

**The Traumatized Male: Dada, Surrealism and
Masculinity**

Volume I

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For my parents
Ellen Matheson
and
William Neil Matheson

Abstract

This thesis asserts the crucial role of gender, and in particular of masculinity, in the productions of the dada and surrealist movements. World War I is viewed as having exercised a decisive influence upon the formation of those involved in these movements, producing a generation of “traumatised males”, and the question of there being a consequent “crisis in masculinity” is analysed in some detail. These factors are explored within the broader socio-cultural context associated with the development of modernity - shifting gender roles, the emergence of the “New Woman”, popular culture, anarchism, etc. Gender is understood here as a largely social construct, with particular attention given to the performative model of gender proposed by Judith Butler. Particular importance is accorded to the entire “fantasmatic” surrounding the machine within the male imaginary, together with the role of related phenomena such as electricity, magnetism and hypnosis. The central actor here is the male body, though masculinity is never considered apart from femininity, and hence the role of femininity, male attitudes towards women and the depiction of the female body, all inevitably figure within the study. Within this general approach, certain specific figures (André Breton, Jacques Vaché, Max Ernst, Francis Picabia, and Marcel Duchamp) are analysed within specific contexts: including, the impact of the War, Oedipal conflict, the role of the machine, hysteria, fantasy, fetishism and male desire. Running throughout this study is the theme of the physical, corporeal body, the importance of which to the creative process is continually underscored within a range of significant contexts. In an appendix, the continuity of many of these themes is demonstrated in an analysis of the drawings of Antonin Artaud, in which particular attention is given to the inter-relationship of machine and body in the specific context of Artaud’s electroshock treatment.

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Neil Matheson

Preface

The idea for this study first emerged out of a concern with certain problems relating to the status of images, the relationship between the visual and the textual, and the implication of factors such as fantasy. This inaugural material has been retained in the penultimate chapter, "Tales from an Enchanted Forest", which focuses upon certain male fantasies, in particular André Breton's fantasy (in *Nadja*) of encountering a naked woman in the woods, though the general approach of closely linking visual and textual material pervades the entire study. Masculinity seems to me an unjustly neglected aspect of art history and theory and I hope to demonstrate here that its incorporation demands both a reinterpretation of many canonic works, while at the same time requiring that more marginal works and themes be accorded far greater significance. My interest in masculinity is not so much rooted in gender theory itself (though such theory obviously plays a central role here) as in the role, conception and depiction of the body itself. This often results in an intensely *corporeal* conception of the body, nowhere so well displayed as in the writings and drawings of Artaud, which I analyse in an appendix to the main study, considered particularly in relation to electroshock therapy. It is perhaps this same interest in the body which has drawn me into areas which are often neglected in the study of the areas and artists considered here - as for example in the case of electricity, Mesmerism, hypnosis or electroshock therapy. The impact of World War I similarly seemed to me to be a neglected aspect in our understanding of the dada and surrealist movements - beyond the usual brief acknowledgement of its role in stimulating revolt, little serious attention has been given to the mechanics of its impact at the level of gendered identity, and more specifically in relation to shifts in our conception of masculinity. One of the primary functions of World War I was, of course, to destroy or seriously damage the male body, and I consider this to have exercised a determinative influence upon the attitudes of an entire generation of males towards their bodies (and, indeed, towards the bodies of women).

In terms of the chronological parameters of this study, my focus has been upon developments in the wake of the World War I and during the twenties, i.e. the crucial period of dada, the *mouvement flou*, and the early emergence of surrealism. These historical parameters enable me to focus upon the impact of that war upon what was to culminate in the surrealist movement, as well as to explore some of the key theoretical debates such as the role of the visual within surrealism, and to consider those developments in relation to a traumatic model of masculinity. I go beyond those historical limits in the case of the Rodez drawings of Artaud, considered in an appendix, where this allows me both to further develop certain theoretical points drawn from the work of Deleuze and Guattari, as well as to expand further on themes such as electricity, the conception and depiction of the body, and the fantasmatic of the machine.

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Introduction

For the generation of young men who were to survive World War I, whether returning from the horrors of the trenches, from serving in an auxiliary capacity in hospitals, or simply having managed to evade any form of active service, the war itself came, for many, to constitute a major trauma, a “tear” in experience. I begin by exploring the return of this repressed, in terms of its impact on male attitudes of the period (particularly in relation to gender issues) and the various ways in which it found expression in writings and artworks. These works themselves, of course, served to actively form and change attitudes, rather than simply passively reflecting their socio-historic context and this productive role of imagery is apparent throughout this study. War is essentially bound up with an assertion of masculinity and the primary purpose of war at that time was the destruction of the male body. For this generation, then, the experience of war was to exert a defining influence upon the formation of a masculine identity and we discover the scars of that experience in the artworks and writings produced in the wake of that war. Both masculinity and the impact of the war are surprisingly neglected aspects in analyses of the productions of dada and surrealism and part of my purpose is to re-evaluate their importance for those movements. One of the central characters of this study is André Breton, posed initially in terms of Breton’s wartime relationship with Jacques Vaché. What, precisely, was the extent of their relationship and what does it tell us of contemporary masculinity and of surrealist attitudes towards women?

One of the central problematics in relation to the war, is the extent to which it can be considered to have provoked a “crisis of masculinity” and part of my purpose is to consider the evidence for such a crisis. As we shall see, a number of writers have suggested a wide-ranging masculinity crisis in the wake of the war, whereas Johanna Bourke argues against any widespread effect of male alienation or brutalisation resulting from the wartime experience. For Bourke, heightened misogyny is confined to specific areas, for example professions such as teaching, where women made significant inroads during the early decades of the century. Against this, I want to suggest that the evidence suggests a more extensive gender crisis and that we should view the men considered in this study as perhaps indicative of a more widespread male malaise. It is an issue which cuts to the heart of what is intended by the term “masculinity” - how it is to be defined, the role of socio-cultural factors and the stability of that category. My suggestion is that the question of a

masculinity crisis is closely linked to that of the inherent instability of masculinity as a category. What, then, was the impact of that war for the generation of artists and writers considered here, and how in particular did it influence their sense of masculine identity?

The issue of fetishism emerges as one of the key complexes of late nineteenth century investigations in the fields of psychiatry, sexology and early psychoanalysis, and is intimately linked to shifting models of masculinity and in the perception of the “perversions”. I set out to analyse this theme in terms of the motif of the glove, which I explore first in terms of nineteenth-century attitudes and imagery, including the work of Klinger, before developing that theme in the work of Ernst and in early surrealism. What processes, we need to consider, are at work here, what do they tell us of contemporary masculinity, and how are they manifested in artworks and writings of the period? How do processes of the male psyche such as castration anxiety, fantasy or fetishisation find visual expression, and how are such formulas transformed by a subsequent generation of artists?

Whereas the conception of dada in terms of “Oedipal revolt” is something of a commonplace, there has again been a consistent failure to situate that revolt within any kind of theorisation of masculinity itself, with masculinity usually simply accepted as some unquestioned given. I therefore set out to analyse the ways in which masculinity was both understood and represented during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and to consider the consequences of the shift from a Victorian to a more modern and more fragmented conception of masculinity. It has been argued by some that we see a “crisis in masculinity” as consequent upon the war and upon the changing social role of women. To take only one example, in her *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has argued that:

many of the major nodes of thought and knowledge in twentieth-century Western culture as a whole are structured - indeed fractured - by a chronic, now endemic crisis of heterosexual definition, indicatively male, from the end of the nineteenth century.¹

What evidence is there, then, for such a crisis, and should we not also consider the possibility that masculinity might itself be an inherently unstable category?

¹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990, p.1.

The question of Oedipal revolt against the generation responsible for the war is perhaps most acute in the work of Max Ernst in particular, where I explore the work of wartime and of the immediate postwar period. Ernst's rejection of the father, his break with his own family and his experiments with new forms of relationship with the Eluards are all explored and are sited in relation to Ernst's wartime experience. In what ways do the linked issues of the impact of war and the troubled relationship with the father influence the artworks and writings of this period, and how are we to disentangle Ernst's conscious deployment of psychoanalytical concepts in that treatment? And what, too, is the influence of de Chirico, again posed in terms of his own problematic relationship with his father and his deployment of the glove motif?

The wartime discovery of so-called shell-shock is perhaps not unrelated to surrealism's celebration of hysteria, as found in Aragon and Breton's *Le Cinquantenaire de l'hystérie*: Breton's wartime encounter with insanity and with its theorisation in the writings of Freud, Charcot and Kraepelin, were to exercise an enduring influence upon his thought, while his celebration of the hysterical woman perhaps also suggests interesting questions about his own masculine identity and of the role of hysteria within surrealism. I also consider the case of Ernst's own extensive deployment of hysteria, particularly in the collage novels and its relationship with the *ménage à trois* which he established with the Eluards at Eaubonne. How, we also need to consider, was hysteria in the male understood at that time, and in what ways did it influence male attitudes and works within the surrealist movement?

Sedgwick's notion of the "homosocial" provides a very useful tool in analysing relationships and attitudes towards gender within the surrealist group, and the figure of the bachelor assumes a key role here. In considering the homosocial character of male groupings such as that of surrealism, the bachelor emerges, both as a central player and as a key concept, and nowhere more so than in the work of Marcel Duchamp. An analysis of Duchamp's own famed bachelor status and of his deployment of the motif in his work raises further questions about masculinity, about male attitudes towards the feminine, and about the status of the sexual relation. Moreover, Duchamp's assumption of a female alter ego in the person of Rose Sélavy returns us to the question of the constructedness of gender and more specifically, to gender as performance, as theorised in the work of Judith Butler.

One of the key concepts considered in relation to Duchamp is that of the “Bachelor Machine”, which derives from the work of Michel Carrouges. One of the central motifs of the period, characterised by Reyner Banham as the First Machine Age, is that of the machine itself. Particularly for the dada movement, having just experienced the first “machine war”, an inhumane conflict of tanks, machine guns and gas-masked men, the machine came to constitute a highly ambivalent motif, and one in which a recurring theme is that of the *absurdity* of such machines. The theme of the machine and of electricity is explored here in terms of a widespread “fantasmatic” surrounding the machine, a concept which embraces both the rootedness of such machine fantasies within the (male) unconscious, as well as the social fantasy through which this is given expression - a line which runs directly from Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, via the futuristic world of Villiers’ *L’Eve future*, to the android of Lang’s *Metropolis*. What is the role of the machine in the male imaginary and how does this fantasmatic find expression?

Picabia’s mechanomorphic works are explored in some detail in this study, as well as considering Picabia’s own relationship with his body via such themes as neurasthenia and machine metaphors. As well as attempting to re-read these works via the work of Deleuze and Guattari, I also want to propose some hitherto unexplained sources for some of Picabia’s earliest machine works, which I believe cast further light upon Picabia’s working methods and his personal iconography. The sources for some of Picabia’s earliest mechanomorphic works have long remained a mystery and I believe that the sources set out here enhance our understanding of his conception of the machine, and of his attitudes towards gender relations and the body. The application of theoretical concepts from Deleuze and Guattari also entails a shift in the conception of the subject, away from models such as that of psychoanalysis which are founded in *lack*, in favour of a model founded in *production*. What, then, would be the implications of such a model for an analysis of Picabia’s mechanomorphic works? And what do such metaphors tell us of Picabia’s conception of the body - including his own neurasthenic body - and of his attitudes towards gender and the sexual relation?

The question of male desire is a recurring refrain throughout this study and in the final chapter of the main study I focus upon a number of deep-rooted, recurring fantasies

encountered within surrealism. These fantasies relate to the theoretical question asked by surrealism itself - the question of "What representations accompany desire?" - and hence of the actual status of those representations, for example, whether or not such representations could be entirely imaginary. These questions find their focus in Breton's fantasy, expressed in *Nadja*, of discovering a naked woman in a wood and expand to include such figures as the succubus. These questions around the status of the image for surrealism are in turn extended to embrace the related question of the inter-relationship of image and text, explored in relation to some of the work of Magritte and Michel Foucault's analysis of that work in his *This Is Not a Pipe* (1982).

In an appendix I turn to consider a series of drawings produced by Antonin Artaud while incarcerated in the asylum at Rodez, between 1945 and 1946. My concern with Artaud is to analyse the drawings which he produced during his incarceration at Rodez and to site that analysis within the broader context of Artaud's writings. Again the work is approached from the viewpoint of masculinity and of male subjectivity, considered in terms of an intensely *corporeal* conception of the body. We discover in Artaud a form of traumatised masculinity in perhaps its most extreme manifestation, and in the work, an intensely difficult personal iconography, but which nonetheless leads us back to many of the themes already encountered (the creative subject, the conception of the body, the relation with the father, etc.). Although chronologically a little later than other areas analysed here, the work of Artaud allows us to revisit some of the themes encountered earlier in the main body of the study, though from an entirely different angle, and in the process, to further refine our understanding of some of the theoretical concepts taken from Deleuze and Guattari. Moreover, I view the themes of the late texts and drawings as deeply rooted in themes already developed in Artaud's earlier writings of the twenties and early thirties (apart, obviously, from the additional impact of his electroshock therapy), so that again the disparity between Artaud and the preceding chapters is not so great as might appear at first sight.

Finally, I turn to the question of methodology. The bulk of the theoretical work is carried out here using two theoretical paradigms: that of psychoanalytic theory (mainly Freud, Lacan and Zizek), and that of Deleuze and Guattari (in particular, their *Anti-Oedipus*). My general approach has been a pragmatic one, attempting to give priority to the particular context, artwork or text being analysed, and considering them from what seemed the most

appropriate theoretical standpoint, rather than attempting to fit everything within a single theoretical model. Because of the importance which psychoanalysis assumed in the thinking of figures such as Ernst and Breton, with Freud's writings also appearing in translation in France during the twenties, the impact of psychoanalysis upon contemporary thinking around gender issues inevitably requires some consideration. Psychoanalysis has also been deployed here as an analytic tool, using the additional insights of Lacan and Žižek, allowing new interpretations of works previously analysed in readings which have privileged the classic Freudian texts. There are certain conflicts between a performance theory of gender and one rooted in more fixed notions of gender roles and I have found it necessary at times to deploy the latter as a form of shorthand when the performative nature of gender has been less at issue, as for example when analysing works which clearly draw on contemporary readings of Freudian theory. Notwithstanding such terminological shifts, my main concern here is with a model of gender as socially constructed and in particular one based upon the notion of performance - a model which is itself rooted in writings of the period, in the work of Joan Rivière. There are clearly also certain incompatibilities between, for example, a Freudian reading and a Deleuzian one, and I have accordingly attempted to be sensitive to such conflicts - the use of Deleuze and Guattari is accordingly focussed on the mechanomorphic work of Picabia, and on the analysis of Artaud's drawings, where the key concepts (such as the "body without organs") are rooted in Artaud's writings. This approach allows a certain theoretical flexibility and applicability, while retaining coherence and the overall integrity of the argument. Nonetheless, the theoretical tensions within the work need to be acknowledged, and indeed welcomed as producing new insights, as for example in the case of Deleuze and Guattari's resolutely anti-Oedipal stance, which serves as a useful foil against the earlier Freudian readings of Ernst in particular.

My approach is historical as well as theoretical, and the use of theory has been guided by the historical context. I have tried to be sensitive to social contexts and to the relevant theoretical debates of the period (including, for example, the surrealists' debates around sexuality, the reception of Freudian psychoanalysis in France, the status of the image, or themes such as suicide) and I believe that this acknowledgment of the role of history serves to further enhance the sense of coherence and continuity within the work.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the text:

Breton, *OCI* and *OCII* refer to:

Breton, André, *Œuvres complètes*, Volumes I and II, Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1988.

Artaud, *OCI*, etc. refers to the appropriate volume of:

Artaud, Antonin, *Œuvres complètes*, Vol.I -XXVI, Paris: Gallimard, 1956-1994.

1. Breton, Vaché and the Nantes Group: World War I and the Roots of Surrealism

"Jacques Vaché est surréaliste en moi"

André Breton¹

Breton and Vaché: A Chance Encounter

In February 1916, while working as *interne provisoire* at the hospital at Nantes, the 20 year old André Breton met Jacques Vaché for the first time. Although training in medicine, Breton was by vocation a poet, and already deeply involved in the process of establishing literary connections (with Valéry and Apollinaire), finding his own voice, and having his work published. Vaché, a year older than Breton, had been wounded by a grenade during the Champagne offensive in September of the previous year and was then still recovering at the hospital. Though he wrote and drew a little, Vaché's own talents were more modest and he was to become an influence far more through the force of his character, attitudes and humour - particularly as inflected and magnified through Breton's recollections - than through the power of his actual works. Recalling that time in his 1924 essay "La Confession dédaigneuse"² Breton observes that Vaché would spend an hour each morning in rearranging a few photos, bowls and violets, on a small bedside table, and that his time was spent in painting and drawing:

La mode masculine faisait presque tous les frais de son imagination.
Il aimait ces figures glabres, ces attitudes hiératiques qu'on observe
dans les bars.³

I want to stress this focus upon the masculine within Vaché's drawings and writings and to go on to consider its significance, both to Breton in his relationship with Vaché, and more broadly, to the specific gender attitudes which inform surrealism. The two had certain shared cultural interests and Breton notes a few of their correspondences and disagreements:

Nous nous entretenions de Rimbaud (qu'il détestait toujours),

¹ André Breton, "Trente ans après", in Jacques Vaché, *Lettres de guerre de Jacques Vaché*, Paris: K éditeur, 1949 (first published by Éditions du Sans Pareil in 1919).

² In Vaché, *Lettres de guerre*, *ibid.*

³ Breton, *La Confession dédaigneuse*, *ibid.* (unpaginated); Breton, *Œuvres complètes I*, Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1988, pp.193-202.

d'Apollinaire (qu'il connaissait à peine), de Jarry (qu'il admirait), du cubisme (dont il se méfiait)⁴, adding too that Vaché reproached him for his enthusiasm for modernism. Whereas Breton's tastes were more advanced, we nonetheless find a certain sophistication in Vaché's writings - and particularly in his use of humour, or "umor" - which Breton was to put to use in the gradual emergence of surrealism.

We know too, from a much later essay by Breton, "As In a Wood" (1951), of their practice while at Nantes, of hopping from cinema to cinema:

I agreed wholeheartedly with Jacques Vaché in appreciating nothing so much as dropping into the cinema when whatever was playing was playing, at any point in the show, and leaving at the first hint of boredom - of surfeit - to rush off to another cinema where we behaved in the same way, and so on ...⁵

We can see in this juxtaposition of unrelated elements, another example of the collage aesthetic which was to become central to surrealism, and of which Breton observes "I have never known anything more *magnetising*", adding that, regardless of the titles being shown, the important point was that "one came out *charged* for a few days."⁶ I want to return later to these electro-magnetic metaphors, which pervade modernist writings, and to trace their lineage in areas such as mesmerism and the rise of the machine. But Breton also adds two further factors at work in all of this - firstly "the aid of chance", later to become a touchstone of surrealism; secondly, and again of enormous importance to the future development of surrealism, "its *power to disorient*." The spectator, Breton observes, "passes through a critical point as captivating and imperceptible as that uniting waking and sleeping."⁷ So that already in these early cinematic experiences, with their disorienting interweaving of serial thrillers such as *Les Vampires* (1915-16), perhaps collaged with *The Creeping Glove*, we discern what are to become some of the fundamental characteristics of surrealism.

Breton and Vaché would have met mid-way through the release of the ten episodes of Louis Feuillade's serial *Les Vampires*, issued between November 1915

⁴ Breton, *ibid.*

⁵ André Breton, "As In a Wood", in Paul Hammond (ed), *The Shadow and its Shadow: Surrealist Writing on the Cinema*, Edinburgh: Polygon, 1991 (2nd Edition), p.81.

⁶ Breton, *ibid.*

⁷ Breton, *ibid.* p.82.

and June 1916.⁸ The series starred Musidora in her trademark "maillot de soie noire" in the role of the fatal Irma Vep and featured episodes with titles such as *Le spectre*, *Les yeux qui fascinent* and *Satanas ...*⁹ We can perhaps already see in Feuillade's masterwork a kind of precedent for surrealism, insofar as his fantastically transformed world was nonetheless entirely plausible, thus anticipating Breton's intention to merge the realms of dream and reality. Francis Lacassin refers to: "le magnifique exemple d'un art réaliste mis au service d'un univers fantastique." Lacassin observes that Feuillade based his stories upon actual events:

découpés dans la réalité ou dans *Le Petit Journal illustré* et *L'Oeil de la police*, miroirs d'une époque traversée de bandits en autos et d'exécutions capitales, jonchée de malles sanglants, ébranlée par les bombes anarchistes et les obus de la grosse Bertha.¹⁰

Lacking detailed shooting scripts, scenes were improvised as they were filmed on location, a technique characterised by Lacassin as "l'écriture automatique au cinématographe."¹¹ A hybrid world was thus created, combining the everyday world with a fabulous, oneiric, psychical reality rooted in the unconscious - particularly that of unconscious desire.

What then was the actual contribution of Vaché to surrealism, and to what extent can considerations of gender - and particularly of masculinity - be seen to have exercised a determining role upon the form which that influence assumed? Despite their relatively brief friendship (they met again only four or five times after Vaché returned to the front in May 1916), and the rather sporadic nature of their correspondence (some ten *lettres de guerre* from Vaché to Breton), Breton went on to mythicise their relationship and to pose Vaché as one of the founding pillars of the surrealist movement. For Mark Polizzotti, Breton's relationship with Vaché "remains one of the essential mysteries of Breton's life"¹², adding that "Breton saw in Vaché largely what he wanted to see ... [and that] at this time in his life, Breton *needed* a nihilistic Vaché."¹³ The year of Vaché's death, Breton immediately published Vaché's side of their correspondence, together with several letters from Vaché to Fraenkel and to Aragon, and in many of Breton's

⁸ See *Les cahiers de la cinémathèque*, no.48, 1987, for a special issue devoted to the work of Louis Feuillade.

⁹ See Francis Lacassin, *Louis Feuillade*, Paris: Editions Seghers, 1964, p.71.

¹⁰ Ibid. p.71.

¹¹ Ibid. p.72.

¹² Mark Polizzotti, *Revolution of the Mind: The Life of André Breton*, London: Bloomsbury, 1995, p.42.

¹³ Polizzotti, *ibid.* p.43.

subsequent writings we find reference to the central role which he accorded Vaché in the emergence of what was to become surrealism. In one such instance Breton writes:

Son comportement et ses propos nous étaient un objet de
continuelle référence. ... Toujours est-il qu'il incarnait pour nous la plus
haute puissance de "dégagement" ... (... dégagement surtout à
l'égard de la "loi morale" ...).¹⁴

But if a myth, Breton's Vaché was one in which Vaché himself actively collaborated and where, in his writings, Vaché's "chameleonism" is immediately apparent in the entirely different personas which he presents to his correspondents.

However, it can be demonstrated that, in his mythicisation of the life and death of Jacques Vaché, Breton in fact elides all reference to his friend's literary affiliations at Nantes, and that, during the period of their correspondence, Breton was unaware of other important aspects of Vaché's life. For example, on Vaché's leaving again for the front in May 1916, Breton observes: "il m'écrivait rarement (lui qui n'écrivait à personne, sauf, dans un but intéressé, à sa mère tous les deux ou trois mois)."¹⁵ In fact, this is entirely incorrect, as even the title of Georges Sebbag's *Jacques Vaché: Quarante-Trois Lettres de Guerre a Jeanne Derrien* indicates. Derrien was then a young woman on voluntary wartime service at the hospital at Nantes, and conducted an extensive correspondence with Vaché between July 1916 and January 1918. Sebbag also dates some sixty letters from Vaché to his parents, again hardly the quarterly duty suggested by Breton.¹⁶ To this we can also add an unquantified correspondence with the writer Jean Sarment (Jean Bellemère), a former fellow pupil of Vaché's at the Grand Lycée de Nantes. The sole example of this latter correspondence, published by Michel Carassou, presents a very different side of Vaché to that given by Breton, and in place of the bored young dandy, celebrated for his *dégagement*, we are instead given a very moving picture of a young man who, though retaining his *sang-froid*, very clearly believes he is about to die:

Je pars ce soir pour l'endroit le plus stupide de la grande bataille, d'où
peu reviennent. Je vais aller à la tranchée fleurie du nom de <tranchée
des cadavres> ... Je ne voudrai pas donner à cette lettre la ligne
solennelle d'un monument funèbre Mais ... je dois te dire que cela
va mal..... Il faut compter à cette tranchée funèbre 70% de pertes.

C'est le pourcentage prévu au-dela duquel l'honneur est sauvé sur ce

¹⁴ André Breton, *Entretiens (1913-1952)*, Paris: Editions Gallimard, New édition, 1969, p.45.

¹⁵ Breton, *La Confession dédaigneuse*, op. cit.; Breton, *OCI*, p.200.

¹⁶ Vaché's letters to his parents were also published by Sebbag in Jacques Vaché, *Soixante-dix-neuf lettres de guerre*, Paris: Editions Jean-Michel Place, 1989.

point-là.¹⁷

Vaché goes on to request of Sarment that, in the likely event of his not being amongst the survivors, "tu brûleras ce que tu voudras. Je laisse cela à tes soins, car je sais que tu feras comme j'aurais fait." The suggestion here is both of a close friendship and perhaps also a far more extensive correspondence. In fact, Vaché's assessment of his prospects at the front was proven to be rather prescient - he was wounded a month later, on 25 September 1915, and was returned to his hometown of Nantes in order to recover.

Breton's elevation of Vaché, based as it is on only very partial knowledge of his friend, therefore points us to the importance of such close inter-male friendships, particularly in the circumstances of total war. What, then, does this friendship tell us of the condition of masculinity during wartime, and how might this assist our understanding of the various writings and artworks which were to issue from this context?

Masculinity and World War I

Paul Fussell has observed of World War I that:

It was a hideous embarrassment to the prevailing Meliorist myth which had dominated the public consciousness for a century. It reversed the Idea of Progress.¹⁸

After the initial thrusts following its launch in August 1914, the war quickly settled into a stalemate of immovable opposing forces settled in trenches stretching across Belgium and the whole of France, a war of murderous attrition which was to cost some three and a half million men to the Central Powers, while the Allies lost some five million men. In relation to masculinity, Fussell characterises the impact of the conflict in terms of a certain loss of innocence, for a generation raised on abstract values like *courage* and *manliness*, in the novels of Rider Haggard or the Arthurian romances of Tennyson and William Morris. Such literature would provide the romanticised terminology for an entire ideology, expressed in terms such as *valour*, *honour*, *fate* and *the heavens*, or euphemisms such as *strife* or *the fallen*. According to Joanna Bourke, the war "subtly

¹⁷ Jacques Vaché, letter to Jean Sarment, 21 August 1915, in Michel Carassou, *Jacques Vaché et le groupe de Nantes*, Paris: Editions Jean-Michel Place, 1986, p.205.

¹⁸ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1975, p.8.

shifted concepts of masculinity"¹⁹ , though she rejects the thesis of masculine "alienation" as consequent upon the war, as found in the writings of Graves, Sassoon, and Owen, among others. Taking a briskly pragmatic view, Bourke argues that, for the most part, the survivors had simply to get on with rebuilding their lives. And she likewise rejects the notion that those men involved in the conflict were "brutalized" by their experiences, emphasising instead their sense of community and connectedness with home life. Furthermore, in terms of male attitudes towards women, Bourke is sceptical of claims of increased misogyny during the postwar period, viewing this as more confined to areas of particular conflict, such as in occupations like teaching. Margaret Higgonet, citing the work of Fussell and Eric Leed's *No Man's Land*, detects a shift in the dominant model of masculinity, indicated by "ambivalent attitudes towards aggression ... coupled with deep fear, disorientation, and passivity", indicators which she reads in terms of a "crisis of masculinity."²⁰ For Higgonet, war is, in itself, "a gendering activity" - a "discourse of militarism" - and one which "ritually marks the gender of all members of a society, whether or not they are combatants."

Whereas factors such as the emergence of the "New Woman" and increasing feminist activism produced gender tensions throughout Europe during the immediate pre-war period, for Michell Perrot "the French experience was especially conflictual."²¹ Perrot argues that paralleling this emergence of a new feminine identity, "a 'masculinity crisis' developed for which World War I eventually provided a heroic outlet." The postwar backlash against women's gains was particularly severe in France, leading Perrot to conclude that the war had "a profoundly conservative, even retrogressive, effect on gender relations." This crisis found cultural expression, she argues, in "the affirmation of virile values, physical, cultural and moral", citing for example, the new cult of sport, or the rise of detective and science fiction. Alongside these developments we also find an emergent homosexual culture.

I will turn later to the question of specific models of masculinity, but first want to map out the general social climate within which masculinity operated and to relate all of

¹⁹ Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War*, London: Reaktion Books, 1996.

²⁰ Margaret R. Higgonet (ed), *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987, p.2.

²¹ Michelle Perrot, "The New Eve and the Old Adam: Changes in French Women's Conditions at the Turn of the Century" in Higgonet (ed), *ibid.* p.51.

this to the linked issue of the male body. In very broad terms, gender relations in Britain at the time of World War I remained those of the late Victorian era, as briefly summarised here by Bourke:

By the 1870s, the ideologies of separate spheres had firmly placed men and women within secure enclaves in which their roles were clearly acknowledged. The womanly woman was gentle, domesticated and virginal: the manly man was athletic, stoical and courageous.²²

The classic statement of that doctrine of separate spheres is found in John Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), in which Ruskin characterises the masculine in the following terms:

The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest ...²³

With regard to morality and *moeurs* in France, Antony Copley paints a broadly similar picture and indeed characterises the moral atmosphere in terms of the persistence of "Victorianism".²⁴ Copley summarises the French situation in terms of a "catholic and conservative morality", with patriarchy embodied in the Civil Code, and where women are dedicated to motherhood and the domestic realm. In relation to homosexuality, whereas some relaxation of attitudes is experienced after the mid 1870s, following developments in French psychiatry - particularly in the work of Charcot and Magnan - in practice this served on the one hand to deliver certain homosexuals from the grip of criminality, only to hand them over to that of the psychiatric institutions. Thus, for Copley: "The moral climate for the homosexual during *la belle époque* remained largely hostile."²⁵

The central actor in this drama was of course the male body itself, and for Bourke, the whole point about the male body during the Great War, was that "it was *intended* to be mutilated",²⁶ with 31% of those serving in the British army being wounded. France suffered some 1.4 million dead, and another 4.25 million wounded. But just as importantly, given the technological refinements of modern warfare, "the severity of

²² Bourke, *ibid.* p.13.

²³ John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), in J.M. Golby *Culture and Society in Britain, 1850-1890*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986, p.118.

²⁴ Antony Copley, *Sexual Moralities in France, 1780-1980*, London: Routledge, 1989.

²⁵ Copley, *ibid.* p.147.

²⁶ Bourke, *ibid.* p.31.

those mutilations was unprecedented.²⁷ Sidra Stich roots her interpretation of surrealist art in the socio-political upheaval of the War and the subsequent political turmoil within Europe during the period of the rise of fascism.²⁸ Stich views the war itself as a major source of the more disturbing or violent surrealist imagery, as for example in the case of the razed landscape of North-East France, or again, the case of the appalling physical injuries inflicted upon the bodies of the combatants (fig.1). Moreover, Stich observes that "the 'fantasies' of the surrealists were often based on the disorder and strangeness of things actually seen or events that actually occurred."²⁹ One such significant example might be that of Breton's wartime encounter with shell-shocked soldiers, which I consider later. Stich also cites Walter Benjamin's observation that Surrealism was:

concerned literally with experiences, not with theories and still less with phantasms. And these experiences are by no means limited to dreams, hours of hashish eating, or opium smoking [Surrealist] creativity resides in a *profane illumination*, a materialist, anthropological inspiration.³⁰

While accepting Stich's overall thesis on the impact of the War and subsequent political turmoil upon the art of the period, it is at times difficult to see the precise linkages at play here, while in the case of artists such as Bellmer a far more compelling case can be made in terms of particular gender issues (problematic relations with women, and with the father) as inflected through contemporary socio-political events (the rise of fascism, etc.) - as has been documented in the work of Hal Foster.³¹ Nonetheless, the intensely *physical* nature of the war is undeniable and its impact will be traced through the corporeality of the body and related psycho-somatic experiences - shell-shock, male hysteria, the impact of the war upon vision. The military historian Martin Van Crefeld has argued that one of the central functions of war is an "affirmation of masculinity" and it is undoubtedly the case that the Great War exercised a powerful grip, and in many cases a traumatising influence, upon the generation of young men who survived it.

During the war itself, the propaganda effort demanded the heroisation of the

²⁷ Bourke, *ibid.* p.33. Bourke notes that, on the British side, there were over 41,000 amputees, with another 275,000 suffering less serious injuries to arms and legs. Some 60,500 suffered injury to head and eyes.

²⁸ Sidra Stich, *Anxious Visions: Surrealist Art*, Berkeley: University of California, 1990.

²⁹ Stich, *ibid.* p.26.

³⁰ Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism", cited in Stich, *ibid.* p.26. See also Margaret Cohen, *Profane Illumination: Walter Benjamin and the Paris of Surrealist Revolution*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1993.

³¹ Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993.

wounded male body - for example the image of Apollinaire with head wound, in the Military Hospital in Paris, in 1916 (fig.2). It has been suggested by Katia Samaltanos that Duchamp's *Apolinère Enameled* (1916-17) (fig.3) might allude to this well-known photo, and that the image might be said to illustrate Duchamp's pun "*L'arrhe de la peinture est du genre féminin*".³² But it might also be suggested that we see in Duchamp's image an allusion by one future cross-dresser (Rose Sélavy) to the literary cross-dressing of Apollinaire as the critic "Louise Lalanne", in a women's column which he wrote for a year, during 1909, for the magazine *Les Marges*.³³ We also find in this work the features which Shattuck, in *The Banquet Years*, identifies in Apollinaire and his other three selected artists - ambiguity, a delving into the unconscious, humour, and the reference to childhood³⁴ - in effect, a condensation of Apollinaire's contribution to early modernism.

If we contrast with the wounded Apollinaire, a similar image of Vaché in his hospital bed at Nantes (fig.4), one immediate difference is the almost dadaist collage which sprouts from the wall above the injured Vaché - a heterogeneous collection of signs, objects and images, which includes texts such as "POSTES", "Ni Fleurs, ni couronnes" and (in English) "DON'T SPIT". We might see in this proto-dadaist manifestation, perhaps one more marker of the shift in sensibility from the generation of Apollinaire to that of Breton and Vaché. One source of Breton's growing disillusionment with Apollinaire during the period immediately prior to his death, is rooted in Breton and Vaché's growing antipathy toward the increasingly nationalistic and chauvinistic tone of Apollinaire's pronouncements - as for example in the case of Apollinaire's lecture *The New Spirit and the Poets* ("France, keeper of the entire secret of civilization").³⁵ Vaché was later to write of Apollinaire: "Mais nous ne connaissons plus Apollinaire ni Cocteau - Car - Nous les soupçonnons de faire l'art trop sciemment ..."³⁶ And in a later, more personal attack, Vaché wrote complaining of Apollinaire writing for *La Bayonnette*, and adds rather viciously: "mais il est déjà lieutenant trépané, n'est-ce pas, et on le décora -

³² Katia Samaltanos, *Apollinaire: Catalyst for Primitivism, Picabia and Duchamp*, Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1981.

³³ See John Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, Volume II: 1907-1917*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1996, p.204; also Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France, 1885 to World War I*, Revised Edition, London, Jonathan Cape, 1969, Ch.9.

³⁴ Shattuck, *ibid.*, p.37.

³⁵ Apollinaire cited in Polizzotti, *op. cit.* p.62.

³⁶ Vaché, *Lettres de guerre* - letter to Breton, 18 August 1917.

Well."³⁷

It is perhaps no more than fortuitous that Breton should have met Vaché at the Nantes hospital in February 1916 - precisely the time at which the first manifestations of dada were appearing on the stage of the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich - and yet this coincidence requires deeper examination if we are to grasp the precise contribution of Vaché to surrealism, as well as to cast more light upon the complex relationship of both to the Dada movement. Georges Hugnet, for example, observes of Vaché that: "Son refus de tout désigne Vaché comme précurseur de l'état d'esprit dada."³⁸ What precisely, then, was Vaché's contribution to the future orientation of the group surrounding Breton?

Vaché and the Nantes Group

Entirely eclipsed in Breton's mythicised version of Vaché as patron saint of surrealism, is all mention of Vaché's close connection with the "Nantes Group", a literary grouping formed by pupils and former pupils of the Grande Lycée de Nantes, between 1913-15.³⁹ Apart from Vaché, this group included Pierre Bissérié, poet Eugène Hublet, and the actor-writer Jean Bellemère (Jean Sarment, author of *Cavalcador, Jean-Jacques de Nantes*), and in the view of Martin Sorrell, the group "has a claim to be a major forerunner of Dada and Surrealism."⁴⁰ According to Henri Béhar, as with similar groups at Rennes and at Rheims:

ce qui rassemble ces jeunes gens, c'est leur haine commune envers le Bourgeois, le Philistin, le Mufle, cible de tous leurs sarcasmes. Haine naturelle du père dira-t-on. Manière de s'affirmer.⁴¹

Shared literary interests, according to Béhar, included Shakespeare, Baudelaire, Barrès, Musset, as well as Gide and Wilde. The proximity of Rennes to Nantes might suggest an obvious connection with the work of Jarry, though the passion for 'Pataphysics seems to have been more specific to Vaché and it has been argued that it may well have been Fraenkel who in fact alerted Vaché to the significance of Jarry's work. Members of the group cultivated certain "attitudes" and shared a certain sacreligious

³⁷ Vaché, *Lettres de guerre* - letter to Aragon, July/Aug 1918.

³⁸ Georges Hugnet, *Dictionnaire du dadaïsme, 1916-1922*, Paris: Jean-Claude Simoën, 1976, p.361.

³⁹ For a full account of the Nantes Group see Carassou, op. cit.

⁴⁰ Martin Sorrell, "Jacques Vaché's Letters from the Front (1916-1918)" in Richard Sheppard (ed), *Dada: Studies of a Movement*, Chalfont St Giles: Alpha Academic, 1979, p.100.

⁴¹ Henri Béhar, "Departs", in Carassou, op. cit. p.8.

humour; some used cocaine, and there is evidence from Vaché's letters, as well as from the manner of his death, that he was an experienced user of opium. It is worth noting that Vaché's role in the small-scale publications of the Nantes *bande* (*En route, mauvais troupe* and *le Canard Sauvage*) is generally judged to have been a minor one, and that he made no contribution to the final review *Ce que les sars ont dit*. Polizzotti considers that Vaché was "a secondary contributor to the group's activities,"⁴² while Sarment has called him "le plus anodin" of the group.⁴³

In relation to gender attitudes, the group elaborated a complex hierarchy of men and of women, which served to further enhance their sense of elitism. That of men peaked at the heights of "Les Mimes", descending down through the "Sârs", the "sous-hommes" and the "sur-hommes", to "les généraux" at the very bottom - though Vaché apparently suggested a lower category for his own father, a marine captain, along the lines of the "untouchables".⁴⁴ The order of women is of particular interest insofar as it proposes a broad divide between the domain of goddesses - "les Fuyantes sacrées" - and that of mortal women, stretching down through "nos soeurs putassières", "la putain au grand coeur", "mes soeurs les respectées putains", with the deepest contempt reserved for the "Mère cousine", a figure of conformist respectability. The persistence of such attitudes is evidenced in Vaché's letter to Breton of 29 April 1917, which is decorated with a cartoon image of "ma soeur la putain familière",⁴⁵ while one of the two male images is of the "tough guy" type, cigarette hanging from lower lip, and captioned "my brother the big city ponce". We discover these same "shady", criminal types, apparently leaving a theatre, in an undated drawing by Vaché (fig.5), reproduced in Carassou - and there are perhaps links here between these "gangster" types, and those of political anarchism which I discuss later. As ever in Vaché's drawings, we find the same careful attention to fashion details and accessories, in the cut of a coat, the style of a hat, or the turned-up collar.

Carassou characterises Vaché's father in terms of a "petit homme nerveux, autoritaire, très décoré et très vieilli ..."⁴⁶ According to Jeanne Derrien "Son père devait

⁴² Polizzotti, *op. cit.* p.43.

⁴³ Jean Sarment, cited by Henri Béhar in Carassou, *op. cit.* p.12.

⁴⁴ Carassou, *op. cit.* p.24.

⁴⁵ Reproduced in Roger L. Conover (ed), *Four Dada Suicides: Selected Texts of Arthur Cravan, Jacques Rigaut, Julien Torma and Jacques Vaché*, London: Atlas Press, 1995, p.218-219.

⁴⁶ Carassou, *op. cit.* p.24.

être très dur avec lui", and that "Il le détestait."⁴⁷ Derrien relates how Vaché had got to know a young, female employee of an undertaker who had offered him a discount, and that Vaché had asked her to reserve a place for his father. Writing to his father, explaining how he had come to be wounded, Vaché sarcastically observes that "Je regrette beaucoup d'avoir quitté le front au moment intéressant,"⁴⁸ while to Derrien he confides "je sors d'un enfer." It is clear from the tone of Vaché's wartime letters to his father (and in contrast with those to his mother), that there was little warmth between the two men. Jean Sarment describes Vaché as "habillé avec un plus grand soin et un gros effort vers le dandyisme," adding that: "Il portait le monocle à l'oeil gauche et s'était voué au genre anglais."⁴⁹ Vaché had English roots on his mother's side of the family, and his apparent Anglophilia - his adoption of English expressions and habits, his serving as a translator with the British forces, etc. - might also be read as a further rejection of the father.

Vaché and Wartime Masculinity

Vaché himself is described by his correspondent Jeanne Derrien as "un pur" and she adds: "C'était un garçon glacial, pas bavard du tout, tres réservé".⁵⁰ Their relationship was undoubtedly a purely platonic one ("Jamais je ne l'ai embrassé, même serré la main"), and Sebbag makes the point that for Vaché, as for others in that circle, including Breton and Fraenkel, women were either raised into the category of the pure and chaste - the *petite fille modèle* - or fell within the various categories of the fallen, the *grue* or the *putain*. Of Breton, Derrien observes dryly: "Monsieur Breton était antiféminin. Il n'était même pas aimable, presque pas poli ... Il était tres fermé."⁵¹ Sebbag judges the three men to have been "délicatement misogynes", while considering Vaché "le plus équivoque des trois, comme si sa quête de <petites filles> pouvait masquer un attrait pour les garçons ..."⁵² - an issue we will return to when considering the manner of Vaché's death. Sarment nicely captures something of Vaché's gender attitudes, together with his style of humour and use of Anglicisms in *Cavalcadour*:

⁴⁷ Jeanne Derrien, interview in Georges Sebbag (ed), *Jacques Vaché: Quarante-trois lettres de guerre à Jeanne Derrien*, Paris, Jean-Michel Place, 1991, p.28.

⁴⁸ Vaché, letter of 1 October 1915, in Vaché, *Soixante-dix-neuf lettres de guerre*, op. cit.

⁴⁹ Jean Sarment from *Jean-Jacques de Nantes*, quoted in Carassou, op. cit. p.28.

⁵⁰ Derrien, op. cit., p.26.

⁵¹ Derrien, in Sebbag, *ibid.* p.26.

⁵² Sebbag, *ibid.* p.ix.

Pas ces demoiselles, excuse me gentlemen ! Je me détourne - honi soit qui mal y pense - de ce sexe abusif, endurci dans le despotisme. Je mets de côté quelques mystérieuses, insondables petites filles; mais pour la gloire de leur durée dans mon estime, il faudrait me les tuer à 13 ans.⁵³

Breton too throws further light on Vaché's attitudes towards women in *La Confession dédaigneuse*, as in this description of a woman known simply as "Louise", whom he met in Vaché's room at Nantes, and whom Vaché:

obligeait à se tenir des heures immobile et silencieuse dans un coin. A cinq heures elle servait le thé, et, pour tout remerciement, il lui baisait la main. A l'en croire, il n'avait avec elle aucun rapport sexuel et se contentait de dormir près d'elle, dans le même lit. C'était d'ailleurs, assurait-il, toujours ainsi qu'il procédait.⁵⁴

Attitudes which, Breton concludes, serve to anticipate the question subsequently posed by Gide: "Jacques Vaché était-il chaste?".

