from bad worse if men do not change their ways....Of importance here is the relation of theories of contingent progress to theories of regress, and of theories both of contingent progress and regress to theories of cycles. A theory of contingent progress, by definition, concedes that the future pattern of history may not be progressive, whatever has been the pattern of the past....(p. 120). If all cyclical theories are disguised theories of regress, and if all theories of regress, in turn, are either disguised theories of contingent progress, or more simply, jeremiads against the practice of human life as it is now lived (that is, prophecies of doom if the author's warning is not heeded,) then a final question must be asked. Are there, in the West at least, any genuine denials of progress? (p. 121).

41. George Steiner, "On Difficulty," On Difficulty and Other Essays (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980) p. 187.

42. Henri Bergson, cited in Rudolf Arnheim, Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the creative Eye. (the new version) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974) P. 152.

43. See this dissertation, Ch. II, B. The Surreal and the Sacred; C. The Surreal and the Supernatural.

44. See this dissertation, Ch. III, The Historical Context; C. Decadence, Symbolism, and the Daemonic in Late Nineteenth Century France.

45. See Bessede, Robert. La Crise de la Conscience Catholique dans La Littérature et la Pensée Françaises à la fin du XIX Siècle. (Paris: Editions Klincksieck, 1975). Also Edward Tiryakian, Edward, ed. On the Margin of the Visible: Sociology, the Esoteric, and the Occult. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974). or Webb, James, The Occult Establishment (Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1976).

46. André Breton, Manifesto of Surrealism (1929), p. 128.

47. I must thank Dr. Katherine Young for her insights on the topic of "curse" and "blasphemy."

Chapter II

FOOTNOTES

1. As, for example, in Anna Balakian's Literary Origins of Surrealism: A New Mysticism in French Poetry (New York: New York University Press, 1947), which treats currents in French literature such as the occultism of the Symbolist movement to the mysticism of Surrealist poetry. These literary themes can only be compared to, but not identified with, the perceptions embodied in Surrealist art.

2. In order to grasp the central features of this elusive movement, I therefore employ the phenomenological method, although not exclusively and often in conjunction with other approaches.

3. Alexandrian, Sarane, Surrealist Art (New York: Praeger, 1970) quoting Andre Breton, p. 232.

4. The cult of experience as a commodity is discussed by Harvey Cox in Turning East: The Promise and the Peril of the New Orientalism (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977) especially in Chapter Nine, "Enlightenment by Ticketron: American Society and the Turn East".

5. See, for example, Roger G. Betsworth, The Radical Movement of the 1960's (New Jersey: Scarecrow Press and the American Theological Library Association, 1980).

6. B. J. Timmer, "Wyrd in Anglo-Saxon Prose and Poetry", Neophilologus XXVI (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1940), pp. 24-33, 213-228. Henceforth referred to as Timmer, "The Wyrd".

7. Timmer, "The Wyrd", pp. 33, 217, 218, 221.

8. Timmer, "The Wyrd", pp. 215, 219.

9. Timmer, "The Wyrd", pp. 24, 25.

10. For a discussion of the element of the Wyrd in Beowulf, see F. Anne Payne, "Three Aspects of Wyrd in Beowulf", Old English Studies in Honour of John C. Pope. Edited by Robert B. Burlin and Edward B. Irving, Jr. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974) pp. 15-36. See also W. Sedgefield, ed. Beowulf. (Manchester: University of Manchester, 1913).

11. A short definition of the wyrd which compares its etymological development with that of the word "fate" is found in The Wanderer, I. P. Dunning and A. J. Bliss, eds. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969) Section III, Vocabulary, pp. 71-74.

12. Timmer, "The Wyrd", pp. 217-218.

13. Timmer, "The Wyrd", pp. 215, 227.

14. Timmer, "The Wyrd", pp. 218, 223.
15. Roger Shattuck, "Love and Laughter: Surrealism Reappraised", introduction to Maurice Nadeau, The History of Surrealism (Middlesex: Penguin, Macmillan, 1965) pp. 9-36. Henceforth referred to as Shattuck, "Love and Laughter".
16. Shattuck, "Love and Laughter", pp. 17-18.
17. Shattuck, "Love and Laughter", p. 18.
18. Shattuck, "Love and Laughter", p. 19.
19. Objective chance, for Surrealism, is the principle of chance as it operates impartially through the universe. The Surrealists attempted to emulate the operation of chance by using random methods of artistic creation, based on the principle of chance. It is described by Andre Breton as: "The attention that on every occasion I have endeavoured to call to certain disturbing facts, certain overwhelming coincidences in works like Nadja, the Communicating Vessels and in various previous communications, has resulted in raising - with a wholly new urgency - the problem of 'objective chance', in other words, the sort of chance through which is manifested - still very mysteriously for man - a necessity which escapes him although he experiences it as a vital necessity." (1935). Jose Pierre, A Dictionary of Surrealism. (London: Methuen, 1974) p. 123.
20. Shattuck, "Love and Laughter", P. 21.
21. Andre Breton, (1924) Manifestoes of Surrealism. Translated by Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974) p. 13. Henceforth referred to as Breton, Manifestoes of Surrealism.
22. Cited in Shattuck, "Love and Laughter", p. 25.
23. Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", Collected Papers Vol. IV (London: Hogarth Press, 1956) pp. 369-407. Henceforth referred to as Freud, "The 'Uncanny'".
24. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", p. 370.
25. These dates are cited in several excellent chronologies of Surrealism, the most extensive of which is William Rubin's Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage (Greenwich, Connecticut: The Museum of Modern Art, 1967), pp. 197-216.
26. Maurice Nadeau, The History of Surrealism (Middlesex: Penguin, Macmillan, 1967) pp. 13, 26, 56-7, 61, 64, 78, 111, 178, 184, 222, 234, 241.
27. "The 'Uncanny'" was first published in German in Freud's journal Imago, 1919. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", p. 368.

28. Freud, "Dreams and Telepathy", 1921, Collected Papers, Vol. IV (London: Hogarth Press, 1956) pp. 158-162. A discussion of Freud within the context of the occult revival of the late nineteenth century is found in James Webb, The Occult Establishment (Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1976.) pp. 345-416. For a detailed discussion of this matter see this dissertation, Chapter IV, "Freud: Magus of Surrealism".

29. James Webb, The Occult Establishment (Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1976). "In Germany, the term Okkultismus was used up until the Second World War to describe both members of esoteric groups and parapsychologists (wissenschaftliche Okkultisten)....The phrase "psychical research", although its meaning is now certain, merely shows the necessary interpenetration of supposedly normal, abnormal, and paranormal aspects of the mind...." p. 364.

30. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", p. 370.

31. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", p. 371.

32. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", p. 371.

33. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", pp. 373-374.

34. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'". Freud cites Grimm's dictionary on "the uncanny": "Heimlich, as used of knowledge, mystic, allegorical: a heimlich meaning, mysticus, divinus, occultus, figuratus". p. 377.

35. Edward Tiryakian, ed., On the Margin of the Visible: Sociology, the Esoteric, and the Occult. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974) pp. 7, 10. Henceforth referred to as Tiryakian, On the Margin of the Visible.

36. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", cites definitions of "the uncanny" compiled by Dr. Theodore Reik, p. 371.

37. R. E. L. Masters, Eros and Evil: The Sexual Psychopathology of Witchcraft (Baltimore: Penguin, 1974) pp. 38, 191-267.

38. C. G. Jung, "Basic Concepts of Alchemy", Tiryakian, On the Margin of the Visible, p. 46.

39. Edward Tiryakian, "Preliminary Considerations", in Tiryakian, On the Margin of the Visible, p. 10.

40. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", p. 376-377.

41. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", p. 375.

42. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", p. 374.

43. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", citing Schelling, p. 376, 394

44. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", p. 377.
45. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", pp. 378-381; refutation of theory of the uncanny as "intellectual uncertainty", pp. 383-392.
46. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", citing Otto Rank, Der Doppelgänger, pp. 387-391.
47. Freud, "The Uncanny", p. 391.
48. Breton, Manifestoes of Surrealism, (1924) p. 14.
Andre Breton, Manifestoes of Surrealism. Trans. by Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane, (Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan Press, 1974). Henceforth referred to as Breton, Manifesto of Surrealism.
49. Alfred Jarry, cited in Shattuck, "Love and Laughter", p. 25.
50. Roger Shattuck, The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France, 1885 to World War I (London: Jonathan Cape, 1968), p. 237. Henceforth referred to as Shattuck, The Banquet Years.
51. Henri Bergson, cited by Rudolf Arnheim in Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974) p. 152.
52. Breton, Manifestoes of Surrealism, (1924) p. 47.
53. Timmer, "The Wyrd", p. 33.
54. William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity (New York: New Directions, 1965) p. 240. Henceforth referred to as Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity.
55. Breton, Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924. "Let us speak out: the marvellous is always beautiful, everything marvellous is beautiful, there is even only the marvellous that is beautiful." pp. 14, 16.
56. Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity. Empson defines full contradiction as: "An example of the seventh type of ambiguity, or at any rate of the last type of this series, as it is the most ambiguous that can be conceived, occurs when the two meanings of the word, the two values of the ambiguity, are the two opposite meanings defined by the context, so that the total effect is to show a fundamental division in the writer's mind...or one might admit that the criterion in this last type becomes psychological rather than logical, in that the crucial point of the definition has become the idea of a context, and the total attitude to that context of the individual...Thus the seventh type of ambiguity involves both the anthropological idea of opposite and the psychological idea of context, so that it must be approached warily." pp. 192-197.