Breton also reports an equally revealing incident involving Vaché and a young girl, another Jeanne, whom he rescued one night from two toughs who were abusing her in the vicinity of the Gare de Lyon. Vaché eventually abandoned her after their spending a night together in a hotel near the Bastille, but significantly omitted from the edited version of the incident in the 1949 edition of the *Lettres de guerre* is Breton's final comment that "I have reason to believe that in exchange, she gave him a dose of syphilis."⁵⁵ In omitting such details Breton focuses on the more romantic aspects of the escapade and provides us with a more mythicised version of the life of Vaché, where we remember instead the first night that the couple spent together, given shelter by "un éteigneur de réverbères qui, par une poétique coincidence, exerçait le jour la profession de croque-mort."⁵⁶

We find throughout Vaché's drawings an obsessive dissection of contemporary masculinity, focussed upon eccentric English military types, elegant and aristocratic types, and tough guys and gangsters - and where we constantly find close attention to fashion details, an insistence upon style or the cut of a uniform, and above all the expression of a particular "attitude". The Derrien letters are particularly rich in terms of their imagery and boast a cast of English eccentrics as bizarre as that of Peake's

⁵³ Jean Sarmant, *Cavalcadour*, cited in Carassou, op. cit. p.34.

⁵⁴ Breton, *La confession dédaigneuse*, op. cit.

⁵⁵ Breton, *Disdainful Confession* (English translation), in *Four Dada Suicides*, op. cit. p.247.

⁵⁶ Breton, *La Confession dédaigneuse*, op. cit.

Gormenghast. What's immediately striking here is the contrast between the visually-rich letters to Derrien, with their often sophisticated imagery, and the far more basic, cartoon-like drawings in the few facsimile copies published of the letters to Breton. On his return to the front after his recovery, in May 1916, Vaché was attached to the English forces in the capacity of translator and we discover in his letters a clear fascination with the range of masculine types encountered there. We find one such striking example in Vaché's second letter to Jeanne (fig.6):

L'autre jour je demande à mon Major insolent ce qu'il faisait en bras de chemise, en terrain découvert - Le bombardement commençant - La réponse tranquille: < - I enjoy my pipe ...> Well !!⁵⁷

Indeed, we discover this Jarryesque sense of the absurd throughout Vaché's letters - a realm of eccentrics, where the norms, morality and logic of everyday reality have been almost entirely abandoned - only to be replaced by that of an entirely other, strictly hierarchical order, by the absurdity of military discipline, and a rather savage gallows humour. Vaché's astute eye for both English eccentricity and the fashion detail is again in evidence in this extract from the summer of 1917, with accompanying sketch of an English officer, who appears - despite the torrential rain - hands on hips, languidly smoking, and sporting:

la tenue d'ETE assez extravagant: chemise de soie cachou, culotte courte (avec quel pli!) bas noirs de soie aussi, et ESCARPINS - Bien - Je dois dire qu'il ne sort pas du camp en ce déshabille galant.⁵⁸

In another of Vaché's drawings, bearing the inscription "Toth" (fig.7), we find an elegantly uniformed young officer in an attitude of casual disdain towards his German prisoner, a model of masculine control and restraint - and a model of masculinity with which Vaché himself might well have identified.

Vaché's attitude towards his own masculinity often reflects distinctively Anglophile attitudes, obvious in his sense of humour and his predilection for English uniforms, dress-style and attitudes. We can detect, particularly in his early attitudes towards the war, the influence of Ian Hay's *The First Hundred Thousand* (1915), a rollicking yarn which humourously traces the recruitment and training of a detachment of Kitchener's volunteer army during the very early stages of the war. Vaché was strongly taken by Hay's book and planned to illustrate it. There's a certain naive innocence in Hay's cheery, populist account of war, aimed at reassuring the people at home, while discreetly concealing from

⁵⁷ Vaché in Sebbag, *ibid.* - letter 2, Aug-Sept. 1916 ?

⁵⁸ Vaché, in Sebbag, letter no.37, 29 July 1917.

them the true horror of what was actually going on - again an indicator of "manliness" and restraint. Hay, as we can gauge from the titles of other of his books - *A Man's Man*, or *The Right Stuff* - was acutely concerned with masculinity and appropriate forms of male response to the challenges of war. Notions of bravery and heroism are modestly played down, as in this extract from the opening poem:

But yesterday, we said farewell
To plough; to pit; to dock; to mill.
For glory? Drop it! Why? Oh, well -
To have a slap at Kaiser Bill.⁵⁹

And Hay's poem concludes with the line: "He did his duty - and his bit!" The style of humour found in Hay is apparent in this exchange in the darkness during a night patrol:

"War is hell and all that, but it has a good deal to recommend it. It
wipes out all the small nuisances of peace-time."

"Such as - . - ?"

"Well, Suffragettes, and Futurism, and - and - "

"Bernard Shaw" suggested another voice.⁶⁰

Hay also drily observes of the trenches - which extended some 400 miles across Belgium and France - that at least trench warfare "tidies things up a bit", where the result is "an agreeable blend of war and peace" - again a form of ironic understatement which pervades Vaché's letters. The cheery optimism and humourous drawings of Vaché's letters to Jeanne Derrien give way, though, to the more savage, Jarryesque humour of the disillusioned letters to Breton of the later years of the war, with their complaints of boredom, miserable conditions and imprisonment, and their prevailing tone of deep cynicism.

With regard to the the commonly adopted metaphor of the "theatre of war", Fussell observes:

The most obvious reason why "theater" and modern war seem so compatible is that modern wars are fought by conscripted armies, whose members know they are only temporarily playing their ill-learned parts.⁶¹

And he adds that the wearing of "costumes" i.e. uniforms which designate some fixed role, "suggests the sense of the theatrical." We might further suggest that there is a strong sense in which trench warfare, with its fixed positions which soon develop into a kind of travesty of civilian life, is itself inherently theatrical. The trenches soon accumulate

⁵⁹ Ian Hay, *The First Hundred Thousand*, Edinburgh and London: W. Blackman and Son, 1915.

⁶⁰ Hay, *ibid.* p.120.

⁶¹ Fussell, *op. cit.* p.191.

many of the structures of everyday life, for cooking, washing, recreation, etc., and Hay observes that signposts appear in the British trenches indicating places like "Piccadilly Circus", or "The Haymarket", while planks over a stream are labelled "London Bridge." Hay also parodies the division in civilian life, between the world of work and pleasure:

The firing-trench is our place of business - our office in the city, so to speak. The supporting trench is our suburban residence, wither the weary toiler may betake himself ... for purposes of refreshment and repose.⁶²

And he adds that the firing-trenches are lined "with little toy houses on either side ... painted, furnished and decorated." Fussell also observes that this notion of the theatricality of war is further reinforced by "the availability of a number of generically rigid stage character-types ... the sadistic Sergeant, the adolescent, snobbish Lieutenant, the fire-eating Major, the dotty Colonel." This, then, is the wartime world which as an interpreter with the British, Vaché inhabited for much of the war, and indeed, it is precisely such a range of military types that we encounter in Vaché's letters.

Breton describes Vaché himself as "très elegant", and recounts his almost fetishistic love of military uniforms: "Dans les rues de Nantes, il se promenait *parfois* en uniforme de lieutenant de hussards, d'aviateur, de médecin."⁶³ And in fact, in the various extant photographs of Vaché, we discover him in a bewildering range of both English and French military uniforms (for example, fig.8), further accentuating the already strong sense of Vaché's identity in terms of the theatrical and of his social role as performance. It is often noted of Vaché that, like Jarry, he modelled himself upon his own creation, but with Vaché this is further complicated by his "chameleonism", where different friends or correspondents are presented with radically different personas. Put more strongly, it can be argued that Vaché's masculinity itself becomes one more aspect of this performance, along the lines of gender as performance as theorised by Judith Butler: "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame ..."⁶⁴ For Butler, following Foucault, substantive categories such as "sex" and "gender" which pose as being simply "natural", are in fact highly elaborated social constructions, the fixing of which is a function of *discourse*. For Foucault, there are no sexual identities which are somehow "outside" or "before" the effects of power - the

⁶² Hay, *op. cit.* p.97.

⁶³ Breton, *La confession dédaigneuse*, *op. cit.*

⁶⁴ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London and New York: Routledge, 1990, p.33.

effects of socialisation, the family, etc. Citing Simone de Beauvoir's celebrated dictum that "one is not born a woman, but rather, becomes one", Butler extends that claim to masculinity, while also rejecting any simple binary opposition of masculine and feminine with its presumption of a heterosexual norm, embracing instead sexual identities which are open and multiple.

For Butler, then, "gender is performatively produced"⁶⁵, it is "always a doing", as opposed to some fixed, essential quality of the subject - and it is precisely this sense of masculinity as performance which we discover in Vaché's theatrical deployment of military uniforms, in the endless details of civilian costume over which he fantasizes in his letters, and in the various roles adopted by him, both in fantasy and reality. As he boasted in a letter to Breton: "J'ai successivement été un littérateur couronné, un dessinateur pornographe connu et un peintre cubiste scandaleux ..."⁶⁶ The writer and boxer Arthur Cravan, too, in his prose poem "Hie!" boasts his multiplicity:

Mondain, chimiste, putain, ivrogne, musicien, ouvrier, peintre,
acrobate, acteur;

Vieillard, enfant, escroc, voyou, ange et noceur; millionnaire ... [...]

Je suis tous les choses, tous les hommes et tous les animaux!⁶⁷

And Cravan exclaims: "My fatal plurality!" This all sounds, in its somewhat rakish swagger, as though straight out of some adolescent, cowboy adventure story and rather close to Vaché in another of his letters to Breton:

Je serai aussi trappeur, ou voleur, ou chercheur, ou chasseur, ou mineur, ou sondeur - Bar de l'Arizona (Whisky - Gin and mixed?), et belles forêts exploitables, et vous savez ces belles culottes de cheval à pistolet-mitrailleuse ...⁶⁸

Throughout most of his wartime correspondence with Breton, Aragon and Fraenkel, Vaché assumes the pseudonym J.T.H. or "Jacques Tristan Hylar", but in his final letters becomes "Harry James" - perhaps ambivalently identifying with his father, James Vaché, while also suggesting the hero of some boys' adventure story. So that the performance of masculinity, and of identity, was for Vaché a continually recreated and shifting construction.

⁶⁵ Butler, *ibid.* p.24.

⁶⁶ Vaché, *Lettres de guerre* - letter to Breton, 11 October 1916, *op. cit.*

⁶⁷ Arthur Cravan, "Hie" in *Maintenant*, Second Year, no.2, July 1913, reproduced in Maria Lluïsa Borràs, *Cravan: Une stratégie du scandale*, Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 1996.

⁶⁸ Vaché, letter to Breton, 14 November 1918, in Vaché, *Lettres de guerre de Jacques Vaché*, *op. cit.*

Une fourberie drôle: Humour, Anarchism, Dada

Vaché, as we have noted, was himself partly of English extraction through the family of his mother⁶⁹ and certainly cultivated Anglicisms in his manner, dress, and not least in his style of humour - or "umour". It is a style of humour central to Breton's formulation of surrealism, and comprehensively demonstrated in his *Anthologie de l'humour noir* (1945), but which Breton first finds embodied in the figure of Jacques Vaché. For Breton, this style of humour in Vaché is inextricably bound up with his form of revolt: "His refusal to participate is absolute", while at the same time, "he maintains all the 'outer signs of respect', of a somewhat automatic acquiescence to precisely what the mind deems most insane."⁷⁰ The debt to Jarry too is clear, where we find, as Béhar observes, "une mise a distance, une théâtralisation de la vie quotidienne."⁷¹

Vaché's definitive statement on the meaning of the term "umour" comes in his letter to Breton of 29 April, 1917: "IL EST DANS L'ESSENCE DES SYMBOLES D'ETRE SYMBOLIQUES." To which Vaché adds that "Il y a beaucoup de formidable UBIQUE aussi dans l'umour" and that "c'est une sensation - j'allais presque dire un SENS - aussi - de l'inutilité théâtrale (et sans joie) de tout."⁷² The terminal point in this sense of the "theatrical futility" of all things, is surely Vaché's "suicide" itself, compounded by his "decision" to take along with him an unknowing companion, and in all of which Breton discerns - surely stretching any definition of "humour" beyond breaking point - "une dernière fourberie drôle."⁷³ In his *Anthologie de l'humour noir* Breton re-formulates Vaché's concept of *umour* using Freudian terminology, describing this form of humour as:

the revenge of the pleasure principle (attached to the superego) over the reality principle (attached to the ego) ... The hostility of the hypermoral superego is thus transferred to the utterly amoral id and gives its destructive tendencies free rein.⁷⁴

But with specific reference to Vaché himself, Breton interestingly observes that:

A superego of pure simulation, veritable pattern of its kind, was retained by Vaché only as an ornament: an extraordinary lucidity conferred an unusual, wilfully macabre, and extremely disquieting cast

⁶⁹ Martin Sorrel tells us that Vaché's "maternal grandmother's name was Pearson, she came from near London, and married a Frenchman called Vincendeau." - in Sheppard, op. cit. p.99.

⁷⁰ André Breton, *Anthology of Black Humor*, trans. Mark Polizzotti, San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1997, p.293.

⁷¹ Henri Béhar in Carassou, op. cit. p.13.

⁷² Vaché, *Lettres de guerre*, letter to Breton, 29 April 1917, op. cit.

⁷³ Breton, *La confession dédaigneuse*, op. cit.

⁷⁴ Breton, *Anthology of Black Humor*, op. cit. p.vii.

upon his relations with the id.⁷⁵

While Breton's usage of Freudian terminology is often somewhat oblique, this does seem an extremely perceptive analysis in the light of Vaché's hostile relations with authority, whether with his father (a marine captain), or with the French and British military authorities. It accords, too, with Vaché's theatrical play with uniforms - indeed, with the entire murderous reality in which he was bound up for the final four years of his life - and not least, the savagery of his ultimate *fourberie drole*. But we might also view this as one possible strategy in dealing with an unbearable reality for a generation caught up, as Sandra Gilbert observes, between "a deadly technocracy on the one hand and deadly bureaucracy on the other"⁷⁶ - the outcome of which, for Gilbert, was a generation of emasculated men - of ciphers or cannon fodder.

We have already noted, in relation to "umour", what Breton describes as Vaché's absolute refusal to participate, and which I want now to link to the question of anarchism and the Nantes group, together with its relationship with dadaist revolt. Vaché's "refusal" never assumed the form of anything so definitive as *desertion*, but rather, as Breton points out, "Vaché opted for another kind of insubordination, which we might call *desertion within oneself*."⁷⁷ The issue of anarchism was hotly disputed in France during the immediate postwar period and was the central factor in the scandal which followed the appearance of the first review produced by the Nantes group in 1913 - *En route mauvaise troupe*. This otherwise fairly innocuous adolescent literary review, produced under the clear influence of the preceding generation of Symbolists, is characterised by Carassou as "anarchist" in tone and includes one article by Rigaud,⁷⁸ which directly confronts the issue of anarchism and which distinguishes political anarchism from the bourgeois' conflation of the anarchist with the *apache*. The resulting scandal which broke in the regional newspapers is symptomatic of the sensitivity of the authorities to the whole issue of anarchism at the time, and particularly in the light of the growing wave of patriotism being experienced in the build-up to World War I. There had been growing social unrest in France since the 1890s, with terrorist attacks by Ravachol and Emile Henry, and this in turn reflected increasing international tension across Europe, with strikes and murders, eventually culminating in the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand at Sarajevo in June 1914 and the outbreak of war. Shattuck too points to the significance

⁷⁵ Breton, *ibid.* p.294.

⁷⁶ Sandra Gilbert cited in Sidra Stich, *op. cit.* p.31.

⁷⁷ Breton, *ibid.* p.293.

⁷⁸ Rigaud, "Anarchie", in *En route, mauvaise troupe* - reproduced in Carassou, *op. cit.* pp.42-49.

of anarchism from the 1880s onwards, as a paradigm of revolt for young intellectuals and for the artistic avant-garde, and cites the view of Buisson who saw in anarchism:

the spirit of revolt ... of examination and criticism, of opposition and innovation, which leads to scorn and hate of every commitment and hierarchy in society, and ends up in the exaggeration of individualism.⁷⁹

Buisson's words surely unerringly find their target in the figure of Jacques Vaché - in his disrespect of all authority, his nihilism, his extreme individualism - and point up the significance of the example of anarchism in relation to the revolt of the avant-garde, and in particular, that of the dada movement. Polizzotti points out that anarchism had again become topical during 1913 when the anarchist gangster Bonnot attained the status of populist hero and that Breton cites political anarchy as "one of the seeds of surrealism."⁸⁰ Polizzotti adds that Breton began to take note of the anarchist press during this period and to consider the notion of political art - an early link with radical politics which was to later find its echo in the commitment of surrealism to permanent revolution and its political affiliation to communism.

Vaché, Breton: Dada and Surrealism

As Breton observes in *La Confession dédaigneuse*, his meeting with Vaché in February of 1916 came for him at a crucial moment:

Je traversais un des moments les plus difficiles de ma vie, je commençais à voir que je ne ferais pas ce que je voulais. La guerre durait.⁸¹

Richard Cork notes in *A Bitter Truth*⁸², that the war had by 1915 reached a state of deadlock, and that by 1915-16 even those artists who had initially approached it as offering the potential for positive social change (Beckmann, Nevinson) had largely reached a state of deep disillusion - others were already dead (Macke, Gaudier-Brzeska) or were suffering major trauma (Kirchner). For Breton:

Le tout était de vivre encore ... Écrire, penser, ne suffisait plus: il fallait à tout prix se donner l'illusion du mouvement, du bruit ...⁸³

In the light of his "final letter" before being sent to the "tranchée des cadavres", the

⁷⁹ Cited in Shattuck, *op. cit.* p.20.

⁸⁰ Breton cited in Mark Polizzotti, *Revolution of the Mind: The Life of André Breton*, London: Bloomsbury, 1995, p.15.

⁸¹ Breton, *La confession dédaigneuse*, *op. cit.*; Breton, *OCI*, p.199.

⁸² Richard Cork, *A Bitter Truth: Avant-Garde Art and the Great War*, London: Yale University Press/Barbican Art Gallery, 1994 - see chapters 3 & 4.

⁸³ Breton, *La confession dédaigneuse*, *op. cit.*

wounded Vaché was already, in a sense, returned from the dead, and the savage humour of his letters, his problems with the military authorities resulting in his imprisonment,⁸⁴ and the manner of his eventual death, all suggest a man with little to lose.

Vaché certainly seems a changed man on his return to the front. Eric Leed argues that the frontsoldier developed a "defensive personality" as a consequence of the immobility of trench warfare and the instinct for survival. Most conscripts on both sides of the trenches sought as quiet a life as possible by minimising antagonising the enemy, thus cultivating a sharp split with the "offensive personality" promoted by the staff, as well as a strong identification with the similar plight of the enemy - all equally victims of an impersonal, industrialised war. Vaché's growing hatred of his leaders, indeed of the whole generation of the "fathers", and his attitude of "moral desertion" were therefore shared with many others of his generation, and we can see in all of this quite clear signs of a breakdown of the official "martial" model of masculinity, displaced by a less confrontational, survivalist model. Leed even argues a "collective estrangement" from the military role by those serving in the trenches and the sense of having an "invisible personality" not recognised by the leadership.⁸⁵

For Carassou, whereas dada could have been - and indeed, to a degree was - sparked off in any number of places, surrealism was far more the specific outcome of a particular configuration - of the specific mixture of Vaché and the "sars" of Nantes, with the figure of André Breton. Carassou roots surrealism in the Nantes group's rejection of positivism and its attendant logic, and instead its embrace of the alternative logics of children, of "primitives", and in its use of intuition in place of analysis. For Henri Béhar, the Nantes group shared many of the sentiments and revolt expressed by dada - a condemnation of the old world, the radical critique of art (albeit expressed rather differently) - and views both as the revolt of youth against a bankrupt civilisation. Certainly at least one member of the Nantes group, Pierre Bissière, has claimed that "Nous avons inventé le mouvement Dada"⁸⁶ - a view shared by Hugnet, who, as we have seen, viewed Vaché's spirit of refusal, of negativism, as "précurseur de l'état

⁸⁴ See undated letter to Aragon: "Je suis in prison, naturellement, et peu apte cependant à exprimer des choses visibles sur votre oeuvre ..." - *Lettres de guerre*, op. cit.

⁸⁵ Eric Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War I*, London, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979, p.113.

⁸⁶ Pierre Bissière, cited in Carassou, op. cit. p.233.

d'esprit dada."⁸⁷

In *La Confession dédaigneuse*, Breton is quite specific on the question of dada at the time of his meeting with Vaché:

<Dada> n'existait pas encore, et Jacques Vaché l'ignora toute sa vie. Le premier, par conséquent il insista sur l'importance des gestes, chère à M. André Gide.

The reference to Gide and the importance of gestures points to that author's *Les Caves du Vatican*, first published in 1914, with its character Lafcadio, widely admired by Breton and his circle. Perhaps the most egregious such gesture was that of the sensation caused by Vaché's sudden appearance at the premiere of Apollinaire's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, which he subtitled "A Surrealist Drama", staged in Montmartre on 24 June, 1917. According to Breton's account of the incident, Vaché appeared during the interval following the first act:

Un officier anglais menait grand tapage à l'orchestre: ce ne pouvait être que lui. Le scandale de la représentation l'avait prodigieusement excité. Il était entré dans la salle revolver au poing et il parlait de tirer à balles sur le public. A vrai dire le <drame surréaliste> d'Apollinaire ne lui plaisait pas.⁸⁸

As Polizzotti observes, of the nearly two dozen reviews of the performance, only Aragon's mentions the Vaché incident ; as Aragon was by this time also a close friend of Breton, we can perhaps see in this incident a proto-surrealist embellishment of reality. Nonetheless, Breton insists on the incident having taken place, and that its effect upon him was profound; as he later observed:

Never before, as I did on that evening, had I measured the depth of the gap that would separate the new generation from the one preceding it.⁸⁹

And across a range of accounts of it, Breton makes of this heavily mythicised incident, one of the founding pillars of surrealism - as we find echoed in the *Second manifeste du surréalisme*:

L'acte surréaliste le plus simple consiste, revolvers aux poings, à descendre dans la rue et à tirer au hasard, tant qu'on peut, dans la foule.⁹⁰

Nonetheless, such a gesture would not have been entirely out of line with a certain streak

⁸⁷ Hugnet, op. cit., p.361.

⁸⁸ Breton, *La confession dédaigneuse*, op. cit.

⁸⁹ Breton, cited in Polizzotti, op. cit. p.60-61.

⁹⁰ André Breton, "Second manifeste du surréalisme" (1930), in *Breton Manifestes du surréalisme*, Paris: Gallimard, 1962, p.74; Breton, *OCI*, op. cit. pp.782-3.

of malicious humour we sometimes find in Vaché's letters, as in this remark addressed to Breton:

Rappelez-vous que j'ai ... une bien bonne amitié pour vous - que je tuerai d'ailleurs - (sans scrupules peut-être) - après vous avoir indûment dévalisé de probabilités incertaines...⁹¹

Or again, we find such savagely Ubuesque statements as: "tachez d'arranger un spectacle à grand effet pour que l'on tue ensemble quelques personnes et que je m'en aille."⁹² As Alain and Odette Virmaux⁹³ point out, Vaché is here reprising Pere Ubu's "Alors je tuerai tout le monde et je m'en irai", from Jarry's *Ubu Roi*. So that both in his letters and in the absurd incident staged by Vaché at the theatre we find Vaché "in character", playing out his own invention, albeit one in part derived from Jarry and from his earlier performances amongst the *sârs* of Nantes - and running through that performance, a powerful and unpredictable streak of anarchism. Moreover, as Fussell observes, combatants experienced a sharp split between their own experience and that of those far from the action, such that:

The visiting of violent and if possible painful death upon the complacent patriotic, uncomprehending, fatuous civilians at home was a favourite fantasy indulged in by the troops.⁹⁴

And Fussell notes that Sassoon similarly fantasized the massacre of a music-hall crowd, crushed by tanks.

Vaché's final performance

Toward the end of the series of Vaché's *Lettres de guerre*, we discover an increasingly dark, and at times despairing tone - complaints of the endless boredom, depression, even imprisonment, and of the unlikelihood of ever being released from military service with any remaining semblance of sanity:

Je sortirai de la guerre doucement gâteux, peut-être bien, à la manière de ces splendides idiots de village (et je le souhaite).⁹⁵

And to which he adds the somewhat paranoid proviso, "pourvu qu'ILS ne me décervèlent pas pendant qu'ILS m'ont en leur pouvoir?" - again a reference to Jarry and the absurdity of "la machine à décerveler" (*Ubu Cocu*) which Vaché often links to the

⁹¹ Vaché, *Lettres de guerre* - letter to Breton, 5 July 1916.

⁹² Vaché, letter to Fraenkel, 4 June 1917.

⁹³ Alain and Odette Virmaux, *Cravan, Vaché, Rigaut: Suivi de le Vaché d'avant Breton*, Mortemart: Rougerie, 1982, p.22.

⁹⁴ Fussell, op. cit. p.86.

⁹⁵ Vaché *Lettres de guerre* - letter to Breton, 14 November 1918.

arbitrary power of the military authorities. As Kenneth Silver points out, Paris and the front line were, in effect, two quite different realms, and that whereas Paris was "congested with myth, fiction, propaganda, prohibitions ...", the front was "relatively free of ideology".⁹⁶ Silver argues that the rigidity of military discipline obviated the need for persuasion through wartime propaganda to anything like the extent encountered in civilian life - in effect, a military "machine à décerveler". We find too in Vaché's letters, a strong sense of this detachment, as when he speaks of civilians as a "race apart", or again, of being exiled to some far-off country and the whole experience being like some kind of dream.⁹⁷ Eric Leed too observes that participants in the war underwent "a deep and profound alteration of identity" and that: "Many spoke of having inhabited two distinct worlds, of having seemed two distinct persons."⁹⁸ It is therefore not difficult to see the war, as Sidra Stich does, as some kind of alternative reality - as a parallel world of sudden and uncomprehending death, arbitrary authority, pulverised bodies, decimated landscapes, and destroyed towns - and hence to discern connections with the anxious alternative world proposed by surrealism.

But this sense of an alternative reality is also further reinforced by the habitual use of drugs within the alternative circles of French youth - Carassou for example points to the use of cocaine amongst the Nantes group, while Richardson⁹⁹ details drug use within the Parisian avant-garde. There exists in the *Lettres de guerre*, fairly conclusive evidence of Vaché's familiarity with drugs, both in terms of the imagery sometimes evoked, and also in terms of direct references to opium, as in the following extract:

Je fume à coup sur un peu de <ouffiane>, cet officier <au service de sa Majesté> va se transformer en androgyne ailé et danser la danse du vampire ...¹⁰⁰

In the same letter Vaché adds that "J'imagine - Les anglais sont en réalité des allemands, et je suis au front avec eux, et pour eux ..." - a claim, repeated in other letters, which has some parallels with that of the case of a patient reported by Breton and which he used as the basis of a prose poem *Sujet*. Breton's patient, a "young, well-educated man", had attracted the attention of the military authorities through his extreme

⁹⁶ Kenneth E. Silver, *Esprit de Corps: The Art of the Parisian Avant-Garde and the First World War*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989, p.81.

⁹⁷ Sebbag, op. cit. - see letters five and six.

⁹⁸ Eric Leed, op. cit., p.1.

⁹⁹ Richardson, op. cit. For example, Richardson refers to Apollinaire, Salmon and Picasso as having a taste for opium and visiting opium dens (p.4 & pp.62-63).

¹⁰⁰ Vaché, *Lettres de guerre* - letter to Breton, 5 July 1916, op. cit.

recklessness during bombardments (rather like the smoking English officer sketched by Vaché), and when subjected to medical examination insisted that "the supposed war was only a simulacrum, the make-believe shells could do no harm, the apparent injuries were only makeup" - and that nothing the doctors could argue would convince him otherwise.¹⁰¹ Renata Salecl, in an analysis of the role of anxiety in contemporary culture, has pointed to a strikingly similar case, involving a young Israeli soldier serving in the Yom Kippur war. The soldier was able to survive the experience only by creating the fantasy that he was participating in a war movie, thus creating some consistency in his reality, but eventually suffered a major breakdown when he encountered a pile of corpses mixed with the bodies of horses - a scene which he had never encountered in a movie, and hence entirely unassimilable within his fantasy.¹⁰²

Apart from the psychical damage occasioned by war, we have already encountered in Vaché's letters certain references to drug-taking and to that alternative reality upon which it opens out. There are perhaps literary precedents here which would link the Anglophile dandy Vaché to the use of opium in the works of Oscar Wilde - as, for example, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, where we find another beautiful and perpetually young dandy, and who also has a friend (Adrian Singleton) whose life he destroys through opium. Vaché died suddenly of an opium overdose, in a Nantes hotel, on the 6th January 1919. In *Le Télégramme des Provinces de l'Ouest*¹⁰³ the following day, it was reported that the son of one of the most honourable families in Nantes, together with a friend, had been found dead, naked together in a hotel bedroom, and that an American soldier had raised the alarm. Vaché and his friends were described as part of a gang of young "*noceurs*", and while recognising a national problem of drug use amongst the young, the article asserts that the problem had not hitherto affected Nantes. In *L'Express de l'Ouest* of January 9th, it is argued that the circumstances of the death would suggest inexperienced drug users. The article of January 7th also speculates on the source of the opium, suggesting as one possibility that Vaché's father (not mentioned by name) may have been the source, through his travels in the East - an accusation which must surely have incensed the father and set the seal on their poor relationship during Vaché's lifetime; after Vaché's death the father

¹⁰¹ Breton, cited in Polizzotti, op. cit. p.53. See Breton, *OCI*, pp.24-5.

¹⁰² Renata Salecl, "Images of Anxiety", unpublished lecture, University of Westminster, 10 November 2000.

¹⁰³ Reproduced in full in Vaché, *Lettres de guerre*.

erased all trace of his son's memory.

Carassou points to Breton's pointedly ignoring the fact that Vaché had been found naked, in a hotel bed, with another man, attributing this neglect to Breton's own prejudices against homosexuality. He also adds that, according to another of Vaché's Nantes friends, Pierre Lanoë, there had been a fourth young man in the hotel room, André Caron, who was known for his homosexual partners, and who had managed to drag himself out of the hotel. Carassou seems inclined toward the thesis of Vaché's probable homosexuality, which in turn would raise questions on the nature of Breton's relationship with Vaché. Certainly for Sedgwick, close homosocial relationships entail the ever-present potential to become homosexual ones, while a number of commentators have noted that the intense inter-male bonding created during times of war tended to create an environment in which homosexual experiences become more likely. In Vaché's case there is no conclusive evidence and the issue only serves to point to the complexity of sexual identity during such a charged period.

Breton insisted that there was certainly nothing involuntary in Vaché's death, that Vaché was in fact an experienced opium user, and that he had decided upon a final "*fourberie drôle*" in opting to take a friend along with him - a suggestion dismissed as "monstrous" by a number of other commentators. Nonetheless, as Carassou demonstrates, a number of witnesses support Breton's stance. Marc-Adolphe Guégan, writing in 1927, argued that Vaché had told someone only weeks beforehand that he would not die alone, and that he would take someone along with him.¹⁰⁴ Derrien too inclines towards the thesis of suicide, but interestingly also links this to Vaché's troubled relationship with his father:

Son père devait être très dur avec lui ... Il le détestait. ... Je commence à croire ... que Jacques avait organisé sa mort. Il avait fait scandaleuse un peu pour punir son père.¹⁰⁵

We could also point to a torn photograph of Vaché in civilian clothes, which he is said to have used for target practice (fig.9), which again might support the notion of a death-wish. However, in the view of others who knew Vaché - Jean Sarment, Paul Perrin - the notion of suicide is dismissed. Nonetheless, for Breton, writing in the *Anthologie de l'humour noir*, the evidence of Guégan provided striking confirmation of his insistence

¹⁰⁴ Marc-Adolphe Guégan, *La Ligne du coeur*, No, 8, 15 January 1927 - cited in Carassou, op. cit.

¹⁰⁵ Jeanne Derrien in Sebbag, op. cit.p.28.

upon Vaché's suicide:

a trustworthy source [Guégan writes] sent me a horrifying revelation. Apparently Jacques Vaché said a few hours before the tragedy: *I will die when I want to die ... But then I'll die with someone else. Dying alone is too boring ... Preferably one of my very best friends*¹⁰⁸

Breton's insistence upon this *romantic* death - for what we have here is surely an updated version of Wallis's *Death of Chatterton* (another beautiful red-haired youth) - points to its significance as one of the founding myths of surrealism; a myth built, though, with a certain degree of resigned acquiescence on the part of its victim, upon the corpse of Jacques Vaché. One can almost hear his final *Well*.

¹⁰⁸ Marc-Adolphe Guégan, *La Ligne du coeur* (January 1927), quoted in Breton, *Anthology of Black Humor*, op. cit. p.294.

2. Fetish, Fantasy and Masculinity in the Work of Max Ernst

A Sabaean odour - an aromatic fragrance - a delicious sensation for which there is no name: I mean a scent, such as fills the shop of some curious glover.
Cervantes, *Don Quixote*.

Dada and Postwar Trauma

Following the loss of Vaché, Breton turned in the immediate postwar period to the Dada movement and in particular pinned his hopes on the figure of Tristan Tzara to provide the spark needed to ignite some new and insurrectional literary movement. Breton first encountered dada journals, including Tzara's 1918 *Dada Manifesto*,¹⁰⁷ during the war, and he first wrote to Tzara on 22 January 1919, only weeks after Vaché's death. Fearing disturbances, the French government allowed demobilisation to proceed only very slowly, and Breton and his circle gradually realised that a return to the pre-war status quo was underway, dashing any hopes for radical change. Dada therefore seemed to hold the key to a shake-up within the arts and there were numerous indications of such an oppositional cultural shift even before the much anticipated arrival of Tzara in Paris, on 17 January 1920 and the immediate launching of the first Dada season. In April of the same year, Breton began to correspond with Max Ernst whose work he had first come across in *Die Schammade*, the Cologne dada journal which Ernst directed, thus establishing a further bridge through which dada would exercise an influence upon events in Paris.

Even before his own arrival in Paris in the autumn of 1922, the work of Ernst had preceded him in an exhibiton of his collages at *Au Sans Pareil* in May 1921 and had begun to assume enormous importance in relation to the still emergent visual style, or more accurately styles, assumed by surrealism. This was due in no small measure to his still-emerging collage aesthetic. Coming as he did from a distinctly authoritarian,

Wilhelminian socio-cultural background, in a country still coming to terms with the trauma
¹⁰⁷ Tristan Tzara, "Manifeste dada 1918", in Tzara, *Dada est tatou, Tout est dada*, Paris: Flammarion, 1996, pp.203-213.

of a lost war, Ernst can be taken as representative of a particularly troubled male subjectivity; and a trauma which I wish to argue as central to any understanding of the early work, up to around 1924, when we see his style and subject matter changing radically. I want first to consider Ernst and masculinity in terms of a "language of gloves" - in particular, to highlight the importance to masculinity of fetishism and to briefly trace the development of this motif in the art and literature of the late nineteenth century - a period on which Ernst drew extensively in his collage novels, no doubt in part for the barely veiled sexual undercurrents which he is able to tease out of its works. I shall focus in particular upon the highly influential glove series of Max Klinger - *Paraphrase on the Finding of a Glove* (1881) - and develop the discussion of the glove motif within surrealist imagery generally.

Much of my analysis of Ernst and masculinity finds its focus in the relationship with the father, and because of his enormous influence upon Ernst, I also want to include here some consideration of Giorgio de Chirico and his own highly formative relationship with his engineer father. By inserting the glove within the context of late nineteenth-century investigations of sexuality, in which fetishism assumes the role of the key perversion, I want to argue that the glove points us to the emergence of competing forms of male sexual identity which were to become crucial to the development of alternative forms of male subjectivity within surrealism. Moreover, that these models, privileging as they do the erotic, the fetishistic, and the perverse, signify a rejection in the wake of the World War I, of the dominant model of normative, procreative sexuality advocated by that generation of rejected fathers. I therefore deploy the glove here, not simply as a motif in its own right within artworks and literature, but also more broadly as an index of intense anxieties and radical changes within male subjectivity during this period - as a symbol of shifting social mores and the forging of alternative, and often "deviant", sexual identities. Kaja Silverman uses the phrase "male subjectivity at the margins"¹⁰⁸ to refer to these alternative identities, and it is therefore at the margins I want to begin, with the theme of masculinity, fetishism and the glove.

¹⁰⁸ Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

Confused Masculinity and the Language of Gloves

A good deal of recent work on nineteenth-century culture has focused on the positioning of the feminine in relation to modernity, analysing issues such as the "doctrine of separate spheres", gender relations and in particular, the socio-political position and representation of women.¹⁰⁹ In this, much attention has been given to the social construction of femininity, to issues such as the gendering of the gaze and in particular to the representation of the female body. Increasingly though, attention has turned to the construction and representation of masculinity, in a critique which questions its claims to universality, innateness, and transhistorical fixity.¹¹⁰ During the Victorian era, masculinity is organised around the concept of *manliness*, characterised by Norman Vance as "embracing qualities of physical courage, chivalric ideals, virtuous fortitude, with additional connotations of military and patriotic virtue."¹¹¹ In fact, it can be shown that masculinity undergoes a gradual metamorphosis over the course of Victoria's reign, with the "manly ideal" being continually remoulded in conformity with the ideological imperatives of nation and empire. As David Newsome points out:

To the early Victorian it represented a concern with a successful transition from Christian immaturity to maturity, demonstrated by earnestness, selflessness and integrity; to the late Victorian it stood for neo-Spartan virility as exemplified by stoicism, hardiness and endurance.¹¹²

Arthur Brittan argues that "styles" of masculinity will relate closely to their socio-historic context and be subject to change, but that there is an underlying ideology of "masculinism" which serves to underpin patriarchy, and which is stable and resistant to change.¹¹³ Michael Roper and John Tosh, too, insist on the central role of patriarchy, which they define, drawing upon Weber, in terms of "father rule": "social authority based on a family structure in which the oldest male presides over an extended family."¹¹⁴ For Roper and Tosh, masculinity is continually changing, shifting in relation to its "other", and

¹⁰⁹ See for example Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, Oxford and Cambridge Mass.: Blackwell, 1988; Linda Nochlin, *Women, Art and Power, and Other Essays*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1991; Janet Wolf and John Seed, *The Culture of Capital*, Manchester: MUP, 1988.

¹¹⁰ See Joseph A. Kestner, *Masculinities in Victorian Painting*, Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995; Herbert Sussman, *Victorian Masculinities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995; Arthur Brittan, *Masculinity and Power*, Oxford and Cambridge Mass.: Blackwell, 1989; Michael Roper and John Tosh (eds), *Masculinities in Britain since 1800*, London and New York: Routledge, 1991; Pamela Nunn, *Problem Pictures: Women and Men in Victorian Painting*, Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995; J. A. Mangan and James Walvin, *Manliness and Morality*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987.

¹¹¹ Norman Vance, cited in Mangan and Walvin, op. cit. p.1.

¹¹² David Newsome, *ibid.*

¹¹³ Arthur Brittan, op.cit. p.4.

¹¹⁴ Roper and Tosh (eds), op. cit. - see their Introduction.

must continually be proven:

Despite the myths of omnipotent manhood which surround us, masculinity is never fully possessed, but must perpetually be achieved, asserted and renegotiated.¹¹⁶

While many historians and theorists are therefore agreed on the instability and mutability of the concept of masculinity, I want to pursue more radical models which insist upon the *constructedness* of that category.

Carole Vance makes a basic distinction between "Cultural Influence Models" of gender which accept cultural influences without problematising the basic terms of the theory, and the more radical category of "Social Construction Theory", where sexual acts, identities, object choice, and even desire itself, are explicable in terms of social construction.¹¹⁶ "Gender" must first be distinguished from "biological sex", and the presumed correspondence of male sex with masculinity placed under question. Abigail Solomon-Godeau, who analyses "excessive" forms of male embodiment in French Neoclassical painting, argues that gender is to be conceived as "a contingent, variable, and inescapably social ensemble of values, beliefs and behaviours projected and imposed upon the physical givens of sexual difference."¹¹⁷ For Solomon-Godeau, both sides of this equation are produced within a patriarchal order which produces "ideologies of gender" in order to maintain the prevailing imbalance of power. I want to turn later to Judith Butler's conception of gender as a *performative* category, but for the moment wish to consider the question of its social construction and in particular to analyse the role of *representation* in that construction.

Rather similar ideals of masculinity seem to have been shared by the western European nations that were to become the principal combatants of World War I, though subject to certain local variations - for example, resort to the duel as a mean of resolving inter-male disputes died out during the early nineteenth century in England, whereas in France duels were still being fought well into the following century. But of equal importance, we see masculinity again subject to further transformation in response to changes such as the continuing shifts in the position of women, and the male reaction to the war itself - particularly in terms of a rejection of the fathers and their value-system,

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p.18.

¹¹⁸ Carole S. Vance, "Social Construction Theory and Sexuality", in Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis and Simon Watson (eds), *Constructing Masculinity*, New York: Routledge, 1995, pp.37-48.

¹¹⁷ Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Male Trouble: A Crisis in Representation*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1997, p.19.

deemed responsible for the conflict. Ernst, born in 1891 at Bruhl, a small town between Cologne and Bonn, has described his own father as "très autoritaire ... catholique de stricte obédience ...",¹¹⁸ and as in the case of so many others of Ernst's generation, we discover a powerful rejection of the masculine ideals of the generation of the fathers as part of a more wide-ranging rejection of all that that generation held dear - authority, the family, rationality, and values such as duty.

As Brittan, Kestner and others, point out, masculinity can be grasped only in relation to femininity and to the underlying and unequal power relations between the sexes; gender relations will reflect material power relationships. I first want to consider these relationships in the context of mid- to late-nineteenth century painting, in order to sketch out the context for Klinger's work, and the background for Ernst's, in terms of the debates around gender. We discover such an unequal relationship in William Holman Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* (1853), which depicts a St. John's Wood love-nest (fig.10), a bourgeois interior which could profitably be contrasted with that of Louise Ernst-Strauss's *Augustine Thomas et Otto Flake*, which I discuss below. In Ruskin's analysis of this image in a letter to *The Times*, he notes that "even the most trivial objects force themselves upon the attention of a mind which has been fevered by violent and distressful excitement."¹¹⁹ And while he adds that "There is not a single object in all that room ... but it becomes tragical, if rightly read", Ruskin pointedly fails to comment on the glove prominently displayed at the fallen woman's feet. The glove lies limply on the floor, below the man's outstretched hand, and we might suspect that its explication would be both unnecessary and unsuitable in the pages of *The Times*. Linda Nochlin, pointing to the dropped glove in Hunt's image and in Rossetti's *Hesteria Rosa* refers to "tell-tale symptoms of a moral as well as a physical carelessness."¹²⁰ I want to suggest too, that the glove marks a shift in the order of experience of the image, from the visual, to the tactile - as a kind of eruption within the visual field, where hand and glove point the viewer to the epidermal, the carnal, the corporeal. And hence the invisibility of that experience to Ruskin's penetrating but detached gaze.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Max Ernst, *Ecritures*, Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1970, p.11.

¹¹⁹ John Ruskin, Letter to *The Times*, 25 May, 1854. Reproduced in J. M. Golby (ed), *Culture and Society in Britain 1850-90*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, p.104.

¹²⁰ Linda Nochlin, "Lost and Found: Once More the Fallen Woman", in *Women, Art and Power, and Other Essays*, op. cit., p.71.

¹²¹ Apropos hands, Leonore Davidoff notes that "hands were also regarded as the agents of the "dirty" work involved in masturbation, an obsessive concern of the middle class at this time."; in J.L. Newton, M.P. Ryan and J. R. Walkowitz (eds), *Sex and Class in Women's History*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983, p.69.

I therefore want to explore the significance of this metonymic signifier of male presence and to consider its implications in relation to the late Victorian model of masculinity. In Alfred Elmore's *On the Brink* (1865), the male again figures as seducer (fig.11). The woman, having lost all her money at the gambling tables, now faces the loss of her virtue to her male rescuer. Again, the gesture here is interesting, with one of the man's hands either reaching into a leather purse, or perhaps toying with his glove. A Freudian reading of the symbolism implicit here, given that this is a scene of seduction, is clear enough; but quite apart from such connotations, during the nineteenth century gloves were also associated with contraception. The first book on contraception to be published in England was Carlile's *Every Woman's Book: Or, What Is Love*, of 1826. In that book, Carlile describes the man's use of an early form of condom, known then as a *baudruche* or "glove", and the fabrication of early condoms from animal intestines and skin serves to further underline this association with the corporeal and epidermal.¹²² In his *History of Contraception*, McClaren also tells us that the association of condoms with prostitution and disease - the fear of syphilis - made them less acceptable in respectable nineteenth-century households. So that these underlying sexual connotations might further reinforce the sexual symbolism of gloves in images of the "fallen woman".

In James Tissot's *The Bridesmaid* (c.1883-85), a somewhat rakish groom is tucking his newly-married wife's skirts into the bridal carriage, whereas his roving gaze is quite clearly fixed upon the watching bridesmaid.¹²³ But I'm also drawn here to the glove, again rather rakishly half unfurled - and again rather pointedly incongruous, given the formality of a Victorian wedding. In this erotics of gloves, then, the glove would appear to be clearly on the side of sexual malpractice, or of illicit sexuality. I want to pursue this further in relation to some literary works of the period, beginning with a brief snippet from the American author Henry James, in an 1888 essay on London. James writes there of his fascination with the city on his arrival in London, and of the "inexhaustible interest" of every object as he walks along the Strand. He writes, "in particular it struck me as desirable and even indispensable that I should purchase most of the articles in most of the shops." But he then suddenly changes tack:

¹²² Angus McClaren, *A History of Contraception*, Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1990, p.183.

¹²³ See C. Miller, L. Nead, and G. Pollock, *Images of Women*, Leeds: Leeds City Art Gallery, 1989, for confirmation of this reading of the Tissot.

Memorable is a rush I made into a glover's at Charing Cross ...
Keen within me was a sense of the importance of deflowering, of
despoiling the shop.¹²⁴

The language here is surely striking: the idea of suddenly "rushing" at the shop and the sexual connotations of "deflowering" and "despoiling". Again this erotic undercurrent in relation to the glove, and perhaps too, an erotics of consumption - the fetishization of the commodity.

Secondly, let us consider this brief scene drawn from the diaries of A.J. Munby, an obsessive, not to say fetishistic, collector of data drawn from the everyday lives of working women.¹²⁵ Under a dripping tree in Hyde Park, Munby offers the shelter of his umbrella to a young woman employed in a drapery store and the somewhat stilted conversation turns to gloves:

"We've not many gentlemen customers", she went on, "ours is mostly a ladies' shop: but sometimes a gentleman might come in for gloves or that. Yes, if he asked me to put the gloves on for him, I should, of course; but not without. And if he wanted to joke me, I should say "one of the young men'll attend to you, Sir".¹²⁶

Again - and clearly prompted by Munby's questioning - there is the sense of there being something rather indelicate, perhaps sexually suggestive, in a man being fitted for gloves by a woman. Certainly in the case of Munby, and we might suggest more broadly, the sexual charge derives in part from the differential power relationship at play here, a theme I want to pursue further in the next extract.

The third text I want to briefly consider is Emile Zola's sex-and-shopping melodrama, *Au Bonheur des Dames* of 1882. Zola's novel is based on the first of the great department stores, the *Bon Marché*, reconstructed as a large store in 1869. The entire novel is marked by a certain ambivalence towards the modern: the gigantic store is continually expanding, producing ever more spectacular displays, ever more goods; but at the same time it is linked with death - with the inevitable collapse of all the small shopkeepers driven to bankruptcy, suicide or death. It is linked too with the highly eroticised seduction of its female customers - as Rita Felski points out, placing sex and capital at the centre of modern social relations. The store itself - the *Bonheur* - is closely

¹²⁴ Henry James, "London", in James, *The Portable Henry James*, New York: The Viking Press, 1951, p.521-2.

¹²⁵ See Griselda Pollock, " 'With My Own Eyes': Fetishism, the Labouring Body and the Colour of Its Sex", *Art History*, Vol.17, no.3, September 1994, pp.342-382.

¹²⁶ Munby, quoted in Derek Hudson, *Munby - Man of Two Worlds*, London: John Murray, 1972, p.98.

linked to its male owner and manager, Mouret, whereas its clientele is almost exclusively female. The central theme is therefore one of seduction - of customers seduced by ever more elaborate displays, spectacles, sales and promotions; and overlaid by the simultaneous sexual seduction of the women by Mouret. Here is Mouret speaking of "the exploitation of Woman":

C'était la femme que les magasins se disputaient par la concurrence, la femme qu'ils prenaient au continuel piège de leurs occasions, après l'avoir étourdie devant leurs étalages. Ils avaient éveillé dans sa chair de nouveaux désirs, ils étaient une tentation immense, où elle socombait fatalement ... puis dévorée.¹²⁷

Already in Zola's language we see how consumption is eroticised and how a ready slippage is effected from economic to sexual seduction. In part this is effected through a mobilization of the gaze - the store as one gigantic spectacle, an erotic *machine*, with ever more elaborate displays - of unfurled umbrellas, oriental carpets, even a Swiss chalet constructed entirely of gloves. We constantly find the commodities fetishised, as if animated by the desiring gaze of the window-shoppers:

Et les étoffes vivaient, dans cette passion du trottoir: les dentelles avaient un frisson ... ; les pièces de drap elles-mêmes, épaisses et carrées, respiraient, soufflaient une haleine tentatrice; tandis que les paletots se cambraient davantage sur les mannequins qui prenaient une âme ... avec les battements de la gorge et le frémissement des reins.¹²⁸

Again then, the language is heavily eroticised, but it is with the sales that Zola really brings all this to its orgiastic conclusion, when the store is stormed by a conquering army of women, variously described as "fevered", "intoxicated", "inflamed". One woman, for example, is described by Zola as having "la face animée et nerveuse d'une enfant qui a bu du vin pur", and who finally leaves the store alarmed, "dans le détraquement de cette névrose des grands bazars."¹²⁹

Ernst himself was of course acutely aware of these scarcely veiled and often melodramatic sexual undercurrents within nineteenth century popular literature, and there is perhaps an echo of this delirium in Ernst's own exhilarated response to a teaching-aids catalogue, its diversity of objects "producing hallucinations and lending the objects depicted new and rapidly changing meanings."¹³⁰ Ernst also used various commercial

¹²⁷ Emile Zola, *Au Bonheur des Dames*, Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1980, p.115-6.

¹²⁸ Zola, *ibid.* p.45.

¹²⁹ Zola, *ibid.* p.336.

¹³⁰ Max Ernst, "Biographical Notes: Tissue of Truth, Tissue of Lies", in Spies, *op. cit.* p.290.

catalogues - *Le Catalogue du Grand Magasin du Louvre*, *Le Magasin des nouveautés*, or *Les Attributs de commerce* - for collages produced around 1920 using his "overpainting" technique, which involved painting over large parts of the catalogue page, leaving certain objects still exposed.¹³¹ One such example, *l'ascaride de sable* (1920), features a page of women's hats, transformed by Ernst into sand-worms. As Elsa Adamowicz observes, the elements thus isolated by Ernst serve as a catalyst, releasing unconscious desire, or as Ernst himself observes: "*ce qui se voyait en moi*."¹³² We could add that Duchamp, too, has recourse to the commercial catalogue when asked by Cabanne for his own interpretation of the *Large Glass*:

I didn't have any, because I made it without an idea. ... The idea of the ensemble was purely and simply the execution, more than the descriptions of each part in the manner of the catalogue of the "Arms of Saint-Etienne".¹³³

Duchamp invokes the same analogy in describing his "Box" of 1913, as a collection of unrelated notes, reflections and calculations, "like the Saint-Etienne catalogue",¹³⁴ a box characterised by Dalia Judovitz in terms of "a logic of assemblage whose nature is not artistic but technical and commercial".¹³⁵ As he observes in his *Notes*, Duchamp also looked to the catalogue for a specific style of writing: "Éviter tout lyrisme formel. que tout le texte soit un *catalogue*."¹³⁶ Breton, in a 1927 essay on Ernst, also points to "the inspiration which Apollinaire sought in catalogues", adding that "Max Ernst seems to have inherited the sense of culture as something extraordinary, captivating, paradoxical and priceless."¹³⁷ It is therefore perhaps no surprise that Albert Gleizes in his essay "The Dada Case" (1920), should have seen in dada the last gasp of a decadent bourgeois culture rooted only in materialist values. For Gleizes dada artwork was an expression of consumer culture, "all very fashionable" and "full of taste", while "the books and magazines are always delightfully made up and recall the catalogues of perfume

¹³¹ See Elza Adamowicz, *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image: Dissecting the Exquisite Corpse*, Cambridge and New York, 1998, pp.33-34 and 76-77.

¹³² Ernst, *Écritures*, op. cit. p.259.

¹³³ Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, New York: Da Capo Press, 1979, p.42.

¹³⁴ In this regard it is also worthy of note that Max Nordau (*Degeneration*) attacks Huysmans (*A Rebours*) for his "ransacking technical dictionaries" in order to produce his eclectic and exotic lists of liqueurs, scents, teas, etc., accusing him of having been "forced to copy the catalogues of commercial travellers." See Max Nordau *Degeneration* (1892), Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993, p.305.

¹³⁵ Dalia Judovitz, *Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1995, p.53.

¹³⁶ Marcel Duchamp, *Notes*, Paris: Flammarion, 1999, p.45.

¹³⁷ André Breton, "Max Ernst" (1927), in Max Ernst, *Beyond Painting*, New York: Wittenborn, Schultz Inc., 1948, p.180.

manufacturers."¹³⁸ So that the commercial catalogue, with its heterogeneous collection of objects, serves as a condensation of the dazzling array displayed in the *grands magasins*, a celebration, indeed a *fetishisation* of the commodity, as announced by Marx in 1867.

Meanwhile, in the glove department, the male shop assistant Mignot, at a counter covered in green velvet, is fitting gloves on Madame Desforgues. She is an aristocrat and the mistress of Mouret, the owner of the store. We're told she has already bought twelve pairs of kid gloves and is now being fitted with Saxe gloves:

A demi couché sur le comptoir, il lui tenait la main, prenait les doigts un à un, faisant glisser le gant d'une caresse longue, reprise et appuyé; et il la regardait, comme s'il eût attendu, sur son visage, la défaillance d'une joie voluptueuse. Mais elle, le coude au bord du velours, le poignet levé, lui livrait ses doigts de l'air tranquille dont elle donnait son pied à sa femme de chambre, pour que celle-ci boutonnât ses bottines. Il n'était pas un homme, elle l'employait aux usages intimes avec son dédain familial des gens à son service, sans le regarder même.¹³⁹

Gender and class surely clash here, in the woman's haughty disdain and the plebeian glover's almost masochistic servility. This all points to contemporary anxieties about the potentially promiscuous mixing of classes and sexes, in the erotic ambience of the department store. And Zola underscores the sensual nature of the encounter by adding that: "L'odeur des gants de Saxe ... la troublait d'habitude" and that "elle confessait son goût pour ce parfum équivoque, où il y a de la bête en folie, tombée dans la boîte à poudre de riz d'une fille."¹⁴⁰ In all of this somewhat overblown sensuality, there's also a strong element of fetishism - the prominence of both the tactile and the olfactory is striking - and as his customer leaves, the hapless glover winks to a friend and "murmurs crudely": "on la ganterait jusqu'au bout!" What's interesting too is the way in which the sexual coding of the glove metaphor shifts here to reflect the contemporary state of gender relations consequent upon the rise in mass consumption - more specifically, reflecting Zola's fears for a weakened and degenerate model of masculinity.

¹³⁸ Albert Gleizes, "The Dada Case", in Robert Motherwell (ed), *The Dada Painters and Poets*, Second edition, Cambridge Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1981, p.301.

¹³⁹ Zola, op. cit. p.144.

¹⁴⁰ Zola, *ibid.*

Borderline Males: Masculinity in Crisis

We find frequent claims in the literature, that masculinity is somehow "in crisis", usually following periods of war or social turmoil - hence such claims are made for the period following the American Civil War, World Wars I and II, the period of the *fin de siècle*, etc. I want to consider these claims particularly in relation to the period of formation of those men who were to become active within the dada and surrealist movements and to explore the gender climate in which they grew up. Michael Kimmel argues a "crisis in masculinity" during the late Victorian era, and points to a spate of articles during the 1890s which indicated a "male malaise".¹⁴¹ There were many reasons for this, but most obvious were the advances being made by women in Britain after 1870.¹⁴² We find a similar rise in feminist activism in other European countries, as for example in France, with the Fourth International Congress on the Conditions and Rights of Women meeting in Paris in September 1900. At the same time we find homosexuality being properly recognised and theorised in the work of early sexologists such as Havelock Ellis and Krafft-Ebing.¹⁴³ Normative bourgeois masculinity is essentially heterosexual, though heterosexual relationships often come into conflict with inter-male forms of bonding - Elaine Showalter points, for example, to the bourgeois male's club-based, "bachelor" style existence, even after marriage. Abigail Solomon-Godeau emphasises the notion of "homosociality", borrowed from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, which she roots in the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and which she defines in terms of the "networks of relationships between men that involve both power and desire and which may be expressed in cultural production."¹⁴⁴ Sedgwick refers to homosocial *desire* (rather than love) in order to designate a *structure* rather than an emotion and insists that such desire can't be understood outside its relation to women and to the gender system as a whole.¹⁴⁵ For Solomon-Godeau "crises in masculinity are neither unprecedented nor exceptional" and

¹⁴¹ Michael S. Kimmel, cited in Kestner, op cit.

¹⁴² This would include, amongst other legal changes in the status of women: growing demands for the vote; the Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882 giving women equitable property rights after marriage; and also repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts in 1886 which had tended to scapegoat prostitutes for male promiscuity.

¹⁴³ We find, for example, a case of glove fetishism amongst the many forms of fetishism analysed by Richard von Krafft-Ebing in his *Psychopathia Sexualis, With Especial Reference to the Antipathic Sexual Instinct: A Medico-Forensic Study*, translated from the twelfth German edition, New York: Stein and Day, 1965, pp.182-4.

¹⁴⁴ Solomon-Godeau, op. cit. p.29.

¹⁴⁵ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1985, p.2.

she leaves open the question of whether forms of masculinity which embrace "castration, alterity and specularity" should be read in terms of a masculinity "crisis", or whether they are not rather simply recurring themes within the history of representation of the male. Such alternatives to the dominant, "manly" model of masculinity were very much in evidence during the period of the *fin de siècle* of the 1880s and 1890s and characterised by Showalter in terms of "sexual anarchy." Showalter argues that the period - which saw the defining and pathologisation of homosexuality, the emergence of borderline figures like the androgyne, and the early manifestation of the New Woman - "marked a crisis of identity for men" and a breakdown of any clear boundary between the masculine and the feminine.¹⁴⁶ Turning specifically to the situation in France, Showalter cites Michelle Perrot, who argues that:

at the advent of the twentieth century, fear of women's sexual and economic liberation or perhaps an imaginary fear - gave rise to renewed antifeminism, expressed as a masculinity crisis ...¹⁴⁷

Showalter argues that there were fears in England of "degeneration and collapse", together with anxieties about growing decadence.¹⁴⁸ Andrew Wynter's *The Borderlands of Insanity* of 1877, warns of "the potential degeneration of borderline men into "Mazeland", "Dazeland" and "Driftland".¹⁴⁹ Wynter warned that men, without military service or a distinct social role would lack a clear masculine identity. Showalter points to similar fears in the United States and in France - and she refers specifically to the work of Zola and other French writers, who she says, "lamented the weakening virility of a feminized France", for which they blamed the New Woman and social degeneracy.¹⁵⁰ But it was in Germany that women were to make the greatest advances during the early years of the twentieth century, and in 1908 were admitted to universities and political parties. As Erika Esau has pointed out:

By the end of the First World War, Germany was considered the most advanced country in terms of the promotion of sexual equality, and most intriguingly, of a woman's right to sexual pleasure.¹⁵¹

It is perhaps therefore no coincidence that we also find in post-war Germany the most virulent manifestations of misogyny, as evidenced for example by Klaus Theweleit in

¹⁴⁶ Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle*, London: Virago, 1992, p.8.

¹⁴⁷ Michelle Perrot cited in Showalter, *ibid.* p.9.

¹⁴⁸ Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*, London: Virago, 1992, p.4.

¹⁴⁹ Cited in Showalter, *ibid.* 11.

¹⁵⁰ Showalter, *ibid.* p.10:

¹⁵¹ Erika Esau, "The Künstlerpaar: Ideal and Reality", in Marsha Meskimmon and Shearer West (eds), *Visions of the Neue Frau: Women in the Visual Arts in Weimar Germany*, Aldershot and Vermont: Scolar Press, 1995, p.30.

the case of the German *Freikorps*, or again, the sudden rise in sex crimes, a modern theme taken up in the work of George Grosz and Otto Dix.

We might therefore briefly consider *fin de siècle* Symbolism, for signs of this feared decadence and its impact on gender identity. As Showalter points out, while the avant-garde of the 1880s and 1890s broke with the dominant models of masculinity - experimenting, for example, with homosexuality, masochism and fetishism - they were nonetheless equally fearful of the role of feminism. Much Symbolist art, castigated by Max Nordau, clearly manifests this mixture of misogyny and fear in relation to the female body, as analysed in Bram Dijkstra's *Idols of Perversity* - for example in the focus upon castrating women like Salome, Clytemnestra and Judith, and in the frequent slippage made between the figure of woman and that of death. Of particular relevance in relation to the context of Ernst's early years is Nordau's *Degeneration* (1892), which viewed modern art as "the productions of a shattered brain", and argued that such works "have their source in the degeneracy of their authors, and that the enthusiasm of their admirers is for manifestations of more or less pronounced moral insanity, imbecility, and dementia."¹⁵² Nordau categorises his degenerates mainly in terms of "mystics" and "egomaniacs", castigating invention and imagination in art, preferring instead organic growth and observation, and traces the roots of such degeneracy to the fatigue and nervous excitement occasioned by industrialisation and modern urban life. Nordau's moralistic analysis of the ills of late nineteenth century society at least pinpoints for us some of the factors against which the next generation was to rebel, and as George L. Mosse points out: "Youth took up the offensive, trampling on all that Nordau held dear ... For them, life was a struggle for existence which was bound to end in defeat" - and hence their tendency toward fatalism and pessimism.¹⁵³ Interestingly, Nordau argues that hysteria is to be found "as often, perhaps oftener, among males" and links that condition to egomania, as a desire by some men to "attract attention and get themselves talked about", pointing specifically to "eccentricities of dress and behaviour."¹⁵⁴ We find ample evidence of such eccentricities, for example in the dandyism of Vaché or Breton, which I discuss below in relation to the emergence of competing styles of masculinity during the early years of the new century. But I want to return again to the motif of the glove, focusing in particular upon the theme of fetishism in

¹⁵² Nordau, op cit. p.vi.

¹⁵³ George L. Mosse, "Introduction: Max Nordau and his *Degeneration*", ibid. p.xxi.

¹⁵⁴ Nordau, ibid pp.25-26.

a brief analysis of Max Klinger's remarkable series of engravings, *Paraphrase on the Discovery of a Glove* (1881). Klinger is also of significance here because he is so often cited as an important early influence upon Ernst, who had the additional benefit of being able to read such works in the light of his own knowledge of the work of Freud.

Thus psychoanalysis immediately suggests itself as a useful model through which to approach this alleged "crisis" within male subjectivity, and I therefore first want to briefly set out the model adopted by Kaja Silverman in her own analysis of deviant masculinities. Silverman, adopting a modified Lacanian model, argues that we inhabit neither the symbolic order (the order of language and social-symbolic systems) nor the mode of production *directly*, but rather are "accommodated to their Laws via an ideological facilitation."¹⁵⁵ We accede to those orders, she argues, via fantasy and imaginary "captation" (the Althusserian "recognition effect" through which ideology functions),¹⁵⁶ thus providing a model which accounts both for the psyche as well as its imbrication within the socio-political order. Silverman thus suggests that:

unconscious desire and identification do not always follow the trajectory delineated for them in advance, and that they sometimes assume forms which are profoundly antipathetic to the existing social formation.¹⁵⁷

This potential deviation from the path to normalization, through processes of desire and identification, allows the emergence of "deviant" masculinities; and it is this rejection of what Silverman refers to as the "dominant fiction" of masculinity - basically, its equation with the phallus as symbol of power and privilege - that I wish to consider in relation to Ernst and others linked to the dada and surrealist movements. In terms of ideology, Silverman draws here on the work of Jacques Rancière, using the notion of a society's ideological "reality" as its "dominant fiction" - a kind of mirror held up to society, in which it recognises itself. Silverman's psychic model is based on the Lacanian distinction between the ego or *moi*, which provides support for identity or self and is located in the imaginary, as distinct from the *je* or "I", which is the *desiring* subject. To this Silverman adds the concept of the *fantasmatic*, taken from Laplanche and Pontalis, which is defined as "the unconscious prototype for all dreams and fantasies" and which organises and regulates unconscious desire. Such a division is strikingly exemplified in the case of

¹⁵⁵ Silverman, *op cit.* p.2.

¹⁵⁶ See Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1969), in Althusser, *Essays on Ideology*, London: Verso, 1984.

¹⁵⁷ Silverman, *op cit.*

Ernst's enormous ambivalence in relation to the father - both desired and feared - and all which that figure symbolises, while his staging of unconscious desires in the works considered here up to around 1924, might be seen in terms of the Laplanchean fantasmatic - as the *mise-en-scène* of those desires. Silverman's Lacanian model assumes that "lack of being is the irreducible condition of subjectivity" - the "acephalic" subject, or the subject of pure *lack* (the *je*), where lack of access to reality is the condition of acceding to language - and where fantasy comes to conjure up an object in place of that lack (Lacan's *objet a*).¹⁵⁸ Silverman also draws here on the work of Slavoj Žižek, who has argued that fantasy both "provides the coordinates of our desire" and also "constructs the frame enabling us to desire something."¹⁵⁹ Fantasy requires that the subject assume some "desiring position" within particular scenarios or tableaux, and hence also plays an important role in contributing to the formation of identity - Ernst's own self-myth in his autobiographical writings, and the visual works playing out his own Oedipal dramas, thus provide a striking example of such self-construction through fantasy and desire.

In terms of constructing that identity, the images in which the subject discovers itself come to it from *outside*. As Silverman observes, Laplanche and Pontalis in their essay "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality", maintain that "fantasy enters from outside - that it breaks into the infant subject ... in the guise of the sounds and images of adult sexuality." There are thus two forms of incorporation of external images: the first is that of the "imaginary" identifications of the Lacanian mirror stage; while the second is that of "symbolic" identification, based upon the Oedipus complex. Laplanche further argues that "meanings implicit in the slightest parental gesture bear the parents' fantasies", and that:

In the final analysis the complete oedipal structure is *present from the beginning*, both "in itself" (in the objectivity of the familial configuration) but above all "in the other", outside the child.¹⁶⁰

An excellent example might be Ernst's "hallucination" at 5-7 years, as described in *Beyond Painting* (cited below), in which his father appears making "joyously obscene"

¹⁵⁸ Judith Butler provides a useful critique of this Lacanian model of subjectivity as rooted in "lack", with its inevitable failure of identity, which she sees as having a somewhat ideological air about it, and which serves to exclude cultural politics or any form of alternative - a kind of "slave morality" - see Butler, *Gender Trouble*, op. cit. p.57. The work of Deleuze and Guattari, as we shall see in a later chapter, provides an alternative paradigm to this lack-based model of the subject.

¹⁵⁹ Slavoj Žižek, cited in Silverman, *ibid.* p.6.

¹⁶⁰ Laplanche, "Life and Death in Psychoanalysis", cited in Silverman, op. cit. p.7.

gestures, in what is clearly a Freudian "seduction" fantasy.

For Silverman, then, classic male subjectivity - what she calls the "dominant fiction" (the equation of the male organ, the *penis*, with the *phallus* as transcendent signifier of desire) - "rests upon the denial of castration", covering over the lack which is the consequence of man's access to language, and therefore relies upon a number of forms of *méconnaissance*. This "failure to recognize" can pertain either to the self or the other - the subject projects an unwanted feature of the self onto the *other*, or, "refuses to recognize an unpleasurable or anxiety-producing aspect of the other by disavowing it, a process which sometimes requires the support of a fetish."¹⁶¹ Conventional masculinity thus rests upon a denial of castration which Silverman reads as a refusal to acknowledge the "defining limits of subjectivity"; the consequence of that refusal is, to a large degree, the category of "femininity" i.e. the projection of *male* lack onto the feminine. As we shall see in discussing Freud's account of fetishism, the Freudian model posits *female* lack, as evidenced in woman's purported anatomical "wound". As Charles Bernheimer, very much like Silverman, points out, Freud's argument is itself ideological insofar as it "veils the purely constructed quality of the identification of female nature with castration": "woman cannot be deprived of an organ that was never hers in the first place."¹⁶²

For Silverman, then, subjectivity is itself founded upon *lack* ("lack of being is the irreducible condition of subjectivity"), while masculinity rests upon an impossible fiction - the equation of penis and phallus - a belief retained at the level of the unconscious and of fantasy. Masculinity is thus particularly susceptible to what Silverman refers to as "historical trauma" - for example World Wars I and II - when belief in the dominant fiction can no longer be sustained, and hence the recurring "crises" in masculinity. We might now consider Klinger's *Glove* series for evidence of anxieties which indicate the dominant fiction under threat, and the defence mechanisms through which this unease is placated and the penis/phallus equation re-asserted.

¹⁶¹ Silverman, *op cit.* p.45.

¹⁶² Charles Bernheimer, "Fetishism and Decadence: Salome's Severed Heads", in Emily Apter and William Pietz (eds), *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993, pp.64-5.

Klinger, Modernity and the Glove as Fetish

Klinger sites his opening image - *Place* (fig.12) - in a location which is of the essence both of modernity and the popular - a roller-skating rink; a place which, as Martin Jay points out, constitutes one of Benjamin's public "dream spaces", where we find "new arenas of visual consumption" and "the possibility for previously unknown libidinal encounters and itineraries."¹⁶³ The significance of such modern fantasy spaces is underlined in the numerous photographs of dadaists and surrealists posing on bicycles, horses and aeroplanes at the Luna Park funfair or at the Montmartre fair. Apollinaire and Picabia would obtain drugs at Luna Park, while in the photos of the surrealists we also see various sexual relationships being played out, as in the case of the *ménage* of Ernst and the Eluards, or that of Simone Breton and Max Morise. These are places, therefore, tinged with eroticism and the promise of the illicit, and which through fantasy, allow the acting out of new forms of identity.

Klinger himself appears in the first image of his series, on the far left alongside a friend, both of whom look in the direction of a young girl who has fallen to the ground, attracting the attention of a number of others nearby.¹⁶⁴ The girl's pose, with legs awkwardly raised in the air in the direction of Klinger, immediately suggests a concern with the question of sexual difference. Christiane Hertel compares Klinger's final version of the print with an earlier drawing (fig.13), where the most glaring alteration is in the pose of the young girl, whose legs become more insistently raised, exposed in the direction of the artist, thus confirming the importance of sexual difference (and in particular castration anxiety) to Klinger's theme.¹⁶⁵ Also amongst the crowd, seated to the left, is a woman whom Hertel refers to as the "Brazilian" or the "Cuban", the object in real life of Klinger's unrequited affection and the other main protagonist of the series. In the second image, *Action* (fig.14), we encounter the loss of the glove, in a scene which perfectly characterises the Baudelairean modern, posed in terms of "the ephemeral, the fugitive,

¹⁶³ Martin Jay, "Unbinding Vision", in L. Charney and V. Schwartz, *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California, 1995, p.65.

¹⁶⁴ Klinger's image is in many ways an updating of Manet's *La Musique aux Tuileries*, 1862 (National Gallery, London), from the appearance of the artist and friend on the far left, the seated women, the playing child in the foreground, to the man raising his hat on the right, and suggests the importance of Manet as a precedent in depicting such scenes of modern life.

¹⁶⁵ Christiane Hertel, "Irony, Dream and Kitsch: Max Klinger's *Paraphrase of the Finding of a Glove* and German Modernism", *The Art Bulletin*, Vol.74 no.1, March 1991.

the contingent",¹⁶⁶ and posed too in terms of Benjamin's "love at last sight."¹⁶⁷ The dropped glove initiates an absurd metonymic chain of desire from the lovesick man's outstretched hand, to the dropped glove, the disappearing female object of desire, the farcical little dog, and finally to a skating woman being apparently carried off between two men. In psychoanalytic terms, we are confronted here with the Lacanian *objet a*, characterised by Benvenuto and Kennedy as "the object which unchains desire, especially desire for what is lacking with regard to the mother, and then what the mother desires." This object "represents what the Other lacks in order to be absolute" and is "the object which always *escapes the subject*."¹⁶⁸ For Lacan, as for Freud (though couched in somewhat different terms), the "lack of being of the mother is ... represented by the signifier of the phallus, which she does not have and which she desires."¹⁶⁹ The equation of glove/woman/dog with the phallic is surely inescapable in Klinger's image, suggesting that we should consider the glove in terms of the psychoanalytic concept of fetishism. This is confirmed in subsequent episodes of the series, where we discover the glove idolised, inflated, domineering, worshipped - essentially, the over-valuation of the object associated with the fetish.

According to Robert Nye, "the concept of fetishistic perversion first arose in French psychiatry and was only later integrated into psychiatric nosologies elsewhere" - including that of Freud.¹⁷⁰ Nye finds support for Michel Foucault's contention that fetishism constituted the "master perversion" of the latter part of the nineteenth century, the "guiding thread for analyzing all the other deviations."¹⁷¹ It was only in 1887 that fetishism, hitherto treated as a form of obsession, was finally named as such by Alfred Binet. Binet, a student of Charcot, published his *Le fétichisme dans l'amour* in 1887, taking the view - somewhat like that later adopted by Freud - that "tout le monde est plus ou moins fétichiste en amour; il y a une dose constante de fétichisme dans l'amour le plus régulier," and hence that there are degrees of fetishism, ranging between a *grand*

¹⁶⁶ Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life", in Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, New York: Da Capo Press, 1964, p.13.

¹⁶⁷ Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, London and New York: Verso, 1973, p.45.

¹⁶⁸ Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy, *The Works of Jacques Lacan*, London: Free Association Books, 1986, p.176.

¹⁶⁹ Benvenuto and Kennedy, *ibid.* pp.177-178.

¹⁷⁰ Robert A. Nye, "The Medical Origins of Sexual Fetishism", in Apter and Pietz (eds), *op. cit.*, p.14.

¹⁷¹ Foucault cited in Nye, *ibid.* p.20.

and a *petit* fetishism, where only the former could be considered pathological.¹⁷² Binet divides fetishism into two broad camps: either that which takes a body part as its object (the eye, hand, hair and odour); or that which attaches to some material object (a night cap, white apron, nailed boot, etc.). Interestingly, the large department stores are reported as the haunt of hair fetishists, where they would track their victims, armed with scissors, before cutting a lock from their hair. Equally, Binet points to the role of perfumes, particularly those of animals whose odour is particularly pungent when in rut - musk, civet - again recalling Zola's pastiche of the *Bon Marché*. Both William Hull and S.W. Beck, in their histories of the glove, make connections with the olfactory, both citing Cervantes who refers in his *Don Quixote* to: "an aromatic fragrance - a delicious sensation for which there is no name: I mean a scent, such as fills the shop of some curious glover."¹⁷³ In France there were specific fears in the wake of the disaster of 1870, surrounding the birth-rate and the physical health of the nation, such that fetishism was bound up with fears of degeneracy - a medical debate which had its literary corollary in the work of decadents such as J.-K. Huysmans (*A Rebours*) or Remy de Gourmont (*Sixtine*). For Binet the fetishist proper is "un dégénéré" who is subject to a hereditary predisposition toward perversion, while the actual form assumed by his fetishism will be determined by some chance event or observation, usually occurring early in the subject's life.¹⁷⁴ With Binet, then, the fetish is resolutely both material and corporeal, either literally a body part, or metonymically linked to the body. So that the glove clearly lends itself to this broader sexual economy of the fetish, again asserting the claims of the material and tactile - as well as of the olfactory - as against those of the eye.¹⁷⁵

Freud considered the subject of fetishism on a number of occasions in his writings, beginning with some comments in his 1905 *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, followed by some remarks on foot-fetishism in his 1907 study of Jensen's *Gradiva* (a paper which Spies has argued was used by Ernst in a number of collages).¹⁷⁶ In the *Three Essays*, Freud asserts that "no other variation of the sexual

¹⁷² Alfred Binet, "Le fétichisme dans l'amour", *Revue Philosophique*, Vol.XXIV, August and September 1887, Part One, p.144.

¹⁷³ William Hull, Jun., *The History of the Glove Trade, with the Customs Connected with the Glove*, London: Effingham Wilson, 1834; S.William Beck, *Gloves, their Annals and Associations*, London: Hamilton, Adams and Co., 1883, p.91.

¹⁷⁴ Binet, *ibid.* p.164.

¹⁷⁵ In terms too of a Freudian analysis of fetishism, the fetish itself is on the side of the material, the corporeal - a displacement from a sighting, from the visual, to the tactile.

¹⁷⁶ Werner Spies, *Max Ernst- Collages: The Invention of the Surrealist Universe*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1991, p.59.

instinct that borders on the pathological can lay so much claim to our interest as this one, such is the peculiarity of the phenomena to which it gives rise."¹⁷⁷ Freud first conceived of fetishism (in its pathological form) in terms of the overvaluation of some substitute for the sexual object. By the time of his 1908 essay "On the Sexual Theories of Children", Freud put forward the idea that children early on believe both parents to be in possession of a penis, and in a 1910 footnote to the *Three Essays* argued that the fetish stands for the mother's missing penis. But it is in his 1910 paper on Leonardo da Vinci that Freud first makes clear his association of the fetish with the missing penis of the mother - again, another paper argued by Spies and others as being used by Ernst.¹⁷⁸ However, it is only in his 1927 paper "Fetishism" that Freud adds to this a new theoretical concept in the notion of *disavowal* (*Verleugnung*), a term which he uses to designate the subject's capacity to maintain the contradictory belief that the woman both is and is not "castrated", and where the fetish comes to substitute for the missing maternal penis. Freud argues further that the fetish is linked to the child's first sighting of the mother as "castrated", seizing upon the last object seen *before* that sighting - a foot, a shoe, etc. as the fetish object - as though wanting to freeze time at the last possible moment before the realization of the reality of castration.

In Freud's essay on Leonardo, the child's early sexual researches culminate in the realization of the reality of castration, whereas fetishism proposes a substitute for the missing maternal penis. The fetish thus, as Freud observes in his essay "Fetishism", "remains a token of triumph over the threat of castration and a protection against it",¹⁷⁹ a notion well suited to Klinger's treatment of the glove. In one particularly telling example - *Silence* (fig.15) - the glove appears on a pedestal in a kind of temple formed of a wall of gloves, recalling the Swiss chalet of gloves described by Zola. Richard von Krafft-Ebing describes the case of a glove fetishist who would wear a kind of apron around his waist, made up of ladies' kid gloves, similarly replicating the glove motif.¹⁸⁰ This replication of the motif is, in Freud, a defence against the threat of castration; but at the same time, castration is posed in Klinger's image by the appearance of a reptilian head which peers menacingly through the glove curtain. This threat of castration is

¹⁷⁷ Sigmund Freud, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality", in Freud, *On Sexuality*, The Pelican Freud Library, Vol.7, Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin Books, 1977, p.66.

¹⁷⁸ See Werner Spies, *Max Ernst - Loplop: The Artist's Other Self*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1983, pp.98-109.

¹⁷⁹ Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism" in Freud *On Sexuality*, op. cit., p.353.

¹⁸⁰ Krafft-Ebing, op. cit., p.183.

spectacularly realised in the subsequent image, *Abduction*, where a Pterodactyl-like creature flies off into the night clutching the glove between its massive jaws, while a pair of hands reaches despairingly through the jagged glass of the broken window. Male desire is thus enacted only under the constant threat of castration in Klinger's series, and provides strong support for Silverman's thesis of the determining role of castration anxiety and *male* lack, as projected onto the female, in normative male identity.

Further signs of troubled masculinity are apparent in *Anxieties* (fig.16), where the troubled sleeper tosses restlessly on a bed which opens onto a sea in which swim various grotesques, alongside the massively enlarged and now menacing glove, while a further outstretched glove drifts out to sea. Binet, too, observes that, as a general rule, "les fétichistes recherchent tout ce qui peut augmenter le volume physique ou l'importance de l'objet matériel qu'ils adorent."¹⁸¹ Hertel points to Ernst's reprise of this image in one of the collages from his *La Femme 100 têtes* (1929) - *Quiétude* (fig.17) - with the significant difference that the dreamer seems here to be at ease with his watery, phallic nightmare, at rest in a comfortable armchair. Here male insufficiency is denied via the phallic lighthouse, rising up from the midst of a powerful, vertical plume of water, where the composition serves to clearly equate the penis with the phallus, while also projecting lack/castration onto the drowning woman, the bend of whose arm is echoed in the broken stick which projects from the water beside her. Klinger's image is also echoed by Ernst in an image taken from the second book, *L'eau*, of his collage novel *Une semaine de bonté* (1934), where the restless dreamer threatened by the rising waters is now the woman, whose partially exposed body is the subject of investigation by the watching man (fig. 18). Elza Adamowicz notes Evan Maurer's argument that Ernst has deployed Freud's "Dora, an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria", a case history in which Freud treats Dora's early bedwetting as a displacement of her sexual desires and anxieties. For Adamowicz, Ernst is rather *parodying* this Freudian scenario, "suggesting desire fulfilled rather than repressed".¹⁸² But what surely interested Ernst in the Dora case would have been Dora's *betrayal* by her father, who was manipulating her in relation to a suitor (Herr K.), in order to ensure her silence in relation to his illicit affair, as well as her fantasies of *revenge*, as evidenced in her second dream where she receives a letter reporting her father's death. The same ambivalence in relation to the love object is apparent as in the case of the "betrayal" of Ernst's generation by the fathers in World

¹⁸¹ Binet, op. cit. , Part 2, p.266.

¹⁸² Adamowicz, op. cit. p.120.

War I, with corresponding fantasies of revenge. If we turn to Dora's first dream:

*A house was on fire. My father was standing by my bed and woke me up. I dressed quickly. My mother wanted to stop and save her jewel-case; but Father said: "I refuse to let myself and my two children be burnt for the sake of your jewel-case." We hurried downstairs, and as soon as I was outside I woke up.*¹⁸³

Freud detects in this dream an Oedipal scenario suggesting a wish to be seduced by the father,¹⁸⁴ and it is perhaps this Oedipal dimension of the case which was of particular interest to Ernst, particularly in the light of what has been argued by Geoffrey Hinton and by Martin Gee, as Ernst's own inverse Oedipal relationship with his father (discussed in more detail below). Freud also develops the symbolism of the antithesis of fire and water, with fire having connotations of sexual desire (being "consumed by love", etc.), while water too points to bodily emissions during lovemaking, as well as to bedwetting by the child and hence to masturbation and the parent-child dynamic. As Elizabeth Legge has pointed out, Ernst deploys such fire and water symbolism in his *Deux enfants sont menacés par un rossignol* (1924) (fig.19), in which a female figure waving a knife runs distraught, as a second figure lies apparently dead on the ground, while a third figure, a child, is carried off across a rooftop by a man.¹⁸⁵ Ernst's source for the male figure is that of a firefighter featured in *La Nature* from January 1886 (fig.20), a rescuer rendered menacing by virtue of his masked face, and hence an *ambivalent* figure well suited to represent the father. It is also perhaps worth noting that this motif of "rescue", with its strong sexual connotations, is a well-established male fantasy, as for example in Millais's *The Rescue* (1855) (fig.21) in which a woman *en déshabillé* and her children, are rescued from a burning house by a fireman. Robyn Cooper has described this image as "a site for the reproduction of bourgeois values", but a highly problematic one, given the volatile mixture of sexuality and class encountered in the work.¹⁸⁶ Ernst's *Deux enfants sont menacés par un rossignol* is similarly volatile, though here it is the child who becomes the object of sexual menace. Ernst mentions a "threatening nightingale" in the fever hallucination cited above, as one of the forms assumed by the imitation wood-grain of his bed-panel, further reinforcing the image's links with the father and with a

¹⁸³ Sigmund Freud, "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria", in Freud, *Case Histories I*, The Pelican Freud Library, Vol.8, Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin Books, 1977, p.99.

¹⁸⁴ Freud in fact goes further, suggesting that beyond the figure of the father lies the figure of Herr K., a suggestion which Dora vigorously denies - Freud's persistence in attempting to discern a normative, heterosexual relationship in the case has attracted some criticism.

¹⁸⁵ Elizabeth M. Legge, *Max Ernst: The Psychoanalytic Sources*, UMI Research Papers, London and Michigan: Ann Arbor, 1989.

¹⁸⁶ Robyn Cooper, "The Rescue", *Art History Journal*, Vol.9 no.4, December 1986.

menacing sexuality - a fantasy of seduction by the father.

Ernst is thus able to develop the sexual themes first broached by Klinger, with the benefit of a knowledge of Freud, treating male anxieties with a degree of reflexive irony. Spies insists that Ernst's use of Freud reflects a concern only with the *manifest* and not the *latent* content of the psychoanalytical material which he draws upon, and that he "endows his works with what is merely pseudo-psychoanalytical effect."¹⁸⁷ Given Ernst's early and relatively extensive knowledge of Freud and other psychological and psychoanalytic texts, this rather knowing or self-conscious application of the theory inevitably complicates interpretation, but we can nonetheless discern a consistent concern with quite specific Freudian themes within the work - the Oedipus complex, castration anxiety, sexuality, masculinity, dream symbolism, etc. - and including fetishism. Perhaps more revealing would be a comparison of Klinger's *Anxieties* with Ernst's collage *The Master's Bedroom It's Worth Spending a night there* (fig.56), depicting a bed which is similarly surrounded by wild animals and fishes, an image which I discuss in the next chapter.

As Emily Apter and William Pietz point out, "fetishism is profoundly linked to what psychoanalysis terms *scopophilia* (the love of looking)", and in fact Ernst tells us in his biographical notes, "When someone would ask him: 'What is your favourite occupation?' he regularly answered 'Looking.'"¹⁸⁸ In a later variant of these notes, after rejecting the notion of "duty", Ernst observes that "On the other hand, the words from the Catechism, 'Lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the vaingloriousness of life', sounded rather lovely to him."¹⁸⁹ Ernst's reformulation of the aesthetics of the gaze therefore entails a rejection of Kantian detachment and in its place the substitution of a gaze permeated by the erotic. Hence, the emergence of an incarnate, corporeal gaze, and one much closer to the other bodily senses - particularly the tactile, as evidenced in Ernst's development of the collage technique, or his later use of techniques such as *grattage* and *frottage*. So that Ernst's embracing of scopophilia in this carnal gaze should perhaps be considered as another of his contributions to what was to emerge as

¹⁸⁷ Spies, cited in William A. Camfield, *Max Ernst: Dada and the Dawn of Surrealism*, Munich: Prestel-Verlag, and Houston: The Menil Collection, 1993, p.113.

¹⁸⁸ Max Ernst, "Some Data on the Youth of M.E." in *View*, New York, April 1942, republished in Charles Henry Ford (ed), *View: Parade of the Avant-Garde*, New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1991, p.44.

¹⁸⁹ Max Ernst, *Biographical Notes: Tissue of Truth, Tissue of Lies*, in Werner Spies (ed), *Max Ernst: A Retrospective* (exh. cat.), Munich and New York: Prestel (in association with the Tate Gallery, London), 1991, p.281.

surrealism's penchant for the erotic.