57. Rudolf Otto, The Idea of the Holy, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.) p. 6. Henceforth referred to as Otto, The Holy. Otto refers to the numinous as something ethically neutral: "Holy means something quite other than good. Omen has given 'ominous' and there is no reason why from numen we should not similarly form a word 'numinous'." He defines the numinous as "mysterium tremendum et fascinans".

58. The occult writings of Freud are discussed in this chapter under "The Surreal and the 'Uncanny', a) Freud's analysis of the uncanny, and b) the occult and the uncanny. A detailed discussion of Freud and occultism is found in Chapter IV, Section C. Sigmund Freud, "Magus of Surrealism".

59. Wilhelm Wundt, Mythus und Religion (1906) and Elemente der Völkerpsychologie (1911), cited extensively by Freud in Totem and Taboo (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1950). Wundt is also included in the bibliography of Otto, The Holy.

60. Otto, foreword to The Holy, p. xix1.

61. John W. Harvey, trans., Otto, The Holy. Introduction p. xi.

62. Eric Sharpe discusses the excessive popularity of The Idea of the Holy in Comparative Religion: A History (London: Duckworth, 1975) p. 161-167. He writes, "As it is, The Idea of the Holy has by its very success obscured the personality of its author, and has thoroughly eclipsed his other works...it was not altogether a good sign that it had so unerringly caught the spirit of the age."

63. The occult revival and its twentieth century ramifications is discussed by James Webb, The Occult Establishment (Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1976).

64. Otto, The Holy, p. 12.

65. Otto, The Holy, p. 14.

66. J. D. Bettis, ed. The Phenomenology of Religion (New York: Harper and Row, 1969) p. 54.

67. Otto, The Holy, p. 14.

68. Gerardus Van der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestation: A Study in Phenomenology (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1938) p. 80.

69. Otto, The Holy, p. 64.

70. Breton, Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924, p. 14.

71. Otto, The Holy, p. 31.

72. Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo (New York: W. H. Norton and Company, Inc., 1950) p. 18. Henceforth referred to as Freud, Totem and Taboo.

73. Freud, Totem and Taboo, p. 19.
74. Mircea Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, (New York: Meridian, 1974) p. 15.
75. Breton, Manifesto of Surrealism 1930, (Second Manifesto) p. 123, 124.
76. Breton, Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924. p. 38.
77. Breton, Manifesto of Surrealism, 1930. (Second Manifesto) p. 124.
78. Andre Breton, Surrealism and Painting (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1965) p. 38.
79. Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and The Profane: the Nature of Religion. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1959) p. 25.
79. Marc Eigeldinger, "Du supranaturalisme au surrealisme", Le Surnaturalisme Francais, (Neuchatel: Les Editions de la Baconniere, 1979) p. 126. Henceforth referred to as Eigeldinger, "Du supranaturalisme au surrealisme".
80. Marc Eigeldinger, "Du supranaturalisme au surréalisme", p. 126.
81. Apollinaire, cited in Eigeldinger, "Du supranaturalisme au surréalisme", p. 126.
82. The contention surrounding the use of the word "surrealisme" is discussed by Bernard-Paul Robert, Le surréalisme desocculte, (Ottawa: Editions de L'Universite D'Ottawa, 1975) pp. 144-172.
83. Eigeldinger, "Du supranaturalisme au surréalisme". Eigeldinger relates a conversation between Pierre Albert-Birot and Apollinaire (cited by Emmanuel Aegerter and Pierre Labracherie, Guillaume Apollinaire (Paris: Editions Littéraires de Monaco et Rene Juillard, 1943, p. 226). "Pierre Albert-Birot estima que ce vocable manquait de precision. 'Le surnaturel, disait-il, c'est tout a faire avait repondu: 'Mettons surrealisme.'"
84. Maurice Nadeau, The History of Surrealism (London: Jonathan Cape, Penguin, 1968) p. 57, 58, 63. Henceforth referred to as Nadeau, History of Surrealism.
85. Nadeau, History of Surrealism, citing Andre Breton "La Confession dedaigneuse", Les Pas Perdu.
86. Nadeau, History of Surrealism, p. 63. Nadeau cites Jacques Vache, Lettres de guerre, 1919.
87. Breton, Manifesto of Surrealism, 1930 cited by Nadeau, History of Surrealism, p. 57.

88. Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchism of the Middle Ages (London: Granada Publishing, 1978). Cohn gives an extensive analysis of social unrest combined with the apocalyptic and heretical millenarian movement of the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries in Northern Europe.
89. Breton, Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924. (First Manifesto) p. 25.
90. Breton, citing Gerard de Nerval, dedication to Filles de Feu, in Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924, p. 25.
91. Breton, citing Nerval, Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924, p. 25.
92. Anna Baklalian, The Symbolist Movement: A Critical Appraisal (New York: Random House, 1967). Ch. II, "Swedenborgism and the Romanticists" pp. 12-28.
93. Nerval, "un decent aux enfers", Aurelia, cited by Anna Balakian, Literary Origins of Surrealism: A New Mysticism in French Poetry (New York: New York University Press, 1947) p. 43.
94. Breton, Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924, p. 26.
95. Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology (1966 edition S.V.) "supernatural".
96. Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology (1966 edition S.V.) "super", "supernatural".
97. Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language. S.V. "super".
98. Claude Pichois, "La literature francaise a la lumiere du surnaturalisme", Le Surnaturalisme Francaise (Neuchatel: A la Baconniere, 1979). On German Romanticism, pp. 11-27; citing Gérard de Nerval, p. 20. Henceforth referred to as Pichois, "La literature francaise".
100. Pichois, "La literature francaise", p. 21.
101. Pichois, "La literature francaise", p. 22.
102. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, p. 14 and Freud, Totem and Taboo, pp. 31, 32.
103. Oxford English Dictionary, 1933 ed. S.V. "supernaturalism" p. 187.
104. Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas, 1973. S.V. "Romanticism in Literature", by René Wellek, pp. 187-191, pp. 189, 190.

105. Oxford English Dictionary, 1933 ed., S.V. "supernaturalism" p. 187.
106. See Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology, 1966 ed., S.V. "super". See also Dictionnaire de la langue Francaise: Emile Littré (1956 ed.) S.V. "supernatural", "sur" and Dictionnaire alphabetique et analogique de la langue Francaise: Le Robert (1970 ed.) S.V. "sur", "surnaturel", "supranaturel", "supernaturel".
107. Dictionnaire alphabetique et analogique de la langue Francaise: Le Robert. (19790 ed.) S.V. "sur". Also Eigeldinger, "du supranaturalisme au surrealisme", pp. 109-131, p. 109.
108. Eigeldinger, "Du supranaturalisme au surrealisme", p. 109.
109. Dictionnaire de la langue Francaise: Emile Littré (1956 ed.) S.V. "reel", "naturel". Also Dictionnaire alphabetique et analogique de la langue Francaise: Le Robert (1970 ed.) S.V. "reel", "naturel", and Oxford English Dictionary (1933 3d.) S.V. "real", "natural".
110. Oxford English Dictionary, (1933 ed.) S.V. "natural", "real".
111. Oxford English Dictionary (1933 ed.) S.V. "real". Also Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology (1966) ed.) S.V. "re", "real".
112. Oxford English Dictionary, (1933 ed.). S.V. "real".
113. Dictionnaire alphabetique et analogique de la langue Francaise: Le Robert, (1970 ed.). S.V. "reel", "actuel", "naturel".
114. Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology (1966 ed.) S.V. "re", "real".
115. Nadeau, citing Andre Breton, History of Surrealism, p. 37.
116. Andre Breton, Surrealism and Painting (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1965) p. 46.

Chapter III

FOOTNOTES

1. This tradition is discussed with reference to the medieval period by Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages (London: Granada Publishing, 1978). Henceforth referred to as Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium.

2. Christine McCorkel, "Sense and Sensibility: An Epistemological Approach to the Philosophy of Art History", Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 1981. McCorkel connects modern art historiography with "the logical positivism of the nineteenth century, and with Victorian ideals of progress." pp. 37, 38, 41, 45, 48.

3. See M. H. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature (New York: W. A. Norton, 1971). Ch. I "The Design of Biblical History", pp. 32-37. Henceforth referred to as Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism. Also Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium, Ch. I, "The Tradition of Apocalyptic Prophecy", pp. 19-36.

4. The romantic roots of Surrealism are discussed extensively by Anna Balakian, Literary Origins of Surrealism (New York: New York University Press, 1947). Henceforth referred to as Balakian, Origins of Surrealism.

5. Sarane Alexandrian, Surrealist Art (New York: Praeger, 1970). Ch. I, "Precursors", pp. 9-27. Henceforth referred to as Alexandrian, Surrealist Art.

6. Alexandrian, Surrealist Art, p. 9.

7. Tristan Izara, cited by Balakian, Origins of Surrealism, p. 14.

8. Alexandrian, Surrealist Art, pp. 10, 11, 19.

9. Timothy Foote, The World of Bruegel, c. 1525-1569 (New York: Time-Life Books, 1968) pp. 49-53.

10. Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium, Ch. 8, "An Elite of Amoral Supermen", 1) The heresy of the Free Spirit, The Sociology of the Free Spirit, pp. 148-163; Ch. 9, "The Doctrine of Mystical Anarchism", pp. 176-186.

11. This topic has been extensively delineated by Wilhelm Franger, The Millennium of Hieronymus Bosch: Outlines of a New Interpretation, trans. Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1951).

12. Alexandrian, Surrealist Art; p. 14, 138.

13. Breton, Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924. p. 16.
14. Alexandrian, Surrealist Art, p. 22.
15. Evan Maclyn Maurer. "In Quest of the Myth: An Investigation of the Relationships between Surrealism and Primitivism". Doctoral Dissertation, U. of Pennsylvania, 1974.
16. Whitney Chadwick, Myth in Surrealist Painting, 1929-39. Ann Arbor: U.M.I. Research Press, 1980.
17. Breton, Manifestoes of Surrealism, "On Surrealism in its Living Works", 1953 p. 304. Breton suggests that "this intuition, finally unleashed by Surrealism, seeks not only to assimilate all known forms, but also boldly to create new forms -- that is to say, to be in a position to embrace all the structures of the world, manifested or not. It alone provides the thread that can put us back on the road of Gnosis as Knowledge of suprasensible reality, "invisibly visible in an eternal mystery".
- Marcel Jean ed., The Autobiography of Surrealism (New York: Viking Press, 1980), p. 58. In 1920 André Breton wrote, "With the assurance that nothing is incomprehensible and that everything, if necessary, may be used as a symbol, we are expending treasures of imagination. To imagine the sphinx as a woman-headed lion was poetic in former days. I believe that a true modern mythology is in the making. It lies with Giorgio de Chirico to give an imperishable shape to its memory."
18. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism p. 67.
19. Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas. 1973. "Romanticism in Literature", Rene Wellek, pp. 187-197.
20. Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, 1937 ed., Vol. XIII, S.V. "Romanticism", G. Anton Borgese.
21. Harold Osborne, ed. The Oxford Companion to Art (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1970). S.V. "Romanticism in the Visual Arts", pp. 1007-1011.
22. Dictionary of the History of Ideas, 1973 ed., Rene Wellek, "Romanticism in Literature", René Wellek, pp. 189-197.
23. The theme of neo-babbarism as it inheres in romantic thought is extensively discussed by Robert Harbison, Deliberate Regression (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980). Also Dictionary of the History of Ideas, "Romanticism", S.V. "Volkgeist", Frank L. Baumer, p. 203.
24. Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences. 1937 en. Vol. XIII, S.V. "Romanticism", p. 428. Also, Dictionary of the History of Ideas, S.V. "Romanticism and Post-Kantian Philosophy", p. 206.
25. Boehme, Jacob. The Signature of All Things and Other Writings (USA: Penguin Books, Inc., 1974).

26. James Webb, The Occult Establishment, (Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1976). Ch. I p. 10. "The Struggle for the Irrational". Webb suggests that "the rejection of Reason as a category of thought involved the rejection of the society whose weapon Reason was. The Establishment of late 19th-century Europe...was confronted with a selection of idealisms whose kingdoms were not of this world, whose categories of thought were apocalyptic, were based on visions of absolute values and drew sustenance from traditions of thinking that have, through historical accident, remained rejected throughout the course of European history. This underground of rejected knowledge, comprising heretical religious positions, defeated social schemes, abandoned sciences and neglected modes of speculation has as its core the varied collection of doctrines that can be combined in a bewildering number of ways and that is known as the occult. Henceforth referred to as Webb, The Occult Establishment."

27. Webb, The Occult Establishment, pp. 7-20.

28. Webb, The Occult Establishment, p. 9.

29. Mircea Eliade, Occultism, Witchcraft, and Cultural Fashions: Essays in Comparative Religion (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976) p. 52. Henceforth referred to as Eliade, Occultism.

30. Short, R. S. "The Politics of Surrealism, 1920-36", The Left Wing Intellectuals Between the Wars, 1919-1939. W. Laquer and George Mosse, eds. (New York: Harper, 1966). Also Herbert Gershman, The Surrealist Revolution in France (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1974).

31. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", p. 371.

32. Oxford English Dictionary (1933 ed.) S.V. 'gauche', "left".

33. Dictionary of the History of Ideas, (1973 ed.) S.V. "Romanticism" p. 199.

34. Dictionary of the History of Ideas, (1973 ed.) S.V. "Romanticism", p. 199.

35. William Blake, "Songs of Innocence and Experience".

36. Blake, cited by R. D. Stock, The Holy and the Daemonic from Sir Thomas Browne to William Blake (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982) p. 352. Henceforth referred to as Stock, The Holy and the Daemonic.

37. William Blake, Jerusalem. With commentary and notes by William R. Hughes (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1964).

38. The Surrealist Cult of Stones is described by Andre Breton in "The Crisis of the Object", Surrealism and Painting. (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1956).

39. William Wordsworth, "The Prelude", from Selected Poems and Prefaces, ed. with an introduction and notes by Jack Stillinger (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965). Henceforth referred to as Wordsworth, Selected Poems and Prefaces.

40. Dictionary of the History of Ideas, S.V. "The Sublime in External Nature", Majorie Hope Nicholson, p. 336.

41. Dictionary of the History of Ideas, "The Sublime in External Nature", citing Edmund Burke, p. 336.

42. Dictionary of the History of Ideas, "The Sublime in External Nature", citing John Dennis, 1693, p. 333-334.

43. Wordsworth, Selected Poems and Prefaces, "Introduction" by Jack Stillinger, citing Coleridge, p. xiii.

44. Wordsworth. "The Prelude", Book XII, 208-18. Selected Poems and Prefaces.

45. Emmanuel Swedenborg, Heaven and Hell, cited in Balakian, Literary Origins of Surrealism: A New Mysticism in French Poetry. (New York: New York University, 1947), p. 45.

46. Robert Ellwood, Alternative Altars, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979), p. 86. Henceforth referred to as Ellwood, Alternative Altars.

47. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p. 67.

48. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p. 68.

49. Blake, Jerusalem.

50. Wordsworth, "The Prelude", Book II, 233-260, Selected Poems and Prefaces.

51. Wordsworth, "The Prelude", Book V, 506-509, Selected Poems and Prefaces.

54. The King James version of the Bible. St. Matthew, 18:3, 4.

55. Goldwater, Robert. Primitivism in Modern Art, (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 19. Henceforth referred to as Goldwater, Primitivism in Modern Art.

56. The history of the discipline of religious studies is thoroughly delineated by Eric Sharpe, Comparative Religion: A History, (London: Duckworth, 1975). Henceforth referred to as Sharpe, Comparative Religion. The parallel development of ethnology and archaeology is also addressed by Goldwater, Primitivism in Modern Art, Chapter I and II, "The Accessibility of the Material", "The Preparation", pp. 3-63.

57. By "archetypal feminine," we mean the idea of the feminine or the feminine principle as it is expressed in various mythologies; and as a primordial image common to many religions. Our hesitancy to employ this term stems from the simplistic reductionism it has undergone since the popularization of Jungian ideas of "archetypal patterns".

58. Goldwater, Primitivism in Modern Art, pp. xxii, 11.

59. This concern for fundamental visual structures, seen as paradigms for the thought process itself, was expressed in the theosophical search for "thought-forms", (i.e., Annie Besant, The Life of Thought Forms; The Ancient Wisdom; Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1971) as well as in Kasimir Malevich's Suprematist aesthetic of abstract forms.

60. Worringer, Wilhelm. Abstraction and Empathy (New York: International Universities Press, 1953).

61. Sharpe. Comparative Religion, pp. 40-46

62. Sharpe. Comparative Religion, p. 36.

63. Sharpe. Comparative Religion, p. 36.

64. Sharpe. Comparative Religion, p. 39.

65. Muller, Max. "Three Lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy" (1989) cited in Sharpe, Comparative Religion, p. 40.

66. Sharpe, Comparative Religion, p. 46. Sharpe cites Muller's stylistic elegance as an element in the appeal of his work.

67. Eliade, Occultism, p. 53.

68. Houston, John Porter. The Demonic Imagination: Style and Theme in French Romantic Poetry, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1969), p. 127. Henceforth referred to as Houston, Demonic Imagination.

69. European Authors 1000-1900: A Biographical Dictionary, 1967. ed., S.V. "Nerval", p. 678.

70. Oxford Companion to French Literature. 1969 ed. S.V. "Nerval", p. 510.

71. European Authors 1000-1900: A Biographical Dictionary 1967 ed., S.V. "Nerval", p. 676. Also cited in Pichois, "La littérature française à la lumière du Surnaturalisme", pp. 19-23.