Nye has argued that the late nineteenth-century development of sexology (the classification of the perversions, analysis of sexual behaviour, etc.), is closely linked, particularly in France, with concerns about the birth-rate and hence with normative, procreative sexuality, "so that men who deviated from this sexual norm were also perceived to be engaged in behavior that threatened the national welfare."¹⁹⁰ Binet's fetishist is likewise generally contempt - "c'est surtout par l'imagination qu'ils jouiront"¹⁹¹ - and thus outside the normative circuit of reproduction. Similar concerns re-emerged in France in the wake of the slaughter of the First World War, where we see a vigorous, state-sponsored pro-natality and anti birth-control campaign during the twenties, and we can view dadaist provocations in the field of sexuality, the surrealists' investigations into sex, and the celebration of the erotic in their work, as a rejoinder to this official, functionalist view of sexual activity. The surrealists' responses in the *Recherches sur la sexualité* to the question of their attitude toward the possibility of becoming a parent are indicative: "I'd kill it on the spot" (Prévert), "odious" (Tanguy), "regrettable" (Naville) - or the response of Max Morise, "I would not want to put myself in the same situation as my father."¹⁹² Or even Pierre Unik's more radical assertion, supported by Breton: "There are no fathers."¹⁹³ Hence this refusal to procreate on the scale of their fathers on the part of Duchamp ("the Bachelor"), Ernst and many others of their generation, can be read as a further act of rebellion against the generation of their fathers, while the rejection of normative family structures necessarily led to the creation of new forms of sociality - "homosociality" (Sedgwick), homosexuality, the Ernst/Eluard *ménage*, etc. As Nye observes, Freud's early thinking on the subject of fetishism was influenced by the biological determinism of the French model, but soon shifts to an increasingly enlightened model characterised by Nye as "a powerful analytic matrix of symptoms, mental disturbances, and neuroses associated with the castration complex."¹⁹⁴ And it is precisely such a model of fetishism which we discover in Ernst and de Chirico, a model already anticipated in the work of Klinger.

¹⁹⁰ Robert A. Nye, op. cit. p.19.

¹⁹¹ Binet, op. cit., Part 2, p.267.

¹⁹² José Pierre (ed), *Investigating Sex: Surrealist Discussions 1928-1932*, London and New York: Verso, 1992, p.61.

¹⁹³ Breton, *ibid.* pp.61-62.

¹⁹⁴ Nye, *ibid.* p.30.

Enigma, Glove Fetishism and the Father in De Chirico

The glove also figures as a significant motif in the imagery of de Chirico, whose work first came to Ernst's attention in September 1919, during a trip to Munich, when he came across a copy of *Valori Plastici* containing reproductions of the work of both de Chirico and Carrà. The influence of de Chirico is particularly interesting in the light of the undoubted importance of the relationship with the father in the work. De Chirico was born in 1888, in the Greek seaport of Volo, in Thessaly, and moved between Volo and Athens until the early death of his engineer father in 1905, after which his mother moved the family to Munich. Whereas de Chirico speaks very fondly of his father in his *Mémoires* - "C'était un ingénieur mais aussi un gentilhomme d'un autre âge - courageux, loyal, travailleur, intelligent et bon" - he also notes that there existed between himself and his father "une certaine distance, une apparence de froideur, ou plutôt, une certaine pudeur..."¹⁹⁵ We find, too, some strong parallels with Ernst's situation: "Mon père était très puritain et, dans notre famille, il faisait peser une atmosphère de puritainisme et de jésuitisme." And de Chirico's brother, the painter Alberto Savinio, also confirms this emotional frigidity which pervaded the household, writing of "Cette cuirasse de gel, cette interdiction d'aimer;"¹⁹⁶ and hence the enormous *ambivalence* in that relationship, which, in the case of Ernst, Malcolm Gee characterises in terms of an inverse Oedipal relation, and which I turn to in the next chapter.¹⁹⁷

At Munich, de Chirico continued his training as a painter and was influenced in particular by both Böcklin and Klinger. According to James Thrall Soby, de Chirico "revered" Klinger's *Fantasy on Brahms* and the *Glove* series,¹⁹⁸ and we find that the glove itself provides a recurring theme within the work, particularly during de Chirico's early Metaphysical period. De Chirico's *L'Enigme de la fatalité* (1914) (fig.22), is unusual in its triangular format, featuring a red glove in the foreground on a black and white checker-board pattern, against a spatially ambiguous architectural backdrop with a large red-brick chimney at its centre. The image was reproduced in *La Révolution surréaliste* (No.7, 15 June 1926) under the title *L'angoissant voyage*, a title proposed by Breton during 1926, who also owned the work for a time. Paolo Baldacci links this glove to a

¹⁹⁵ Paolo Baldacci, *Giorgio de Chirico: 1888-1919, La métaphysique*, Paris: Flammarion, 1997, p.15.

¹⁹⁶ Baldacci, *op cit.* p.17.

¹⁹⁷ Malcolm Gee, *Ernst: Pietà or Revolution by Night*, London: Tate Gallery, 1986. Gee notes that Dawn Ades first made this point in her *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed*, London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1978, section 8.12.

¹⁹⁸ James Thrall Soby, *Giorgio de Chirico*, New York: Museum of Modern Art/Arno Press, 1966, p.30.

1918 text by de Chirico:

L'énorme gant de zinc coloré, aux terribles ongles dorés, que les vents très tristes des après-midi citadins faisaient se balancer sur la porte de la boutique, m'indiquait, de son index pointé vers les grandes dalles du trottoir, les signes hermétiques d'une nouvelle mélancolie.¹⁹⁹

Baldacci adds that the source of this imagery can be traced to another text, this time that of de Chirico's brother, Alberto Savinio. Savinio relates how the sign of *La Main Rouge* used to hang in an Athens street where it served as the sign of the Biruni sisters, who ran a glover's shop:

mais tout le monde sait que les Soeurs Biruni sont trois sirènes travesties, qui pratiquent dans leur arrière boutique accouplements volants, jeux d'amour rapides, aphrodismes lucratifs.²⁰⁰

Savinio adds that "dans l'enseigne de la Main Rouge se cache un symbole impudique mais quel crédit apporter au langage des symboles?" Given de Chirico's intense interest in Greek mythology, we might also suggest a further influence in Virgil's *Aenid*, where an account is given of the Trojan games in which Dares and Entellus do battle, where the two men: "Swing their steel-clinch'd fingers in the air ... And clashing gauntlets flake their fists with fire."²⁰¹ Breton, in *Nadja*, similarly refers to this painting in terms of "the famous hand of fire."²⁰²

The red glove features again in another image from the same year, *Le Chant d'amour* (fig.23), transformed now into the form of a red rubber glove hanging alongside a plaster cast of the head of the Apollo Belvedere, while in the background we see the silhouette of a steam locomotive, passing behind the brick wall of the Chirico family home at Volo, a clear reference to de Chirico's dead father. Apollinaire, an early champion of de Chirico's work, wrote in 1914 that:

Monsieur de Chirico has just bought a pink rubber glove, one of the most impressive items that are for sale. Copied by the artist, it is destined to render his future works even more moving and frightening than his previous paintings. And if you ask him about the terror that this glove might arouse, he will immediately tell you of toothbrushes still more frightening than those recently invented by the dentist's art ...²⁰³

Apollinaire's comments are surely striking in their unconscious evocation of fetishism,

¹⁹⁹ De Chirico (1918) cited in Baldacci, op cit. p.26.

²⁰⁰ Alberto Savinio, *ibid.*

²⁰¹ Virgil cited in Hull, op. cit. p.21.

²⁰² André Breton, *Nadja*, New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1960, p.129.

²⁰³ Guillaume Apollinaire (July, 1914), cited in Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco "De Chirico In Paris, 1911-1915", in William Rubin (ed), *De Chirico* (exh.cat.), Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1982, p.19.

contraception and castration anxiety. In these images then, the glove serves to figure illicit sexuality: in the first case in the context of a tall, phallic tower, and in the second in relation to a symbol of the father. The fact that the glove here is of rubber implies a connection with condoms, which were mass-produced in rubber in the United States as early as the 1840s.²⁰⁴ As in so many of his images of this period, de Chirico cultivates an aura of enigma, of nostalgia and of loss - not least through his habitual use of a low, raking, late autumn sunlight - an aura which engenders a sense of mystery in relation to the symbols of sexuality and desire included in these images, and perhaps suggestive - as with Klinger - of sexual difference itself as enigma. Baldacci points to the significance of the Apollo Belvedere in relation to the influence of Nietzsche upon de Chirico, recalling his opposition of the Apollonian and the Dionysian in his first book *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). In that dichotomy, the Apollonian figures as on the side of the dream, the beautiful, the rational - the world of "mere appearance" and illusion - whereas the Dionysian is on the side of "intoxication", "ecstasy", "frenzy". Moreover, whereas the Apollonian is ruled by the *principium individuationis*, the Dionysian tends instead toward a "primordial unity."²⁰⁵ In terms of art-forms, this assumes the form of an opposition "between the Apollonian art of sculpture, and the nonimagistic, Dionysian art of music."²⁰⁶ In his study of Nietzschean aesthetics, Julian Young characterises Apollo as "the fundamental civilization-forming force" and argues that, in aesthetic terms, "the object of Apollonian consciousness is essentially beautiful ..."²⁰⁷ Baldacci poses de Chirico as inverting this Schopenhauer-influenced Nietzschean model wherein the image figures as "mere appearance", incapable of penetrating underlying realities; instead, for de Chirico, painting becomes "le seul art capable de saisir l'architecture interne de la matière ... le seul capable de saisir la 'metaphysique' du monde."²⁰⁸ Of the rubber glove, Baldacci notes its use by surgeons as well as by "les sages-femmes", arguing that its use here symbolises "birth", attested by the fact that de Chirico painted the image in early July, at the time of his birthday and by the various symbolic references to his birth, his Greek birthplace and childhood. Baldacci also reads *Le Chant d'amour* in terms of an opposition of the Apollonian and the Dionysian, the former symbolised in the open windows and arcades on the right, as against the Dionysian signified in the steaming

²⁰⁴ McClaren, op. cit. p.184.

²⁰⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy", in Nietzsche, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, New York: The Modern Library, 1966.

²⁰⁶ Nietzsche, *ibid* p.33.

²⁰⁷ Julian Young, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p.32.

²⁰⁸ Baldacci, op. cit. p.263.

engine - an opposition of male and female principles, whose conjunction results in the act of procreation (both in the literal sense of the birth of the child, as well as metaphorically, as "giving birth" to art).²⁰⁹

Hence, we discover in the use of the glove motif with de Chirico, that there are again strong connotations of illicit sexuality, connections with phallic masculinity and the fear of castration, as well as the important link with the figure of the father. I want now to develop the contribution which the use of the glove motif in Ernst and de Chirico can be seen to bring to the emerging surrealist aesthetic and the question of shifting male subjectivity.

Breton, Ernst and the Surrealist Fetish

Dawn Ades has pointed to the insistence in Binet upon the fetish as "real object", and notes a stress there upon "the importance of the material sign, the embodied character of the amorous illusion."²¹⁰ The motif of the glove occupies a privileged place in the surrealist imaginary and Ades further points out that "Surrealism's relationship with the fetish depends crucially on the latter's materiality ...",²¹¹ which she views as closely linked to the surrealist object, citing in support Breton's *Introduction to the Discourse on the Paucity of Reality*. In this key text dating from February 1925,²¹² soon after the publication of the first *Manifeste du surréalisme*, Breton probes the question of "the value which should be accorded reality" and proceeds to launch a frontal assault upon "so-called reality."²¹³ Breton's argument in that essay suggests that he views the realistic attitude as itself fetishistic:

Human fetishism, which must try on the white helmet, or caress the fur bonnet, listens with an entirely different ear to the recital of our expeditions. It must believe thoroughly that it has really happened.²¹⁴

In order to confront that attitude, Breton proposes putting into circulation certain objects

²⁰⁹ Baldacci, *ibid.* p.264.

²¹⁰ Dawn Ades, "Surrealism: Fetishism's Job", in Anthony Shelton (ed), *Fetishism: Visualising Power and Desire*, London: South Bank Centre, 1995, p.71.

²¹¹ Ades, *ibid.* p.72

²¹² Rosemont gives the date as September 1924, but this is contradicted in the text itself. Polizzotti, surely correctly, says it was written during January and February of 1925.

²¹³ André Breton, "Introduction to the Discourse on the Paucity of Reality" in Breton, *What Is Surrealism?: Selected Writings*, edited by Franklin Rosemont, New York: Pathfinder, 1978, p.22.

²¹⁴ Breton, *ibid.* p.26.

on the paradigm of a strange item which he encounters in a dream, at an open air market - a curious book composed of pages of "heavy black cloth", the cover of which was "formed by a wooden gnome whose white beard, clipped in the Assyrian manner, reached to his feet." Breton hopes in this manner to "help to demolish these concrete trophies which are so odious, to throw further discredit on those creatures and things of 'reason'."²¹⁵ Through this strategy, Breton simultaneously undermines the realistic attitude on its home terrain, as it proliferates to the point of absurdity, whilst also giving material form to fantasy, imagination and the dream. Thus, the fetish, insofar as it embodies the tactile and material, assumes a privileged role within the surrealist artistic strategy, while also giving vent to the surrealist obsession with the erotic. But this also broaches the question of artistic identity, an issue which Breton makes central to his book *Nadja* (1928).

Breton launches *Nadja* with the striking question "Who am I?", a question which he immediately re-phrases in terms of "knowing whom I 'haunt'," and an enquiry which he then expands to include significant details of the lives of those men he admires. Breton's enquiry therefore begins quite literally in relation to male subjectivity - "Je prendrai pour point de départ l'hôtel des Grands Hommes ..." (a building which still stands opposite the Panthéon) - but becomes gradually more entangled within the question of femininity, and particularly with *marginal* femininity (the barely veiled lesbianism in *Les Détraquées*, the naked woman in the *Électric-Palace* cinema, Nadja's promiscuity and madness). Amongst the men he includes, Breton muses on the case of de Chirico, eager to know "what it was that once made him paint as he did," adding that:

On n'aura rien dit de Chirico tant qu'on n'aura pas rendu compte de ses vues les plus subjectives sur l'artichaut, le gant, le gâteau sec ou la bobine. ...

En ce qui me concerne, plus importantes encore que pour l'esprit la rencontre de certaines dispositions de choses m'apparaissent les dispositions d'un esprit à l'égard de certaines choses; ces deux sortes de dispositions régissent à elles seules toutes les formes de la sensibilité.²¹⁶

We have already considered the symbolism of certain of de Chirico's objects and the underlying psychic organization which has generated them, so that we might instead throw further light upon the arrangement of Breton's own mind by taking the example of

²¹⁵ Breton, *ibid.* p.26.

²¹⁶ André Breton, *Nadja* (1928), Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1964, pp.15-16.

its relation to the object of our enquiry. Breton relates in *Nadja*, the "apparently jocular proposition", made to a woman during her visit to the surrealist *Centrale*, that she should present to the surrealists "one of the remarkable sky-blue gloves she was carrying" (fig.24).²¹⁷ But to which proposal Breton reacts with a sudden unaccountable fear: "I don't know what there can have been, at that moment, so terribly, so marvellously decisive for me in the thought of that glove leaving that hand forever." I would suggest that this fear finds its focus in the same anxieties which motivated Klinger's glove series - the question of castration and the concomitant fetishisation of the woman through the motif of the glove. And although the glove itself remained with its owner, a substitute bronze glove was instead presented to the *Centrale* - an object which, in its insistent tactility, Breton could never pass without succumbing to the temptation to pick it up, and to feel its inordinate weight.²¹⁸

The owner of the blue glove was in fact Lise Deharme, the widow of Pierre Meyer, who had committed suicide soon after their marriage - hence another of the "fatal women" so attractive to the surrealists. Breton had been smitten by her from their first meeting at the surrealist *Centrale*, though his persistent advances were unreciprocated. Deharme became for Breton "the lady of the glove" and he composed a poem for her, *My Loss of Paradise* (unpublished in his lifetime), in which the glove is prominently featured:

You are solemn in the absolute grace of being lighter
 Than my tempest
 [...]
 I shall pick up the glove
 The glove heaven has tossed me and shut myself forever
 In the prison of my lips ...
 Go my lovely foreigner my loss of paradise ...²¹⁹

Mark Polizzotti notes that this fruitless affair coincided with the time when Breton was writing the *Introduction to the Discourse on the Paucity of Reality*, during January and February of 1925, and suggests that it accounts for the melancholy tone of that text. Breton was more successful in acquiring the bronze glove than in seducing its owner, and the glove, significantly - given the many important artworks of which Breton

²¹⁷ Breton, *ibid.*, p.56.

²¹⁸ In relation to Boiffard's photographs of statues, Ades points to Desnos' interest in the "contradiction between the materiality, the heavy weight of the statues and the elevated aspirations they are meant to symbolise" - a disparity again characteristic of the fetish. Ades, *op cit.* p.85.

²¹⁹ Breton cited in Mark Polizzotti, *Revolution of the Mind: The Life of André Breton*, London: Bloomsbury, 1995, p.231. See Breton, ["Tu es grave.."], *OCI*, pp.609-10.

disposed - remained in his studio on his death, a testimony to the persistence of the fetish.

It is surely significant too, that amongst the images included in *Nadja* we find de Chirico's *L'Enigme de la fatalité*, as well as Ernst's *Les hommes n'en sauront rien* (1923) - both of which also feature glove symbolism. In the latter (fig.25) a copulating couple hover below a crescent-shaped form, while below them stand two vaguely anthropomorphic figures, the larger of which apparently presses a semi-gloved hand to its breast. Based in part upon an image of a lunar eclipse taken from *La Nature*, Ernst's painting embodies a number of polarities: male/female, sun/moon, light/dark, etc., while on the reverse of the image is a prose poem and a dedication to Breton. The structure of dichotomies is echoed in the poem, which concludes with the line: *Le tableau est curieux par sa symétrie. Les deux sexes se font équilibre*. This all suggests that Ernst conceived of gender in terms of a sharp dichotomy in which each sex "balances" the other. This suggestion of balance and reciprocity in gender relations marks a break with traditional patriarchal views and perhaps also reflects the influence of Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character* (which I discuss below), and in particular, Weininger's eccentrically poetic Law of Sexual Attraction, a mathematical formula in which each partner ideally "balances" the other by providing the element of masculinity or femininity which the other lacks.²²⁰ Geoffrey Hinton has linked Ernst's image to Freud's analysis of the Schreber case (discussed in papers dating from 1911 and 1923),²²¹ a case of paranoia in which Freud, says Hinton, "saw Schreber's fantasies of being transformed into a woman as a castration complex, allied to an inverted Oedipus complex."²²² Freud restated much of his analysis of Schreber in his paper on the seventeenth century painter Christoph Haizmann, published in 1923, the same year in which Ernst produced this image, and a text in which a painter figures prominently undoubtedly proved attractive to Ernst, as in the case of Freud's paper on Leonardo, and Theodor Storm's novella *Aquis Submersus* (both discussed below). Schreber's heliocentric obsession was interpreted by Freud as relating to the father (Schreber's father was a noted German pedagogue and author of the child-rearing text *Kallipadie* (1858), while Ernst's

²²⁰ Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character* (1903), translated from the Sixth German edition, London: William Heinemann, 1906, pp.28-31.

²²¹ Sigmund Freud, "Psychoanalytic Notes on An Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia" (1911), in Freud, *Case Histories II*, Pelican Freud Library, Vol.9, Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin Books, 1979.

²²² Geoffrey Hinton, "Les Hommes n'en Sauront Rien", *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol.CXVII no.866, May 1975, p.293.

was a teacher of the deaf-and-dumb), and Hinton is thus led to interpret the detached gloved hand in Ernst's painting as a symbol of castration anxiety. Schreber also wrote of "floating in voluptuousness", and of fantasies of being impregnated by God (which again points to an inverted Oedipus complex, i.e. assuming the "feminine" position in relation to the father), and of having his viscera removed - hence perhaps the visceral forms at the base of Ernst's image. So that through these coded references to the inverted Oedipus complex, we might see Ernst as referring to his intensely ambivalent relationship with his own father. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud links dreams of flying or floating to the erotic, noting a specific link with dreams of erection, a phenomenon which is in a sense "an apparent suspension of the laws of gravity."²²³ Spies notes that Ernst was well aware of these erotic linkages made by Freud and must therefore be assumed to be using these motifs in a conscious manner.²²⁴ In *Les hommes n'en sauront rien* an erect, penis-like form figures at the level of the genitals of the central figure, and in his poem Ernst states that:

*Le croissant (jaune et parachute) empêche que le sifflet tombe par terre.
Celui-ci, parce qu'on s'occupe de lui, s'imagine monter au soleil.*

Hinton interprets this in terms of "the little whistle/phallic symbol wants to climb up to the sun/father symbol",²²⁵ and as we shall see in a later chapter, this floating, flying or falling motif, provides a recurring fantasy within Ernst's oeuvre, both visual and literary, relating both to erotic themes (particularly the ambivalent-erotic relationship with the father), as well as to their inevitable accompaniment - castration anxiety. And hence, too, the apotropaic function of the glove as fetish: here, Hinton suggests that the gloved hand indicates "a protective gesture", as reinforced by Ernst's poem ("*La main cache la terre...*"). But what is also striking in all of this, is Ernst's emphasis upon the bodily, the carnal, the erotic, the tactile and visceral, in which the gloved hand assumes a pivotal role - or more broadly, in Ernst's extensive use of often highly complex hand symbolism.

We also discover a suggestion of glove symbolism amongst the curious drawings by Nadja herself which Breton includes in his book. One untitled drawing (fig.26) apparently features a hand (though more suggestive of an unfastened glove)

²²³ Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), Pelican Freud Library, Vol.4, Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin Books, 1976, p.518.

²²⁴ Hinton, op. cit. p.296.

²²⁵ Hinton, op. cit. p.293.

from which a woman's face protrudes, partially obscured by a heart shape on which the word "Nadja" and the figure "13" appear. Breton observes that, while visiting him, Nadja recognised in de Chirico's *The Enigma of Fatality* "the famous hand of fire", and that:

she offered a long explanation of Max Ernst's extremely difficult painting *But Men Will Know Nothing About It* which agreed in every particular with the detailed legend on the back of the canvas.²²⁶

And finally, Breton offers Nadja's comments on certain objects from Easter Island and New Britain, which he characterises as "fetishes", pointing us to some of the wider connotations of the fetish within surrealism.

Fetishism, then, together with the motif of the glove, was to become a recurring feature of much surrealist work, as for example in the case of Meret Oppenheim (*Fur Gloves with Wooden Fingers*, 1936), or the photography of Man Ray, Boiffard and Bellmer, among others. Valentine Hugo's *Objet à fonctionnement symbolique* (1931) depicts a fetishistic fur-cuffed red glove, which caresses the palm of a second, white-gloved hand holding a dice, against the backdrop of a gaming table. Set within an oval frame, the scene is overlaid with a skein of thread, suggestive of traps and erotic entanglement, and points us again to the highly tactile quality of fetishism, as well as to Breton's insistence upon the materiality of the surrealist object. We find this same tactile quality, rendered photographically, in a pairing of images by Man Ray in his collaboration on the book *Facile* (1935) with Paul Eluard, where a pair of barely touching gloves is set opposite images of the naked female body. But what we also see here is the way in which the female body itself becomes fetishised, through various strategies which render it either acephalous or phallicised - both of which are deployed here. The problem for the male psyche, posed in Freudian terms, in deploying the female body as object of desire, is that it simultaneously evokes castration anxiety - hence the classic defence ploy of fetishising the body in order to ward off that fear. For Rosalind Krauss, photographic surrealism constitutes a "scandal" insofar as it breaks with the dominant aesthetic of Straight Photography, with its mantra of the unmanipulated image:

For surrealist photography is contrived to the highest degree ... We see the object by means of an act of displacement, defined by a gesture of substitution. The object, "straight" or manipulated, is always manipulated and thus always appears as a fetish. It is this fetishization of reality that is the scandal.²²⁷

²²⁶ André Breton, *Nadja*, op cit. p.129.

²²⁷ Rosalind Krauss, "Corpus Delicti", in Rosalind Krauss and Jane Livingston, *L'Amour fou*, London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1986, p.91.

Fetishism is thus again reaffirmed as the key "perversion" of surrealism, through which its aesthetic strategy is enacted, while also pointing to the central role of castration anxiety in the formation of male subjectivity.

By way of concluding this discussion of the glove motif, we might consider the photograph by Pablo Volta (fig.27) which was added to the 1959 edition of *Nadja*, and which attests to the persistence within the male psyche of this motif of the fetishised, headless body of the woman and of the glove as fetish. Here, sited within the Musée Grévin, one of the quintessential surrealist spaces, we are given an eroticised mannequin which Breton describes as a "statue" - the torso of a gloved woman adjusting her garter - a figure which, Breton says, "in its immutable pose, is the only statue I know of with eyes."²²⁸ It is a figure which, like Klinger's fallen child, exposes itself, thus raising the question of sexual difference and castration, but simultaneously wards off that fear by way of the glove as fetish; the figure thus has "eyes" insofar as it opposes blindness/castration. The Musée Grévin thus becomes a fantasy space in which male desire is once more staged, a *mise-en-scène* in which the fetish again assumes its perennial role in warding off fears of insufficiency or lack, and reaffirming the male psyche in its delusion of the equation of penis with the phallus - and to which degree the "dominant fiction" of masculinity is re-asserted. So that the fetish is doubly ambivalent, both shoring up normative masculinity by confirming masculine ambivalence in its phallic delusion, while also opening up alternative scenarios for fantasy and sexual exploration (the Laplanchean fantasmatic), enabling the emergence of new forms of male subjectivity, alternative identities, and their expression in new forms of creativity. As such it is central to the emergence of the surrealist aesthetic.

²²⁸ See Renée Riese Hubert, *Surrealism and the Book*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1988, p.268.

3. Ernst, Oedipus and the Law of the Father

Max, qui avait la malchance d'être l'aîné de la progéniture, porte la responsabilité - louanges et réprimandes - de ce qu'il entreprend et de ce que font les plus jeunes. Le bon exemple. Le devoir. Le devoir, encore toujours: le devoir. Très vite, le mot paraît suspect, très vite haïssable.

Max Ernst, *Ecritures*.²²⁹

Introduction: Ernst, Masculinity and *Le mouvement flou*

The arrival of Max Ernst's early collages in Paris from Cologne, early in 1921, and their unpacking at the home of Francis Picabia, has been characterised by Rosalind Krauss as "surrealism's primal scene."²³⁰ For Breton, the works served as a "revelation" and were said to have incited in Picabia not a little envy - Breton observed that Ernst "almost made Picabia die of chagrin."²³¹ Ernst's work was exhibited at the bookstore *Au Sans Pareil* from 3 May until 2 June 1921, but due to the postwar travel restrictions still in force in Germany, Ernst himself was not to arrive in Paris until August 1922, when he travelled illegally on Paul Eluard's passport. Breton married Simone Kahn in September of 1921, after which the newlyweds travelled to Tarrenz in order to meet up with Ernst, Tzara and Arp. Breton's relations with dada were already strained and Ernst later described Breton's arrival in the Tyrol as being like "a hair in the soup."²³² By the time the Eluards arrived, only Breton and Simone remained, and the four travelled on to Vienna for what turned out to be the disastrous meeting with Freud recorded by Breton in his essay "Interview du professeur Freud": "un petit vieillard sans allure, qui reçoit dans son pauvre cabinet de médecin de quartier."²³³ Breton's brusque dismissal of Freud was of course to be decisively reversed by the time of the appearance of the first *Manifeste du*

²²⁹ Max Ernst, "Notes pour une Biographie", *Ecritures*, Paris: Gallimard, 1970, pp.11-12.

²³⁰ Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993, p.42. Krauss's privileging of the visual in this inaugural role is in itself a position on the debate on the role of the visual arts within surrealism.

²³¹ Breton, cited in Werner Spies, *Max Ernst: Collages*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1991, p.81.

²³² Polizzotti, op. cit. p.161.

²³³ André Breton, "Interview du professeur Freud", in Breton, *Les pas perdus* (1924), Paris: Gallimard, 1969, p.95.

Surréalisme in 1924 and part of my intention here is to analyse Ernst's contribution to that volte-face. The Eluards travelled on from Vienna to Cologne in order to meet Ernst, a meeting which went rather better than Breton's and which was to culminate in their *ménage à trois* at St.Brice (and later at Eaubonne), where the couple provided shelter for Ernst during his time as an illegal alien.

What I want to consider here, is what precisely was at stake in the work of Ernst in the wake of World War I, which so appealed to the group of Dadaists and proto-surrealists, occurring as it does during this decisive period of *le mouvement flou* and the rather brief *époque des sommeils*. I want to focus in particular on certain aspects of troubled masculinity which provide recurring themes within Ernst's imagery and which I believe struck a responsive chord in a group of young men who had undergone a similar wartime experience and who were likewise confronted with the dilemma of reconstructing their own sense of masculine subjectivity. What we in fact see in the process of construction by surrealism during this period, is what Roger Cardinal has referred to as the "paradigm of the creative subject", i.e. "the individual self seen as the instigator and monitor of its own artistic impulses."²³⁴ Breton's initial response to that problem had been the deployment of automatic writing in the production of *Les Champs magnétiques*, written with Soupault in May 1919, an experiment though which was without immediate consequences. Breton's quest for the "new spirit" of his time led him first to dada in the person of Tristan Tzara, but his rapid disillusionment with dada's relentless negativism compelled him to consider other approaches to artistic production - hence his enthusiasm for Ernst's collages, returning him as they did, to his wartime experience with the productions of the insane and his early reading of the work of Freud, Kraepelin and Babinski at Saint-Dizier during 1916. Writing of Ernst's collages, Breton observes that:

The external object had been displaced from its accustomed surroundings. Its separate parts had liberated themselves from the objective context in a way that enabled them to enter completely new relations with other elements.²³⁵

More specifically, I want to consider this in terms of the role of a traumatic sexuality as inflected by Ernst's own wartime experience, and as informed by his reading of the

²³⁴ Roger Cardinal, "Surrealism and the Paradigm of the Creative Subject", in Maurice Tuchman (ed), *Parallel Visions: Modern Artists and Outsider Art*, Los Angeles & Princeton: Los Angeles County Museum/Princeton University Press, 1989, p.94.

²³⁵ Breton, cited in Spies, op. cit. p.81.

psychoanalytic writings of Freud. We find in the early work of Ernst a persistent and richly-developed theme of anti-authoritarianism which finds its focus in relation to the father, by way of a series of thematically related images which rely upon overtly Freudian themes and imagery - themes such as the Oedipus complex, castration, and fetishism. I therefore want to begin by examining this theme of Oedipal revolt and Ernst's rejection of the family, and then to go on to consider the exploration of alternative models of sociality and male subjectivity which emerge during this crucial transitional period.

Ernst, Childhood Myth, Freud

As a self-taught artist, Ernst presents an interesting case, where influences external to art assume an even greater significance than is the case with many of his colleagues; Uwe M. Schneede, for example, stresses the fact that Ernst attended university rather than art school and that he was, by formation and inclination, "an intellectual artist."²³⁶ Louis Aragon, in his 1923 essay "Max Ernst, peintre des illusions", considered Ernst to have produced "une peinture entièrement nouvelle", and characterised his collages in terms of "une sorte de collage intellectuel."²³⁷ Cultural influences nonetheless weigh heavily and Werner Spies sees Ernst as "deeply rooted in the German Romantic tradition", stressing the influence of Romantic writers and painters upon Ernst's work - Novalis, Goethe, Hoffmann, Hölderlin, and Caspar David Friedrich.

Born at Brühl, near Cologne, Ernst was the eldest son of a solid bourgeois, a teacher of the deaf-and-dumb and enthusiastic amateur painter. Ernst began his own biographical notes in 1927, periodically updating them during the course of his career, and accords particular importance to certain (mythicised) childhood experiences:

The 2nd of April (1891) at 9:45 a.m. Max Ernst had his first contact with the sensible world, when he came out of the egg which his mother had laid in an eagle's nest and which the bird had brooded for seven years.²³⁸

²³⁶ Uwe M. Schneede, *The Essential Max Ernst*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1972, p.5.

²³⁷ Louis Aragon, "Max Ernst, peintre des illusions" (1923), an unpublished essay included in Aragon *Les Collages*, Paris: Hermann, 1965, pp.30-1.

²³⁸ Max Ernst, "Some Data on the Youth of M.E., As Told by Himself", first published in the Max Ernst special edition of *View* magazine, April 1942; reprinted in Ford (ed), *View: Parade of the Avant-Garde*, op. cit., pp.42-5.

As David Hopkins observes, Ernst's project can in many ways be characterised as that of taking up the challenge of establishing the "véritable mythologie moderne" which Breton discerned in formation in the work of Giorgio de Chirico.²³⁹ We should also note Ernst's adoption of the third person when writing of himself, as though undertaking a form of self-analysis on the paradigm of that undertaken by Freud. In the course of that self-analysis Freud was to establish a new discipline, while out of Ernst's self-analysis (both in text and artwork) emerges a new form of art-making - and also a new "creative subject." In the same writings, Ernst also refers to the "great mystery of telegraphic wires which move when you look at them from a running train and stand still when you stand still" and it was in pursuit of telegraph wires and stations that the five year old Ernst left home, joining a procession of pilgrims, where he was proclaimed "little Jesus Christ". In his *Écritures* Ernst gives significant emphasis to the telegraph cables, noting that "Dès le départ du train, ils subissent un mouvement rythmique de montée et de descente ...", a movement we might add, reminiscent of the insistent rhythms of Duchamp's optical devices, and suggesting at once an erotic dimension to Ernst's infantile fantasies. In fact we find Ernst's childhood fantasy realised in an untitled montage (fig.28) produced by the designer and photographer Roger Parry, dating from 1929, which depicts the fantasmic image of a young child being led by its mother, fashionably dressed in Edwardian outfit, against the backdrop of telegraph cables. On one level this also bears out Rosalind Krauss's argument that the work of Duchamp and the surrealists constitutes a kind of "counterhistory" to modernism's "purist model of vision", an alternative model which Krauss characterises in terms of the "optical unconscious", citing for example Duchamp's *Precision Optics*, as well as "Ernst's Dada collages that would so stun Breton."²⁴⁰ It is worth noting that observers of the time made a similar distinction - Aragon, for example, in the essay already cited, distinguishes Ernst's collage technique from that of the cubists, pointing out that whereas for cubism the collaged elements "avaient la valeur d'un test, d'un instrument de la *réalité* même du tableau", with Ernst, everything was quite different. Aragon sees in Ernst's collage technique "un procédé absolument analogue à celui de l'image poétique", and instructs his reader in how to approach them: "Traitez ces dessins comme des rêves et analysez-les à la façon de Freud. Vous leur trouverez un sens phallique très simple."²⁴¹ But as we shall see, the

²³⁹ David Hopkins, *Marcel Duchamp and Max Ernst: The Bride Shared*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1998, p.125.

²⁴⁰ Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious*, op. cit. p.21.

²⁴¹ Aragon, op. cit. p.28.

apparent simplicity of Ernst's conscious deployment of Freudian motifs is merely feigned, often concealing less apparent signs of a troubled, traumatized masculine subjectivity.

Ernst also relates how his father subsequently depicted the young Max as "a little Jesus child, blue-eyed, blond-curly-haired, dressed in a red night shirt", perhaps secretly pleased at thereby himself assuming the role of God-the-Father. Ernst himself suggests that his lost image *Souvenir de Dieu* (1923) (fig.29) might be related to these childhood events, where we find a composite figure with an animal-like head, making curious hand gestures - a motif also found in Ernst's *Au Rendez-vous des amis*, where such gestures have been linked to Ernst's father's use of sign language. Malcolm Gee has also linked this image to Freud's "Wolf Man" case history, a case of inverted Oedipal neurosis in which the child seeks to displace the mother and to take the father as love object.²⁴² Gee develops this argument in relation to his analysis of Ernst's *Pietà, or Revolution by Night*, which I turn to below, in a more detailed consideration of the impact of Freud upon Ernst's work.

Freud was an undoubted early influence on Ernst, dating from the period of his studies at the University of Bonn from 1910-14. While at Bonn Ernst took courses in philosophy, psychology, art history, language and literature, where his reading in psychology included courses in criminal psychology and mental illness in children.²⁴³ We know too that Ernst became interested in the art of the insane, bringing a copy of Prinzhorn's *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* (1922) as a present for Eluard when he finally moved to Paris in 1922. Spies confirms that Ernst would have first become familiar with Freud around 1913, and the texts most frequently cited as formative reading include Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* and *An Introduction to Psychoanalysis*. Spies views Ernst's use of Freud in terms of "merely pseudo-psychoanalytical effect"; and argues that while Ernst undoubtedly showed a keen interest in Freud's writings, applying those ideas widely in his works, he did so in a very knowing way by deploying their *manifest* content as worthy of interest in its own right. Hence the works are not, for Spies, susceptible to "deep" psychoanalytic readings in terms of their *latent* content. Despite Spies's reservations, the work has been extensively analysed from a Freudian

²⁴² Malcolm Gee, *Ernst: Pietà or Revolution by Night*, London: Tate Gallery, 1986.

²⁴³ See Legge, *Max Ernst: The Psychoanalytic Sources*, op. cit., p.11.

viewpoint, notably by David Hopkins,²⁴⁴ Geoffrey Hinton,²⁴⁵ Elizabeth Legge,²⁴⁶ Charlotte Stokes,²⁴⁷ Laura L. Meixner,²⁴⁸ Jeanne Siegel,²⁴⁹ and Malcolm Gee.²⁵⁰ William Camfield, while pointing to the many pitfalls involved in Freudian interpretations of Ernst's oeuvre (e.g. that the symbolism is often too general, or the connotations too personal to permit interpretation) nonetheless himself makes fairly extensive use of such readings in interpreting the works. Hal Foster and Rosalind Krauss have more recently provided revised readings of the work, with Foster focusing upon the classic Freudian texts in a reading of Ernst which privileges the role of primal fantasy and accords a central role to Freud's paper on "The Uncanny."²⁵¹ Krauss lends a Lacanian inflexion to her reading of the work, which she considers in particular in terms of her conception of the "optical unconscious", which she poses as a kind of "counterhistory" that undermines from within, and which is rooted in a "refusal of the optical logic of mainstream modernism."²⁵² While acknowledging the importance of such psychoanalytic readings I also want to extend the discussion to embrace some of the writings of Max Stirner and Otto Weininger.

Ernst, Stirner, Weininger

"Man has become to himself a ghost, an uncanny spook ..."

Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*.

Camfield identifies two specific texts which he considers crucial to Ernst's formation: Max

²⁴⁴ See for example, David Hopkins, "Hermetic and philosophical themes in Max Ernst's *Vox Angelica* and related works", *Burlington Magazine*, Vol.134, November 1992, pp.716-723.

²⁴⁵ Geoffrey Hinton, "Max Ernst: *Les Hommes n'en Sauront Rien*", *Burlington Magazine*, Vol.117, May 1975, pp.292-299.

²⁴⁶ Elizabeth Legge, "Max Ernst's *Oedipus Rex* and the Implicit Sphinx", *Arts Magazine*, Vol.61 no.1, September 1986, pp.50-3; Legge "Posing Questions: Ernst's *Au Rendez-vous des Amis*", *Art History*, Vol.10 no.2, June 1987, pp.227-243.

²⁴⁷ Charlotte Stokes, "Collage as Jokework: Freud's Theories of Wit as the Foundation for the Collages of Max Ernst", *Leonardo*, Vol.15, no.3, 1982, pp.199-204.

²⁴⁸ Laura L. Meixner, "Max Ernst's *Aquis Submersus* as Literary Collage", *Arts Magazine*, Vol.63 no.3, November 1986, pp.80-5.

²⁴⁹ Jeanne Siegel, "Max Ernst's *One Night of Love*", *Arts Magazine*, Vol.57, Part 5, January 1983, pp.112-115.

²⁵⁰ Malcolm Gee, "Max Ernst, God and the Revolution by Night", *Arts Magazine*, Vol.55, March 1981, pp.85-91.

²⁵¹ Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, op. cit.

²⁵² Krauss, op. cit. p.21.

Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own* (*Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, 1844)²⁵³ and Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character* (1903). Stirner, a key philosophical source for anarchism, is frequently cited as an influence in relation to both Duchamp and Picabia, and we might usefully consider briefly how this text may have contributed towards the attitudes adopted by men of their generation - including Ernst - for example in terms of personal autonomy, or in terms of influencing their sense of their own male subjectivity.

Stirner rejects the notion of the existence of any human "essence", asserting instead the relativity of truth, reason and language; he has thereby been viewed by some as an important precursor of Nietzsche's thought. The central argument in *The Ego and Its Own* is that humanity has passed through three stages: "realism", "idealism", and culminating in the modern era of "egoism". For Stirner, the modern period of egoism is to be organised around the concept of autonomy or "ownness" (*Die Eigenheit*) - one should live according to one's own laws, and even these are not to be binding. Hence then, the antipathy between individual and state: "every state is a despotism be the despot one or many."²⁵⁴ Stirner also attacks what he sees in modern philosophy as the exaltation of the "scientific consciousness", which, he asserts "does not rest until it has brought reason into everything, and can say 'The actual is the rational, and only the rational is the actual'."²⁵⁵ We find this same polemical, aggressive tone echoed in the assault on reason of Breton, who writes scathingly in the first *Manifeste du surréalisme* of "l'attitude réaliste": "Je l'ai en horreur, car elle est faite de médiocrité, de haine et de plate suffisance."²⁵⁶ But the two part company in their proposed alternative; whereas Breton exalts "freedom" - "Le seul mot de liberté est tout ce qui m'exalte encore"²⁵⁷ - for Stirner, "freedom" is simply an ideal, an abstraction, a romantic longing, whereas "ownness" is a reality.²⁵⁸ Stirner is likewise scathing on the abstraction "man", viewing it "only as *my quality* (property) like masculinity or femininity", whereas, by contrast, "The ancients found the ideal in one's own being male in the full sense; their virtue is *virtus* and *arete* - manliness."²⁵⁹ Stirner's egoist rejects such abstractions, together with the institutions which sustain them, such as church and state; the egoist, he says, desecrates: "Nothing is

²⁵³ Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own* (1844), edited by David Leopold, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

²⁵⁴ Stirner, *ibid.* p.xxvi.

²⁵⁵ Stirner, *ibid.* p.78.

²⁵⁶ André Breton, "Manifeste du surréalisme", in *OCl*; p.313.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p.312.

²⁵⁸ Stirner, *op. cit.* p.147-8.

²⁵⁹ Stirner, *ibid.* p.163.

holy to him!".

There is likewise evidence of Stirner's influence upon Ernst, particularly in an early text "Vom Werden der Farbe" (1917) which Ernst wrote under the impact of the colour theories of Expressionists like Chagall, Kandinsky and Marc. Camfield describes this text as "charged with an exaltation of the heroic individual celebrated in the writings of Stirner and Nietzsche", as for example when Ernst states that "Creation is to become one's self, to attain one's own form", whereas "sin is to lag behind in the attainment of one's intended form."²⁶⁰ Uwe M. Schneede confirms that Ernst's reading while at the University of Bonn included Nietzsche and Stirner, while Spies suggests the general influence of Stirner in Ernst's collages.²⁶¹

As Richard Sonn has insisted, anarchism was never simply a *political* movement, "but must be interpreted as a wide-ranging cultural rebellion", and there are clear parallels with dada as an expression of such cultural revolt. Man's weakness, Stirner insists, springs from not fully asserting his *uniqueness*:

One faith, one God, one idea, one hat for all! If we were all brought under one hat, certainly no-one would any longer need to take off his hat before another.²⁶²

We can perhaps detect an echo of some of these attitudes in Ernst's *c'est le chapeau qui fait l'homme* (1920) (fig.30), an image which has been linked by Spies to earlier works by Macke which focus upon fashion as a significant aspect of modernity, while also pointing to the Freudian symbolism of the hat on the head as a phallic symbol. The text at the bottom right of the collage speaks of "seedless, stacked-up man, seedless waterformer well-fitting nervous system ...", suggesting for Camfield, modern man as oppressed, constrained and perhaps impotent. But we could also suggest the influence of Stirner, where the use of a catalogue page of mass-produced hats points to a view of man as conformist, as forced into some standard mould and lacking individuality - of man, in Stirner's terms, as a product of what is *imparted* to him, rather than as an assertion of *ownness*. Schneede also points out that Ernst produced this image at a time when he "had to take charge of his father-in-law's hat-blocking shop for a few

weeks,"²⁶³ which might suggest a more personal level of rebellion, akin to the Oedipal

²⁶⁰ Camfield, op. cit. p.43. As Camfield himself observes, when Ernst's comments on colour symbolism are tested against his own wartime paintings, "no convincing correlation is evident."

²⁶¹ Uwe M. Schneede, *The Essential Max Ernst*, op. cit.; Spies, *Max Ernst: Collages*, op. cit. p.89.

²⁶² Stirner, *ibid.* p.186.