72. Le Sage, Laurent. The Rhumb-line of Symbolism: French Poets from Saint-Beuve to Valéry. (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 1978), p. 38. Henceforth referred to as Le Sage, Symbolism.

73. Le Sage, Symbolism, p. 35.

74. Le Sage, Symbolism, p. 35.
75. Le Sage, Symbolism, p. 36-37, Houston, The Demonic Imagination, p. 129.
76. Senior, John. The Way Down and Out: The Occult in Symbolist Literature. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968) p. 76. Henceforth referred to as Senior, The Way Down and Out.
77. Breton, Arcane Dix-Sept. Also cited in Jean Richer, Aspects esoteriques de l'oeuvre litteraire: Saint-Paul a Andre Breton. (Paris: Dervy Livres, 1980).
78. Le Sage, Symbolism, p. 37
79. The idea of "coincidentia oppositorum" stems from hermetic alchemy and is dealt with by several authors including Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion (New York: Meridian, 1974) p.419-425. Also Titus Burckhardt, Alchemy (Baltimore: Penguin, 1974), and Edward F. Edinger, Ego and Archetype: Individuation and the Religious Function of the Psyche (Baltimore: Maryland, 1973) pp. 272-281.
80. Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 88.
81. Eliade, Occultism, "The occult and the modern world", p. 53.
82. Shattuck, "Love and Laughter" pp. 19-30. Also Breton, L'Amour Fou (Paris: Gallimard, 1957).
83. Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 87.
84. Houston, The Demonic Imagination, p. 130.
85. Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 87.
86. Nerval, cited in Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 86.
87. Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 84.
88. Shattuck, "Love and Laughter", pp. 19-30.
89. Houston, The Demonic Imagination, p. 130.
90. Houston, The Demonic Imagination, p. 127.
91. Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 80. See also Houston, The Demonic Imagination, p. 127-131.
92. Houston, The Demonic Imagination, p. 130.
93. Stock, R. D. The Holy and the Daemonic from Sir Thomas Browne to William Blake (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982) p. 18. Henceforth referred to as Stock, The Holy and the Daemonic.

94. Stock, The Holy and the Daemonic, p. 19.
95. From an unpublished paper by the author of this dissertation, "Cybele: Myth, Cult, and Iconogenesis, 300 B.C. - 500 A.D." Research Paper, McGill University, May, 1981. Henceforth referred to as Rabinovitch, "Cybele: Myth, Cult and Iconogenesis".
96. Rabinovitch, "Cybele: Myth, Cult and Iconogenesis", p. 11.
97. Vermaseren, Maarten, Cybele and Attis (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977) p. 37.
98. See also Chapter II, this dissertation, 3. "An initial definition of the Surreal: the element of the "weird", a) the ambivalence of the wyrd.
99. Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 87.
100. Nerval, "Myrtho", cited in Le Sage, Symbolism, p. 44.
101. Le Sage, Symbolism, p. 44.
102. Le Sage, Symbolism, p. 40.
103. Le Sage, Symbolism, p. 45-46.
104. Rabinovitch, "Cybele: Myth, Cult, and Iconogenesis", pp. 12-13.
105. Nerval, "Delfica", cited in Le Sage, Symbolism, p. 45-46.
106. Rabinovitch, "Cybele: Myth, Cult, and Iconogenesis", p. 10. Also Houston, The Demonic Imagination, p. 128.
107. Houston, The Demonic Imagination, p. 128.
108. Le Sage, Symbolism, p. 66.
109. Le Sage, Symbolism, p. 66.
110. Roger Williams. The Horror of Life (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1980), p. 17. Henceforth referred to as Williams, The Horror of Life.
111. Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 89-97.
112. Baudelaire, Journaux Intime p. 1209, cited in Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 92.
113. Williams, The Horror of Life. Williams discusses the work of Baudelaire and other major French writers in the light of recent medical research in the history of disease.

114. Baudelaire Journaux Intime, p. 1203, cited in Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 93.
115. Baudelaire, "Spleen", Le Sage, Symbolism, p. 75.
116. Baudelaire, "L'Invitation au Voyage", Le Sage, Symbolism, p. 73.
117. Baudelaire, "Mon coeur mis a nus", Houston, The Demonic Imagination, p. 119.
118. Senior, The Way Down and Out, pp. 24, 92.
119. Baudelaire "Alchimie de la douleur," cited in Houston, The Demonic Imagination, p. 118.
120. Williams, The Horror of Life.
121. Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 24.
122. Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 95.
123. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p. 156.
124. Gershom Scholem, cited in Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p. 157.
125. Baudelaire, cited in Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 92.
126. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p. 158.
127. Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 92
128. Le Sage, Symbolism, p. 5.
129. Bessede, Robert. La Crise de la Conscience Catholique dans la Litterature et la Pensee Francaises a la fin du XIX Siecle. (Paris: Editions Klincksieck, 1975). The last chapter deals with the "religion of art" in late nineteenth century France.
130. Le Sage, Symbolism, p. 62.
131. Baudelaire, Journaux Intime, p. 1189, cited in Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 94.
132. Eigeldinger, "Du supranaturalisme au Surrealisme", p. 109; Senior, "The Way Down and out", p. 122.
133. Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 125.
134. Lucie-Smith, Edward. Symbolist Art, (Toronto: Oxford University, 1972), pp. 51-85. Henceforth referred to as Lucie-Smith, Symbolist Art.

135. Lucie-Smith, Symbolist Art, p. 67.
136. Lucie-Smith, Symbolist Art, p. 64.
137. Lucie-Smith, Symbolist Art, p. 64.
138. Webb, The Occult Establishment, pp. 167, 174.
139. Webb, The Occult Establishment, p. 168.
140. Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 118.
141. Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 118-123.
142. Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 121.
143. Joanny Bricaud, J. K. Huysmans et le Satanisme (Paris: 1913) p. 49, cited in Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 120.
144. Eliade, Occultism, "The Occult and the Modern World", p. 51.
145. J. K. Huysmans, La-bas (Down There) (Britain: Sphere Books, 1974) p. 227. Henceforth referred to as Huysmans, La-bas.
146. Huysmans, La-bas, p. 216.
147. The concept of the femme fatale has been explored extensively by Lucie-Smith, Symbolist Art, and by Phillipe Jullian. Dreamers of Decadence: Symbolist Painters of the 1890's. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974). Henceforth referred to as Jullian, Dreamers of Decadence.
148. Linda Nochlin, and Thomas B. Hess, eds. Woman as Sex Object (New York: 1972).
149. Lucie-Smith, Symbolist Art, pp. 42-47. Also, Jullian, Dreamers of Decadence.
150. Lucie-Smith, Symbolist Art, p. 66-69.
151. Revelations, 17:1-18.
152. Revelations, 20:2

Chapter IV

FOOTNOTES

1. Roger Shattuck, The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France, 1885 to World War I (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969) p. 46. Henceforth referred to as Shattuck, The Banquet Years.

2. Shattuck, The Banquet Years, pp. 79-82. Also, Goldwater, Primitivism In Modern Art, pp. 51-62.

3. Breton, Surrealism in Painting, p. 368.

4. Breton, Surrealism in Painting, p. 369.

5. Henri Rousseau cited in Shattuck, The Banquet Years, p. 111.

6. Shattuck, The Banquet Years, p. 89.

7. Roger Shattuck, The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France, 1885 to World War I. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969).

8. Shattuck, The Banquet Years, p. 91.

9. Shattuck, The Banquet Years, p. 91.

10. Shattuck, The Banquet Years, p. 92.

11. Shattuck, The Banquet Years, p. 91-93.

12. Phillippe, Jullian. The Symbolists (London: Phaidon Press, 1983) pp. 32-33.

13. Shattuck, The Banquet Years, p. 53.

14. Shattuck, The Banquet Years, pp. 66-71.

15. Discussed extensively in an unpublished paper by the author of this dissertation, Celia Rabinovitch, "Nature morte devient corps vivant: Ambivalence in Picasso's Surrealist Paintings, 1928-1938."

16. Rabinovitch, "Nature morte devient corps vivant: Ambivalence in Picasso's Surrealist Paintings, 1928-1938."

17. William S. Rubin, Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage (Connecticut: Museum of Modern Art, 1967) p. 197. Henceforth referred to as Rubin, Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage.

18. Patrick Waldberg, Surrealism (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, n.d.), pp. 24-25.

19. The difference between anatomical exaggeration and an emphasis on muscle tension has been explored extensively by Viktor Lowenfeld in his research on the art of the blind. Lowenfeld, The Nature of Creative Activity (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1939).

20. Alexandrian, Surrealist Art, p. 22.

21. Alexandrian, Surrealist Art, pp. 22-24.

22. Breton, L'Amour Fou (Paris Gallimard, 1957).

23. Willy Verkauf. Dada: Monograph of a Movement, (London: St. Martins Press, 1975). Henceforth referred to as Verkauf, Dada. p. 80.