²⁶³ Schneede, op cit. p.33.

revolt of Ernst against his own father.

Weininger's *Sex and Character* is of particular interest in that it is also a text which is cited by James Thrall Soby and by Paolo Baldacci as having influenced de Chirico (in turn a key influence upon Ernst), though Baldacci considers Weininger's influence more superficial than that of Nietzsche and dates that influence only from 1916, during the time of de Chirico's Ferrara period. While he considers the influence of Weininger upon metaphysical painting to be over-stated, Baldacci nonetheless acknowledges "la grand popularité qui entourra cette figure pendant les premières décennies du siècle". More recently, Slavoj Žižek has also observed that:

It is by no accident that, in the first decades of our century, *Sex and Character* headed the reading lists of troubled adolescents: it provided an answer to all the questions that tormented their stormy inner lives.²⁶⁴

Part of Weininger's appeal to that generation, as Žižek rightly notes, consists in the "unmitigated *authenticity* of his writing", as attested by his suicide at twenty-four, soon after the appearance of *Sex and Character*. There is some evidence for Žižek's assertion, for example in the case of the Austrian illustrator Alfred Kubin, who, in a letter of 8 October, 1903 to Fritz von Hermanovsky-Orlando, a long-term correspondent, writes: "Dr. Otto Weininger, für mich der grösste Mensch des Jahrhundert hat sich in Wien vor einigen Tagen erschossen (24 Jahre)."²⁶⁵ I therefore want to focus in particular upon Weininger's possible impact upon gender attitudes of the period. Camfield characterises *Sex and Character* in terms of a "mad mixture of pseudo-science" and prejudice and sees it as a likely source for Ernst's views on androgyny. Weininger mixes psychology and philosophy in an attempt to redefine the relations between the sexes on the basis of a re-formulation of their essential character. Rejecting any blunt separation of the sexes into categories of "male" and "female", he argues that there is "always a certain persistence of the bisexual character" in all life-forms and therefore sees each sex as containing characteristics of the other.²⁶⁶ This leads Weininger to conceive of homosexuals, for example, in terms of men whose characters display a high level of feminine characteristics, and hence to argue for the liberalisation of the "ridiculous laws of England, Germany and Austria directed against homosexuality." Despite innate

²⁶⁴ Slavoj Žižek, "Otto Weininger, or Woman doesn't Exist", originally in *New Formations* (vol.23, 1994), reprinted in Elizabeth Wright and Edmond Wright (eds.), *The Žižek Reader*, Oxford and Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1999, p.129.

²⁶⁵ Fritz von Hermanovsky-Orlando, *Der Briefwechsel mit Alfred Kubin: 1903-52*, (*Samtliche Werke*, Band VII), Salzburg und Wien: Residenz Verlag, 1983, p.7.

²⁶⁶ Weininger, *Sex and Character*, op. cit. p.9.

bisexuality, Weininger nonetheless conceives masculinity and femininity in terms of ideal forms, a consequence, as Allan Janik points out, of his rejection of positivism (which can only ever predict probabilities, based upon empirical observation) and its replacement by Neo-Kantian analytic categories.²⁶⁷ Weininger thus conceives gender in terms of a binary opposition in which the male clearly figures as the superior sex, based upon a capacity for clear and rational thought, through which man gains access to "genius", but from which women are excluded. Weininger is thus led to reserve the quality of "genius" for the male, while correspondingly denigrating the female in a tedious litany of misogyny, denying to woman any capacity for logic, ethics, or even the possession of an ego. Woman, for Weininger, exists only in terms of her sexuality - "she is sexuality itself"²⁶⁸ - and the central aim of her existence is simply that of reproduction.

While it would be tempting to simply dismiss Weininger's thinking as an hysterical reaction to the rise of feminism (Weininger devotes a chapter of his book to an attack on "Emancipated Women" and rejects out of hand any notion of the equality of the sexes), Žižek rightly cautions against any such dismissal, insisting instead upon the effect of *recognition* which his ideas held for that generation of youth. For Žižek, there are striking parallels between Weininger's denial of subjectivity to woman ("Woman therefore does not exist"), and Lacan's statement that *La femme n'existe pas*, or his assertion of "woman as a symptom of man". The reason why, for Žižek, the formulas of Weininger and Lacan are not fully congruent, is that Weininger fails to follow on from his assertion of woman's "non-existence" and to recognize "*in this 'nothing' the very negativity that defines the notion of the subject*" - i.e. the gap between the subject's "reality" and his or her social-symbolic existence:

Weininger's aversion to woman bears witness to the fear of the most radical dimension of subjectivity itself: of the Void which "is" the subject.²⁶⁹

For Žižek, Weininger's great merit is his absolute rejection of the mystification of femininity in terms of "woman's enigma", and his "violent anti-feminist outburst" is to be read as "There is no feminine secret at all, behind the mask of the Enigma, there is simply nothing!"²⁷⁰ One final point of particular interest in Žižek's analysis is his assertion of the radical nature of Weininger's argument that it is *man's love* which creates female

²⁶⁷ Allan Janik, *Essays on Wittgenstein and Weininger*, Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 1985.

²⁶⁸ Weininger, op. cit. p.200.

²⁶⁹ Žižek, *ibid.* p.136.

²⁷⁰ Žižek, *ibid.* p.134.

beauty, and hence the performative nature of that beauty. Weininger argues that: "All beauty is really more a projection, an emanation of the requirements of love", and hence that "woman's beauty is the love of man; they are not two things, but one and the same thing."²⁷¹ Zizek thus concludes that love "disregards utterly the object's (woman's) true nature, and uses it only as a kind of empty projection screen ..."; or in Weininger's striking formula: "Love is murder." Certainly the treatment of female beauty within surrealist art would bear this out, where for example, the woman's body is fetishized, or overlaid with a projection of male anxieties and desires, and comes more to reflect *male* subjectivity than that of its ostensible subject.

What, then, could we say of the response of the artwork of the period to the problems posed by Weininger on the nature of femininity and the relationship between the sexes? Perhaps the two dominant modes of dealing with a feared femininity are either to investigate the woman (a return to the original trauma of sexual difference), or alternatively to fetishize her (thus reaffirming the myth of the "eternal feminine"); we find ample evidence of both attitudes within surrealism - particularly obviously, for example, within surrealist photography.²⁷² At the time of its initial publication in 1903, Alfred Kubin produced a series of illustrations for *Sex and Character* in which the misogyny of the book, and the fear of femininity find vivid visual expression. Particularly clear in Kubin's imagery (fig.31) is the intense evocation of castration anxiety, as well as the clear linkage of female sexuality with death. Kubin instigates both a sadistic investigation of femininity, while also elevating, mystifying and fetishising the female body.²⁷³ In the case of Ernst, we again find both tendencies - fetishism, as already discussed in the previous chapter; but also a strongly analytic and investigative tendency, and one which Hopkins has detected in both Duchamp and Ernst, using the central metaphor of the "unveiling" of the bride, and which he interprets - at least in part - in terms of "dissection/investigation". One such example of the latter approach would be Ernst's *Die Anatomie (als Braut)* of 1921 (fig.32), in which a partially "dissected" mechanical female mannequin is displayed for the viewer in a coffin-like metal tub. Constructed in part from a German army helmet, there are clearly linkages between this metallic corpse and the recently ended war - the image evokes the literal damage to the body, or suggests, for example, the way body

²⁷¹ Weininger, cited in Zizek, *ibid.* p.131.

²⁷² See for example Rosalind Krauss, "Corpus Delicti", in Krauss and Livingston, *L'Amour fou: photography and surrealism*, *op. cit.*

²⁷³ See *Alfred Kubin: Das zeichnerische Frühwerk bis 1904*, Texte von Christoph Brockhaus (exh. cat.), Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, 1977.

parts would have been gathered together after an explosion. Ernst's image also fits within Elisabeth Bronfen's thesis of femininity as repository of death within Western culture, as evidenced by the long tradition within both the visual arts and literature of the representation of the dead woman (dissection imagery, the "death of the beautiful woman", etc.).²⁷⁴ Such depictions function in the manner of the symptom, a compromise formation which indicates the failure of a repression, and in which "representations as symptoms articulate unconscious knowledge and unconscious desires in a displaced, recoded and translated manner."²⁷⁵ Eberhard Roters has suggested that Ernst's *Anatomie* might be linked with the theme of sex murders, a recurring subject in the work of Grosz and Dix amongst others, and in her analysis of this theme in Weimar Germany, Maria Tatar points to the "psychic fall-out of the war years" and the consequent "crisis of male subjectivity occasioned by a sense of military defeat", as well as the "painfully acute sense of the body's vulnerability to fragmentation, mutilation and dismemberment."²⁷⁶ There are also undoubted links with the violent fantasies against the female body analysed by Klaus Theweleit in his important work *Male Fantasies*,²⁷⁷ though Theweleit's study relates to specific groups such as the right-wing Freikorps who considered themselves "stabbed in the back" by the communists and other civilian groups. Ernst's work lacks the crude misogyny of the bulk of the work analysed by Theweleit, and indeed, can be read more in terms of an investigation or critique of gender construction, as informed by a reading of Freud. Nonetheless, whereas Hopkins detects in Duchamp a more sustained interrogation of the constructedness of gender, within Ernst's oeuvre such critique is found only sporadically, and ultimately Ernst is judged by Hopkins as sharing the "unreflective valorization of woman as nature, "femme-enfant", or muse that Whitney Chadwick has seen as epitomizing male Surrealist attitudes towards women."²⁷⁸ There is certainly evidence for both approaches within Ernst's work and we see something of such attitudes in Ernst's *Ecritures*, where, writing of the period of his earlier career he says "L'élément féminin n'était point exclu de nos délices", and that, although there were neither women poets or painters amongst them:

²⁷⁴ Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, femininity and the aesthetic*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992.

²⁷⁵ Bronfen, *ibid.* p.xi.

²⁷⁶ Maria Tatar, *Lustmord: Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995, p.12.

²⁷⁷ Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, (Vol.1 and 2), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987 and 1989.

²⁷⁸ Hopkins, *The Bride Shared*, *op. cit.* p.147.

Par contre, toute personne digne du nom "Perturbation ma soeur, la femme cent têtes" était reçue avec cris et clameurs. Ces personnes étaient rares, leurs apparitions de courte durée. Plus constantes étaient celles que nous appelions volontiers "Les sources de tout bien", et ... qui ont inspiré quelques beaux poèmes à Henri Heine et à Guillaume Apollinaire ...²⁷⁹

Woman is therefore posed here as muse, but a muse as inflected through a somewhat troubled, traumatised male subjectivity, and which requires that we consider the impact of the War upon Ernst's work.

War, Defeat and the Male Psyche

Max was called up. Field artillery. Four months in a barracks in Cologne-Niehl, then out into the shit. Four years. "We're going out to beat the French, to die a valiant he-ee-ee-ro ..."
Ernst *Biographical Notes*²⁸⁰

Ernst served in the German army throughout the whole of the First World War, though his reference to that period in "Some Data on the Youth of M.E." from the Max Ernst special edition of *View* magazine, from April 1942 is surely striking in its brevity:

(1914) Max Ernst died the 1st of August 1914. He resuscitated the 11th of November 1918 as a young man aspiring to become a magician and to find the myth of his time.²⁸¹

Camfield tells us that Ernst in fact enlisted "without enthusiasm", only three weeks into the conflict, along with his brother Karl, rather than waiting to be conscripted. In his *Ecritures* Ernst later gave a somewhat fuller account of that period: "Aucun de nous, dans notre cercle d'amis, n'est pressé de sacrifier sa vie à Dieu, au roi, à la patrie", adding his bemusement at the bellicose attitude of Macke who, under the influence of Futurism, conceived of the war as a philosophic necessity "pour la réalisation de l'idée d'humanité!"²⁸² Kurt Tucholsky, in his essay "The Spirit of 1914", has written of a "wave of drunkenness" which "overtook the country" in that year.²⁸³ Interestingly, Leed observes that the split between volunteers like Ernst and conscripts was much greater in

²⁷⁹ Max Ernst, *Ecritures*, op cit. p.21

²⁸⁰ Max Ernst, "Biographical Notes: Tissue of Truth, Tissue of Lies" - in Spies, Max Ernst, op. cit. p.281.

²⁸¹ Max Ernst, "Some Data on the Youth of M.E.", op. cit.

²⁸² Ernst, *Ecritures*, op. cit. p.24-25.

²⁸³ Kurt Tucholsky, "The Spirit of 1914" (1924), reprinted in Anton Kaes, Martin Jay and Edward Dimendberg, *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1994, p.20.

the German forces than elsewhere. "Volunteers" were usually of a higher and better-educated class, often with idealistic expectations, and would spend a year in the ranks before being sent off for officer training. They were widely despised by conscripts as dangerous idealists, while the conscript sought only a quiet life and to survive the conflict. Details of Ernst's wartime activities are sketchy, but it is known that he served on the Western front with an artillery unit during 1915, near Laon and Soissons, and that around the middle of that year was assigned to a staff position, taking telephone directions and marking map locations. Ernst's chances of survival were considerably improved by that transfer and he was able to continue his artwork, showing in Berlin during 1916, and producing occasional critical texts on art, such as his 1917 paper *On the Origins of Colour*. A photograph survives of Ernst swathed in bandages (fig.33) on one of the two occasions in which he was wounded, his injuries "sustained by the kick of a mule and the recoil of an artillery piece."²⁸⁴ Russell notes that Ernst was transferred to the Eastern front late in 1916 and that during 1917 was transferred to Koblenz for officer training, so that in many ways his profile is that of the more idealistic volunteer described by Leed. Ernst's own reticence in this matter is matched by Spies's almost total silence on the wartime period in his major study of Ernst's collages, making no attempt at all to either explain this earth-shattering four year gap, nor to consider its undoubted impact upon Ernst and his work. The war thus assumes the status of a black hole, a traumatic gap, whose absence is filled out by many of Ernst's most disturbing works of the immediate postwar period.

In Ernst's surviving work of the wartime period we find regular references to warfare, as in images such as *Battle of the Fish* (fig.34), or *The Spindle's Victory*, both of 1917, where we find ominous, mechanical-organic flying fishes, some of which resemble missiles or shells, engaged in bloody combat. Martin Jay has pointed to the role of the War in marking a break in the dominance of what he calls "Western perspectivalism" (essentially the pictorial tradition of Renaissance perspective) and the rational tradition of the Enlightenment. Trench warfare, endured over years, "created a bewildering landscape of indistinguishable, shadowy shapes, illuminated by lighting flashes of blinding intensity, and then obscured by phantasmagoric, often gas-induced haze."²⁸⁵ Such hallucinatory visual ambiguity, coupled with the contrast of obscurity and blinding

²⁸⁴ Camfield, *Max Ernst: Dada and the Dawn of Surrealism*, op. cit., p.41.

²⁸⁵ Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1993, p.212.

light, certainly characterise Ernst's symbolization of the conflict in terms of warring fishes, which stylistically still draws upon an Expressionist vocabulary, while the overall dark tone and the avoidance of all reference to the human body is suggestive of an inhumane conflict, devoid of all reason. I would also suggest a quite different source of influence in the boys' adventure stories which exercised such a grip upon the imagination of Ernst's generation, and in particular the science fiction stories of Jules Verne and Albert Robida. Robida, author of *Le Vingtième Siècle* (1883) and *La Guerre au Vingtième Siècle* (1887), creates a fanciful future world in which he projects nineteenth century technologies into the next century, where airborne transport often assumes the form of fish-like flying vehicles (fig.35).²⁸⁶

But of equal interest within Ernst's oeuvre, in relation to the impact of war, is a series of spatially disorienting paintings produced by Ernst during 1919, in which the family unit features as a target of savage satire. The family had been the object of attack with Expressionism, indicating severe social tensions even prior to the war. In his "Biographical Notes" Ernst wrote bitterly of the family and of his own role as the eldest son: "Set a good example. Duty, duty and duty again. The word began to seem dubious to him at an early age, and he began to hate it."²⁸⁷ Again, the influence of Stirner suggests itself, where notions of sacrifice, responsibility and duty are absolutely rejected: "Egoism does not think of sacrificing anything ..."²⁸⁸ This is an attitude which we also find in Weininger, though Weininger does nonetheless take an ethical position: "Logic and ethics are fundamentally the same, they are no more than duty to oneself"; and he adds "Duty is only toward oneself."²⁸⁹ In images such as *Immortality*, *Household Life*, *The Family Outing*, or an untitled work (fig.36) of the same year, 1919, Ernst depicts the family unit as a dysfunctional band of grotesques - physical ugliness, ominous lighting, claustrophobic settings, dubious relationships and a general spatial unease characterise these images, producing a sardonic critique of the nuclear family which shares something of the corrosive tone of the work of George Grosz. Ernst later spoke of:

young people [who] came back from the war in a state of stupefaction,
and [whose] rage had to find expression ... quite naturally through

²⁸⁶ Albert Robida, *Le Vingtième Siècle*; Paris: Georges Decaux, 1883.

²⁸⁷ Max Ernst, "Biographical Notes: Tissue of Truth, Tissue of Lies", in Spies, op. cit., p.291.

²⁸⁸ Stirner, op. cit. p.228.

²⁸⁹ Weininger, op. cit. p.159.

attacks on the foundations of the civilization responsible for the war.²⁹⁰ Breton manifests a similar rage against his age when he writes of being "flung into a cesspool of blood, mud and idiocy"²⁹¹ and he too, as in the case of other surrealists (Aragon²⁹², Eluard), had a difficult relationship with his father. Quite clearly the family figures prominently as one such pillar of that civilization, but it is the father in particular who assumes the main burden of responsibility and guilt.

It was also during the same year that Ernst came into contact for the first time with the work of the Dada movement. This was during September 1919, while Ernst was visiting Munich, and at the same time as his first encounter with the work of de Chirico in *Valori Plastici*. Given the recent end of the war and Ernst's troubled relationship with his father, works such as de Chirico's many versions of *The Prodigal Son* (fig.37), in which father and son embrace, finally reconciled, must have had a particular resonance. The impact of these works upon Ernst was immediate and far-reaching, and of de Chirico's imagery he observed:

I had the impression of having met something that had always been familiar to me, as when a *déjà vu* phenomenon reveals to us an entire domain of our own dream world that, thanks to a sort of censorship, one has refused to see or comprehend.²⁹³

What is immediately striking about this is Ernst's use of the language of Freud - *déjà vu*, *censorship*, *dream* - and in fact it was in the same year, 1919, that Freud's paper on "The Uncanny" first appeared. Freud begins that paper with an extensive discussion of the etymology of the term, where *heimlich* refers to the family and home, to what is intimate, friendly, comfortable, whereas *unheimlich* denotes that which is "eerie, weird, arousing gruesome fear", or according to Schelling, "the name for everything that ought to have remained ... secret and hidden but has come to light."²⁹⁴ Ernst's treatment of family and home surely echoes this ambivalence which Freud detects in the uncanny, as he lays bare what ought to remain hidden, making strange and unwelcoming what ought to be cosy and familiar.

²⁹⁰ Originally in U. M. Schneede, *Max Ernst*, New York, 1973 - cited in Meixner, "Max Ernst's *Aquis Submersus* as Literary Collage", op. cit., p.80.

²⁹¹ André Breton, cited in Polizzotti, op. cit., p.29.

²⁹² Aragon was the illegitimate son of Louis Andrieux, a prominent politician, and his true origins shrouded in deception.

²⁹³ From *Max Ernst, Ecritures* - cited in Camfield, op. cit. p.57.

²⁹⁴ Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny", in *Freud, Art and Literature*, The Penguin Freud Library, Vol.14, London & New York: Penguin Books, 1985, pp.344-345.

Hal Foster adopts the uncanny as the key term in his psychoanalytic interpretation of surrealism, and reads the sense of *déjà vu* encountered in the Freudian uncanny, in terms of "the primal fantasy of intrauterine existence".²⁹⁵ Foster juxtaposes Freud's paper on "The Uncanny" alongside his just completed paper "Beyond the Pleasure Principle", where Freud argued an instinctual compulsion to repeat, to return to some prior state (ultimately to return to a state of non-existence). It is a compulsion which over-rides the pleasure principle, leading Freud to posit the existence of a "death drive" - and hence Freud's final model of the drives based on the opposition of Eros and Thanatos. Foster thus concludes that, for Freud, "the evocation of these two repressed states, castration and death, epitomizes the uncanny", adding that the drives never appear in any "pure" state, but "only in combination", with the death drive, in Freud's phrase "tinged with eroticism."²⁹⁶ Such a combination of eroticism and death is already apparent in Ernst's *Anatomie* and, as we shall see, had become a recurring feature of the work which he produced under the immediate impact of war.

Following his exposure to dada in 1919, we quickly see Ernst shed his expressionist past. Ernst's enthusiastic involvement in the Cologne Dada movement, together with Hans Arp and Johannes Theodor Baargeld, soon led to the first Cologne Dada Exhibition of November, 1919. This was initially to have been part of an exhibition organised by the Cologne Society of Arts, but split into two separate shows when the true nature of what they were dealing with became apparent to the Society. The dada show included Ernst's *Aquis Submersus* (fig.38), which was also reproduced in the catalogue, *Bulletin D*, and which Spies has linked to Theodor Storm's melodramatic 1875 novella of the same title, which had been re-published that same year. Storm's novella essentially involves a penniless artist's illicit affair with a woman of higher social status, which results in an illegitimate son who later drowns while the lovers embrace; as penance, the painter is compelled to produce a post-mortem portrait of the drowned child, and the novel concludes with the words "*Culpa Patris Aquis Submersus: Drowned in the flood of his father's guilt.*"²⁹⁷ The Oedipal theme of paternal guilt clearly had a particular resonance for Ernst, as with others of his generation who considered themselves betrayed by those responsible for the War, and in *Aquis Submersus* we see the son drowning while the absurd moustached figure of the father - limbless (and

²⁹⁵ Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, op. cit., p.8.

²⁹⁶ Foster, *ibid.* p.10-11.

²⁹⁷ Camfield, op. cit. p.60.

thus helpless to intervene) and apparently castrated - turns away. For Ernst's generation such a figure inevitably recalls the numerous amputees who had become a familiar sight from the outbreak of war. Meixner adds a further dimension in noting a dream in Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, with which Ernst was familiar, which refers to a dreamer diving into a lake which has a moon shining upon it. Freud interprets this as a "birth dream", a reading which Meixner sees reinforced in Ernst's image by the inclusion of hollow architectural structures which she views as Freudian womb imagery.²⁹⁸ Meixner is thereby able to provide an optimistic reading of the image, in terms of displacement of the father, symbolic of the old order, and the re-birth, via the son, of a new social order. She also finds further support for this thesis of death and re-birth in Ernst's own autobiographical writings, where he writes of the sudden death of his pink cockatoo:

It was a terrible shock to Max when, in the morning, he discovered the dead body and when, at the same moment, the father announced the birth of a sister. In his imagination Max coupled these two events and charged the baby with the extinction of the bird's life.. There followed a series of mystical crises, fits of hysteria, exaltations and depression.²⁹⁹

My own reading of these events would rather stress the element of trauma rather than any sense of optimism through rebirth, with the traumatic kernel as the driving force behind the endless re-working of those events. As quoted above, Ernst uses the metaphor of death and rebirth to express his wartime experience, both of which events figure as major traumas in the life of the subject. The overall message then, in *Aquis Submersus*, is of displacement of the old order and a sense of "rebirth" for the survivors of the war - and in the case of Ernst, it was dada which was to provide the artistic vehicle for that revolution.

The second Cologne Dada Exhibition held in the spring of 1920 in the courtyard of the brasserie Winter, and said to have been accessible only via the men's toilets, excited far more hostility than had previous dada work in that city. The show provoked the final break between Ernst and his father, who wrote to him "I curse you. You have dishonoured us."³⁰⁰ Ernst's own view of dada confirms the extent of the schism between the generations and its source in the sense of betrayal consequent upon the War:

Dada was a rebellious upsurge of vital energy and rage; it resulted from the absurdity, the whole immense *Schweinerei* of that imbecile

²⁹⁸ Laura L. Meixner, op. cit. - p.82.

²⁹⁹ Max Ernst, "An Informal Life of M.E., as told by himself to a young friend", cited in Meixner, ibid. p.83.

³⁰⁰ Camfield, op. cit. p.74.

war.³⁰¹

This Oedipal revolt against the father, at least in the case of Ernst, was to embrace all that the generation of the father stood for - including social values, cultural ideals and religion, all of which stand parodied in Ernst's visual work and writings. Lacan's re-casting of the Freudian Oedipus complex emphasises the role of the father as the embodiment of the entire symbolic order, in which *language* assumes a central role, and in this light we can more clearly perceive Ernst's revolt as being against all that is symbolised by the father - against the "Law of the Father". In part, this revolt is directed against the very language of art and assumes a key role in Ernst's re-casting of his artistic identity.

Ernst's main contribution to dada was surely his collage technique, and indeed Spies privileges collage as the key term in twentieth-century art, adding that "almost everything in Max Ernst's oeuvre can be traced back to collage."³⁰² For Spies, Ernst had not wanted to "destroy art", but rather to produce a "painting beyond painting", a phrase first used by Ernst in 1921. Spies dates Ernst's first collages to 1919, where, under the influence of his exposure to dada, he shifts from assemblages to collage, a "revolt" against the realism and attachment to painterly technique of his father, in a move which Spies characterises as "a revolt against his father's world and the rules that governed it."³⁰³ Ernst also relates a tale of his father removing a tree from a painting of his garden, and then chopping down the corresponding tree in reality, to ensure the perfect correspondence of the representation with the real; Ernst's own art was thus to be premised upon the total rejection of any such correspondence, and upon a general rejection of ocular reality - a "revolt against the eye" which Jay argues is characteristic of much surrealist work.³⁰⁴

It was during late 1919 that Ernst first recognised the potential of a teaching aids catalogue, which was to feed much of his work in the following year:

Cette même année, en effet, un jour de pluie, à Cologne, le catalogue d'un fournisseur d'articles scolaires attire son attention. Il s'y trouve des annonces de maquettes touchant à toutes sortes de disciplines: mathématiques, géométriques, anthropologiques, zoologiques ... Éléments de nature si diverse que l'absurdité qui se dégagait de leur accumulation trouble son regard et ses sens; suscite des hallucinations

³⁰¹ Ernst cited in Meixner, *ibid* p.84.

³⁰² Spies, *Max Ernst - Collages: The Invention of the Surrealist Universe*, op. cit. p.10.

³⁰³ Spies, *ibid.* p.41.

³⁰⁴ Jay, op. cit., see Ch.4.

et donne aux objets représentés des sens nouveaux qui changent rapidement.³⁰⁵

Ernst asserts that this commercial catalogue heightened his "facultés visionnaires", and that with the aid of a little paint or a new background, his "hallucination" had been fixed. Here, we are directly in the tradition inaugurated by the department stores, the *Bon Marché* and *Au Bonheur des dames*, with their promiscuous mixing of all varieties of products and with the fetishization of the commodity. We could add to these various influences upon the emergence of Ernst's collage technique, the impact of the work of Francis Picabia, whose machine drawings had been appearing in *291* since 1915, as well as in the third issue of *Der Dada*, and who also provided the alarm clock cover for *Dada* 4-5 (February 1919). Freud's influence has already been noted, but has a particular relevance to Ernst's collage technique. Not only was Freud's work to prove influential in terms of the oneiric imagery of his dream interpretations, but also in relation to the various psychic devices identified by Freud - condensation, displacement, etc. - and which are directly applicable to collage technique. For example, Ernst's "overpainting" technique, in which he paints over most of a page from a catalogue, leaving only some of the objects still visible, recalls the process of repression, or creates a metaphor for the mind as composed of conscious and unconscious elements. If dada provided the immediate vehicle through which Ernst might respond to his wartime experience, the collage technique and Freudian theory provided him with the technical means and the critical theoretical paradigm through which to formulate that experience.

The Labyrinth and the Icarian Dream

Modern battle is the fragmentation of spatial and temporal unities. It is the creation of a system with no centre and no periphery in which men, both attackers and defenders, are lost.

Eric Leed³⁰⁶

Eric Leed points to the acute sense of disorientation experienced by trench soldiers like Ernst during the war, lost in a labyrinth of trenches without clear visual markers, and that this in turn "generated a need for coherent vision, the kind of vision attributed to the flyer, the pilot who enjoyed an aerial perspective."³⁰⁷ Leed also cites Fussell's argument that

³⁰⁵ Max Ernst, "Notes pour une Biographie", *Écritures*; op. cit., p.31.

³⁰⁶ Leed, op. cit. p.104.

³⁰⁷ Leed, op. cit. p.123.

war provoked a shift "towards myth, towards a revival of the cultic, the sacrificial ...", a tendency explicable by way of reference to Lévi-Strauss's reading of myth in terms of the imaginary resolution of an irresolvable cultural contradiction. The fighter ace was promoted by both sides of the conflict as one such mythical figure, able to rise above the stalemate of the trenches and exercise a mobility, an aggressive "masculine" activity, of which the trench soldier could only dream. Leed argues that the miner too, mythically linked with figures like smiths and alchemists becomes associated with processes of change and the transformation of matter. Hence the opposition of trench and open sky, between the entanglements of the labyrinth and the freedom of infinite space, embodied in the mythicised figures of the underground miner and the Icarian flyer.

Of the early collage works of 1920, a number of Ernst's images relate directly to the War, particularly in terms of the theme of aerial combat, and often inflect that combat through issues of gender. In *démonstration hydrométrique à tuer par la température*, 1920 (fig.39) Ernst has placed a range of scientific devices taken from his teaching-aids catalogue, and inserted them within a sharply-receding interior space. The devices assume vaguely anthropomorphic forms, and given the title of the image, suggest what Camfield has called the "nightmarish image of a torture chamber."³⁰⁸ Again, the misuse of science suggests itself as a theme. Technologised war is also the theme of Ernst's *1 Copper Plate 1 Zinc Plate 1 Rubber Cloth 2 Calipers 1 Drainpipe Telescope 1 Pipe Man* of 1920 (fig.40). The title here reads like a check-list of equipment on some army inspection, with the "Pipe Man" added at the end, almost as an afterthought - a cipher, like Ernst's impotent "hat-men". The image is again based on a catalogue plate featuring chemical and bacteriological equipment, and Ernst's figures in their goggles and gasmask clearly make reference to chemical warfare. These hybrid man-machines, with their eyeless gaze and their "Drainpipe telescope", evoking the huge periscopes used in trench warfare, also recall Jay's characterisation of the war as essentially outside the scope of the existing visual and representational tradition. Women too feature in this torture chamber of war, as we have seen already in *Anatomie (als Braut)*, though more as objects of investigation.

Ernst's early love of adventure stories such as those of Jules Verne is surely a neglected aspect of his work, and may be of particular relevance to his later collage

³⁰⁸ Camfield, op. cit. p.82.

novels. The balloon, another reference to the dream of flight, figures in a number of Ernst's collages and paintings of this period and may also relate to Verne, whose first novel was *Five Weeks in a Balloon* (1863). The distant balloon in *Oedipus Rex* (1922) (pl.1 - discussed below), figures perhaps as a receding fantasy of freedom set against the foreground realities of constraint, castration and the law of the father. There are also similarities between Ernst's *Here Everything is Still Floating ...* (1920)(fig.41) and an image of another flying ship from Verne's *The Clipper of the Clouds* (1885)(fig.42), suggesting that the optimistic dreams of childhood have here turned sour and hence again come to signify betrayal. As is apparent in magazines of the period, the issue of mechanical flight exercised a peculiar grip on the popular imagination, and clearly embodies very specific fantasies in the generation of Ernst, as for example in the novels of Verne and H.G.Wells. Aerial warfare was early on identified as the most immediate potential of such technologies, as in Wells's short story "The War in the Air" (1908), or even earlier in Verne's *Robur-le-Conquérant*. As Robert Wohl shows, the First World War began to see these predictions realised and the figure of the heroic fighter ace, engaged in some chivalric conflict of the skies, became established as one of the great myths of the period. Although women pilots existed, the world of the fighter pilot was an exclusively masculine domain, where "Comradeship among males was often represented as a deeper bond than the more sensual and superficial motivations that united men and women":

The Great War only reinforced the image of the sky as a privileged male space. ... Aces exemplified more purely than any other figure of their time what it mean to be a man.³⁰⁹

The betrayal of those fantasies in transforming the dream of flight into a weapon of war can thus be seen to exercise a powerful influence upon Ernst's imaginary. In an untitled image from ca.1920 (fig.43) a hybrid of machine and human body passes overhead - a figure reminiscent of that of *Anatomie (als Braut)* - while one of its gigantic female arms makes a delicate gesture, as though to gently drop some invisible object; below, two men carry away a bandaged man, against the background of a bleak, featureless landscape. Leed observes that some trench veterans experienced "a peculiar narrowing of comprehension, a stripping away of any sense of periphery, a fixing of their gaze to a narrow strip of uninteresting ground," and that in this experience, the space becomes "stretched" as in phantasy. Such an experience might help us explain

³⁰⁹ Robert Wohl, *A Passion for Wings: Aviation and the Western Imagination, 1908-1918*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994, p.282.

the desert-like expanses of featureless land in Ernst's collages and paintings of this period, in terms of his wartime experience. A similar hybrid of woman and aeroplane occurs in Ernst's *Santa Conversazione* (ca.1921), with overt references to birds and to flight, while the same principal figure re-appeared in an oil painting, *La Belle Jardinière* (1923), a work which featured in the Munich *Entartete Kunst* show of 1937, before disappearing. The overt message is clearly that of the War, setting aerial combat against the featureless landscape of the trenches, whereas the subtext suggests the juxtaposition of male camaraderie against a hostile and feared femininity.

In *The Swan Is Very Peaceful ...* (fig.44), the aeroplane again assumes an air of innocence, even beauty, with its row of cherubic angels in a picture frame on the front of the plane. There is surely an implied critique here of both religion and the Renaissance tradition of painting to which it was so closely linked, while the position of the painting in place of the propellor recalls Duchamp's challenge to Léger to produce something better than a propellor. The title of the work, suggestive of peace and calm, is at odds with the aeroplane as a weapon of death, creating a tension within the image. Charlotte Stokes first identified the image of the angels as that of Lochner's *The Virgin Adoring the Christ Child* (1440), an association which leads us to Ernst's own self-identification as the Christ-child and hence to his father's depiction of him in that role; and hence the suggestion, in the juxtaposition of angels on a war-machine, of a betrayal of innocence. The angels also embody the age-long human fantasy of flight, as also signalled by the inclusion of the swan, a dream finally achieved in the mechanical form of the aeroplane. The extended title of the image constitutes, as Aragon (the owner of the work in 1921) observed, "a little poem", as well as being the "complement":

It is the twenty-second time that Lohengrin leaves his mistress for the last time - we are on the upper Missouri, where the earth has extended its crust/surface on four violins (? sur quatre violons) - We will never see ourselves again, we will not fight against the angels - the swan is very peaceful, he pulls forcefully on the oars to reach Leda.³¹⁰

Ernst's reference to Lohengrin, the "knight of the swan," evokes the male phantasy of the rescue of the woman, while the reference to Leda points to her being ravished by Jupiter in the guise of a swan.

The Icarian fantasy is more explicitly stated in *Le massacre des innocents* (ca.1920)(fig.45), which again features the spectre of death from the air, and we should

³¹⁰ Ernst, cited in Camfield, op. cit. p.93.

recall too that Icarus signifies not only the fantasy of flight, but also the (unwitting) betrayal of the son by the father. The collage is based upon an aerial photograph of Soissons, where Ernst had served during the war, witnessing its destruction, and features the façades of buildings apparently lying flat, suggestive of the devastation of war. The technology involved here was very recent, originating in the work of Oskar Messter, a German film technician, who in October 1915 first developed a camera capable of filming a 50km. stretch of territory from an aeroplane, producing a flattened image of the earth which, as Robert Wohl points out, breaks with traditional perspective and is readable only by a trained interpreter.³¹¹ But Soissons also had a more personal association for Ernst:

En 1915, promu brigadier, Max avait, devant Soissons, la charge d'une seule pièce d'artillerie assez lourde et des plus démodées, que les Français avaient oubliée pendant la retraite. Une inspection passe et constate que l'intérieur du canon est entièrement rouillé. Max est accusé de grave négligence dans l'exercice de ses fonctions ...³¹²

Although the incident ultimately resulted in Ernst being transferred to a safer position, it no doubt rankled, and perhaps the sense of his own "innocence" and betrayal, promotion and sudden fall, becomes one of the sub-texts of his *Massacre of the Innocents*. In this context, it is also worth noting Stokes' argument in her analysis of the scientific sources of Ernst's collages, in which she points to Ernst's *ambivalence* toward science - he is both intrigued by it, but also views "the scientific method as part of the bankrupt social system whose rationality and technology" were responsible for the devastation of his own generation.³¹³ At the top left of the image, the winged figure of Icarus plunges to the earth, while the silhouettes of three male figures, based on the same template, apparently leap for cover.³¹⁴ We should also add that the title of the image *Le massacre des innocents* is a quite precise reference to a biblical theme which refers specifically to the murder of children (rather than, more generally, to "war victims"). The collage technique, replication of the leaping figure, mixing of media, the collapsing of space, etc., also suggest a critique of the Renaissance tradition of representation, reinforced here by the aerial viewpoint - again pointing to the significance of Jay's argument of the "invisibility" of trench warfare and hence of "a compensatory exaltation of

³¹¹ Wohl, *op.cit.* p.285.

³¹² Ernst, *Ecritures*, *op. cit.* p.25.

³¹³ Charlotte Stokes, "The Scientific Methods of Max Ernst: His Use of Scientific Subjects from *La Nature*", *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 62 no.3, September 1980, p.454.

³¹⁴ Meixner too identifies an Icarian theme in Ernst's *Aquis Submersus* in the figure of the son plunging into the water, which she links to Peter Breugel the Elder's *Fall of Icarus* - a painter admired by Ernst - Meixner, *op cit.* p.83.

the aerial perspective of the flyer.¹³¹⁵ Ernst's choice of the myth of Icarus, son of Daedalus, and their flight using eagle feathers from captivity imposed by King Minos of Crete, points us to the characterisation of trench warfare, as Leed observes, in terms of the *labyrinth*, as well as to this mythicised opposition of aerial flight and underground dweller.

Ernst was to return again to the theme of war in a somewhat later collage, *Rêves et hallucinations* (1926), in which he assumes a rather different approach to the medium (fig.46). According to Spies, Ernst produced this piece in collaboration with Louis Aragon, which may well account for the work's highly fragmented style, mixing a disparate range of images and texts in a fashion which is sharply at odds with Ernst's usual "seamless" style of integrating his source material. As Elza Adamowicz has argued: "Ernst's appropriation of texts and images can be read as a social critique of the discredited values of the ecclesiastical, military and literary establishments."¹³¹⁶ The towering image of the cardinal, taken from a reproduction of Philippe de Champaigne's *Le Cardinal de Richelieu*, appears to bestow the blessing of the Church upon the scene of war, while the gloved hand above seems to gesture to the resulting scene of devastation. The top-hatted bourgeois perhaps represents those who profit from the war, while a further opposition is set up between the uniformed *poilus* and the "elegant" figure in civilian dress - between combatants and those who stayed at home. The figure of Richelieu is in turn superimposed upon the figure of a woman in a bonnet, further reinforcing the sense of gender confusion signalled in the cardinal's ecclesiastical robes. The initials "L.A." have been superimposed upon the cardinal's mitre, perhaps making an allusion to Aragon's own bisexuality. The silhouette of the woman is repeated on the right-hand side of the image, forming a vignette through which we view a scene of utter destruction, again making the link found in Ernst's aerial imagery, between the feminine and wartime violence. What is particularly striking in this collage, is the emphasis upon identity - including gender identity - conceived in terms of costume, uniform and "image", and hence in terms of the *performance* of that identity - an issue I return to in a later chapter. In the context of the book on which the collage is based, Dr. Schatzmann's *Rêves et hallucinations* (1925), with much of the postwar reconstruction now completed the war itself becomes simply a "bad dream", as indicated by the accompanying text: "Tout ici est à neuf ... Grâce à Faineuf!" Several studies confirm that war neurosis actually

¹³¹⁵ Martin Jay, op. cit. p.213.

¹³¹⁶ Adamowicz, op. cit. p.28.

substantially *increased* in the years following the war, and would have assumed the form of memories, dreams and hallucinations. The collage therefore stands as a testament to the traumatic wartime experience of two former combatants, Ernst and Aragon, and against the ever-present danger of cultural forgetting.

Ernst's late expressionist and early dada works therefore reveal a range of themes relating to both a sense of betrayal, as well as to Oedipal revolt against the generation responsible for the war - against the family, against the father, against science, etc. - in brief, against the Law of the Father. So that we see emerging from this sense of trauma, betrayal and anger, a shifting sense of male subjectivity and a new artistic identity. We might therefore summarise the theme of these images in terms of the betrayal of human dreams, symbolised in that of flight, through the misuse of technology and the destruction of war - again an indictment of the generation of Ernst's father, a theme underlined by the unintended "murder" of the sons by the fathers, in the case of both the Icarus legend and in Storm's novella. And as we shall see in the context of *Au Rendez-vous des amis*, the theme of paternal betrayal and the "murder" of the son later becomes inverted in the theme of parricide.

Ernst, Oedipus and Homosociality: *Au rendez-vous des amis*

I want to narrow the discussion further by considering the Oedipal dimension of Ernst's work very specifically in terms of those images and texts in which a central role is accorded to the figure of the father or of his surrogates. Freud first mentions the possibility of such a family dynamic as early as 1897, in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess, and his initial approach to the problem centred upon possible sexual abuse of children within the family unit. His first use of the term "Oedipus complex" came in a 1910 paper "A Special Type of Object Choice" and over the next decade became one of the central concepts of psychoanalytic theory. Freud's early model of the Oedipus complex, as given in the *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1916-17) is modelled upon Sophocles' play, and in essence argues that the young boy will rival the father in seeking the affections of the mother, where such rivalry may turn toward "hatred of the father" and the formulation of "death wishes against him."¹³¹⁷ The twin crimes at the heart

¹³¹⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Pelican Freud Library, Vol.1, Harmondsworth & New York: Penguin Books, 1974, p.379.

of the Oedipus complex are therefore incest and parricide, and Freud significantly refers to that complex as "the nucleus (*Kerncomplex*) of the neuroses." The resolution of the Oedipus complex in its complete form is first discussed in Freud's 1923 paper "The Ego and the Id", but covered more comprehensively the following year in "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex."³¹⁸ In "The Ego and the Id" Freud first posits the Oedipus complex in its more complete form, positive and negative, based on the originary infantile bisexuality, where the boy not only displays an ambivalent attitude towards the father, acting as rival in relation to the mother, but also assumes a "feminine attitude to his father" in rivalry with the mother. The complex is effectively resolved by the child's recognition of sexual difference, which requires some acknowledgement of the reality of castration, effectively foreclosing on both the active and passive forms of satisfaction. However, if the Oedipus complex is not dissolved, but simply repressed, it "persists in an unconscious state in the id and will later manifest its pathogenic effect."³¹⁹

Between 1921 and 1924 Ernst produced a distinctive series of somewhat oneiric images, usually referred to as the "collage paintings", beginning in Cologne with *Celebes* in 1921, and concluding in 1924 in Paris with *Deux enfants sont menacés par un rossignol*. In these works, Ernst develops a sophisticated visual vocabulary of disconcerting objects and strange juxtapositions, which seem to bear some relationship to the psychoanalytic symbolism of Freud's dream analyses, as well as to certain of the case histories. Elizabeth Legge characterises this body of work as "an assault on the domain of the father", noting that Ernst "returns to the Oedipus complex again and again" in this series, "because that theme could implicate his personal life in the larger structure of universal myth-making, originating in the unconscious."³²⁰ The Oedipal theme is perhaps at its most overt in *Oedipus Rex* (pl.1), painted by Ernst early in 1922, the year in which Ernst, then still living in Cologne, met Eluard and Breton. It has been suggested by Legge that, during their summer break in the Tyrol, the group's common concern with psychoanalysis and their probable discussion of Freud's work, may have contributed to Breton's decision to travel on to Vienna for a personal meeting with Freud. Spies has shown that the device piercing the fingers in *Oedipus Rex* is based on an image of a tool used for puncturing birds' feet, and together with the split walnut, makes reference to themes of blinding and castration. Indeed, as Legge suggests, the entire

³¹⁸ Sigmund Freud, "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex", in Freud, *On Sexuality*, op. cit..