24. William Fleming, Art, Music and Ideas, (New: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975) p. 334.

25. Charles Van Doren, The Idea of Progress, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967) Chapter 7, "Denials of Progress: Theories of Regress and Cycles" and Chapter 9, "Cosmogenic Regress" pp. 326; 113-197.

26. Jean Arp, "Dadaland," cited in Hans Richter, Dada: Art and Anti-Art (London: Thames and Hudson, 1964) p. 25. Henceforth referred to as Richter, Dada: Art and Anti-Art.

27. Verkauf, Dada, "Dada, Cause and Effect". p. 13.

28. Verkauf, Dada, p. 13.

29. Richard Hulsenbeck, Dada Almanach, (New York: Something Else Press, 1966), pp. 132-133. Henceforth referred to as Hulsenbeck, Dada Almanach.

30. Hulsenbeck, Dada Almanach, pp. 3-4.

31. Verkauf, Dada, p. 11.

32. Rubin, Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage, p. 53.

33. Conflicting dates are given by several authors for Schwitters's Merzbau, including Rubin, Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage and Alexandrian, Surrealist Art.

34. Kurt Schwitters, cited in Verkauf, Dada, p. 92.

35. "Buddhist non-discrimination": I use this term in the very general sense of non-attachment to ideas of right and wrong, good or bad. Buddhism avoids such 'pre-judging' as it can obscure a direct perception of reality. In Ch'an Buddhism, "no-form" is the expression of an experience which radically transforms our experience. The theme of

"no-form" in Ch'an is an anti-systematic interpretation of Buddhist non-discrimination. "No-thought" is the transformation of consciousness which ensues when one "casts aside the mind that clings". Ideas of both right and wrong, valuing in any context, must first cease for the Buddhist to become aware of the infinite dimension in all existence: "The mind has nothing to do with thinking because its fundamental source is empty. To discard false views, this is the one great causal event". [Philip Yampolsky, trans., The Platform Sutra, (New York: Columbia University Press, p. 1967) pp's. 150, 166.]

In the Duchampian sense, the 'non-discrimination' of taste that effaces the difference of the 'tasteful' as opposed to 'the banal' was a way of circumventing conventional aesthetic ideals. This rejection of taste applies to the realm of aesthetic appreciation, rather than the concept of non-discrimination in Buddhist philosophy.

36. Alexandrian, Surrealist Art, p. 34.
37. Alexandrian, Surrealist Art, p. 34.
38. Marcel Jean, The History of Surrealist Painting, (New York: Grove, 1960) p. 36.
39. Alexandrian, Surrealist Art, p. 27
40. Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A Study of The Play Element in Culture, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955). p. 109. Henceforth referred to as Huizinga, Homo Ludens.
41. Roger Cardinal, Surrealism: Permanent Revelation (New York: 1971) p. 16.
42. Hans Richter, Dada: Art and Anti-Art.
43. Nadeau, The History of Surrealism, p. 85.
44. Tristan Tzara, cited in Nadeau, The History of Surrealism, (New York: MacMillan 1966) p. 66.
45. Henry Treece, Dylan Thomas: Dog Among the Fairies (London: Benn Ltd., 1957) Ch. 1, "Relations to Surrealism", p. 23.
46. Michel Carrouges, Andre Breton and the Basic Concepts of Surrealism (Alabama: University of Alabama, 1974) p. 2.
47. Huizinga, Homo Ludens, p. 110.
48. The conventional wisdom that Freud provided the theoretical basis for Surrealism is questioned in this dissertation. See Section C, Freud, "Magus of Surrealism".
49. Nadeau, History of Surrealism. p. 86.

50. De Chirico's poetic theory of the "imagination as revelation" is extensively explored in this chapter, Section D, "Giorgio de Chirico, Enigma of Surrealism". An initial comparison of de Chirico's letters with the first and second Manifestoes of Surrealism (1924, 1930), showed startling resemblances between these documents, and therefore was explored in my M. A. Thesis, 1978, McGill University: Chapter III "The History of Surrealism". I was later able to obtain the letters of de Chirico in their original French from the Museum of Modern Art Library for the research of this dissertation. The resemblances between Surrealist thought and the early writings of de Chirico first became apparent to me in a graduate seminar on theories of religion, 1976, Concordia University, Montreal, "The Transformative Process in the Painter Giorgio de Chirico", which dealt with the troubled relationship between de Chirico and the Surrealists, and its lasting effect on his artistic vision.

51. Breton, Manifestoes of Surrealism, 1924, p. 26.

52. See Chapter II, "The Surreal and the Supernatural: An Etymological Analysis".

53. Breton, Manifestoes of Surrealism, 1924, pp. 22-23.

54. On Jacques Vache, See Chapter I, 5. The Surreal and 'the uncanny' a) Freud's analysis of the uncanny.

Also Chapter I, Section C. The Surreal and the Supernatural, 1. The Element of the Supernatural.

55. Ellwood, Alternative Altars, "Mesmer" pp. 91-92, "Blavatsky" pp. 107-111.

56. I have explored the occult affiliations of semiotics in a separate article, titled "Occultism and the Idea of Sign", 1981; (McGill U.) and also have discussed it in a paper dealing with the misapplications of semiotics in contemporary architecture, titled, "Modern Architecture's Trying Child", 1981 (McGill U.) where I delineated the scientific origins of semiology in the following notation:

The study of visual semiotics has been thoroughly developed by the Prague School (c. 1920-1940). However, the terminology for the study of signs first originated in the "Cours de Linguistique Generale" of the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure (posthumous publication, 1915). His "semiologie" referred explicitly to language, and only later was extended by other theorists to include, by analogy, other cultural constructs. The Prague School of Semiotics adapted this approach, (c. 1920) synthesizing it with others and occasionally applying it to visual art (see Jan Mukarovsky, "The Essence of the Visual Arts" a lecture in 1944, in Semiotics of Art: Prague School Contributions, ed. Ladislav Matejka and Irwin R. Titunik, (Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1976 p. 229-245). The Prague School recognized the problems of art interpretation (i.e., visual signs) with a verbal model taken from presence of the art object -- its plasticity -- and the concomittant psychophysiological effect on the viewer.

The merging of Prague School semiotics with French structural linguistics (c. 1960) has produced the abstract approach from which the idea of "sign" now draws its meaning. The confusion of meaning in the term "sign" is acknowledged even by those working in the field: "But there is still some confusion about the basic terms of this science, such as 'sign', 'signal', 'symbol', 'language', and almost every writer has a vocabulary of his own." Mieczyslaw Wallis, Arts and Signs (Bloomington: Indiana University Publications, 1975) p. vii.

It is illuminating to note that the School of Russian Formalism (c. 1915), from which the Prague School of Semiotics drew its idea of "sign", had its roots in Symbolism. The Symbolist theory of art, then, is embedded in the very origins of the discipline of semiotics. Symbolist art theory posited the intrinsic meaning of form itself. The Russian painter Malevich also was deeply influenced by Symbolist ideas of the intrinsic meaning of forms and colours, posited by Theosophy: these ideas, in turn, intermingled with contemporaneous Victorian conceptions of Hindu Vedantic philosophy and with other "scientistic" and occult conceptions.

On the basis of my research into occultism and Symbolism, as well as previous research into the implications of contemporary semiotics for modern architecture detailed in the article, "Modern Architecture's Trying Child" 1981, I suggest that the contemporary discipline of semiotics contains implicit as well as vestigial elements of the original mystical conception of "sign", found in its historical context of Russian Formalism, Symbolism, Theosophy, and occultism. These vestigial elements clearly are visible in the claims to universality of structural linguistics, and in its desire to expose "the logical structures of the mind". This last aim suggests occult theories of mind, whereby consciousness is made conscious of itself.

The tendency of contemporary semiotics to be both self-referential -- in that it offers a closed system of terminology, a code without which it is impossible to have a dialogue -- and self-validating, as its analysis depends on the initial acceptance of the theory and its definition of "sign" -- points to its derivation from the occult. And as in the occult teachings of Theosophy, the writings of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky, or in Annie Besant's Theosophy, contemporary semiotics offers a "scientism" of human behaviour and communication: it is this very "scientistic" aspect of semiotics that provides the initial clue to its occult affiliations, yet of which the discipline itself ironically shows no "diachronic" awareness.

57. Edward Tiryakian, ed. On the Margin of the Visible: Sociology, the Esoteric, and the Occult (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974) pp. 7, 10. The relationship of the occult to society at large is explored by Tiryakian in terms of the visible and the invisible, the familiar and the occult, in the introduction to his book, On the Margin of the Visible, Chapter I "Preliminary Considerations". Henceforth referred to as Tiryakian, On the Margin of the Visible.

58. On Freud's break with Jung, see Webb, The Occult Establishment, Chapter 6, "The Hermetic Academy", pp. 363-364.

59. Aldous Huxley, Point-Counter Point, (Great Britain: Doubleday, 1928). Huxley's fascination with the Freudian view of sexuality was explored in a research paper by the author of this dissertation, titled "Sexuality and Mysticism in Eyeless in Gaza and Island," 1973, for Prof. Lou Lehman, University of Manitoba.