³¹⁹ Freud, *ibid.* p.319.

³²⁰ Legge, *Max Ernst: The Psychoanalytic Sources*, op. cit. p.10 and p.148.

image assumes the form of the posing of a riddle, on the model of that of the Sphinx in the original Theban Oedipus myth - hence Ernst can be seen as taking up the challenge laid down by Breton for the discovery of "une véritable mythologie moderne" in his review of de Chirico, and as proposing a new mythology - one re-formulated in the light of psychoanalysis.³²¹ What is also striking though about this image, as with a very similar one taken from *Répétitions (L'Invention, or L'oiseau de l'infini)* and of the same date, is that both are equally a quotation from Klinger's *Abduction* from the *Glove* cycle - in each case hands reach through a window opening in pursuit of some symbol of a desired object (glove, bird, bird/bull), only to meet a threat of "castration" (broken glass, foot-piercing device, handsaw/split walnut). I also want to suggest that the strange cable tied to the bull-like horns and snaking up into the sky is a further reference to Ernst's childhood fantasy of the telegraph cables, already cited above from his *Écritures*, where, under the section "Le secret des fils du télégraphe" Ernst goes on to add: "

Pas d'espoir pour les fils télégraphiques de monter aux nues: les poteaux trouble-fête sont là pour maintenir l'ordre. Quelle déception mélangée d'angoisse pour l'enfant!"³²²

While further interpretation would require more detailed knowledge of associations made by Ernst with these motifs, we should at least note the confluence here of connections with frustration and the maintenance of order, juxtaposed in the image with signifiers of castration - all attributes associated with the figure of the father. And finally, we again have the motif of the disappearing balloon, confirming the link with childhood, and suggestive perhaps of notions of freedom, escape, or of this pursuit of the lost object (echoes again of Klinger's *Glove* series).

Equally deserving of our interest in terms of Oedipal themes is Ernst's *Pietà, ou Révolution la nuit* (1923) (fig.(47)). In this striking image, a bowler-hatted figure with the moustaches of Ernst's father, cradles in his arms a younger man with the features of Ernst himself, wearing a white nightshirt and red trousers. In the background, the outline of a third male figure with a bandaged head and closed eyes hovers above a staircase, next to a device which resembles either a speaking-tube or a shower hose (another of Ernst's rather blatant penis substitutes, as in *Celebes*, and in *C'est le chapeau qui fait l'homme*). Malcolm Gee has provided an excellent analysis of this work and I therefore

³²¹ See Legge, "Max Ernst's *Oedipus Rex* and the Implicit Sphinx", op. cit., p.50. Legge also shows that the motifs of the walnut and the handsaw-like device, derive from Shakespeare's Hamlet, a text specified by Freud as a modern variant upon the Oedipal scenario.

³²² Ernst, *Écritures*, op. cit. p.12.

want to focus upon its relationship with *Au Rendez-vous des amis* (1922) - a key image for surrealism, produced only months after Ernst's arrival in Paris, and, I want to argue, crucial in terms of Ernst's analysis of his own masculinity.

Essentially, what we are confronted with here by Ernst in *Au rendez-vous des amis* (fig.48), is the group of proto-surrealists posed in terms of a parody of the traditional academy or pantheon, on the model of Raphael's *Disputa*, or perhaps Ingres' *Apotheosis of Homer* (fig.49). Whereas Ingres would appear visually closer to Ernst's image, Raphael is actually richer in personal connotations, given that Ernst's father is known to have assiduously copied Raphael, altering the faces of the godly to those of family and friends, while the damned were given the features of Calvin, Nietzsche, etc. Max Nordau considered art an *individualistic* activity and thought it unhealthy for artists to gather in "isms" and schools, even noting - as a good follower of Lombroso - that "criminals unite in bands ..." ³²³ Nordau also overtly linked the new aesthetic schools of his time to hysteria, citing Charcot to the effect that "Persons of highly-strung nerves attract each other", and adding that the disciples of such schools were "obsessives." Given that *Au Rendez-vous des amis* was produced during the period of experimentation with automatism, hypnagogic states, and related phenomena, Nordau's castigation of the use of hypnosis in France is also of interest. He also attacked the widespread French interest in areas such as alchemy and the occult, as popularised by Papus (Dr.Encausse), besides attacking Joséphin Péladan for his revival of Rosicrucianism ³²⁴ - particularly relevant in the light of alchemical interpretations of Ernst's image. ³²⁵ Let's first consider the context of Ernst's image in a little more detail.

On his eventual arrival in Paris in the autumn of 1922, Ernst had been provided with false papers in the name of "Jean Paris" by the critic and linguist Jean Paulhan. He arrived in time to witness and participate in the period of *sommeils* (September 1922 to February 1923), the first session of which was held at the Bretons' Rue Fontaine flat on 25 September, 1922, led by René Crevel, generally considered to be a genuine and gifted medium. Such mediumistic activity was intimately connected with the war, as friends and relatives attempted to contact the dead, and Ernst had participated in such

³²³ Nordau, op. cit. p.30.

³²⁴ Nordau, op. cit. pp.214-222.

³²⁵ See Hopkins, *The Bride Shared*, op. cit., ch.3; also see M.E. Warlick, *Max Ernst and Alchemy: A Magician in Search of Myth*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001.

activities in the studio of Franz Henseler, calling upon the spirit "Macchab", where in one such session he was told of the death of Macke.³²⁶ Of the other members of Breton's group, only Robert Desnos showed any real gift for similar mediumistic activity, and according to Mark Polizzotti, the two "soon found themselves competing for Breton's approval."³²⁷ It is therefore surely significant that Ernst should have arranged the other fifteen principals of his tableau, between Crevel on the far left and Desnos on the far right - almost as though this bizarre scenario, staged upon a barren precipice against a night-sky, were the projection of one of their mediumistic sessions. The isolated, rocky location itself is of course significant, suggestive of the group as explorers venturing out into the unknown, towards which Gala gestures, and combines Ernst's early love of adventure stories (suggesting perhaps Verne's *De la Terre à la Lune* of 1865) with the Romanticism of Friedrich's *Wanderer Above the Sea of Mist*, or his *Sea of Ice*. The icy landscape also recalls the Tyrol, where Ernst holidayed with the Eluards in March 1922 (fig.50) following their first meeting in Cologne in November 1921, thus launching the adventure of his relationship with Gala and his eventual shift to Paris. Ernst describes the motley group of "writers, painters, musicians, intellectuals, semi-intellectuals ... plus idlers" which gathered in Tarrenz on the group's second Tyrol meeting in the autumn of 1922 and observes: "What a madhouse. Friendships and marriages broke up. Max went to Paris."³²⁸ The black night-sky is also highly symbolic, pointing to the world of dreams and the unconscious, in opposition to the central metaphor of the Enlightenment, which of course associates reason, consciousness, and mind with light and clarity. The image thus comes to signal the group of proto-surrealists as adventurers charting the unknown territory of the mind, mapping the uncharted terrain of insanity, in the company of colleagues and heroes around whom they can agree a common cause. Breton's "Entrée des médiums" appeared in *Littérature* (New series, no.6) in November of 1922 and it is noteworthy that all the figures mentioned there as involved in these experiments, with two notable exceptions, appear in Ernst's image: Crevel, Desnos, Péret, Ernst, Eluard, Morise, Fraenkel, and of course Breton himself. In addition, Aragon and Soupault are listed by Breton as absent, but quickly become involved - the former enthusiastically, the latter more sceptically - and they too appear in Ernst's picture. In addition, Ernst has included his dada accomplices from Cologne, Arp and Baargeld, together with de

³²⁶ Camfield, op. cit. p.41; also see Warlick, op.cit. pp.39-40.

³²⁷ Polizzotti, op cit. p.180.

³²⁸ Ernst, "Biographical Notes: Tissue of Truth, Tissue of Lies", in Spies (ed), *Max Ernst: A Retrospective*, op. cit. p.298.

Chirico, Gala Eluard, and Paulhan, a close friend of both Ernst and Eluard. Finally, Ernst includes two historical figures - Dostoevsky and Raphael. The two significant exclusions from Ernst's image (which is prominently dated December 1922), are of course Tzara and Picabia; both are mentioned by Breton in "Entrée des médiums", despite a cooling of relations in the wake of the collapsed Congress of Paris project. Ernst's image therefore anticipates the split with dada, the final break with Tzara coming on 6 July of the following year, with the surrealists' violent disruption of his staging of the *Coeur à Barbe*, the final dada show. Picabia's scepticism toward the *sommeils* emerged in the satirical attacks which he made upon the mediumistic activities of the group in *Littérature* and he too gradually turned away from Breton following the mock trial of Barrès staged by Breton on 21 July, 1921.

The various analyses of this rather complex image tend to point to the intentionally very wooden, jerky depiction of the figures, giving the impression of automata, as well as to the elaborate use of hand signals, which in part undoubtedly relate to Ernst's father as a teacher of the deaf-and-dumb. As Legge shows, the signs have no meaning in any known orthodox sign language, yet paradoxically, this lack of meaning tends to reinforce the sense of the group as a "secret society", with its own private language, leading Hopkins to interpret this as a reference to Masonic hand-signals. Breton's allusion to freemasonry in the first *Manifesto of Surrealism* is also cited: "Surrealism will usher you into death, which is a secret society. It will glove your hand, burying therein the profound M with which the word memory begins."; and Hopkins adds that Masonry too (*maçonnerie*) begins with M, thus invoking what French Catholics of the period perceived as a secret plot against their religion, as pre-figured in Gide's *Les Caves du Vatican* (1914) which features the kidnap of the Pope by Masons.³²⁹ Masons too, of course, exclude women, and we note in Ernst's image the presence of only one woman, Gala, present no doubt in her role as muse, or as Ernst's "Perturbation, my sister". Standing next to de Chirico, the pleats of Gala's dress echo the fluted classical column which encases the painter; legless and immobile, both are consigned to a different realm to that of the frenetically active proto-surrealists. Spies notes that the collective nature of this enterprise gives rise to "une sorte de machinerie de l'amitié",³³⁰ while Hopkins adopts the term "homosociality" to characterise the various forms of

³²⁹ See Hopkins, *Marcel Duchamp and Max Ernst: The Bride Shared*, op. cit., p.91 and p.122.

³³⁰ Werner Spies, *Max Ernst: sculptures, maisons, paysages*, Paris: Editions du Centre Pompidou, 1998, p.57.

sociation adopted by the group, and which he specifically links to "models of élite and clubbish masculinism" such as the Masonic model, which he identifies in his "hermetic" reading of Ernst's image.³³¹ Hopkins reads this homosocial discourse in terms of "an 'Oedipal' reaction to the parent culture" - in terms of provocations which arise "not so much from straightforward antagonism towards the father principle as from *ambivalence* towards it."³³² And I want to insist on this ambivalence specifically in terms of Ernst's relationship with his father, as will become more apparent as we proceed.

Legge provides a very convincing analysis which, as well as pointing to the significance of the cut-out photographs taken at fairgrounds (see above), also links Ernst's composition to Kraepelin's photographs of catatonic patients (fig.51), taken from his *Dementia Praecox* and which also figured in his *Textbook of Psychiatry*, a standard medical text with which Legge argues Ernst would have been familiar from his studies at Bonn.³³³ Kraepelin arranged these photographs to demonstrate the effects of "involuntary obedience", where the patient is able to maintain an uncomfortable pose over a long period of time, and hence the analogy with the sitter posing for the artist (or indeed, in the case of the resentful child in relation to the father). Legge sees parallels between this state of "lack of will" and the automatism of the hypnotic "sleeps" with which the group was then experimenting. Legge also points to H.R.Lenormand's letter in *Comœdia* (March, 1920) comparing the dadaists with sufferers of dementia praecox, which drew pointed responses from both Picabia and Breton; again this would suggest Ernst as playing up this association with madness and other alternative psychic states, as sources of creativity, in his re-construction of both artistic activity and of the artist as subject. But I would also point to an image from Kraepelin's *General Paresis* (fig.52), where the poses of the sitters, hands on knees, are rather closer to those in *Au Rendez-vous des amis* - again rooting Ernst's image in madness.

Ernst himself occupies a prominent place in the foreground of the image, seated on one of Dostoevsky's knees, alongside Paulhan seated upon the other. Hopkins points to "Ernst's camp, even coquettish pose", adding that he "apparently tweaks the writer's beard";³³⁴ a gesture which equally could be read as mimicing a "cutting" motion,

³³¹ Hopkins, *Marcel Duchamp and Max Ernst: The Bride Shared*, op. cit. p.2.

³³² Hopkins, *ibid.* p.143 and note 143.

³³³ Legge, *op. cit.* p.150.

³³⁴ Hopkins, *op. cit.* p.141.

which would signify "castration". The inclusion of Dostoevsky points us to a range of further linkages, via Gala's Russian origins, to the issue of parricide in Dostoevsky's work, and hence to issues which Freud was to broach in his 1928 paper "Dostoevsky and Parricide." In that paper, Freud first discusses Dostoevsky's character, attaching particular importance to his epileptic attacks ("the uncanny disease", characterised by what we could see as a form of automatism), which he suggests may be rooted in neurosis as a form of hysteria, and which in all likelihood began with the trauma of the murder of his father. The epileptic attacks were preceded by fits of extreme melancholy, followed by "a state exactly similar to real death", which Freud views as a form of identification with "someone who is still alive and the subject wishes dead", where "this other person is usually his father"; the attack is thus "a self-punishment for a death-wish against a hated father."³³⁵ Freud had already discussed the theme of parricide as the source of the sense of guilt in his earlier work *Totem and Taboo* (1912-13), and given that Ernst was at that time studying psychology amongst other courses at the University of Bonn, it is quite feasible that he was aware of this aspect of Freud's work or encountered it later. Freud proceeds in his paper on Dostoevsky to re-state the Oedipus complex in its complete form - both hatred of the father and the wish to be loved by the father as a woman - and adds that the fear of castration is the "normal" attitude, leading to the dissolution of the complex, but that "its pathogenic intensification seems to come only from ... fear of the feminine attitude."³³⁶ And hence that "a strong innate bisexual disposition becomes one of the preconditions or reinforcements of neurosis" - as in the case of Dostoevsky, where Freud suggests a "latent homosexuality". Whereas actual homosexual relationships were engaged by only a minority of the group - with some evidence of Breton's disapproval of such relationships³³⁷ - a strong atmosphere of "homosociality" in the sense intended by Hopkins seems undeniable. To cite only a few of the more obvious examples, one could cite Breton's relationship with Vaché, Ernst's with Eluard (which both are said to have viewed as more important than that with Gala),³³⁸ or the "intense and passionate admiration" which Polizzotti argues Crevel developed for Breton, or again, Desnos's "idolization" of Breton.³³⁹ Certainly we find in photographs of

³³⁵ Sigmund Freud, "Dostoevsky and Parricide", in Freud, *Art and Literature*, op. cit., p.447.

³³⁶ Freud, *ibid.* p.449.

³³⁷ See for example the discussions on sex.

³³⁸ According to the American writer Matthew Josephson, who also attended the Tyrol meeting, Eluard, left to play the role of the "cheerful cuckold", said that: "Well, I love Max Ernst much more than I do Gala." In Josephson, *Life Among the Surrealists: A Memoir*, New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1962, p.179.

³³⁹ Polizzotti, op. cit. pp.178-181.

figures associated with surrealism, some indications of homosexuality and of cross-dressing (particularly with Duchamp and Man Ray), issues I wish to turn to later, particularly in relation to Duchamp's alter ego, Rose Sélavy. But I want instead to pursue further Ernst's intensely ambivalent relationship with his father, as evidenced in the work.

During the course of the surrealists' discussions on sex (Fifth Session, February 1928), Ernst mentions the following dream which strikingly recalls the Ernst/Dostoevsky configuration in *Au Rendez-vous des amis*, with the roles inverted:

In a dream I was bugging a man, and I awoke just at the point of greatest pleasure. As my excitement grew, I pictured all the complexes that might arise from the fact of coming through bugging a fully-clothed man sitting on my knee - as a matter of fact it was a very specific gentleman, whom I don't wish to name ... This is a man who, in waking life, disgusts me physically, morally, and from every other point of view.³⁴⁰

Ernst's reticence here indicates that this is almost certainly a reference to the father, either directly or concealed behind some surrogate figure, again reinforcing the significance of the "negative" Oedipal phase to the work. But what is also striking here is that, in the notion of Ernst picturing for himself "all the complexes that might arise" as a consequence of this act, he in fact stages the operation of the Freudian super-ego which is the broad outcome of the Oedipus complex, and which comprises in part an identification with the father - a kind of inner policemen who facilitates the enforcement of the paternal law. So that again we need to exercise caution in the face of Ernst's very knowing deployment of psychoanalytic theory. The motif of the male figure with another figure on his knee becomes even more interesting if we add a further, overlooked piece from the same period, *Et suivant votre cas* by Ernst and Eluard, which originally appeared in *Littérature* (New series, no.7) in 1922 (fig.53). The text here appears to be an adapted "readymade", perhaps appropriated from some kind of dog training manual, with the woman substituted in place of the animal:

Placer la femme à une dizaine de mètres d'un siège sur lequel on vient s'asseoir.

Appeler la femme et lui recommander de venir en courant.³⁴¹

This capacity for oscillation between male and female positions is, of course, precisely the structure of *fantasy*, a factor which seems confirmed when Breton moves the

³⁴⁰ Pierre, *Investigating Sex*, op. cit. pp.70-71.

³⁴¹ Paul Eluard and Max Ernst, "Et suivant votre cas", in Ernst, *Ecritures*, op. cit. pp.107-8.

discussion on to the incubus and succubus, to which Ernst responds:

Ernst: I believe that a man can very easily be a succubus in dreams.

Breton: It's as if an incubus got the wrong address.

Ernst: Exactly.

If we add to this the actual source for Ernst's image of himself and Paulhan upon Dostoevsky's knee, identified by Spies as an image from *La Nature* (fig.54), we now find a youth on a young man's knee, himself seated on an even older man's knee, while a girl crouches behind the latter's chair - an image from which Ernst again, as in his earlier expressionist works, unleashes the repressed, sexual undercurrents which pervade the Oedipal nuclear family. The importance of the motif to Ernst is further underlined by its inclusion in "On débute alors par une petite fête en famille" (fig.55) from *La femme 100 têtes* where disturbing erotic undercurrents within the family is clearly again at issue. What we therefore seem to have in these various motifs of the carried figure or the figure on the knee, are variations upon one of Freud's primal fantasies - that of "seduction" - with the father now becoming the *desired* father, further reaffirming the enormous sense of *ambivalence* in Ernst's relationship with that figure.

We find further confirmation of this thesis if we return to Ernst's depiction of his father in *Pietà, ou Révolution la nuit*. Again the motif embodies ambivalence - Dawn Ades reads the kneeling figure as offering a sacrifice of the son, on the model of Abraham and Isaac,³⁴² which suggests a fantasy of "castration". We can add to this a reading by Malcolm Gee which recalls Ernst's childhood identification with Christ, and hence of Philipp Ernst with God-the-Father. Gee cites one of three "Visions de demi-sommeil" by Ernst which appeared in *La Révolution surréaliste* in 1927, headed "De 5 à 7 ans", which is worth quoting in some detail:

Je vois en face de moi un panneau très grossièrement peint aux larges traits noirs sur fond rouge, représentant un faux acajou et provoquant des associations de formes organiques ...

Devant le panneau, un homme noir et luisant fait des gestes lents, cocasses et, selon mes souvenirs d'une époque bien postérieure, joyusement obscènes. Ce drôle de bonhomme porte les moustaches de mon père.

Après avoir exécuté quelques bonds <au ralenti> qui me dégoûtent, les jambes écartées ... il sourit et sort de la poche de son pantalon un gros crayon en une matière molle ... Il se met au travail; il souffle très fort et trace hâtivement des lignes noires sur le panneau de faux acajou.

³⁴² Dawn Ades, "Between Dada and Surrealism: Painting in the *Mouvement flou*", in *The Mind's Eye: Dada and Surrealism*, (exh. cat.), Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984, p.39.

Il lui donne vite des formes nouvelles, surprenantes, abjectes. Il exagère la ressemblance avec des animaux féroces ou visqueux à tel point qu'il en sort de vivants qui m'inspirent horreur et angoisse.³⁴³

The man then gathers up his creations "dans une espèce de vase", which he proceeds to whip, making it spin like a top.

Maintenant je reconnais nettement que cet étrange peintre est mon père. Il manie le fouet de toutes ses forces et accompagne ses mouvements de terribles coups de souffle, comparables aux bouffées d'une énorme machine à vapeur enragée. Avec des efforts effrénés, il fait tourner et bondir autour de mon lit cette abominable toupie, qui contient toutes les horreurs, que mon père est capable d'éveiller ... au moyen de son affreux crayon mou.³⁴⁴

Gee argues of this text that it is "not a vaguely obscene fantasy involving Ernst's father, but a blow by blow account of an act of sexual intercourse", and one which knowingly deploys Freudian terminology.³⁴⁵ For Gee the scenario of *Pietà* reflects "an inverted Oedipal relationship", reinforced by obvious Freudian symbols such as the staircase, which "indicates sexual activity." Gee also suggests that Ernst's account could relate to having seen or imagined the parents making love, which would point to Freud's "primal scene" fantasy. This in turn would point us to Ernst's earlier collage *The Master's Bedroom It's Worth Spending a Night There* (ca.1920) (fig.56), where, in another of Ernst's spatially disorienting interiors, a bed is surrounded by animals, a fish and a whale (the "ferocious or slimy beasts" of Ernst's hallucination), in a scene reminiscent of Klinger's restless dreamer on a watery bed in *Anxieties*, from the *Glove* cycle. In his *Introductory Lectures* (1916-17) Freud reports the case of a patient, a girl "in the grip of an erotic attachment to her father", who developed an elaborate sleep-ceremonial in which the parents' bed features prominently, and which had as its aim to keep the parents apart sexually.³⁴⁶ Again, this is a text with which Ernst may well have been familiar, and we see him here juxtaposing that psychoanalytic theory against the visual paradigm provided by Klimt, in order to give expression to his own sexual fantasy. Legge reads Ernst's hallucination text as a "false memory" of infancy, seeing it rather as a "pubescent masturbation fantasy" projected onto the father, stressing the role here of fantasy as a source of creativity. Despite their diverging interpretations, both Gee and Legge though would concur in seeing the father as object of desire, as well as being the embodiment

³⁴³ Max Ernst, "Visions de demi-sommeil", *La Révolution surréaliste*, nos.9-10, 1 October 1927, p.7. Also in translation in Malcolm Gee, *Ernst: Pietà, or, Revolution by Night*, op. cit. p.18.

³⁴⁴ Ernst, *ibid.*

³⁴⁵ Gee, op. cit. p.21.

³⁴⁶ Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, op. cit., pp.303-309.

of authority and signifier of castration/death, and hence again the enormous ambivalence surrounding that figure. This image also needs to be read alongside *L'immaculée conception manquée* (fig.57) taken from Ernst's 1929 collage novel *La femme cent têtes*, an image which even more insistently suggests a primal scene fantasy. That the original engraving is based on an illustration demonstrating how photographs were made of hysterics is also significant, with the woman again under investigation, while the addition of the child gives the man's apron the air of a state of undress and suggests some sexual relationship between the man and the woman. The "solar disc" evokes the pulsing, rotating devices produced by Duchamp, suggestive of both hypnosis and the erotic, while also suggesting a giant iris, a radiant eye beneath whose gaze the crying child averts its stare - again evoking the sense of blinding, or the fear of castration.

The notion of sexual trauma is depicted quite literally in *Pietà* in the form of the bandaged man on the staircase, a figure often identified with Freud or Apollinaire, even though the features in fact resemble neither, and could in fact suggest a range of overlaid figures. The most obvious connotation is surely of the War itself, and hence the figure might stand for Apollinaire (represented wounded in photographs and in a drawing by Picasso), or even Ernst himself, as he appears bandaged in a wartime photograph (fig.33). In the same year (1923) Ernst produced a line drawing of Breton, bandaged, where the bandages are more suggestive of *constraint* than of injury (fig.58). Legge has also convincingly linked the pose of the son (Ernst) to another of the photographs in Kraepelin's *Dementia Praecox* (fig.59), a connection with the world of insanity which confirms Ades' observation that Desnos identified Ernst with the "white smock" of Salpêtrière - both of which connections affirm Ernst as opting for the side of madness, as against the rationality of the fathers. We might also suggest that these bandaged figures point to masculinity itself as "wounded", traumatised - as for example in Kirchner's *Self-portrait as a Soldier* (1915), in which he appears with his painting hand amputated.

Ernst's image of the father in his *Pietà* must also be read via de Chirico's *The Child's Brain* (1914) (fig.60), an iconic image for surrealism which was acquired by Breton around 1919. The image features a deathly white, naked figure with closed eyes, suggestive of both the unconscious and the erotic, who has been identified as de Chirico's own dead father. The figure is also connected by Polizzotti with an automatic phrase which came to Breton, of a man "coupé en deux par la fenêtre", described by

him in the first *Manifeste du surréalisme*,³⁴⁷ thus further reinforcing the image's significance during the period of *le mouvement flou*. Hal Foster juxtaposes Ernst's hallucinatory fantasy of his father alongside a dream reported by de Chirico in the first issue of *La Révolution surréaliste*, in 1924:

En vain je lutte avec l'homme aux yeux louches et très doux. Chaque fois que je l'étreins il se dégage en écartant doucement les bras et ces bras ont une force inouïe, une puissance incalculable; ils sont comme des leviers irrésistibles, comme ces machines toutes-puissantes ...
C'est mon père qui m'apparaît ainsi en rêve ...
La lutte se termine par mon *abandon; je renonce*; puis les images se confondent.³⁴⁸

For Foster, the dream "conflates aspects of a fantasy of seduction with a primal scene", and in it he sees the subject assume a "feminine attitude" towards the father, conflating desire and anguish; Ernst, by contrast, is more "programmatically", consciously deploying the traumas of the primal scene, in order, as he argues in *Beyond Painting*, "to hasten the general crisis in consciousness due in our time."³⁴⁹ Foster, like Gee, notes the parallels between Ernst's treatment of sexual ambiguity and that of Leonardo in Freud's analysis, and argues that Ernst's aesthetic "privileges the 'passive' (homosexual) position that Leonardo assumes in his fantasy", and more generally, a continuously shifting "traumatic sexuality."³⁵⁰

The question remains, however, as to in what precise capacity the father figures in these images - how to reconcile Gee's suggestion that Ernst's father figures as "God-the-father" with the clearly erotic, obscene father of Ernst's fantasy? In *The Child's Brain*, the father is clearly the *revenant*, a fearful figure returned from the dead, as well as a highly-sexualised figure, with long, "feminine" eyelashes and glossy black hair and moustaches. Zizek has argued that, in the figure of the returned father, the "living dead", we are in fact confronted, not with the Symbolic father (emblem of authority and upholder of the "Law-of-the-Father"), but rather the "anal father", the primal father, or what Michel Silvestre calls "*Père-Jouissance*".³⁵¹ This figure derives from the primal father of Freud's *Totem and Taboo*, and is necessary, Zizek argues, because the Oedipus myth leaves open the possibility that, without the prohibiting father, access would be

³⁴⁷ André Breton, *Manifeste du surréalisme*, OCl, op. cit. p.325.

³⁴⁸ Giorgio de Chirico, "Rêves", *La Révolution surréaliste*, no.1, 1 December 1924, p.3.

³⁴⁹ Ernst cited in Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, op. cit. p.75.

³⁵⁰ Foster, *ibid.* p.79.

³⁵¹ Slavoj Zizek, "Grimaces of the Real, or When the Phallus Appears", *October* no.58, Fall 1991, p.54.

available to full enjoyment. But the complementary myth of the primal father forecloses on that possibility "by embodying this impossible enjoyment in the obscene figure of the Father-of-Enjoyment."³⁵² Zizek refers to the "excessive 'sprout of enjoyment' materialized in the obscene figure of this 'anal father'," - "this obscene little man who is the clearest embodiment of the "uncanny (*Unheimliche*)" - recalling for us the "obscene" gestures and actions of the father figure in Ernst's fantasies. It is this highly ambivalent figure, Zizek adds, "who lurks behind the Name-of-the-Father qua bearer of the symbolic Law" - "threatening yet ridiculously impotent" - like the paunchy, somewhat ridiculous figure in de Chirico's painting, or the absurd, moustached father which Ernst views with horror, but also disgust.

It is surely striking that, having "worked through" the relationship with his father in the early paintings and dada collages, in the various versions of his biographical texts, and particularly in the "collage paintings" of 1921-24, Ernst should thereafter radically shift in both his working methods (the move to techniques such as *frottage* and *grattage*) and in his form of depiction (the shift from the oneiric and figurative style), though we do find an occasional return to more purely figurative work, particularly in the case of the collage novels. In this early work then, Ernst clearly draws heavily and quite explicitly upon Freudian theory in working through his own rage at the traumatic experience of war, his relation to the feminine, and above all the intensely ambivalent Oedipal relationship with the father. The various means by which he achieved this crucial breakthrough in his own personal and artistic development (psychoanalysis, the collage principle, the rejection of rationality, the revolt against the nuclear family, and the elevation of insanity) were all to make a decisive contribution to surrealism during this crucial period of its birth, in terms of its understanding of creative activity and of the creative subject. These factors find their focus in Ernst's own sense of male subjectivity and reflect a generally traumatised masculinity as consequent, not only upon the impact of war, but also upon the shifting status of women, demanding a re-evaluation of the relationship of masculinity with the feminine. The wartime issue of so-called "shell shock", with its uncomfortable echoes of nineteenth century models of hysteria in the woman, is one such area of particular tension and I now want to turn to the question of hysteria as celebrated by surrealism.

³⁵² Slavoj Zizek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1991, p.24.

4. The Histrionic Male: Surrealism, Hysteria and the Convulsed Body

L'HYSTÉRIE N'EST PAS UN PHÉNOMÈNE PATHOLOGIQUE ET PEUT, À TOUS ÉGARDS, ÊTRE CONSIDÉRÉE COMME UN MOYEN SUPRÊME D'EXPRESSION.

Aragon and Breton, *Le Cinquantenaire de l'hystérie*.³⁵³

Introduction: The Surrealist as Hysteric

In their 1928 essay *Le Cinquantenaire de l'hystérie*, Louis Aragon and André Breton hailed hysteria as “la plus grande découverte poétique de la fin du XIXe siècle”, noting that they celebrated this anniversary at a time when the “dismembering” of the concept of hysteria was complete. This appeal to an archaism, a diagnostic category by then largely discredited, provides us with some important indicators of surrealist attitudes in relation both to gender and to the question of artistic creativity. I want to argue that hysteria provides both a psychical paradigm through which surrealist attitudes and activities may be understood, as well as providing a structural model for key surrealist concepts such as Breton’s “convulsive beauty” and Ernst’s conception of collage. I want in particular to focus on the question of *male* hysteria, an issue treated extensively in the work carried out by the eminent French neurologist J.-M. Charcot at the Salpêtrière hospital in Paris during the late nineteenth century, and which was revived with renewed urgency during World War I in terms of the involvement of hysteria in the diagnosis of what became known as “shell-shock”. If we accept a psychoanalytic model which proposes that hysteria be conceived in terms of the acting out of some repressed trauma, then we might consider dada and surrealism, not simply in terms of some broad cultural manifestation of the trauma of war, but more specifically as symptoms of a kind of “hystericization” of post-War culture.

³⁵³ Louis Aragon and André Breton, “Le Cinquantenaire de l'hystérie”, in *La Révolution surréaliste*, No.11, 15 March, 1928, pp.20-22 (OC, pp.948-50). This text was originally published in capitals, giving it a somewhat strident, hysterical air - for ease of exposition, subsequent quotes from this text are in conventional characters.



the war cost the Central Powers some three and a half million men, and the Allies over five million dead. Paul Fussell points to the enormous gulf which existed between the prevailing ideology of “manliness”, founded upon a rhetoric of courage, valour, honour, etc. rooted in the novels of Rider Haggard or the Arthurian romances of Tennyson and William Morris, as against the devastating reality of trench warfare.³⁵⁴ Central to the dominant fiction of masculinity at the time of the war, together with the notion of “sacrifice”, was the attitude of “not complaining”, of stoically enduring the most intolerable of physical conditions and psychical stresses, regardless of the personal cost incurred. Fussell points to the cynicism engendered in troops as a result of this sharp split between their own knowledge of their situation, and that of the general non-combatant public, fed a constant diet of patriotism and propaganda. As Elaine Showalter has shown, cases of shell-shock continued to emerge long after the war itself had ended, while memoirs of the war were slow to appear, further confirming the sense of an initial period of traumatised repression as survivors struggled to come to terms with their experience. When such memoirs did eventually appear, as with any manifestation of patriotism or militarism, they met with a vitriolic response from surrealism;³⁵⁵ or as Breton sardonically quips in the first *Manifeste du surréalisme*: “War? Gave us a laugh.”³⁵⁶

The inter-war period has often been characterised in terms of an “age of anxiety”, while Sidra Stich has referred to the art of the time as one of “anxious visions”, where, particularly in surrealist artworks - for example in Masson - we discover devastated landscapes, threats to the body, mutilated corpses and other references to death and war. Characterising postwar culture in this way is to pose it as the expression of the socio-political trauma of the war, and given the close links between shell-shock and hysteria, both rooted in the notion of psychical trauma, this would suggest that hysteria is a useful paradigm in exploring the subjective impact of these events. I therefore want to explore the extent to which we might consider hysteria as providing a paradigm of masculine behaviour during this period, manifested in the context of dada and surrealism in terms of histrionic behaviour, the exploration and simulation of psychopathologies, linguistic dysfunction, and the celebration of the female hysteric, as well as hysteria as the underlying matrix for surrealist concepts such as convulsive beauty.

³⁵⁴ Fussell, *op.cit.*

³⁵⁵ See for example in René Char's 1930 review piece in *Le Surréalisme au service de la Révolution*, no.2, October 1930.

³⁵⁶ André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969, p.46 ; Breton, *OCl*, p.345.

Breton, Hysteria and Theatricality

Dada, as a direct manifestation of anti-war sentiment and as a movement rooted heavily in performance, in many ways manifests a theatricality which at times verges on the histrionic, even the hysterical. Henri Béhar has pointed to his intuition that Breton's early contacts with Tzara - the two corresponded from January 1919, precisely a year before Tzara's much anticipated arrival in Paris - concerned "a project which was theatrical, in all senses of the word."³⁵⁷ For Béhar, Breton aimed above all "to cause a great disruption", in which project theatre constituted "at the time, and for several years afterwards, the best way of activating the public ...". Theatricality might therefore be argued as a key characteristic of Breton's strategy of provocation, and hence in part the appeal of the intensely theatrical approach adopted by Charcot in his treatment of hysteria, as a paradigm for both dada and surrealism. Freud too observes of hysterical attacks, that they are "nothing else but phantasies translated into the motor sphere, projected onto motility and portrayed in pantomime."³⁵⁸ Béhar also notes the curious prominence accorded to the bizarre play *Les Détraquées* in Breton's *Nadja* (1928), where we might say that theatricality assumes a particularly histrionic form, and more specifically, that such histrionics revolve around the question of the ambiguity of sexual identity. The novel of course begins with the famous question "Who am I?", which Breton says might amount to knowing "whom I 'haunt'", reflecting a certain anxiety around the whole question of identity. If for Elaine Showalter, hysteria is to be seen as a form of late nineteenth century female protest, as a refusal to occupy a particular position within the symbolic order, then the dadaists and surrealists too can be seen as similarly refusing to conform to a particular socio-cultural identity (for example Vaché's "desertion within oneself").³⁵⁹ For Slavoj Žižek, this is precisely why psychoanalysis begins with hysteria as its "native soil":

in the last resort, what is hysteria if not precisely the effect and testimony of a failed interpellation; what is the hysterical question if not an articulation of the incapacity of the subject to fulfil the symbolic identification, to assume fully and without restraint the symbolic mandate?³⁶⁰

³⁵⁷ Henri Béhar, "The Passionate Attraction: André Breton and the Theatre", in Anna Balakian and Rudolf E Kuenzli (eds), *André Breton Today*, New York: Willis Locker & Owens, 1989, p.13.

³⁵⁸ Sigmund Freud, "Some General Remarks on Hysterical Attacks". in Freud *On Psychopathology*, Pelican Freud Library Vol.10, London & New York: Penguin Books, 1979, p.97.

³⁵⁹ Breton, *Anthology of Black Humour*, op. cit. p.293.

³⁶⁰ Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, London & New York: Verso, 1989, p.113.

The hysteric's question is thus, Zizek observes: "Why am I what I'm supposed to be, why have I this mandate?" Or as Breton suggests of the material body, and consequently, of the social role which he "haunts":

what I regard as the objective, more or less deliberate manifestations of my existence are merely the premises, within the limits of this existence, of an activity whose true extent is quite unknown to me.³⁶¹

Surrealism might therefore be posed as, at least in part, the product of a hysterical rejection of a certain dominant model of masculine identity - more broadly, as a protest against the entire order maintained by that identity. We might also see Breton's detaching of subjectivity from any material "essence", as returning us again to a *performative* model of male subjectivity, which I develop later in relation to Duchamp.

Breton's involvement with hysteria can be traced back to his first contacts with alternative mental states, particularly shell-shock victims and various forms of insanity during the period of his medical training while serving in the French forces during the war. According to Marguerite Bonnet, Breton made a decision during the summer of 1916 to become more involved in the treatment of the mentally ill and applied for a posting to the neuro-psychiatric centre at Saint-Dizier, then directed by Dr. Raoul Leroy. Breton's interest in the treatment of the insane was undoubtedly intense at this time and he read assiduously in the field: including Gilbert Ballet's *Traité de pathologie mentale*, the *Précis de Psychiatrie* of Dr Régis, Charcot's *Léçons sur les maladies du système nerveux*, Magnan's *Leçons cliniques sur les maladies mentales*, as well as works by Babinski, Kraepelin, Pascal and Freud.³⁶² Breton's enthusiasm is apparent in a letter to Fraenkel of 25 September 1916:

Démence précoce, paranoïa, états crépusculaires.

O poésie allemande, Freud et Kraepelin!³⁶³

What's also interesting about all of this is that Breton undoubtedly recognised something of himself in some of the conditions which he explored, being struck, for example by correspondences with Régis' theory of "des désharmoniques". Breton transcribed a long extract from Régis in a letter to Fraenkel, in which the *désharmonique* is characterised in terms of contradiction and imbalance: on the one hand manifesting "les facultés d'imagination, d'invention et d'expression", but on the other lacking such qualities

³⁶¹ André Breton, *Nadja*, New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1960, pp.11-12.

³⁶² Marguerite Bonnet, *André Breton: Naissance de l'aventure surréaliste*, Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1975 - see Ch.3. See also Fabienne Hulak (ed), *Folie et Psychanalyse dans l'expérience surréaliste*, Paris: Z'Éditions, 1992.

³⁶³ Bonnet, *ibid.* p.99.

as logic, intellectual consistency and judgement - "Ouf! ô gai miroir ..", Breton observes.³⁶⁴ Breton would later affirm that his experiences at Saint-Dizier: "ont compté grandement dans ma vie et ont eu sans doute une influence décisive sur le déroulement de ma pensée." In particular Breton cites the importance of the recording of dreams and the free association of ideas: "ces rêves, ces catégories d'associations constitueront, au départ, presque tout le matériel surréaliste."³⁶⁵ Seriously considering a career in psychiatry, Breton also trained at La Pitié Hospital under the eminent neurologist Joseph Babinski, whom he greatly admired (a portrait of Babinski appears alongside that of Freud and of Charcot in Breton's personal notebook of the period, in what Alain Chevrier has characterised as an "autel votif.")³⁶⁶ However, suffering a long illness during 1917, and drawn equally by his contacts with Apollinaire and the Paris literary set, Breton was to abandon any plans for a career in medicine. This formative period was nonetheless to exercise a decisive influence on the future development of surrealism and I want to focus here on the impact of the work of Charcot.

Charcot's Theatre of Hysteria

Ilza Veith, in her classic history of hysteria, traces the term back to ancient Egypt, where it originally referred to the "peregrinations of a discontented womb."³⁶⁷ The Greeks gave the condition its name (*hystera* =womb) and this linkage with the female body has endured down the long history of the disease, despite periodic attempts, as for example that of Thomas Sydenham in the seventeenth century, to extend the term to embrace the concept of *male* hysteria.³⁶⁸ Charcot had been made chief physician at the Salpêtrière hospital in Paris in 1862 and began his work on hysteria in 1870, having first established an international reputation in the field of neurology, of which he was one of the founding figures. With his strong interest in the visual arts - he also drew throughout his career and regularly used visual aids in his lectures - Charcot was characterised by

³⁶⁴ Breton, letter to Fraenkel, undated (around 20 September 1916), in Bonnet, *ibid.*, p.121.

³⁶⁵ André Breton, *Entretiens*, p.36-7, cited in *André Breton: La beauté convulsive (exh.cat.)*, Paris: Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1991.

³⁶⁶ Alain Chevrier, "Charcot et l'hystérie dans l'oeuvre d'André Breton" in Marcel Gauchet and Gladys Swain, *Le Vrai Charcot: Les chemins imprévus de l'inconscient*, Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1997, p.242.

³⁶⁷ Ilza Veith, *Hysteria: The History of a Disease*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1965, p.viii.

³⁶⁸ See, for example G.S. Rousseau, "A Strange Pathology: Hysteria in the Early Modern World, 1500-1800", in Gilman, King, Porter, Rousseau and Showalter, *Hysteria Beyond Freud*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1993.

Freud as a “visuel”, a seer. In his work on hysteria, Charcot was at the forefront of a second reworking of the field of modern psychiatry. The first upheaval, according to Elaine Showalter, occurred during the early nineteenth century under the influence of Victorian philanthropy. The role of the asylum during that period became to “tame and domesticate madness and bring it into the sphere of rationality,” but after 1870, acknowledgement of the failure of that approach led to the adoption of a more Darwinian view of insanity, organised around “inheritance, evolution and degeneration.”³⁶⁹ During this “second psychiatric revolution”, hysteria became the focus of research and was to culminate in the emergence of Freudian psychoanalysis. During this same period, between 1870 and World War I, middle class women increasingly militated for greater rights. At the same time we see the proliferation of female nervous disorders, including anorexia nervosa, neurasthenia, and particularly, hysteria - hence the cultural significance of hysteria during this period and its prominence in the emergence of Freudian psychoanalysis.

Through his celebrated Tuesday and Friday public lectures at the Salpêtrière, Charcot’s work became known to a wide audience and itself assumed a highly theatrical character. The medical historian Mark Micale has observed that the late nineteenth century blossoming of theatre saw an expansion in women’s roles, amongst which hysteria often figured as a theatrical device,³⁷⁰ and we could add that performers like Sarah Bernhardt and Jane Avril were amongst Charcot’s audience. Charcot’s star hysterics would be placed under hypnosis by his assistants and be made to perform the various stages of *grande hystérie*, an elaborate ritual of hysteria apparently found only in Paris, and arousing inevitable accusations of its being only an iatrogenic condition i.e. induced as a consequence of the physician’s actions. For Charcot, such a major attack consisted of four distinct stages:

1. the *epileptoid* stage (palpitations, choking sensations, loss of consciousness, etc.);
2. the stage of “*clownism*” (bodily gymnastics, the “*arc de cercle*”);
3. the *attitudes passionnelles* (a stage given over to expressive mimicry, in representations of pleasure, pain, fear, etc.);

³⁶⁹ Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980*, London: Virago Press, 1985, p.17-18.

³⁷⁰ Mark S. Micale, “Le discours française sur l’hystérie à la fin du XIXe siècle”, in Jean Clair, Nicole Edelman, et al, *Autour des <Etudes sur l’hystérie>, Vienne 1895, Paris 1995*, Paris and Montreal: L’Harmattan, 1998, p.103.

4. and finally *délire* (a stage of post-hysterical derangement or mental confusion).³⁷¹ For Georges Didi-Huberman, Charcot was “le grand metteur en scène” of symptoms: “Charcot domestiqua la plus baroque des théâtricalités”, in order to create “le spectacle de la maladie.”³⁷² It was a spectacle which was both iconic and narrative, but which embraced only *female* hysterics - Charcot’s extensive work on male hysteria is largely excluded from this visualization of *grande hystérie* and was to find very different (non-erotic) visual expression, outside that spectacle. For Didi-Huberman, Charcot’s idealised and purportedly instantaneous gaze in fact conceals a certain anxiety - that of *Schaulust*, a pleasure in looking which must be concealed in the fiction of the diagnostic *coup d’oeil*. It is also worth observing that amongst Charcot’s audience was Max Nordau, future author of *Degeneration*, himself a doctor and journalist, who saw in *fin de siècle* artwork a “conflation of ... degeneracy and hysteria, of which the main stages are designated as neurasthenia”, the sign of a diseased mind which was the source of “all sorts of queer and senseless ideas.”³⁷³

The central problem confronting Charcot when he began his work on hysteria, was in distinguishing it from other conditions such as epilepsy, which manifested similar symptoms. Hysteria was above all a highly *protean* condition, noted for its capacity to assume a multitude of forms, and particularly for its capacity for *simulating* other pathologies. It is interesting in this regard to compare this hysterical strategy with that of Breton and Eluard in *L’Immaculée Conception* (1930), where in the section titled “Les Possessions”, the two poets provide five “essais de simulation” which simulate such psychopathologies as *la débilité mentale*, *la paralysie générale*, and *la démence précoce*. Alain Rauzy considers that the choice of conditions was perhaps motivated by their “potentialités expressives et créatives” and suggests that the striking exclusion of hysteria perhaps relates to its being a more visual than textual condition.³⁷⁴ But it could also be argued that, insofar as Breton and Eluard are simulating the symptoms of other pathologies, they are in fact writing *as hysterics*, and that simulation immediately introduces an internal split within the subject, which again aligns him with the hysteric. This confusion of the true with its simulation thus constitutes one aspect of surrealism’s

³⁷¹ A. R. G. Owen, *Hysteria, Hypnosis and Healing: The Work of J.-M. Charcot*, London: Dennis Dobson, 1971.

³⁷² Georges Didi-Huberman, *Invention de l’hystérie: Charcot et l’iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière*, Paris: Macula, 1982, p.113.

³⁷³ Nordau, cited in Showalter, *Hystories*, op. cit. p.83.

³⁷⁴ Alain Rauzy, “L’Immaculée conception en 1930”, in Fabienne Hulak, *Folie et psychanalyse dans l’expérience surréaliste*, Paris: Z’Editions, 1992, p.185.

broader project in its assault upon rationality and may be aligned with that of mimicry, as for example in Roger Caillois's essay "Mimétisme et psychasthénie légendaire" (1935), where in merging with its surroundings, the mimic loses its separate identity.³⁷⁵

A useful example of simulation in this context might be that of Duchamp's creation Rrose Sélavy, a highly sophisticated alter-ego and inter-subjective identity aimed at sowing categorial confusion in such diverse fields as subjectivity, gender, language and authorial origin. The inter-subjective dimension of this creation is made clear in Desnos' s simulation of the persona of Rrose Sélavy while in a hypnotic sleep in September 1922 - supposedly while in telepathic communication with Duchamp - during which he produced a series of aphorisms published in *Littérature* in December 1922, for example: "L'orgueil de Rrose Sélavy sait s'évader du cercle qui peut se clore comme un cercueil."³⁷⁶ This mixture of word-play, simulation and inter-subjectivity is also relevant to hysteria, where again we discover simulation of other conditions, verbal confusion, etc. In Breuer's primal case study of hysteria, that of "Anna O.", we find his patient falling into a "somnolent state" during the late afternoons and suffering a "deep-going functional disorganisation of her speech", culminating in the total loss of her native German, after which she spoke only English. She would also suffer "absences" - gaps in her state of consciousness - of which Breuer notes that two "entirely distinct states of consciousness were present which alternated very frequently and without warning ..."³⁷⁷ That the *sommeils* and the linked persona of Rrose Sélavy were perceived at the time to be linked in some way to hysteria is made apparent in Aragon's devastating review in the first issue of *Le Surréalisme au service de la Révolution* of Desnos's *Corps et biens* (1930), which embraced works dating back to 1919 and included some of the sayings of Rrose Sélavy. Reflecting the contemporary divisions within surrealism, Aragon attacks Desnos for reproducing a vulgarised version of Duchamp's Rrose, transforming what were documents into poems:

On peut se rappeler qu'à l'époque où ils furent écrits ils avaient essentiellement la valeur de documents cliniques pour l'étude de crises hystérisiformes que Desnos et quelques autres arrivaient à reproduire.³⁷⁸

Aragon's assertion that the *sommeils* should be conceived in terms of *crises*

³⁷⁵ Roger Caillois "Mimétisme et psychasthénie légendaire", *Minotaure* no.7, 10 June 1935, pp.5-10.

³⁷⁶ Robert Desnos, "Rrose Sélavy", *Littérature* no.7, December 1922.

³⁷⁷ Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria*, Penguin Freud Library Vol.3, London and New York: Penguin Books, 1974, p.76.

³⁷⁸ Louis Aragon, "Corps, âmes et biens", *Le Surréalisme au service de la Révolution*; no.1, July 1930, pp.14-15.

hystérimorphes points to the broader significance of hysteria as a paradigm for the surrealists during the period of *le mouvement flou* and that of early surrealism of the 1920s, embracing not only the concept of simulation, but also the broader connotations of hysteria - the spectacle, the erotic - as well as the structural paradigm provided by hysteria in terms of the split between movement and stasis, as for example in Breton's model of convulsive beauty.

One aspect of this deployment of hysteria concerns what Martin Jay has characterised as a crisis within Western ocularcentrism³⁷⁹ which accompanies modernism; a crisis heightened firstly by the collapse of the visual field during the First World War, and further reinforced by the surrealists' rejection of rationality and their turning away from the outer world of reality and consciousness, substituting instead the inner world - particularly that of the unconscious and the world of the dream. Silvia Eiblmayr has argued that the hysteric emerges at the end of the nineteenth century "as a medium (now associated with pathology) for expressing a collective experience of the modern age" - an age characterised by Walter Benjamin in terms of the "experience of shock."³⁸⁰ For Eiblmayr, this crisis is attributable to "the process of general rationalization beginning in the 19th century" and which she sees as being "decisively triggered by automatization, mechanization and electrification ... and by the development of "telematic" media (telegraphy, telephony, photography) as well as the production of images and text ...".³⁸¹ To what extent then might the figure of the hysteric be taken as paradigmatic of the response of subjectivity to the impact of modernity? More specifically, to what extent does surrealism take hysteria as its model in providing a structural model for some of its central concepts?

Hystericizing Surrealism: "un moyen suprême d'expression."

A number of theorists have accorded hysteria a significant role in their analyses of surrealism. Briony Fer has argued that ideas of diversity and difference were central to surrealism's project, where "the 'feminine' was surrealism's organizing metaphor of

³⁷⁹ Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes*, op. cit.

³⁸⁰ Silvia Eiblmayr, "The Wounded Diva" in S. Eiblmayr, D. Snauwaert, U. Wilmes & M. Winzen (eds), *Die verletzte Diva: Hysterie, Körper, Technik in der Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts*, München: Oktagon Verlag/Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, 2000, p.30.

³⁸¹ Eiblmayr, *ibid.* pp.30-31.

difference"³⁸² and places hysteria alongside paranoia as one of the two key psychic disorders explored by surrealism in relation to the feminine. Hal Foster provides a reading of surrealism which privileges its darker side, using psychoanalytical concepts such as "the uncanny", trauma, repetition compulsion and the death drive. For Foster, key surrealist concepts such as the marvellous, convulsive beauty and objective chance, "involve shock", while others - the paranoid-critical method, the posture of *disponibilité* - "might be read in terms of traumatic neurosis."³⁸³ These concepts originate with Breton, who accords two aspects to the marvellous: "convulsive beauty" (as first revealed in *Nadja*), and "objective chance" (developed by Breton in *Les Vases communicants*). Both concepts were to be further re-worked by Breton in *L'Amour fou* (1937), and Foster adds that:

Indeed, all these surrealist practices might be seen as so many attempts, compulsively repeated, to master trauma, to transform the anxious into the aesthetic, the uncanny into the marvelous.³⁸⁴

The fundamental surrealist concept of convulsive beauty is thus read by Foster in terms of both shock and hysteria: "convulsive beauty is patterned on hysterical beauty as an experience of the world convulsed, like the body of the hysteric, into "a forest of symbols." The paradox of convulsive beauty consists in its echoing of that of the body of the hysteric, torn between two opposing impulses - the frenzied movements of the epileptoid state, and the tetanoid state of immobility. Man Ray's *Explosante-fixe* (1934) embodies this paradox, where the frenzied movements of the dancer are forever frozen by virtue of the photographic process (fig.61), hysterically caught between opposing tendencies.

In *Le Cinquantenaire de l'hystérie*, Aragon and Breton appropriate hysteria from medicine, hailing it instead in aesthetic terms as a "poetic discovery". The first thing to note about this article is that it is set out throughout in capitals, lending the text a declamatory, almost hysterical tone, and echoing earlier such texts inaugurated by Artaud, as for example the *Lettre aux Recteurs des Universités Européennes*, or the *Lettre aux Médecins-Chefs des Asiles de Fous*.³⁸⁵ The article is accompanied by six photographs of Augustine taken by Régnard, which first appeared in the *Iconographie*

³⁸² Briony Fer in Briony Fer, David Batchelor and Paul Wood, *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art between the Wars*, London: The Open University, 1993, p.171.

³⁸³ Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, op. cit., pp.47-48.

³⁸⁴ Foster, *ibid.*, p.48.

³⁸⁵ *La Révolution surréaliste* no.3, 15 April 1925.

photographique de la Salpêtrière (Vol.II, 1878)³⁸⁶, and of whom they observe:

Nous qui n'aimons rien tant que ces jeunes hystériques, dont le type parfait nous est fourni par l'observation relative à la délicieuse X.L. (Augustine) entrée à la Salpêtrière dans le service du Dr. Charcot le 21 octobre 1875, à l'âge de 15 ans 1/2 ...³⁸⁷

That the two surrealists should focus solely upon the "extasies" of the *attitudes passionnelles* is viewed by Georges Didi-Huberman in his *Invention de l'hystérie* (1982), as "une extrême fascination toujours un peu louche."³⁸⁸ And he attacks surrealism's appropriation of the most sensational imagery as part of an aesthetic strategy:

C'était encore annexer l'hystérie à un "moyen d'expression", à "de l'art", c'était bien continuer de se rincer l'oeil avec les gesticulations pourtant si douloureuses d'une Augustine pauvre vedette.³⁸⁹

While partly true, this nonetheless understates the broader role which hysteria assumes within surrealism - far from simply adopting hysteria as a "moyen d'expression", surrealism discovers here an organizing and structuring principle. But equally significant, Didi-Huberman also overlooks surrealism's broader project of discrediting the claims of positivist science to objectivity and rationality, by pointing in this selection of images to the undercurrent of melodramatic eroticism within Charcot's work - a point underscored within the essay by questioning whether:

les internes de la Salpêtrière confondaient leur devoir professionnel et leur goût de l'amour, où, à la nuit tombante, les malades les rejoignaient au-dehors ou les recevaient dans leur lit?³⁹⁰

Such abuses - albeit couched in somewhat different language - had been reported as early as 1881 in Jules Clarétie's *Les amours d'un interne*. Breton and Aragon also ask, somewhat disingenuously, whether or not the Nancy School were still alive, and whether Dr. Luys recalled that school. This is another attack on Luys, Babinski and by extension, the entire Charcot model of hysteria, which had supported the somewhat improbable claims of the mesmerist Victor Burq. Again then, this must be viewed as part of surrealism's broader strategy of discrediting rationality and the claims of positivism.

³⁸⁶ The *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière* of Bourneville and Régnaud, consists of an initial, unpublished volume dating from 1875, followed by three further, published volumes: Vol.I (1876-77), Vol.II (1878), and Vol.III (1879-80). A further series, the *Nouvelle Iconographie de la Salpêtrière*, appeared between 1888 and 1918, under various authors.

³⁸⁷ Aragon and Breton, "Le Cinquantenaire de l'hystérie", op. cit., p.20; Breton, *OCI*, p.948.

³⁸⁸ Georges Didi-Huberman, op. cit. p.147. In fact some of the "attitudes passionnelles" are wrongly designated as such by Aragon and Breton.

³⁸⁹ Didi-Huberman, *ibid.* p.147.

³⁹⁰ Aragon and Breton, op. cit. p.20; Breton, *OCI*, p.949.

What also comes across strongly in Breton and Aragon's essay, is an insistence on the historical relativity of hysteria, comparing Bernheim's paradoxical definition of hysteria ("maladie complexe et protéiforme appelée hystérie qui échappe à toute définition") with the various historical manifestations of the condition:

de l'hystérie, divine dans l'Antiquité, infernale au Moyen-Âge, des possédés de Loudun aux flagellants de N.-D. des Pleurs (Vive Madame Chantelouve!), définitions mythiques, érotiques ou simplement lyriques, définitions sociales, définitions savantes ...³⁹¹

Madame Chantelouve is a reference to Huysmans' *Là-bas*, which in turn points us to the figure of Des Esseintes in the same author's *À Rebours*, a character which Micale designates as "le représentant de l'hystérie masculine dans la littérature française fin de siècle."³⁹² As Micale rightly observes, hysteria came to pervade not only French art, theatre and literature of the late nineteenth century, but also to invade a whole range of socio-cultural discourses:

L'hystérie était devenue un terme codé pour désigner l'irrationnel, le manque de volonté, l'incontrôlable, le convulsif, l'erratique, l'érotique, l'extatique, le féminin et tout une série d' "autres" collectifs.³⁹³

So that the *male* hysteric is perhaps a repressed sub-text in this celebration of the female as hysteric.

Surrealism is also clearly drawn here by the *theatricality* of hysteria as manifested in Charcot's imagery, and more specifically by the medium of the *tableau vivant*. As Breton and Aragon observe:

La crise d'hystérie prend forme aux dépens de l'hystérie même, avec son aura superbe, ses quatre périodes dont la troisième nous retient à l'égal des tableaux vivants les plus expressifs et les plus purs ...³⁹⁴

This third period is of course that of the *attitudes passionnelles* as illustrated in Régnard's photographs, and it can be seen that these images fall within a tradition stretching back at least as far as the theatrical tableaux of Duchenne de Boulogne in his *Mécanisme de la Physiognomie Humaine* of 1862 where we again find purportedly objective science permeated by eroticism and melodrama. As Nancy Ann Roth has shown, Duchenne in turn took the idea from Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle*, in which he states that: "Whenever the spirit is moved, the human face becomes a "tableau vivant", where the passions are

³⁹¹ Aragon and Breton, *ibid.*

³⁹² Micale, "Le discours français sur l'hystérie à la fin du XIX^e siècle", *op. cit.*, p.99.

³⁹³ Micale, *ibid.* pp.110-111.

³⁹⁴ Aragon and Breton, *op. cit.* p.22; Breton, *OCI* p.949.

shown with delicacy as well as energy.³⁹⁵ Duchenne's moving spirit was of course electricity, which he applied directly to his sitter's faces in order to induce facial expression and emotion, as for example in the case of the induced "cruelty" ("unsex me here ...") of Lady Macbeth (fig.62). As with hysterical symptoms, we are again confronted by the question of *simulation*, and it is therefore significant that Duchenne should have been involved, as Didi-Huberman has shown, in the photographic work of the Salpêtrière, pointing to Charcot's own "passion dramaturgique" and noting that he too was an "infatigable citateur de Shakespeare."³⁹⁶ Charcot himself, a keen follower of the visual arts, regularly used the term *tableau* in relation to his work on hysteria, and it is often alleged that Charcot's assistants "coached" their hysterics in the behaviour expected at the public displays, further reinforcing the theatrical aura surrounding hysteria at the Salpêtrière.

But what is also simulated in Charcot's images of Augustine as hysterical seductress, is gender itself. In these images (fig.63) Augustine plays out various stereotypes of eroticised femininity - including the coquette, the vamp, the dreaming lover and the ecstatic visionary. The images could be argued, in fact, to constitute a textbook demonstration of Joan Rivière's thesis in her 1929 paper *Womanliness as a Masquerade*, of the performative nature of femininity. Rivière argues that "women who wish for masculinity may put on a mask of womanliness to avert anxiety and the retribution feared from men"³⁹⁷, and goes on to conclude that there is simply no line between "genuine womanliness" and masquerade: "My suggestion is not, however, that there is any such difference; whether radical or superficial, they are the same thing". Moreover, Rivière extends this masquerade of gender to homosexual men, bringing her close to concluding that gender itself must be considered as performative. It is worth noting, too, that despite her privileged status within the Salpêtrière, Augustine was to eventually escape from the hospital, in another *coup de théâtre*, disguised as a man.

By way of conclusion to their essay, Aragon and Breton propose their own contemporary definition of hysteria:

³⁹⁵ Buffon, *Histoire Naturelle*, cited in Nancy Ann Roth, "Electrical Expressions: The Photographs of Duchenne de Boulogne", in Daniel P. Younger, *Multiple Views: Logan Grant Essays on Photography, 1983-1989*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991.

³⁹⁶ Didi-Huberman, *Invention de l'hystérie*, op.cit. p.223.

³⁹⁷ Joan Rivière, "Womanliness as a Masquerade", *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Vol.10, 1929, p.303.

L'hystérie est un état mental plus ou moins irréductible se caractérisant par la subversion des rapports qui s'établissent entre le sujet et le monde moral duquel il croit pratiquement relever, en dehors de tout système délirant. Cet état mental est fondé sur le besoin d'une séduction réciproque, qui explique les miracles hâtivement acceptés de la suggestion (ou contre-suggestion) médicale.³⁹⁸

While a somewhat oblique formulation which surely contains more of Breton than of Aragon, what *is* clear here is the sense of hysteria as detached from all *moral* constraints and hence as advancing the liberation of desire - and thus, by implication, aligning hysteria with the concept of convulsive beauty. Hysteria, they conclude, is not a pathological condition (an attack on Babinski's definition of hysteria as an *état pathologique*), but rather "un moyen suprême d'expression." Foster sees in this that "hysteria becomes a paradigm for surrealist art, for it too is to render its subject hysterical, sympathetically convulsive, seized by signs of desire ..." ³⁹⁹ But I want to also insist that this acceptance of hysteria as an aesthetic paradigm only becomes possible in the wake of the experience of the trauma of war, particularly in relation to shell-shock, a form of male hysteria - a point I return to below.

It is also worth noting here the influence of Janet upon surrealist thinking in relation to hysteria. Janet, like Freud and Babinski, trained under Charcot, and all three devoted a significant proportion of their work to the study of hysteria. Janet tended to focus upon the psychical aspects of hysteria, rejecting any particular association with sexual obsessions, and also breaking with the traditional conception of hysteria as a "protean" condition; instead, Janet saw hysteria in terms of fixed ideas and regular patterns of behaviour. As Veith observes, Janet was the first to have drawn out fully "the significance of the automatic behaviour of the hysterical patient"⁴⁰⁰ and thus raises the question of his influence upon the surrealist conception of "automatism". Bonnet notes that, in relation to *terminology*, while "le terme et la notion étaient alors monnaie courante dans la psychiatrie française depuis plus d'un demi siècle", Breton used the term "automatisme *psychique*" from 1922, in order to distinguish his own group's activities from the mediumistic uses of automatism which were then current; whereas the poets and painters were aware of the content of their output as they produced it, mediumistic activity showed no such awareness.⁴⁰¹ As regards Janet, Bonnet notes that he used the

³⁹⁸ Aragon and Breton, *ibid.* p.22; Breton, *OCI*, p.950.

³⁹⁹ Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, *op.cit.* p.50.

⁴⁰⁰ Veith, *op. cit.* p.253.

⁴⁰¹ Bonnet, *op. cit.* pp.106-107.

term “*automatisme psychologique*” and is somewhat dismissive of Anna Balakian’s claims for Janet’s importance, insisting instead on the undoubted impact of Freud in relation to automatism. Bonnet points out that Janet had only a very low opinion of the automatic productions of his patients and that he drew a sharp distinction between such productions and conventional artworks, arguing for example that “*la folie et le génie sont les deux termes extrêmes et opposés de tout le développement psychologique.*”⁴⁰² Foster nonetheless argues that Breton’s particular use of automatism gave that approach a “Janetian orientation” which allowed him to privilege automatism to a far greater degree than did Freud and hence to develop “a conception of the unconscious at a remove from Freudian models of conflictual forces, a conception of a *champ magnétique* of associations registered through automatist means ...”⁴⁰³ Moreover, Foster argues that Breton’s definition of surrealism as “psychic automatism” is posed “in Janetian terms”, albeit he acknowledges that Breton’s differences with Janet far exceeded those with Freud and that Janet had dismissed the surrealists as “obsessives”, following Breton’s denunciation of the psychiatric profession in *Nadja*. Finally, in terms of his work on hysterics, Janet clung to the word “hysteria” as a description of the condition, arguing that “truly it has so great and beautiful a history that it would be painful to give it up ...”⁴⁰⁴ - an attitude that in some ways aligns him with Aragon and Breton’s celebration of hysteria, in which they also spurn “*le déguisement déplorable du pithiatisme*”, the term which Babinski proposed (“cure by persuasion”) to replace that of hysteria.

The Austrian art historian Peter Gorsen has also accorded hysteria a significant theoretical role in relation to surrealism.⁴⁰⁵ As Gorsen rightly observes, the surrealist celebration of hysteria must also be read in the context of Breton’s opposition in the surrealist manifestos of 1924 and 1930 to psychiatric institutions, together with the *Lettre aux Médecins-Chefs des Asiles de Fous* (1925) in which the asylums are condemned as gaols and the liberation of their inmates is demanded in the name of individual liberty.⁴⁰⁶ While Breton incorporates his wartime experience of psychiatry and his valorization of the productions of the insane, via his defining surrealism in terms of “pure psychic automatism”, he nonetheless draws back from totally immersing reason and

⁴⁰² Janet from *L’Automatisme psychologique*, cited in Bonnet, op. cit. p.108.

⁴⁰³ Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, op. cit. p.3.

⁴⁰⁴ Veith, op. cit. p.254.

⁴⁰⁵ Peter Gorsen, “The Stigmatized Beauty from the Salpêtrière: Art and hysteria in Surrealism and after” (sic), in Eiblmayr *et al*, op. cit. pp.61-71.

⁴⁰⁶ *La Révolution surréaliste*, no.3, 15 April 1925, p.29.

judgement in insanity; one such key moment being Breton's sudden termination of the *sommeils* towards the end February 1923 when the hypnotic sessions grew out of hand, with Crevel on one occasion pursuing Eluard with a knife, and another threatening to end in mass suicide led by Crevel. Gorsen too reads the surrealists' celebration of hysteria in tandem with Breton's re-evaluation of insanity (schizophrenia) in the case of Nadja, and the conclusion of his book with the statement that "Beauty will be CONVULSIVE or will not be at all."⁴⁰⁷ Breton quite clearly aligns the surrealist ideal of beauty with Charcot's convulsive-erotic model of the female hysteric, suggesting a model of reality as shaken, convulsed, by the power of repressed desire. The implicit erotic element is made explicit in Freud's statement that "a convulsive hysterical attack is the equivalent of coition"⁴⁰⁸, or again that "hysterical symptoms serve the purpose of sexual satisfaction."⁴⁰⁹ But Breton's statement is surely also a pastiche of Zola's "Either the theatre will be naturalist or it will cease to exist", made when he attempted to inject some realism into the formality of late nineteenth century French theatre, just as Breton attempts to convulse the symbolic world of everyday reality with the deeper reality of the unconscious.⁴¹⁰ Breton returns to this formula in *L'Amour fou* (1937), where in its elaborated form it becomes: "La beauté convulsive sera érotique-voilée, explosante-fixe, magique-circonstancielle ou ne sera pas."⁴¹¹ Whitney Chadwick has observed that Breton has taken his title from Janet, who, in his work on hysteria "called the ecstatic states of his female patients *l'amour fou*"⁴¹², though Bonnet is again sceptical of Janet's influence here, arguing that, in opposition to Breton's use of the term, Janet used it in a quite literal and denigratory sense.⁴¹³ Breton asserts that the word "convulsive", "perdrait à mes yeux tout sens s'il était conçu dans le mouvement et non à l'expiration exacte de ce mouvement même"; and he adds that:

Il ne peut, selon moi, y avoir beauté - beauté convulsive - qu'au prix de l'affirmation du rapport réciproque qui lie l'objet considéré dans son

⁴⁰⁷ Breton's abandonment of Nadja might again be seen as his rejection of being too deeply drawn into an increasingly fraught relationship with insanity.

⁴⁰⁸ Sigmund Freud, "Some General Remarks on Hysterical Attacks" (1909), in Freud *On Psychopathology*, op. cit., p.102.

⁴⁰⁹ Freud, "Hysterical Phantasies and their Relation to Bisexuality", *ibid.* p.92.

⁴¹⁰ Alain Chevrier adds a further reference in Saint-Pol-Roux's "La poésie sera magnifique ou elle ne sera pas" - see Alain Chevrier, "Charcot et l'hystérie dans l'oeuvre d'André Breton", in Marcel Gauchet and Gladys Swain, *Le vrai Charcot*, op. cit. p.273.

⁴¹¹ André Breton, *L'Amour fou*, Paris: Gallimard, 1937, p. 21.

⁴¹² Whitney Chadwick, *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1985, p.35.

⁴¹³ Bonnet, op. cit. p.108 n.160.

mouvement et dans son repos.⁴¹⁴

By way of example, he refers to “la photographie d’une locomotive de grande allure qui eût été abandonnée durant des années au délire de la forêt vierge” - an image which was to appear in *Minotaure* that same year (1937). Again then, as in Man Ray’s image of the dancer Prou del Pilar, convulsive beauty is made manifest in the photograph in the paradox of frozen movement, in the hysterical tug-of-war between dynamism and stasis; or as Gorsen observes: “The tensing and stiffening of the muscles, the rigidity of the body in the tonic state corresponds to the wild, twitching and shaking body in the clonic state.”⁴¹⁵ Each of the three manifestations of convulsive beauty listed by Breton (fixed-explosive, veiled-erotic, and magic-circumstantial) can therefore be characterised in terms of *paradox*, as a conjunction of opposites, founded upon the paradigm of the tetanoid-convulsed body of the hysteric.

In the same issue of *La Révolution surréaliste* as the celebration of hysteria, we also find an extract from *Nadja* where we find Breton’s companion lapsing into a second state in which she experiences hallucinations - a crowd of the dead (“Et les morts, les morts!”), a flaming hand over the river Seine - symptoms similar to those which we find with hysteria. What’s also worth noting is that the extract is illustrated with an untitled painting by de Chirico (in fact *Les Plaisirs du poète* of 1912, owned by Breton and sold by him in 1928), indicating that at this point (March, 1928) Breton had not yet opted to illustrate *Nadja* largely with photographs. It would seem plausible that Breton’s decision was influenced by his fascination with the deployment of photographs in the *Iconographie* and their capacity to reveal the marvellous in hysteria. We know that Breton owned a copy of Volume 2 of the *Iconographie*⁴¹⁶, containing the case of “X.. L..., Augustine”, and that this undoubtedly exercised a crucial influence upon Breton’s thought. As early as 1921, in the catalogue to the Paris exhibition of Ernst’s collages, Breton began with the statement that: “L’invention de la photographie a porté un coup mortel aux vieux modes de l’expression, tant en peinture qu’en poésie...”⁴¹⁷; and in 1927, in the third instalment of *Le Surréalisme et la peinture*, in the context of a discussion of Man Ray’s photography, he demanded “and when will all the books that are worth anything stop being illustrated with drawings and appear only with

⁴¹⁴ Breton, *L’Amour fou*, op. cit. p.13.

⁴¹⁵ Gorsen, op.cit. p.64.

⁴¹⁶ Bourneville et P Regnard, *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière (service de M. Charcot)*, Vol.2, aux bureaux du *Progres medical* et V. Adrien Delahaye, 1878. See Breton, *OCI*, p.1730.

⁴¹⁷ Breton, “Max Ernst”, collected in *Les Pas perdus*, *OCI*, p.245.

photographs?"⁴¹⁸ If Breton had a long-standing interest in the photograph, it was perhaps the added element of hysteria which provided the element of paradox - the striking clash of elements, pulling in two opposed directions - demanded of a surrealist concept like convulsive beauty.

Charcot and the hysterical male

Whereas the surrealist celebration of hysteria is focussed exclusively upon the eroticised female body, the unspoken sub-text in all of this - particularly striking given Breton's psychiatric training and his involvement with shell-shock victims - is a refusal to confront the issue of *male* hysteria. The notable silence of Aragon and Breton on this issue rather undermines their efforts to break with the essentialist conception of hysteria rooted in the works of Hippocrates and Plato which they mock in their essay, where the uterus "bondit comme une petite chèvre."⁴¹⁹ While certainly rooted in this theory of the "capering uterus", the medical study of hysteria acknowledged the existence of male hysteria as early as 1618, in the work of Charles Lepois. This was made possible by the shift to a model of mental illness centred on the nervous system, thus breaking the old link between hysteria and the female reproductive system. Male hysteria was reasserted in 1681 in the work of Thomas Sydenham, but has tended to conceal its existence behind such terms as neurasthenia, hypochondria, phthiatism and shell-shock.

Despite this long acknowledged existence of male hysteria, for the early nineteenth century it retained the stigma of being cast as "effeminate", unmanly, or homosexual, so that hysteria retains its deep-rooted association with femininity. Micale notes a strong revival of "gynaecological theories of mental and nervous illness generally and hysteria in particular" during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,⁴²⁰ and he cites the French alienist Louyer-Villermay, who bluntly observed in 1819 that: "A man cannot be hysterical; he has no uterus."⁴²¹ Micale notes a major resurgence of interest in the work of Charcot since the mid-1980s, particularly in relation to his work on post-

⁴¹⁸ André Breton, "Le Surréalisme et la peinture", *La Révolution surréaliste*, nos.9-10, October 1927, p.41.

⁴¹⁹ Aragon and Breton, Breton *OCI*, p.949.

⁴²⁰ Mark S. Micale, "Charcot and the Idea of Hysteria In the Male: Gender, Mental Science and Medical Diagnosis in Late Nineteenth Century France", *Medical History*, Vol.34, 1990, p.366.

⁴²¹ Mark S. Micale, *Approaching Hysteria: Disease and Its Interpretations*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995, p.161.

traumatic disorders such as hysteria and neurasthenia, most of which work on traumatic neuroses was carried out on male patients.⁴²² Although the Salpêtrière had long been a women's hospital, Charcot had a male ward built there in 1882 and treated numerous cases of what he diagnosed as male hysteria. He published the case histories of some sixty male hysterics and left notes on thirty more, yet despite this mass of research there exists what Showalter characterises as a "cultural denial of male hysteria".⁴²³ Charcot's first published case of traumatic male hysteria dates from 1878 and he continued over the next fifteen years, analysing a whole range of hysterical males involved in industrial injuries, falls, burns, and traffic accidents. The decisive factor for Charcot was not the accident itself, but rather "le grand ébranlement psychique", i.e. the psychological factor of nervous shock or emotion, with its consequent effect of *trauma* - though Charcot, a thorough-going positivist, persisted throughout his career in also pursuing some physical seat of the disease, particularly some lesion which would explain the condition. Charcot's male hysterics were railway workers, bakers, builders and carpenters, and he attributed the greater incidence of hysteria amongst the working classes to the more dangerous environment in which most of them worked; his private patients, from the upper social classes, tended instead to be categorised as neurasthenics, a more "respectable" diagnostic category, with greater prospects of recovery. Charcot also firmly believed in hereditary predisposition, a state of dormancy which only required some trigger - an accident or shock - in order to provoke a hysterical attack. However, the notion of trauma came to assume increasing importance as the conception of hysteria grew increasingly psychologised, paving the way for psychoanalytic theory.

Charcot's model of male hysteria broadly followed that of the cycles of female hysteria, though over a third of the male cases failed to manifest convulsions. Representation of the male hysteric, while embracing some of the classic phases of female hysteria, such as the "arc-de-cercle" (fig.64), is nonetheless far less spectacular and lacks the sensationalism of the images of women found in the "attitudes passionnelles." I nonetheless want to insist on the significance of this theorisation of male hysteria and return later to its resurgence in relation to shell-shock. The controversy surrounding Charcot's work on hysteria resulted in an inevitable decline in his reputation following his death in 1893, while research into hysteria had already assumed a far more

⁴²² Mark S. Micale, "Charcot and *les névroses traumatiques*: Scientific and historical reflections", *Journal of the History of the Neurosciences*, vol.4, No.2, June 1995, pp.101-119.

⁴²³ Elaine Showalter, *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Culture*, London & Basingstoke: Picador, 1997, p.64.

psychological direction with the work of Freud and Breuer, beginning with Breuer's analysis of the case of "Anna O" between 1880 and 1882. Freud was to prove a crucial influence upon surrealism, through two converging strands, via Max Ernst and via Breton, in what is also often characterised as a shift from the highly *visual* approach of Charcot, to the far more linguistic and textual approach of Freud's "talking cure". I therefore want to consider Freud's influence upon surrealism, via these two strands, and in relation to his work on hysteria.

Freud, Hysteria, Surrealism

After training first in medicine, Freud came to focus in his early research in the fields of neuroanatomy and neuropathology. In 1885 he travelled to Paris to train under Charcot at the Salpêtrière, at a time when the latter's interests focussed upon hysteria and hypnotism, and in commemoration of that period, an engraving of Brouillet's celebrated painting *Une leçon clinique à la Salpêtrière* (1887)(fig.65) hung for many years in Freud's consulting room. It depicts Charcot demonstrating a case of hysteria before an admiring, amazed audience, where the centre of attraction of the image is the collapsing figure of the eroticised female hysteric, exposing her bare shoulders and bosom, and supported by one of Charcot's male assistants (in fact, the young Babinski).⁴²⁴ Again we are confronted with a male group portrait, clearly within the homosocial tradition already outlined above and it is not implausible that this widely-reproduced image exercised some influence upon Ernst's *Au rendez-vous des amis*. Charcot had the same image in his lecture theatre, together with Robert-Fleury's depiction of Pinel freeing the insane, which again depicts the same phantasy of male control over an eroticised body of the insane woman. Where surrealism parts company with that iconographic tradition is that, while the latter projects the irrational and insane onto the figure of the female, appropriating the scientific-rational tradition to masculinity, surrealism instead *claims insanity as its own*. As Micale notes, Freud's early work on hysteria builds upon that of Charcot, according primacy to the notion of traumatic aetiology and hence also accepting male hysteria. But as Freud was to discover when he returned from Paris in 1886 and made his report to the Viennese Medical Society, the question of male hysteria still aroused stiff opposition; Veith reports one old surgeon raising the old objection: "how

⁴²⁴ For a detailed discussion of this image in its socio-medical context see *La Leçon de Charcot: Voyage dans une toile*, (exh. cat.), Paris: Musée de l'Assistance Publique de Paris, 1986.

can you talk such nonsense? Hysterion ... means the uterus, so how can a man be hysterical?"⁴²⁵

Having established his own practice, Freud came to specialise in the treatment of nervous disorders, of which hysterics made up a large proportion of his patients, resulting in the publication in 1895 of Freud and Breuer's *Studies on Hysteria*. Breuer's case of "Anna O." had indicated that there lay, beyond the conscious mind, an unconscious element which required some special techniques in order to gain access to its contents. Freud then proposed the idea of the patient's "resistance" and came to experiment with "free association", hypnotism and the study of dreams, in order to break through that resistance. In their preface to the first edition of *Studies on Hysteria* Freud and Breuer note their view that "sexuality seems to play a principal part in the pathogenesis of hysteria as a source of psychical traumas and as a motive for 'defence' ..."⁴²⁶ Before proceeding to actual case histories, Freud and Breuer first discuss in their *Preliminary Communication* (1893), the origin of the hysterical symptom, arguing that "the psychical trauma - or more precisely the memory of the trauma - acts like a foreign body" which continues its work long after the initiating event. Hence, they conclude: "Hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences."⁴²⁷ Freud's early theory of hysteria is therefore premised upon the notion of psychical trauma, where such trauma is frequently consequent upon some early sexual experience, and hence Freud's initial "seduction" theory. But Freud quickly had doubts about this explanation, first voiced in a letter to Fliess as early as 1897, and turned instead to the notion of phantasy.

It is something of a cliché in the literature to observe that Freud marks a shift from the highly "visual" style of Charcot, to a far more "text"-based approach in his "talking cure"; from observing and photographing of patients, to actually listening to them. But if we look to a case history by Freud, what we find is a highly narrativised, imagistic account of the patient's history, organised in rather theatrical scenes, together with highly visual accounts of dreams. Freud himself was to observe, in introducing his first full case history (that of Elizabeth von R.): "It still strikes me as strange that the case histories I write should read like short stories..."⁴²⁸ Freud's "Dora" case (1905), his best-known case

⁴²⁵ Veith, *op. cit.* p.263.

⁴²⁶ Freud and Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), *op. cit.*, p.47.

⁴²⁷ Freud and Breuer, *ibid.* p.58.

⁴²⁸ Cited in Showalter, *Hystories*, *op.cit.* p.84.

history of hysteria, continues this novelistic tradition, weaving a complex web of intrigue, sexual betrayal and high melodrama, bringing to light the underlying current of repressed sexuality which serves to undermine the apparent calm of pre-War domesticity and respectability, producing an aura of hysteria which Ernst, for example, draws upon in his collage novels. Ades has pointed out that Freud's "Dora" case study was in fact published in translation in the *Revue française de psychanalyse*,⁴²⁹ in 1928, and there are perhaps links between this publication and the interest of Aragon and Breton in hysteria in their essay of March 1928 - we therefore return below to this case history in the context of Ernst's domestic melodramas.

Linguistic dysfunction in hysteria provides an interesting model in relation to the anarchic disruption of language typical of the dada period: the use of neologisms, absurdities, mechanical repetition, foreign words, exclamations and general verbal exuberance. At the root of psychoanalytic studies of hysteria lies Breuer's case of "Anna O", who suffered increasingly extreme forms of linguistic dysfunction, including loss of words, disturbance of grammar, until eventually "she became almost entirely deprived of words", abandoning her native German and speaking only English. Breuer notes that "two entirely distinct states of consciousness were present which alternated very frequently and without warning ..."⁴³⁰ Picabia, himself notoriously "neurasthenic", assumed a whole range of alter-egos in his writings - including Wise Guy, Pharamousse, and "Ingres" - while Duchamp and Desnos both occasionally assumed the persona of Rrose Sélavy. Anna O. also suffers hallucinatory "absences", when all the people she sees "seemed like wax figures without any connection to her", and during 1882, she relives, day by day, the corresponding day from the previous year. Again, this confusion of the animate and inanimate, particularly in the figure of the mannequin, and the sense of entering some alternative state to that of everyday reality, become major tropes of surrealism.

The question of bisexuality is another significant aspect of hysteria which finds an echo in dada and surrealism. Freud deals with this issue in his 1908 paper *Hysterical Phantasies and their Relation to Bisexuality*, where he argues that hysterical symptoms are, like other psychical structures, "the fulfilment of a wish" and that they "serve the

⁴²⁹ Dawn Ades, "Afterword" in Pierre (ed) *Investigating Sex*, op. cit. p.215.

⁴³⁰ Freud and Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria*, op. cit. p.77.

purpose of sexual satisfaction."⁴³¹ He adds that some hysterical symptoms "are the expression on the one hand of a masculine unconscious sexual phantasy, and on the other hand of a feminine one", and hence "the bisexual nature of hysterical symptoms."⁴³² Duchamp's creation of Rose Sélavy might be viewed as a hysterical manifestation of such sexual confusion and we have already noted that Aragon assimilates the sayings of Rose Sélavy to the *crises hystérisiformes* of the period of the *sommeils*.

While insisting upon the broader influence of psychiatry beyond psychoanalysis, Bonnet nonetheless acknowledges the pivotal role of Freud's thought upon Breton, as for example in the reliance of Freud's method upon speech, or in its downgrading of the role of rationality. Whereas Freud was little known in France at the time and was not to be translated into French until 1921, Breton was already in 1916 able to study résumés of the early work in texts by Régis (*Précis de psychiatrie*) and by Régis and Hesnard (*La Psychanalyse*). Breton's debt to Freud and his admiration of Freud's work, were undoubtedly huge, despite such spats as Breton's rather dismissive *Interview du professeur Freud* and his accusations against Freud in *Les Vases communicants* of being less than scrupulous in referencing his sources on dreams. But I want to focus here on the question of male hysteria, which spectacularly re-emerges during World War I in the form of shell-shock, and which Freud analyses in some depth in his important postwar work *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920).

Shell-Shock: Hysteria, War and Modernity

What has been viewed by some as a form of male hysteria emerged during the First World War with the appearance of "shell-shock", first reported by Dr. Charles S. Myers in an article in the *Lancet* of February 1915. Symptoms included breakdowns, tears, depression, insomnia, etc. and like hysteria, tended to mimic other, organic conditions (mutism, blindness, motor deficiencies). By 1916, as many as 40 percent of British casualties in combat zones were attributable to war neurosis,⁴³³ and according to Sandor Ferenczi the war presented "a veritable museum of hysterical symptoms."⁴³⁴ Myers first

⁴³¹ Sigmund Freud, "Hysterical Phantasies and their Relation to Bisexuality" (1908), in Freud, *On Psychopathology*, op. cit., p.92.

⁴³² Freud, *ibid.* p.93.

⁴³³ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, op.cit. p.109.

⁴³⁴ Elaine Showalter, "Hysteria, Feminism and Gender", in Gilman, King, Porter, Rousseau, Showalter, *Hysteria Beyond Freud*, op.cit. p.321.

suspected some physical injury relating to exploding shells, but soon turned to a psychological explanation. Shell-shock expanded at an alarming rate and by the end of the war, some 80,000 victims had passed through British medical establishments alone.⁴³⁵ It is precisely this human carnage, with its devastating psychical consequences, with which Breton, Aragon and Fraenkel were dealing in a medical capacity over an extended period, while Ernst, Masson and Vaché were all wounded, and others in the group, such as Eluard, saw active military service - so that the war has to be appreciated as the major trauma it undoubtedly was for this generation of reluctant combatants. The parallels between shell-shock and hysteria were glaring and Micale asserts the revived influence of Charcot's work in relation to the "neurologie de guerre", observing that:

In a real sense, the literature of military medicine between 1914-18 repeated in short compass the debate of two generations earlier about the causation of these cases.⁴³⁶

European analysts of these phenomena wrote of shell-shock as "hystérie de guerre", "gas hysteria" or "Kriegshysterie", noting parallels with similar symptoms observed by Charcot and his use of the term "hystero-traumatism".

As Showalter has demonstrated, shell-shock was linked to a number of conditions which might serve to undermine the prevailing model of "manliness". A number of prominent shell-shock victims were homosexuals (Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Ivor Gurney) and Karl Abraham considered war neurotics as those whose latent homosexuality had been aroused by an all-male war environment. Sandra Gilbert argues that war, paradoxically, had an emasculating effect upon men, depriving them of power and autonomy and reducing them to a state of often terrified impotence.⁴³⁷

Vaché's letters, for example, while defiant of military authority, nonetheless speak of boredom, confinement, even imprisonment:

et puis ILS se méfient ... ILS se doutent de quelque chose - Pourvu qu'ILS ne me décervèlent pas pendant qu'ILS m'ont en leur pouvoir?⁴³⁸

Vaché too, echoing the simulations of the hysteric, adopted multiple personas, wore a whole range of military uniforms and adopted various literary identities - "JTH", "Harry James": "J'ai successivement été un littérateur couronné, un dessinateur pornographe

⁴³⁵ Showalter, *The Female Malady*, op. cit.

⁴³⁶ Micale, "Charcot and *les névroses traumatiques*: Scientific and historical reflections", op. cit., p.112.

⁴³⁷ Sandra M. Gilbert, "Soldier's Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women and the Great War", *Signs* 8, 1983.