60. Ellwood, Alternative Altars, "Mesmerism", pp. 91-92.

61. Webb, The Occult Establishment, p. 364.

62. Cited in Webb, The Occult Establishment, p. 363.

63. Ellwood, Alternative Altars, "Mesmerism" pp. 91-92.

64. Webb, The Occult Establishment, pp. 352-353.

65. Webb, The Occult Establishment, p. 353. See also, Ellwood, Alternative Altars, "Shakers and Spiritualists" pp. 65-103.

66. Webb, The Occult Establishment, p. 356.

67. Bruno Bettelheim, "Freud and the Soul", The New Yorker, March 1, 1982, pp. 51-93. Henceforth referred to as Bettelheim, "Freud and the Soul".

68. Bettelheim, "Freud and the Soul", p. 51.

69. Bettelheim, "Freud and the Soul", p. 84.

70. Bettelheim, "Freud and the Soul", p. 86.

71. John Leo, "Away with 'Ego' and 'Id': An Analyst contends that English translators distort Freud." Time Magazine, March 22, 1982, p. 76.

72. Bettelheim, "Freud and the Soul", pp. 72-73.

73. Bettelheim, "Freud and the Soul", p. 71.

74. John Berger, The Success and Failure of Picasso, (New York: Pantheon, 1980).

75. Webb, The Occult Establishment, p. 350.

76. Webb, The Occult Establishment, p. 358.

77. Webb, The Occult Establishment, p. 365. See also Freud, "Dreams and Telepathy", Collected Papers, Vol. IV (London: Hogarth Press, 1956), pp. 408-435, and "The Occult Significance of Dreams", Collected Papers, vol. V (London: Hogarth Press, 1956), pp. 158-162.

78. Breton, Surrealism and Painting, p. 38.

79. Alexandrian, Surrealist Art, p. 160

80. Nadeau, History of Surrealism, p. 86.

81. Breton, Surrealism and Painting, pp. 35, 36.

82. Breton, Surrealism and painting, p. 16.

83. Breton, Surrealism and Painting, p. 16.

84. William Rubin, "De Chirico and Modernism", De Chirico (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1982) p. 55-80. Rubin discusses the Cubist affinities and influences of de Chirico, citing the "multiplicity of vanishing points" in the artist's early work as evidence of his exposure to Cubist fluctuant perspective, and hence his relation to Modernism.

85. Breton, Surrealism and Painting, (1941) p. 63.

86. Breton, Surrealism and Painting, (1941) p. 63.

87. James Thrall Soby, The Early Chirico (New York: Arno Press, 1969). Henceforth referred to as Soby, The Early Chirico.

88. De Chirico, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1982). In particular the article by Laura Rosenstock, "De Chirico's Influence on the Surrealists", (pp. 111-130) falls prey to the conventional wisdom that Freud was the central theoretical influence on Surrealist art. In the frontal statement of this article, Rosenstock declares:

Surrealism, as evolved by Breton, was largely inspired by Freud's research into free association and dream imagery. Breton, who had visited Freud in Vienna in 1921, recognized the impact of the **scientific application of psychoanalysis and free association to the recollection of dreams and the revelation of their meanings.** He adapted Freud's discoveries to his own poetic investigation, using automatic writing as a method of freeing the unconscious levels of the mind and as a means of self-revelation. Breton furthermore was convinced that dream and reality, the inner and outer worlds, two seemingly contradictory entities, would eventually be unified in an absolute reality that he called a "surreality". (p. 111).

After giving Breton's initial definition of Surrealism in the first Manifesto of 1924, Rosenstock states:

It is the second part of this definition that encompasses de Chirico and the illusionist Surrealists who did not employ automatism as a tool to discover the functioning of the mind. Nevertheless, they believed that certain images, remembered from a dream or revelation, indicated the existence of a higher reality". (p. 111).

Rosenstock attempts to modify the initial statement with some qualifying remarks:

De Chirico, both in his thinking and his art, **anticipated** much of Surrealist theory. He wrote repeatedly of the dream and of the metaphysical reality it implied. (p. 111)

In investigating the character of de Chirico's impact upon Surrealism, one must be wary of such hyperbolic attention. When we discuss below the influence de Chirico had upon the major illusionist Surrealists we shall see that in many instances de Chirico was just one of many precursors, whose work formed the root of Surrealist art. Yet his powerful conception, so dramatically expressed in his paintings, served as a spiritual point of departure for the Surrealists and provided a direct, significant, and substantial contribution to Surrealist art. (p. 113)

In Rosenstock's analysis of de Chirico, we may discern four distinct presuppositions:

- 1) That Surrealism was largely inspired by Freud.
- 2) That Freud's research into dreams and free association was "scientific" -- a premise we have already questioned in this chapter, Section C. Freud, "Magus of Surrealism". This section places Freud's research within the historical context of the occult revival in late nineteenth century Vienna.
- 3) That de Chirico "anticipates" or prefigures Surrealist theory, but does not directly influence it.
- 4) That de Chirico's main influence was on the illusionistic style of Surrealist painting.

We have already questioned the first two suppositions. The latter two premises -- that de Chirico anticipates but does not directly influence Breton's theories, and therefore his primary influence is on the precisionist style of Surrealist painting -- is brought into question later in this chapter, Section 3. De Chirico and the Surrealists: a) Affiliation; b) Discovery, and c) Theoretical Influence: Text Comparison.

Rosenstock's assessment of de Chirico's relationship to Surrealist merely exemplifies certain received ideas perpetuated by other writers on Surrealism.

De Chirico fares somewhat better in the article by Joan M. Lukach, "De Chirico an Italian Art Theory", also in the same catalogue of 1982. Lukach relates de Chirico's writings to both Futurism and Italian Metaphysical painting, but this article does not deal with the artist's Surrealist affiliations. The most thorough and reflective study of the artist's writings is, however, contributed by Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco, "De Chirico in Paris, 1911-1915", which treats de Chirico's relationship with Apollinaire and his circle: Picabia, Cocteau, Reverdy, and Gide. He also deals with de Chirico's adaptations of Hermetic philosophy. (pp. 11-34).

89. This evaluation should be apparent upon reading this chapter, Section c) Theoretical Influence: Text Comparison (to follow).

90. Soby, The Early Chirico, p. 93.

91. See this dissertation, Chapter II, C. "The Surreal and The Supernatural", 1. The Element of the Supernatural; 2. Etymological Analysis.

92. See this chapter, 3. De Chirico and the Surrealists.

93. Appollinaire, cited in Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco, "De Chirico in Paris, 1911-1915", De Chirico (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1982) p. 19. Henceforth referred to as "De Chirico in Paris, 1911-1915".

94. Breton, Surrealism and Painting, p. 13.

95. "De Chirico in Paris, 1911-1915", pp. 20-28.

96. Breton, Surrealism and Painting, pp. 16-17.

97. Breton, Surrealism and Painting, p. 17.

98. Waldberg, Surrealism, pp. 25, 34, 35. These more occult methods of arousing the imagination are mentioned by numerous authors, but the enumeration of Surrealist methods is too large a subject to catalogue here.

99. De Chirico, cited in Breton, Surrealism and Painting, pp. 16-17; also cited in James Thrall Soby, Giorgio de Chirico (New York: Museum of Modern Art, Arno Press, 1966) From a manuscript by de Chirico, "On Music", p. 245.

100. This statement is attributed to Grodon Onslow-Ford by Soby, Giorgio de Chirico, pp. 34, 67.

101. Alexandrian, Surrealist Art, p. 58-59.

102. Giorgio de Chirico, The Memories of Giorgio de Chirico trans. Margaret Crosland. (Florida: University of Miami Press, 1962) p. 67.

103. In the Elvehjem Museum, Madison, Wisconsin, there is a large de Chirico work depicting the "disquieting muses", attributed to the artist's early period of 1916-18. On close inspection this work resembles none of the artist's early works in touch, scale, or paint application. It is considerably larger than the works of the early period, and the paint application is of a buttery consistency that belies de Chirico's greater mastery of the oil medium, achieved in Rome after 1922. It has been some four years since I have actually viewed this work; however, after reviewing the inconsistent technique of de Chirico's early works shown in the recent Museum of Modern Art retrospective, I believe my initial assessment of this work to be fundamentally correct. The work, in all likelihood, probably was misdated by the artist himself.

104. De Chirico, 1911-15 cited in Soby, Giorgio de Chirico (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1955) p. 246.

105. Breton, Manifesto of Surrealism, 1930, p. 178.

106. Breton, Manifesto of Surrealism, 1930, p. 173.

107. I have taken the English version of de Chirico's letters from the translations in James Thrall Soby's Giorgio de Chirico, while the original French versions of his writings are taken from the original manuscripts in the Museum of Modern Art Library, de Chirico catalogue. I have checked the handwritten copies of de Chirico's letters, which were written in French, against the typescript in the M.O.M.A. Library to ascertain accurate transcription. The English version of the Manifestoes of Surrealism is taken from the translation by Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane, Manifestoes of Surrealism (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1974) as are all other English quotations of the Manifestoes found in this dissertation. The quotations from the original French version of the Manifestoes are derived from the 1979 Gallimard edition: André Breton, Manifestes du Surréalisme, (France: Gallimard, 1979).

Chapter V

FOOTNOTES

1. I refer to the gestalt theory as defined by Kurt Koffka, and later employed by Rudolf Arnheim with regard to the visual arts in Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye (the new version) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

2. I use the term "aesthetic" here in the more common connotation of "having to do with the beautiful."

3. In effect, the stimulus-response theory of B. F. Skinner's behavioral psychology.

4. See Chapter II, A, 5. The Surreal and the "Uncanny."

5. See Chapter II, B. The Surreal and the Sacred.

6. There have been several names cited for this painting including "Ceci n'est pas une pipe" and The Perfidy of Images.

7. Rubin, Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage, p. 94.

8. For an explanation of the term "sign" in semiotic theory, see footnote 56, Chapter IV.

9. This phrase, "the crisis of the object," was originated by André Breton in an article of the same title of 1936, included in Breton, Surrealism and Painting, pp. 275-280.

10. Marcel Duchamp, cited by Marcel Jean, The History of Surrealist Painting, (New York: Grove, 1960) p. 35. Henceforth referred to as Jean, The History of Surrealist Painting.

11. Jean, The History of Surrealist Painting, p. 35.

12. Jean Bazaine, Notes Sur la Peinture D'aujourd'hui, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1953) p. 124.

13. The term "thing-in-itself" is a rough translation of the Buddhist term tathata, which can also be understood as "thusness" or "suchness". In this sense it also may represent "being-in-itself". D. T. Suzuki defines tathata:

Tathata, suchness, is simply the world as beyond valuation, whether positive or negative. At this level, the world is also accidental in the sense of such terms as svayambhu (self-existent, becoming so of itself) or the Chinese tzu-jan (spontaneous, of itself so, nature, natural)....

Sunyata is the exhaustion of thought in its attempt to grasp existence. But when thought relaxes its hold,

the world is not conceived but experienced as tatnata. That is to say, all that happens seems to be self-explanatory, self-sufficient, and complete just by happening.

D. T. Suzuki, Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism, (New York: Schocken Books, 1963) p. xix.

14. Jean, The History of Surrealist Painting, p. 35. Also pointed out by Rubin, Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage, p. 19.

15. Marcel Duchamp, cited in Alexandrian, Surrealist Art, p. 34.

16. Marcel Duchamp, cited in Jean, History of Surrealist Painting, p. 36.

17. The principle of dissociation is explored by Rubin, Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage, p. 19.

18. Breton, "The Crisis of the Object," Surrealism and Painting, p. 277.

19. Breton, Surrealism and Painting, p. 55.

20. Breton, Surrealism and Painting, p. 46.

21. Breton, Surrealism and Painting, p. 46.

22. Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, p. 23.

23. Suzanne Langer, Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art (New York: Mentor Books, 1958) p. 111. Henceforth referred to as Langer, Philosophy in a New Key.

24. Langer, Philosophy in a New Key, p. 100.

25. J. D. Bettis, ed. The Phenomenology of Religion, (New York: Harper and Row, 1969) p. 54.

26. Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, p. 27.

27. Gerardus van der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestation, p. 71.

28. Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth (New York: Dover, 1945) p. 56. Henceforth referred to as Cassirer, Language and Myth.

29. Breton, "Crisis of the Object," Surrealism and Painting, p. 280.

30. This phrase is attributed to Tristan Tzara by Nadeau, History of Surrealism, p. 65-6.

31. Breton, "Crisis of the Object," p. 279.

32. Lautréamont, cited by Shattuck, "Love and Laughter", p. 25.
33. Breton, "The Crisis of the Object," p. 275.
34. "Metaphorical identification": This definition is given in my research paper of 1976, "Symbolic Transformation in Art and Religion."--(Theory and Methodology for the Study of Art and Religion, independent research for Professor K. Klostermaier, Department of Religion, University of Manitoba, Canada.)
35. Cassi rer, Language and Myth, p. 91.
36. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, p. 18.
37. Cassi rer, Language and Myth, p. 87.
38. James G. Frazer, "Sympathetic Magic," Reader in Comparative Religion, William Lessa and Evon Vogt, ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1958) p. 416-417; 415-425.
39. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, p. 18.
40. Stock, The Holy and the Daemonic, p. 19.
41. Stock, The Holy and the Daemonic, p. 17.
42. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, p. 18.
43. See Chapter II, A, 3, An Initial Definition of the Surreal: the element of the "weird."
44. Franz Steiner, Taboo, (London: Cohen and West, 1956) p. 146.
45. Wilfredo Lam, 1902. For a brief biography of this Cuban Surrealist, see José Pierre, Dictionary of Surrealism, (London: Methuen, 1974) pp. 96-100. Henceforth referred to as Pierre, Dictionary of Surrealism.
46. Alexandrian, Surrealist Art, p. 190.
47. Alexandrian, Surrealist Art, p. 190.
48. Alexandrian, Surrealist Art, p. 190
49. Alexandrian, Surrealist Art, p. 22-26. See also Sidra Stitch, Joan Miro and the Development of a Sign Language, (St. Louis: Washington University, 1980). Henceforth referred to as Stitch, Joan Miro: The Development of a Sign Language. Numerous sources detail the alchemical affiliations of Surrealism, including Nadeau, History of Surrealism, for example.
50. Breton, catalogue to an exhibition of the work of Wilfredo Lam at the Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York City, 1948.

51. Pierre, Dictionary of Surrealism, pp. 96-100.

52. The Surrealist "cult of love" is more extensively delineated by works on Surrealist literature, although it is mentioned in both literary and artistic criticism. See Whitney Chadwick, "Eros or Thanatos: The Surrealist Cult of Love Reexamined," *Art Forum* 14, November, 1975, pp. 45-56.

53. Stitch, Joan Miro: The Development of a Sign Language, p. 30

54. Stitch, Joan Miro: The Development of a Sign Language.

55. This ambiguous term, "sign," cannot be understood as the semiotic model, "signifier-signified," but in the work of Miro instead must be recognized as the mystical sign or gesture that has multiple connotations.

56. "Hypnogogic imagery": This phenomenon has been explored and isolated by those in sleep and dream research, autogenic training, and biofeedback. Robert S. De Ropp, The Master Game, (New York: Delta, 1968) p. 52. See also W. Luthe and J. H. Shulz, Autogenic Training: A Psychophysiological Approach in Psychotherapy (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1959).

57. I suggest this through my own use of the pastel medium.

58. Stitch, Joan Miro: The Development of a Sign Language, especially pp. 35-40.

59. See Chapter III, Sections B, Romanticism, Primitivism, Exoticism and the Pursuit of Origins, and C, a, Charles Baudelaire: The Satanic and the Supernatural.

60. I have extensively explored the ambiguities of Picasso's "bone and stone" series in "'Nature Morte devient Corps Vivant': Ambivalence in Picasso's Surrealist Paintings, 1928-38." A research paper completed for Prof. W. O. Judkins, McGill University, 1981.

61. Celia Rabinovitch, "'Nature Morte devient Corps Vivant': Ambivalence in Picasso's Surrealist Paintings," 1928-38.

62. Otto, The Idea of the Holy, p. 62.

63. See Chapter III, The Historical Context: Archaic, Occult and Daemonic Elements in Modern Art.

64. See Chapter III, The Historical Context: Archaic, Occult and Daemonic Elements in Modern Art.

65. Many of the ideas of the Corpus Hermeticum are detailed in Senior, The Way Down and Out, pp. 23-29. Also in Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism and in Titus Burckhardt, Alchemy: Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul, (Baltimore: Penguin, 1974).

66. Otto, The Idea of the Holy, Ch. X, "The Numinous in the Old Testament," pp. 72-82.

67. See this dissertation, Chapter III, C., 2), Gérard de Nerval: The Goddess, The Muse, and the Imagination.

68. See this dissertation, Chapter III, C., 2), Gérard de Nerval: The Goddess, The Muse, and the Imagination.

69. Timmer, "The Wyrđ", p. 25.

70. See Chapter III, The Historical Context, c. Decadence, Symbolism and the Daemonic in Late 19th Century France.

71. Otto, The Idea of the Holy, p. 31.

72. James Hall, Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art, (New York: Harper & Row, 1979) p. 228.

73. See Chapter III, A, 1. c) The Natural Sublime.

74. Gilbert Highet, "The Mad World of Hieronymus Bosch," Horizon, Spring 1970, Vol. XII, No. 2. pp. 66-80.

75. "Decalcomania:" Pierre, A Dictionary of Surrealism, p. 50.

76. Ernst's obsession with birds and his ornithological altar-ego, Loplop, are mentioned in the following studies: Rubin, Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage, p. 88. See also Pamela Pritzker, Ernst (New York: Leon Amiel, 1975) pp. 20-26.

77. Rubin, Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage, p. 88

78. Pritzker, Ernst, pp. 20-26.

79. A. Leo Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965) pp. 119-206.

80. Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia, pp. 119-206.

81. Stock, The Holy and the Daemonic, p. 18

82. For a discussion of the Surrealist preoccupation with dolls and mannequin parts, see Chapter II A, The Nature of the Surreal, a). The Ambivalence of the Wyrđ.

83. Xaviere Gauthiere, Surréalisme et Sexualité, (Paris, 1971).

84. Whitney Chadwick, "Eros or Thanatos - The Surrealist Cult of Love Reexamined," Art Forum, 14 (Nov., 1975) pp. 45-56. Henceforth referred to as Chadwick, "The Surrealist Cult of Love."

85. Chadwick, "The Surrealist Cult of Love," pp. 53-56. See also J. J. Bachofen, Myth, Religion, and Mother Right, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).

86. Chadwick, "The Surrealist Cult of Love," p. 51

87. Chadwick, "The Surrealist Cult of Love," p. 55.

88. Chadwick, "The Surrealist Cult of Love," p. 53.

89. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, p. 1-38.

90. Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millenium, p. 157-162.

91. Frances Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

92. Samuel Noah Kramer ed., Mythologies of the Ancient World, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961) pp. 30, 150, 155, 200, 201, 210, 254, 298, 299, 386, 387, 424. See also Louise W. Lippincott, The Unnatural History of Dragons, (Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1981). Henceforth referred to as Lippincott, Dragons.

93. Lester B. Bridaham, Gargoyles, Chimères and the Grotesque in French Gothic Sculpture, (Architectural Book Publishing Company: 1930).

94. E. P. Evans, Animal Symbolism in Ecclesiastical Architecture, (London: W. Heinman, 1896 Reprint by Gale Research Company, 1969) p. 180.

95. Lester B. Bridaham, Gargoyles, Chimères and the Grotesque in French Gothic Sculpture, (Architectural Book Publishing Company, 1930) p. xiii.

96. Robert Bessede, La Crise de la Conscience Catholique dans la Litterature et la Pensée Francaise à la fin du XIX Siècle, (Paris: Editions Klincksieck, 1975).

97. James Hillman, The Dream and the Underworld, (New York: Harper and Row, 1979) Chapter 3, "Psyche," Depth-Hades-Underground and Underworld-Dream, pp. 23-68.

98. Claude Pichois, Le Surnaturalisme Francais, p. 111.

99. The state of affairs in contemporary epistemology appears to be animated by two streams of thought: that of the extension of linguistic analysis, epitomized by the thought of Paul Ricoeur, and that of psychophysiological theories of consciousness, implicit in the later writings of Susanne Langer (Mind and Feeling) for example. It is possible that both these streams of thought--the linguistic and the psycho-physiological--are in danger of being entrapped by their own categories of thought at the risk of not being able to create new ones. Linguistic theory, in its many manifestations as semiotics, structuralism, and especially as the currently popular "Theory of the Imagination" of Paul Ricoeur, does not seem able to escape the basic dichotomy imposed by

the use of the verbal model. In point of fact, the verbal model actually is more relevant to communication theory than to cognition theory or epistemology.

In opposition to the theoretical and implicitly ideological, perspective of the linguistic theory, the researchers of the psychophysiological and the neurophysiological basis for thought may be overwhelmed by the minute particulars of their biological studies, that inevitably extend from the biochemical to the atomic levels of existence. This interminable breakdown of the cognitive process into its physical component parts must by the very nature of its study deflect attention away from the more puzzling questions about cognition. Neither of these streams of thought offers a workable model of cognition--the linguistic schools' excessive claims for universality negate its specific contribution to the understanding of the role of language within thought; and the philosophical/neuro-physiological school tends to become overwhelmed by the minutiae of its study. Therefore, in this dissertation I have attempted an understanding of cognition in terms of "fundamental principles" that can be tested through their applicability to various phenomena, and that can also be used to develop self-awareness in the practice of art. The isolation of the various principles of "symbolic transformation" of the creative imagination is therefore an attempt to understand the cognitive process in a new way.

100. See Chapter II, "The Surreal and the Sacred."

101. See Chapter III, "The Historical Context."

102. Breton, Surrealism and Painting, p. 280.

103. Breton, Surrealism and Painting, p. 46.

104. Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, p. 55.

105. Calvin Tomkins, The World of Marcel Duchamp, 1887-, (New York: Time Inc., 1966) p. 120. Henceforth referred to as Tomkins, Marcel Duchamp.

106. See Chapter IV, "In the Modern Context," D. Giorgio de Chirico, "Enigma of Surrealism" c.) Theoretical Influence, Theme IV, The Power Object: Premonition, Immanence, and Omen.

107. Wordsworth, "The Prelude," Selected Poems and Prefaces.

108. Chaucer, cited in R. H. Blyth, Zen in English Literature and Oriental Classics, (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1960) p. 82.

109. Gérard de Nerval, cited in Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 88.

110. Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 88.

111. Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, p. 10.
112. Tomkins, Marcel Duchamp, p. 119.
113. Rubin, Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage, p. 104.
114. Shattuck, The Banquet Years, p. 336.
115. Josephine Withers, "The Famous Fur-lined Teacup and the Anonymous Meret Oppenheim," Art Magazine, 1977, p. 94. Henceforth referred to as Withers, "Meret Oppenheim."
116. Withers, "Meret Oppenheim," p. 95.
117. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, p. 170.
118. Revelations, Book 12.
119. Lippincott, Dragons, p. 4.
120. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, p. 168.
121. Helen Gardner, Art Through the Ages, Seventh Edition, revised by Horst de la Croix and Richard G. Tansey, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1960) p. 125.
122. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, p. 165.
123. Withers, "Meret Oppenheim," p. 96.
124. Tomkins, Marcel Duchamp, p. 138.
125. Dali, cited by Tomkins, Marcel Duchamp, p. 138.
126. Elias Ashmole, ed. Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum, a reprint of the London edition, 1652, with a new introduction by Alan G. Debus. (Johnson Reprint Corporation, New York and London) 1967. Cited in Edward F. Edinger, Ego and Archetype, (Baltimore: Penguin, 1973) pp. 262-263.
127. Rabinovitch, "Cybele: Myth, Cult, and Iconogenesis." See also Vermaseren, The Cult of Cybele, (Thames and Hudson, London: 1977) p. 10, 11.
128. The "Black Madonna" has been explored primarily by Gilles Quispel, a Jungian psychologist.
129. Rabinovitch, "Cybele: Myth, Cult, and Iconogenesis."
130. Krappe, Genése, cited in Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, p. 181. See also Timmer, "The Wyrd," and Chapter I, 1. The element of the wyrd.
131. Breton, Manifestoes of Surrealism, 1930, p. 178.
132. Breton, Manifestoes of Surrealism, 1930, p. 173.

133. Edinger, Ego and Archetype, pp. 262, 263, 265.
134. Titus Burckhardt, Alchemy: Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul, (Baltimore: Penguin, 1974) p. 63.
135. Edinger, Ego and Archetype, p. 265.
136. These ancient spirit figures are discussed in most books on oriental art. See Benjamin Rowland, The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain. (England: Penguin, 1977).
137. Mortimer Wheeler, Roman Art and Architecture, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981).
138. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, pp. 163-182.
139. Senior, The Way Down and Out, p. 80. See also Houston, The Demonic Imagination, p. 127-131.
140. Maarten Vermaseren, Cybele and Attis (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977).
141. For a full discussion of the myth of Gradiva in Surrealist painting see Whitney Chadwick, Myth in Surrealist Painting, 1929-39. (Ann Arbor: U.M.I. Research Press, 1980).
142. Lester B. Bridgman, Gargoyles, Chimères, and the Grotesque in French Gothic Sculpture. (Da Capo Press, 1969) p. x.
143. See Chadwick, "Eros or Thanatos--The Surrealist cult of Love Reexamined," Art Form 14 (Nov., 1925) pp. 45-56.
144. Shattuck, The Banquet Years, p. 398.
145. Steiner, Taboo, p. 146.
146. Freud, Totem and Taboo, p. 48.
147. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, p. 14.
148. Freud, Totem and Taboo, p. 90.

Conclusion

FOOTNOTES

1. See Freidrich Hund, The History of Quantum Theory, trans. Gordon Peece, (London: George C. Harrap and Co., 1974 or T. Bergstein, Quantum Physics and Ordinary Language (London: MacMillan, 1972) pp. 21-26; 38-40.

2. As defined by Kurt Koffka, and in art by Rudolf Arnheim.

3. This argument was suggested by two works: Morse Peckham, Man's Rage for Chaos: Biology, Behaviour, and the Arts (New York: Schocken, 1973) (The most extensive debate on the order/disorder theme as yet) and Van Renssalaer Potter, "Disorder as a Built-In Component of Biological Systems: The Survival Imperative" Zygon Journal of Religion and Science, 1977, pp. 135-149.

4. Potter, "Disorder as a Built-In Component of Biological Systems," p. 142.

5. See Shattuck, The Banquet Years, pp. 325-353.

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