⁴³⁸ Jacques Vaché, letter to Breton, 14 November 1918, in Jacques Vaché, *Soixante-dix-neuf lettres de guerre*, Paris: Editions Jean-Michel Place, 1989.

connu et un peintre cubiste scandaleux.⁴³⁹ And Breton fancifully describes him as sporting a uniform “divided in two”, where “on one side is that of the ‘allied’ armies and on the other that of the ‘enemy’ forces”⁴⁴⁰, which again suggests the divided persona of the hysteric. As Jean Clair has pointed out, the cinematic preferences of Breton’s circle during the wartime period indicate an inclination towards hysteria, particularly in the work of Louis Feuillade and Musidora (*Fantômas*, *Judex*, *Les Vampires*) - Clair also notes a little-known serial *Tih Minh* (1918), in which Musidora deploys various convulsions and contortions to escape binding, one scene of which was even staged amongst the hysterics of the Salpêtrière.⁴⁴¹ He also notes the scene in *Un chien andalou* in which Pierre Batcheff rolls his eyes, dribbling, in simulation of an epileptic attack, relevant given that epilepsy figured as Charcot’s model for hysteria.

Emotionally damaged men were viewed by many at the time as “moral invalids” and the existence of shell-shock clearly posed a potential threat both to military discipline and the war effort, as well as to the dominant model of masculinity, hence the vigorous and often brutal manner in which it was treated: in Britain, Dr. Lewis Yealland applied “vigorous electrical stimulation” to what he clearly viewed as “malingerers”, while in Austria, Wagner-Jauregz was indicted with similarly brutal treatment (though he was exonerated, partly on the evidence of Freud).⁴⁴² The term “hysteria” was likewise avoided to avoid feminizing the condition - hence the British referred to “shell-shock”, while in France war neurotics were termed “pithiatiques” or even “simulateurs”. Showalter notes that war neurosis became even more widespread after the war had ended, with victims suffering depression, rapid mood swings, bitterness and outbursts of emotion, and Eric Leed has suggested that the decade after the War saw a period of psychological repression, as survivors struggled to come to terms with their experience, with memoirs only appearing in any numbers in the 1930s. Vaché, of course, was not to make that transition, committing suicide in January 1919 as the war ended.

Elisabeth Bronfen has provided a new reading of hysteria which retains the

⁴³⁹ Vaché, letter to Breton of 11 October, 1916, *ibid.*

⁴⁴⁰ André Breton, *Anthology of Black Humor*, San Francisco: City Light Books, 1997, p.293.

⁴⁴¹ Jean Clair, “Figures de l’hystérie dans l’art moderne, du symbolisme au surréalisme”, in Jean Clair, Nicole Edelman, et al, *Autour des <Etudes sur l’hystérie>*, Vienne 1895, Paris 1995, Paris and Montreal: L’Harmattan, 1998, *op. cit.* pp.80-81.

⁴⁴² Harold Merskey, “After Shell-Shock: Aspects of Hysteria since 1922”, in H. Freeman and G.E. Berrios, *150 Years of British Psychiatry - Vol.II “The Aftermath”*, London and Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Athlone, 1996, p.92.

central notion of trauma, but which links that trauma to the vulnerability of the body and the fragility of subjectivity. Wanting to go beyond the model of subjectivity as conceived in terms of cultural determination or as the product of “representations”, Bronfen seeks to add notions of “want or impenitence, flaw and vulnerability”; a model of the subject as prey to intimations of mortality, inadequacy and death.⁴⁴³ She notes that Freud posits a “gap in the psyche”, which renders the trauma unrepresentable, unsymbolizable, and hence its direct emergence in the real as aggression, mutilation, etc. The hysteric, or more precisely the hysterical symptom, fills out that gap, “by placing a representation where there is nothing, the psychic gap.”⁴⁴⁴ Hysteria thus becomes a “malady of representation”, and one which exposes the deficiencies within the symbolic structure. Again this might fit the case of Vaché, reported by Breton as waving a revolver around at the theatre during Apollinaire’s “surrealist drama” *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*; or again, the post-War dada manifestations of 1919-21, with their disrupted performances and brawls, or their abandonment of rational language, resorting instead to direct, absurdist expression via the body. Or again, the collages of Ernst, which always contain some such inassimilable element which convulses the image. The preoccupation with suicide too, of the dada and surrealist groups, surely bears upon this notion of a traumatised subject. Vaché’s suicide has already been noted, but we could add the case of Cravan, notorious for the New York “lecture” in which he stripped off his clothes, and who simply “disappeared” in 1920, or again that of Rigaut who spent much of his short life obsessed with the question of his ending it, which he eventually did in 1929. The central importance of suicide is attested by its being the first subject of inquiry launched by the surrealist group in the inaugural issue of *La Révolution surréaliste* in December 1924: “On vit, on meurt. Quelle est la part de la volonté en tout cela? Il semble qu’on se tue comme on rêve. ... LE SUICIDE EST-IL UNE SOLUTION?”⁴⁴⁵ It was a preoccupation which was to dog the surrealist movement, later claiming the lives of Crevel, Teige, Kurt Seligmann, Kay Sage, Dominguez, and Paalen.

The case of Masson is also relevant here, when considered in terms of a delayed response to the trauma of war erupting suddenly in the artists’s life and work. As David Lomas has convincingly shown, Masson’s work is marked by insistent repetition, “a

⁴⁴³ Elisabeth Bronfen, *The Knotted Subject: Hysteria and Its Discontents*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998, p.11.

⁴⁴⁴ Bronfen, *ibid.* p.40.

⁴⁴⁵ *La Révolution surréaliste*, 1 December, 1924, p.2.

compulsively repeated iconography of mutilation and dismemberment”, directly attributable to wartime trauma.⁴⁴⁶ This was finally confirmed in Masson’s *Mémoire du monde* (1974), in which he recounts his experience of being seriously wounded and toppling into a trench to find himself alongside the corpse of a German soldier. Masson’s repressed wartime experiences erupt in the work itself, in the form of scenes of extreme violence and in motifs such as the exploding grenade/pomegranate which also doubles as the female sex. As Lomas points out:

eroticism is twinned with violence and death throughout his work but most especially in those works dealing with themes of the Minotaur and the labyrinth.⁴⁴⁷

Again, this would also confirm Leed’s argument of the wartime mythologisation of the dichotomy of the trench-dweller/labyrinth and the aeronaut/sky, as already discussed in the case of Ernst, particularly if we add Masson’s *Battle of the Fishes* (1926) - an aerial battle of warring fishes, which is uncannily like Ernst’s *Battle of the Fish* (1917). There are also clear parallels between Masson’s eroticisation of violence and Ernst’s linking of aggression with female sexuality, which again points us to the fact that this traumatic experience cuts to the heart of male subjectivity.

By way of hysteria, then, war neurosis can be seen to have exercised both direct and indirect psychological effects - ranging from shell-shock to the more general traumatisation by war - upon that generation which underwent the experience of trench warfare. As Leed insists, participants in the conflict underwent “a deep and profound alteration of identity”, often characterised in terms of psychic split or of deep “discontinuity.”⁴⁴⁸ One such trench-dweller was Max Ernst, and it is to his work that I now turn in terms of the impact of hysteria.

Eaubonne: *Cet invraisemblable chapeau à plumes*

I want to turn now to focus more clearly on some of the artwork produced by the surrealist group, where hysteria can be seen to have exercised a determining influence, and want to centre this discussion on the work of Max Ernst. A number of Ernst’s works of the immediate postwar period suggest the influence of hysteria or of shell-shock.

⁴⁴⁶ David Lomas, *The Haunted Self: Surrealism, Psychoanalysis, Subjectivity*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000, p.37.

⁴⁴⁷ Lomas, *ibid.* p.36.

⁴⁴⁸ Leed, *op. cit.* pp.1-2.

There are perhaps veiled references to male hysteria in such phenomena as doubling (*Un homme en peut cacher un autre, Castor et Pollution*) or in the cataleptic, traumatised figure of the son in Ernst's *Pietà*. In *The Master's Bedroom (das schlafzimmer des meisters)* (fig.56), 1920, Ernst creates a distorted space reminiscent of the oneiric perspectives of de Chirico, in which a bed is surrounded by a range of wild creatures - a bear, a bat, a snake, a sheep, a whale and a fish - and by furniture and a small fir tree. There are clearly echoes of Klinger's *Anguish*, from his *Glove* series, in the suggestion of a troubled sleeper surrounded by creatures from a nightmare. For Hal Foster Ernst's image can be linked to Freud's "primal scene", and in its "contradictory scale, anxious perspective, and mad juxtaposition", and can be seen to embody the concept of *trauma*.⁴⁴⁹ Amongst Charcot's male hysterics in his *Clinical Lectures* is included the case of "Rig", who becomes subject to hysterical attacks after badly cutting his arm with a razor and following a further incident when he is almost crushed by a barrel. Rig becomes subject to attacks at night, when he is "sorely troubled by visions of ferocious animals" developing a phobia for animals "which he sees, moreover, in his horrible nightmares" and in hallucinations: "Sometimes it is the forest, wolves, horrible animals; at others it is the cellar, the staircase or the rolling barrel."⁴⁵⁰ Freud and Breuer, too, in their early work on hysteria, note in the case of "Anna O." that the young woman suffers "frightening hallucinations of black snakes", and there are likewise various animal fears in the case of Frau Emmy Von N".⁴⁵¹ While we can never know its source, the key point here is that the image embodies the notion of *trauma*.

Charcot in fact provides an important model, in his work on hysteria, for Ernst's works of the early 1920s as well as for the later collage novels. Notwithstanding his deep-rooted positivism, Charcot did make tentative moves in the direction of accepting a *psychological* explanation of the impact of accident or shock - for example in the case of so-called "glove and sock" anaesthesias, which affect limbs according to the popular conception of their limits, rather than conforming to areas affected by actual neurological damage. Schematic drawings of the body, onto which are mapped anaesthetic zones, are found in both the *Nouvelle Iconographie de la Salpêtrière* (1888) (fig.66) and in Janet's *Major Symptoms of Hysteria* (1907) and we find Ernst making use of such

⁴⁴⁹ Foster, op. cit., p.81.

⁴⁵⁰ J.-M. Charcot, *Clinical Lectures on Diseases of the Nervous System*, London: The Sydenham Society, 1889, reprinted by Tavistock/Routledge, 1991, p.230.

⁴⁵¹ Freud and Breuer, op. cit. p.77.

figures in some of his work of around 1923. These works relate to the period of the *ménage à trois* with Gala and Paul Eluard, maintained by Ernst since his departure from Cologne in September 1922 and continued when they all moved to a suburban house at Eaubonne, some twenty kilometres north of Paris. The house itself was extensively decorated with murals by Ernst during the summer of 1923, transforming a quintessentially bourgeois suburban home into what Doris Krystof has called a modern “Villa dei misteri”, its walls and doors covered with erotic, naked figures, surreal landscapes and fantastic animals. Eluard eventually sold the house in 1932 after which the murals were covered over, remaining concealed until 1967, when they were rediscovered by Cécile Eluard and her husband Robert Valette. In an essay highly critical of the whole operation, Krystof reveals how the murals were unfortunately removed from their setting and misleadingly sold off as autonomous works on canvas to collections around the world, with titles provided by Valette from Eluard’s writings, without reference to Ernst - they thus bear no relation to Ernst’s intentions, and rather tend to mislead the viewer.⁴⁵² In a photograph dating from around 1923/4 (fig.67) we gain some sense of the way in which the murals related to the space and to its inhabitants: Gala sits upon an ornate sofa beside Cécile, who holds a telephone receiver to her ear, while Ernst squats upon the floor, blowing theatrically on a shell. The murals thus provide a kind of theatrical backdrop against which the domestic melodramas of the Eluard-Ernst *ménage* were played out.

The only surviving contemporary account of the murals comes from Breton, contained in a letter to his then wife Simone, in which he liberally pours vitriol on both murals and household:

Le démon de l’inhospitalité s’y est installé plus méchamment encore qu’à Saint-Brice. La décoration de Max Ernst dépasse en horreur tout ce qu’on peut imaginer. On se prend à regretter Boucher, à quoi rêvent les jeunes filles, les petits Saxons. Il y a là d’accompli, quelque chose d’irréparable.⁴⁵³

But it becomes clear that Breton’s ire is also directed at the domestic arrangements of the Eaubonne *ménage*: “Penser que la banlieue, la campagne vous cachent de telles machinations: je sais bien que si j’étais la foudre, je n’attendrais même pas l’été.” After

⁴⁵² Doris Krystof, “Entrer, sortir, espace, rythme et passage dans le cycle de fresques de la maison de Paul et Gala Eluard à Eaubonne”, in Spies, *Max Ernst: Sculptures, Maisons, Paysages* (exh.cat.), op. cit., pp.225-245.

⁴⁵³ Breton, letter of 11 November 1923, cited in Agnès de la Beaumelle, “L’atelier”, in *André Breton: La beauté convulsive* (exh. cat.), op. cit., p.62.

thoroughly condemning the picture hanging in the house as worthy of some “basse hôtellerie”, Breton concludes with the withering line:

Il est plaisant à dire, mais rigoureusement exact, que la cave bien blanche où s'entasse du charbon bien noir est un lieu presque aimable, une folle presque belle sous cet invraisemblable chapeau à plumes.⁴⁵⁴

Breton's intense reaction and his personal influence upon the surrealist group no doubt in part explain the curious silence surrounding the murals, as well as Ernst's apparent indifference at their rediscovery. Commentaries have been few and have tended to favour a reading of the murals as containing coded references to the Eluard-Ernst *ménage à trois* - which is clearly what Breton read there. Béatrix Blavier, for example, sees such a reference in an untitled image (fig.68) featuring two hands, with a third hand in the space above, three hands all reaching “for the same love or perhaps the same ‘forbidden fruit’,”⁴⁵⁵ as well as in other murals from the cycle, such as three dancing, entwined figures of *Merveilles, vous dansez sur les sources du ciel* (1923)(fig.69) - but there are perhaps also links between these wildly dancing figures and that of the hysteric and I therefore want to consider the possible influence of hysteria here.

In what would have been the first image encountered on entering the house, known now as *Ange volant* (1923) (fig.70) we see what Camfield has described as a “flying” figure which, he asserts, is “surely the incarnation of Gala”, but which is quite clearly also an inverted image of a woman in the classic *arc de cercle* position from the *attitudes passionnelles* of Charcot. Hysteria would surely better explain what Camfield sees as the troubling “ambiguity” of the figure, torn as she is between smiling and “shrieking”.⁴⁵⁶ This particular mural was, incredibly, overlooked when the rest were removed and has remained in situ. Located in the entrance hall above the double-doors to the kitchen and living-room, the image suggests that Ernst's intention was to have the figure of the female hysteric posed like some tutelary deity, guarding the entrance to his enchanted domain. In *Entrer, Sortir* (1923) (fig.71), we find a female (perhaps androgynous) figure with colour-coded zoning of the body, suggesting parallels with medical diagrams of hysteric zones - Legge has suggested the notion of “hysteria-as-muse, the source of new hallucinatory realities, a homage to sexual inspiration.”⁴⁵⁷ Legge

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid. p.62.

⁴⁵⁵ Béatrix Blavier, *Max Ernst: Murals for the Home of Paul and Gala Eluard, Eaubonne, 1923*, MA Thesis, Rice University, Houston, 1985, cited in Camfield, op. cit. p.143.

⁴⁵⁶ Camfield, op. cit., p.142.

⁴⁵⁷ Legge, *Max Ernst*, cited in Camfield, op. cit. p.351, n.137.

also observes that such a masking of the face is a standard trope in medical texts, to preserve anonymity, while for Ernst hysteria figures as a “kind of withdrawal into visionary blindness”⁴⁵⁸ and accords with surrealism’s turning away from the rational world of external vision and toward the inner world of the unconscious.

Eluard’s relationship with Gala was undoubtedly complex - Ian Gibson characterises Eluard as a “consummate Don Juan” and observes that he “liked flashing photographs of Gala naked” to other men.⁴⁵⁹ Gala herself, of Russian origin, is described by Gibson as both forthright and forceful, as well as “intensely superstitious”, and in the light of her early letters to Eluard, as manifesting a “passionately erotic temperament which at times verged on the hysterical”.⁴⁶⁰ According to Legge, Gala was already identified with the figure of Gradiva from Wilhelm Jensen’s 1903 novel *Gradiva: A Pompeian Phantasy*, from the time of Ernst and Eluard’s collaboration on *Les malheurs des immortels* (1922). Jensen’s novel was in turn the subject of an analysis by Freud (*Jensen’s “Gradiva”, 1907*)⁴⁶¹, written only a year after his “Dora” case history. Jensen’s tale involved a young archaeologist, Norbert Hanold, who becomes obsessed with the figure of a young girl represented in an antique relief, and who is distinguished by her particular gait, leading him to name her “Gradiva” - “the girl who steps along.” The girl becomes an obsession for Hanold, as he searches for her in contemporary life, in particular developing a foot fetish, and she comes to represent the man’s sexual awakening, as well as his liberation from the constraints of his antiquarian studies. Spies detects the influence of *Gradiva* in two of the Eaubonne murals, *Histoire Naturelle* and *Au premier mot limpide*, which originally decorated the Eluards’ bedroom and which depict fantastic animals and plants within a garden enclosed by a wall. *Au premier mot limpide* features a lizard-like creature trapped by the tail, which seems to echo the scene of the lizard hunt in *Gradiva* and in which Legge detects a link to castration anxiety. But whereas attention is inevitably focussed upon the figure of Gradiva, what is invariably overlooked here is the question of male hysteria. Freud is in fact quite specific on the question of diagnosis in relation to Hanold’s delusions: after considering the possibilities of paranoia and the obvious element of fetishism in relation to the foot, Freud concludes that the case “would have to be described as a hysterical delusion”, adding that the

⁴⁵⁸ Legge, *Max Ernst: The Psychoanalytic Sources*, op. cit., p.111.

⁴⁵⁹ Ian Gibson, *The Shameful Life of Salvador Dalí*, London: Faber and Faber, 1997, p.219.

⁴⁶⁰ Gibson, *ibid.* p.221.

⁴⁶¹ Sigmund Freud, “Delusions and Dreams in Jensen’s *Gradiva*”, in Freud, *Art and Literature*, op. cit.

“indications of paranoia are absent from it.”⁴⁶² We must therefore consider *Gradiva* as an unspoken case of male hysteria, and while Freud's text is cautious on the matter, he nonetheless draws clear parallels between his own investigations into hysteria and obsessions, rooted in the “suppression of a part of instinctual life”, and the case presented by Jensen - even tracing such investigations back to the work of Janet and “the great Charcot”.⁴⁶³ Dalí too read both Jensen's *Gradiva* and Freud's analysis of the novel, soon after meeting Gala in 1929, and for him too she became both muse and fetish object, known as “Celle qui avance”.

In *Il ne faut pas voir la réalité telle que je suis* (pl.2), a slender female nude usually identified as Gala waves with one arm crossing that of a shadow figure. There are perhaps references to hysteria in the notion of the shadow figure as “second state”, while the gloved hand echoes that of Janet's diagrams of hysterical anaesthesias. The semi-transparent abdomen refers to the long tradition of wax anatomical models used in medical training, or to the anatomical drawings of Leonardo, Cattani and Fialetti,⁴⁶⁴ but more specifically, in Ernst's focus upon the sexual and reproductive organs, where the uterus-like form to the right of the abdomen surely refers to the “wandering” or “devouring womb” of the hysteric, displaced as it is from its anatomically correct location. But there is also perhaps a further reference to *Gradiva* here, in the distinctive gait signalled in the woman's upraised left foot, as well as in the doubled figure, an echo of Jensen's Zoe-Gradiva. Hysteria too involves what Charcot called “une condition seconde”, a phrase which struck Freud, where the patient enters a second psychic state. Gala therefore clearly figures here in her capacity as erotic muse, but also embodies woman-as-hysteric. There are also interesting parallels between this mural and Gala's appearance in Ernst's *La Belle Jardinière* of the same year, where we again find Gala in the role of muse, again as a nude shadowed by a “double”, with cut-away segments in the region of the chest and abdomen, with “flaps” suggestive of the opening plates of anatomical treatises based, as Camfield demonstrates, upon an early swing-wing aeroplane.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶² Freud, *ibid.* p.70, n.1.

⁴⁶³ Freud, *ibid.* p.78-79.

⁴⁶⁴ See for example Deanna Petherbridge and Ludmilla Jordanova, *The Quick and the Dead: Artists and Anatomy* (exh. cat.), London: The South Bank Centre, 1997; see also Spies, *Max Ernst: Collages*, *op. cit.*, fig. 632, for a similar image used in other of Ernst's works.

⁴⁶⁵ Actually based on a photograph of an early swing-wing aeroplane, thus reinforcing the notion of their being opening parts - see Camfield who notes that Aaron Scharf first published this source, *op. cit.* p.341.

The break-up of the Eaubonne *ménage* was to prove as messy as it was spectacular, with Eluard's sudden disappearance on 24 March, 1924 and what we might characterise as his hysterical flight to the Far East, travelling to Saigon, Singapore and Ceylon. Eluard took flight the day before his next volume of poetry, entitled *Mourir de ne pas mourir*, was to be published, leaving only a note for his father in which he said "I have had enough. I'm going on a trip."⁴⁶⁶ When he made contact with her, Eluard was followed by Gala, and then, like some slapstick movie, by Ernst, who financed his trip only by selling works to Mutter Ey in Düsseldorf, at knock-down prices. Eluard and Gala returned to Paris in September 1924, where Eluard resumed his activities with the group "as though nothing had happened", Camfield observes, followed in October by Ernst - in time for the first official activities of the surrealist group from mid-October, with the first *Manifeste du surréalisme* published on 15 October, 1924.

I want to conclude this discussion of the role of the hysteric-as-muse by referring to one of Dalí's anecdotes about Gala in his *Secret Life of Salvador Dalí* (1942). We might consider this in the context of Lacan's dictum that the subject is, by definition, a hysteric, or as Bronfen glosses:

Because the subject exists only insofar as it is the object of an interpellating Other's desire, its existence involves asking what this Other desires and how to comply with that desire.⁴⁶⁷

Dalí recounts his "growing psychic abnormality" during this period of the late twenties and his efforts to cultivate in himself an aura of madness, adopting slogans such as "The irrational for the sake of the irrational". During 1929, at the time when he first meets Gala, he suffers hallucinations and then develops uncontrollable fits of hysterical laughter, which he says "became more and more painful, spastic, and symptomatic of a pre-hysterical state which already alarmed me."⁴⁶⁸ Dalí confesses to his sadism in relation to girlfriends and to the violent fantasies he experiences when he first meets Gala, and it is Gala who is to "cure" him, just as Gradiva-Zoe cures Hanold in Jensen's novel. We need to introduce here Freud's later theory of phantasy, as contained in his essay *A Child Is Being Beaten* (1919), where the final phase of this phantasy ("a child is being beaten") presupposes two earlier scenes: the first of which is the "sadistic" phantasy "my father is beating the child", while the second phase is a "masochistic" inversion of that scene - "I

⁴⁶⁶ Cited in Camfield, op. cit. p.152.

⁴⁶⁷ Bronfen, op. cit. p.238.

⁴⁶⁸ Salvador Dalí, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí* (1942), London: Vision Press Ltd., 1968, p.233.

am being beaten by my father."⁴⁶⁹ Freud specifically points to the frequency of this particular phantasy among hysterics and obsessional neurotics and adds that the really crucial scene is the second, masochistic one, which is radically repressed. Slavoj Žižek illustrates this phantasy using a scene from Hitchcock's *Sabotage*, in which Sylvia Sidney discovers that her husband is in fact a saboteur responsible for the murder of her brother.⁴⁷⁰ The couple confront one another over the dining table as the husband sees his wife increasingly fascinated by the knife which lies on a platter between them; a confrontation ensues, from which the man emerges stabbed by the knife, but in which it remains unclear whether he was stabbed or committed suicide. Žižek sees here a Lacanian "threatening gesture" on the part of both parties, the structure of which is "that of a theatrical, hysterical act, a split, self-hindered gesture" - a gesture which cannot be completed because it expresses some contradictory desire. Sylvia's ambivalence over murder is met by her husband's split between self-preservation and a desire to be punished, and hence the murder "results from the overlap, the coincidence of her desire with his."

In a crucial early scene between Dalí and Gala, set against the backdrop of his growing and increasingly frustrated passion toward her, Dalí grows increasingly insistent with Gala that she should tell him what she wants him to do to her, until she finally - and somewhat melodramatically - answers: "I want you to kill me!" In an analysis which is pure Lacan, Dalí is "astonished and disappointed at having 'my own secret' offered me as a present instead of the ardent erotic proposal I had expected ..."⁴⁷¹ What this strikingly demonstrates, is what Žižek argues as "the Lacanian definition of the hysteric's desire as the desire of the other"⁴⁷² : that point when Dalí recognises his own desire in the desire of the other. But this confrontation with the Lacanian real - the death drive - results not in Gala's death, but in shocked self-realization on Dalí's part. For as Dalí perceptively observes, "Gala's idea constituted indeed the very basis of her psychic life", after which, he concludes: "my hysterical symptoms disappeared one by one, as by enchantment."⁴⁷³

⁴⁶⁹ Sigmund Freud, "A Child Is Being Beaten" (1919), in Freud, *On Psychopathology*, op. cit.

⁴⁷⁰ Žižek, *Looking Awry*, op. cit., pp.119-120.

⁴⁷¹ Dalí, op. cit. p.245.

⁴⁷² Žižek, op. cit. p.122.

⁴⁷³ Dalí, op. cit. p.248.

Hysteria, Histrionics and Melodrama In Ernst's Collage Novels

In a series of photobooth portraits dating from 1929 (fig.72), we find Ernst acting out a series of bizarre gestures and facial distortions, in a histrionic performance which recalls that of images of the insane, or perhaps of the hysteric. Similar photobooth images were made by Breton, Aragon, Tanguy, Prévert, Queneau, and no doubt many others of the surrealist group, an area of "automatism" deserving of more detailed study. We should note here the hysterical laughter of Tanguy (fig.73) and the intensely homosocial nature of a number of these *Photomaton* images, as again in the case of Queneau and Jean Piel.⁴⁷⁴ It is surely no coincidence that in the year following Aragon and Breton's celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of hysteria, Ernst should also accord hysteria a pre-eminent role in *La femme 100 têtes* (1929), the first of his collage novels. Indeed, hysteria can be shown to pervade much of Ernst's three collage novels. I want to argue that many of Ernst's ideas on hysteria and its visualisation, can be traced to the *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière*, particularly to the second volume owned by Breton. While not taking any specific images from the *Iconographie*, Ernst nonetheless takes his entire model of hysteria from that source, much of which can be traced to the second volume owned by Breton.⁴⁷⁵ And to which we might add the influence of the overheated, histrionic atmosphere experienced by Ernst in his own suburban melodrama at Eaubonne.

In the text "Instant Identity", from his *Beyond Painting* (1948), Ernst considers the "flagrant contradictions" of his own identity, pointing to the opposition between "his spontaneous comportment and the dictates of his conscious thought." These conflicting attitudes are, he argues, "convulsively fused into one" whenever he is confronted with a fact, a union brought about by bringing "two distant realities together on an apparently antipathetic plane (that which in simple language is called "collage") ..."⁴⁷⁶ Ernst concludes his text with the statement - paraphrasing Breton - that "IDENTITY WILL BE

⁴⁷⁴ See Jean Ristat (ed), *Album Aragon*, Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1997, pp.166-167.

⁴⁷⁵ Lomas argues of Ernst that: "Certainly it was the misfortune of the *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière* ... to fall prey to his omniverous scissors" (Lomas, op. cit. p.87). This is at least questionable, given that the bulk of the imagery is photographic, with relatively few line drawings suitable for Ernst's collages - equally, if Breton is the source, he would be unlikely to allow Ernst's scissors anywhere near his own single volume of Charcot.

⁴⁷⁶ Max Ernst, *Beyond Painting*, op. cit., p.19. Ernst in fact wrote this text in 1936 and it first appeared as "Au delà de la peinture" in *Cahiers d'Art* (Special Ernst issue), 1937.

CONVULSIVE OR WILL NOT BE."⁴⁷⁷ Hysteria, in the form of hysterical convulsion, thus provides the model through which both the contradictions of identity and of collage are resolved - a process which Ernst characterises in terms of an "exchange of energy", and which he likens to "a shattering stroke of lightning and thunder." In considering the collage novels, we can see how both identity and collage are, for Ernst, rooted in the nineteenth century model of hysteria.

The title of the first collage novel, *La femme 100 têtes*, is already suggestive of both the multiple identities of the hysteric and of the protean form of the disease. The inaugural image, *Crime ou miracle: un homme complet* (fig.74) depicts the gigantic figure of a naked man being hauled down from the sky in a kind of net, by gangs of men hauling upon ropes, in an image suggestive of birth or of some bizarre primal scene. But the image also recalls the acrobatics of the (male) hysteric during Charcot's phase of "clownism", as depicted in Charcot and Richer's *Les Démoniaques dans l'art* (fig.75).⁴⁷⁸ This is immediately echoed in the second image, *L'immaculée conception manquée* (fig.57), based upon an engraving taken from *La Nature*⁴⁷⁹ which depicts the photographic studio at the Salpêtrière (fig.76), and which portrays a female hysteric in the process of being photographed. Foster sites Ernst's image in the context of a discussion of Freudian primal phantasy - specifically that of the primal scene.⁴⁸⁰ Charlotte Stokes notes that the "doctor's apron ... makes him appear dishevelled" and that this and "his demeanour strongly suggest a sexual as well as authoritarian relationship to the woman."⁴⁸¹ But the image might equally be interpreted specifically in terms of hysteria. In his autobiographical writings, Ernst as a child links the death of his pink cockatoo to the announcement of the birth of his sister Loni, an event pervaded by *trauma*:

The *perturbation* of the youth was so enormous that he fainted. ... A series of mystical crises, fits of hysteria, exaltations and depressions followed. A dangerous confusion between birds and humans became encrusted in his mind and asserted itself in his drawings and in his

⁴⁷⁷ Max Ernst, *Beyond Painting*, in Lucy R. Lippard, *Surrealists on Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1970, p.134. (I prefer this formula to Tanning's translation).

⁴⁷⁸ J.-M. Charcot and Paul Richer, *Les Démoniaques dans l'art*, Paris: Adrien Dalahaye et Emile Lecrosnier, 1887 - republished by Macula (Paris), 1984.

⁴⁷⁹ *La Nature*, pt.II, 1883, p.216.

⁴⁸⁰ Foster, *Convulsive Beauty*, op. cit. pp.73-84.

⁴⁸¹ Charlotte Stokes, "The Scientific Methods of Max Ernst: His Use of Scientific Subjects from *La Nature*", op. cit., pp.460-461.

paintings.⁴⁸²

Ernst's image, with its added figures and symbols (a rabbit, a hysterical child, a radiant iris, a giant bottle) and its title (a "failed" immaculate conception) therefore already announces the theme of hysteria, evoking the traumatic appearance of his sister Loni. In his recollection, Ernst adds that the bird-headed figure, Loplop, with which he later comes to identify himself, "remained inseparable from another one called *Perturbation ma soeur, la femme 100 têtes*", both of which figures he designates as "phantoms." Ernst thus confirms that this pairing of the hybrid male figure and the phantom woman, a recurring motif in the collage novels, is rooted in this traumatic relation with the sister. Compulsively repeating this traumatic-erotic theme throughout the book, Ernst regularly introduces an incongruous naked (usually female) figure, thus convulsing these melodramatic tableaux by the eruption within them of Freud's "other scene." Ernst thereby makes explicit the erotic sub-text of these images drawn from Victorian and Edwardian illustrated novels, lifting the veil of sexual repression found in them, or again, manipulates images taken from popular science in order to subvert their claim to scientific detachment, just as Aragon and Breton did in relation to the interns at the Salpêtrière.

The case of Augustine, celebrated by Aragon and Breton, figures prominently in the second volume of the *Iconographie*, where we learn of her innumerable hallucinations, characterised by Didi-Huberman in terms of "une infection hallucinatoire de tout l'espace, de tout le temps ...":

C'étaient le plus souvent visions de viols, sangs, feux encore, terreurs et haines des hommes. [...] Parole affolée, organes affolés. Elle voyait partout des bêtes, noires, <semblables à de gros rats>, ou bien <plates, noires, à coquilles>. ... Des fantômes peuplaient la vie d'Augustine.⁴⁸³

So that the world of the young hysteric is, like that of Ernst, peopled, infected by "phantoms", the same term used in Ernst's biographical notes, and which recurs in *La femme 100 têtes*: These "visions hystériques" which mark the return of the repressed - visions which are also posed by Didi-Huberman in terms of *projections* - are typical of the melodrama, sexual violence and trauma, encountered throughout Ernst's collage novels.

Some of Ernst's images directly refer to the histrionics recorded in Charcot's

⁴⁸² Max Ernst, "Some Data on the Youth of M.E.: As Told by Himself", op. cit. p.44.

⁴⁸³ Didi-Huberman, op. cit. pp.137-8.

photographic studio, themselves already reliant upon the model of the exaggeratedly mannerist style of French acting - compare, for example Ernst's *Loplop, l'hirondelle, passe* (fig.77) with a photograph by Londe taken from Charcot's *Oeuvres* (fig.78). Or again, images which depict pressure being applied to the eyes in order to place the subject in a hypnotic state (fig.79) - "l'oeil sans yeux", suggesting the shift from outer to inner vision - which again reflect the iconography of hysteria (fig.80). Ernst returns to the theme of hysteria in a 1931 catalogue cover (fig.81)⁴⁸⁴ which features a female hysteric in the position of the "arc de cercle", the quintessential hysterical pose as established by Charcot, as shown for example in Régnard's photograph (fig.82) taken from the *Iconographie* (Vol.III, 1879-80). Again Ernst deploys the body of the female hysteric within a banal context in order to suggest an all-encompassing aura of eroticism pervading everyday life - hysteria thus figures as the motif signifying the repression of sexuality and the role of the unconscious within everyday reality.

Ernst's second collage novel *Rêve d'une petite fille qui voulut entrer au carmel* (1930), like *Une Semaine de bonté* (1934), pursues a vehemently anti-clerical line, and both are again strongly redolent of the overworked melodrama of the nineteenth century illustrated novel. In that book Ernst combines the clerical fantasies and hysterical atmosphere of repressed sexuality found in the Gothic novel, with the constant dramatic action of the nineteenth century adventure novel: a frenzied succession of dramatic chases, knife fights, kidnappings, torture, shipwrecks and attacks by wild animals. To this we could add the melodramatic formulas of early cinema, particularly the example of the disconnected serial format of Louis Feuillade's films (*Les Vampires*, *Judex*, *Tih Minh*, etc.). As Foster has pointed out, "melodrama is a genre already given over to the unconscious, a genre in which repressed desires are hysterically expressed"⁴⁸⁵, which in part explains the all-pervading aura of repressed sexuality which permeates Ernst's collage novels. But we could also suggest a more personal connection from Ernst's childhood, as recounted in his *Ecritures*. Ernst observes that his father was president of the "Association des Pèlerins de Kavelaer", which he characterises as "une espèce de Lourdes miniature", and ironically adds that: "Les <miracles> y étaient à l'époque assez fréquents."⁴⁸⁶ Hence the aura of religious hysteria which Ernst pillories in his collage novels.

⁴⁸⁴ Collage produced by Ernst for the Librairie José Corti, *Les Livres surréalistes*, Paris, 1931.

⁴⁸⁵ Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, op. cit. p.177.

⁴⁸⁶ Max Ernst, *Ecritures*, op. cit., p.14.

Hysteria is evoked at the outset of *Rêve d'une petite fille ...*, in Ernst's introductory text, where he describes the divided figure of the book's female protagonist, Marceline-Marie,⁴⁸⁷ "during the benediction for a statue in bronze of 'the Little Saint of Lisieux.'":

She had remained motionless during the procession of the martyr's relics and during the sermon, that is, for two hours, her arms held out, a knife in her hand ...⁴⁸⁸

Amongst a tangle of references, Ernst echoes Freud's "Dora" case history, where Freud writes that Dora recalls a brief visit she made to Dresden, visiting the art gallery there:

She remained *two hours* in front of the Sistine Madonna, rapt in silent admiration. When I asked her what had pleased her so much about the picture she could find no clear answer to make. At last she said: "The Madonna."⁴⁸⁹

But the crucial point here for Freud, is that Dora "was identifying herself with a young man" (a visiting cousin who was also wandering around a strange town), and it is surely this confusion of gender which attracted Ernst to the model of hysteria. In naming his protagonist Marceline-Marie, Ernst condenses a rich mix of references to hysteria, demonic possession and religious extasy. I would also suggest a reference to Madeleine, the protagonist of Janet's *De l'angoisse à l'extase* (1926), who suffered hallucinations, stigmata and religious extasies, inserting herself within a divine family romance in which she oscillates between the various roles. Bronfen notes that the girl assumed the name of Madeleine in imitation of Mary Magdalene and that:

While walking across the room she would suddenly stand transfixed in ecstasy, remaining motionless for up to twenty-four hours, neither eating, sleeping, nor responding to questions.⁴⁹⁰

We find a similar reference to hysteria in *La femme 100 têtes*, in the image entitled *Loplop, ivre de peur et de fureur, retrouve sa tête de oiseau et reste immobile pendant 12 jours des deux côtés de la porte* (fig.83) - again the frozen immobility of the hysteric, combined here with the confusion of gender. We also find amongst Ernst's collages quite specific references to nineteenth century models of hysteria, as for example in the

⁴⁸⁷ The name Marceline-Marie perhaps parodies that of Marie Mesmin, founder of the dissident cult of Notre-Dame des Pleurs et Notre-Dame des Parfums, implicated in a bizarre judicial case involving an assault upon a priest which was widely reported during 1926, and to which Breton and Aragon make oblique reference in their celebration of hysteria. See Breton, *OCI*, pp.1731-2.

⁴⁸⁸ Max Ernst, "Academy of Science" in Ernst, *A Little Girl Dreams of Taking the Veil* (1930), translated by Dorothea Tanning, New York: George Braziller, 1982, p.10.

⁴⁸⁹ Freud, "A Case of Hysteria", op. cit. pp.135-6 (emphasis in the original).

⁴⁹⁰ Bronfen, op. cit. p.285.

conflation of religious and sexual ecstasy (fig.84), where a novice in bridal gown prays before a crucifix and an image of the Madonna and child; again perhaps a reference to Freud, and which could also be linked to the praying figure of *Supplication amoureuse* (fig.85) taken from Charcot's *attitudes passionnelles*. Reading the *Iconographie*, one is struck by the extent to which Bourneville and Régnaud make cross-reference to cases of demonic or religious possession (Charcot in fact built up a "Bibliothèque diabolique" at the Salpêtrière).⁴⁹¹ Whereas much of the secondary literature stresses the rootedness of Charcot's model of hysteria in that of *epilepsy*, in both volumes I and II of the *Iconographie*, the constant reference is in fact to demonic possession, with extensive extracts from *La Piété affligée* (1700) and *Cruels effets de la vengeance du Cardinal de Richelieu ou Histoire des diables de Loudon ... , etc.* (1716). Given that Ernst had ready access to at least a part of the *Iconographie*, he would have encountered numerous accounts of demonic possession, religious extasies, couplings with the devil, succubacy, crucifixions and related phenomena there. It is noteworthy, too, that most of the themes from hysteria treated by Ernst (sexual ecstasy, religious possession, crucifixion, etc.) can be sourced to a single volume of the four which comprise the *Iconographie*, i.e. to Volume II (1878), the volume owned by Breton.

Succubacy is a theme already treated by Ernst in *La femme 100 têtes*, where we discover numerous images in which "phantoms", often naked, come to figures in bed, or erupt suddenly within some everyday location. Again, this might relate to the treatment of this subject as an aspect of hysteria in the *Iconographie* (Vol.II). In the case of "Geneviève", under the heading *Succube*, Bourneville and Régnaud recount the case of a young woman who is visited each night by an imaginary lover who assumes the form of a cat or a stag-beetle, a case which they compare to that of Madeleine Bavant, one of the principal victims of demonic possession at Louviers. They note too that hysterics often experience hallucinations in which they are visited by animals (cats, rats, serpents, insects) or by "des bêtes monstrueuses."⁴⁹² In an unpublished collage for *Rêve d'une petite fille ...* (fig.86) we find a seductive female figure reclining on a bed, approached in the foreground by a giant insect, as another insect nestles against her bosom, while behind her swoops a menacing lion-headed creature. In the same book we also find Ernst's female protagonist depicted in a whole series of images (Ernst:

⁴⁹¹ For the contents of that special collection, see Charcot and Richer, *Les Démoniaques dans l'art*, op. cit. p.204.

⁴⁹² Bourneville et M. Régnaud, *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière*, Vol.III, op. cit., p.209.

plates 30-32) featuring erotic insect fantasies, as for example in his plate 32:

“... sous mon blanc vêtement, venez avec moi, très effrayantes sauterelles qui lisent les journaux! Ecarquillez vos petits yeux et ...”

In another such image, a group of characters is flanked on one side by a giant beetle, while on the other is a naked woman:

“Marceline-Marie: “Qui suis-je? Moi, ma soeur or ce scarabée obscur?” (Gêne).

Madeleine Bavant admitted, under torture, to having coupled with the devil in the form of a cat and to having fantasised coupling with the curé Picard,⁴⁹³ and we again find many scenes of torture and violence in Ernst's collage novels, as well as numerous erotic encounters with animals, birds, insects, or with various hybrid creatures. Seduction of a priest also figures in the third image of *Rêve d'une petite fille ...*(fig.87), where a naked woman hovers between the father and the cleric:

“... comptez sur moi!” Marceline-Marie: “Ma tenue me semble indécente, papa, en présence du Père Dulac. L'épreuve la plus délicate pour une Enfant de Marie ...”

Yet another model for Ernst's Marceline-Marie was undoubtedly the case of Marguerite-Marie Adacoque, dating from the seventeenth century, again cited by Bourneville and Régnard in the *Iconographie*:

Dès son enfance; elle s'adonna avec ardeur aux pratiques de la religion, des austérités et des macérations par jeûnes, chaînes de fer, ceintures, etc. Elle passait les nuits en prières. Vers l'âge de 15 ans, elle fut sujette à des hallucinations de la vue: Jésus Christ lui apparut <sous la figure ou de crucifié, ou d'*Ecce Homo*, ou portait sa croix> Elle se sentait tellement absorbée devant le saint Sacrement qu'elle y aurait passé les jours et les nuits sans boire ni manger. <Je ne savais bonnement ce que je faisais, sinon que je me consumais en sa présence comme un cièrge ardent pour lui rendre amour pour amour.>⁴⁹⁴

Marguerite-Marie experienced increasingly frequent visions of the crucified Christ, such that: “Elle avait sans cesse devant les yeux l'objet *invisible* de son amour.”⁴⁹⁵ Again this suggests the hysteric as inhabiting another level of reality and the intervention of what Ernst interprets as *phantoms*.

In consulting the *Iconographie* Ernst would have encountered numerous case

⁴⁹³ Ibid. p.216.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid, pp.218-219. Bourneville and Régnard quote here from the *Histoire de la bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie, etc. ...* of M. l'abbé Em. Bougaud, fourth edition, 1876 (original spelling retained).

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid, p.220.

histories which read like miniature Gothic novels, or like the melodramatic novels on which he based his own collage novels: tales of girls abused by parents and employers, threatened with knives and guns; sexual assaults; cases of demonic possession; of girls placed in convents, visited by lovers, and continually running away; of drunken fathers cutting their throats while drunk. He would have come across cases of hypnosis, somnambulism, catalepsy, major hysterical attacks, and the application of a whole range of eccentric therapies (suspension, faradisation, and the application of various compressors and devices), many of which find their equivalents in his collage novels. Hysteria thus clearly provides for Ernst, a structuring principle for his collages, where scenes of everyday reality are convulsed by the eruption of the unconscious, in the form of hallucinations, erotic fantasies and violent nightmares. But hysteria also provides quite specific content, providing a window upon another world of violent and dysfunctional families, incarceration and the world of the asylum, in the form of clear references to particular case histories, reports of satanic possession and an accompanying iconography of drawings and photographs.

In his third and final collage novel, *Une Semaine de bonté* (1934), Ernst takes another anti-clerical swipe at authority and sexual hypocrisy, in a work which draws heavily upon the wood engravings illustrating Jules Marey's novel *Les Damnées de Paris* (1883). This time Ernst produces a visual melodrama which finds its focus in the repressed atmosphere of the overblown Victorian domestic interior - the very engine-room of late nineteenth century hysteria. The seven books which comprise the collage novel are organised according to the days of the week and each is given an "element" (mud, water, fire, etc.) and an "example" - thus the first book, Sunday, has the element "mud" and its example, or theme, is that of "The Lion of Belfort". Ernst's "week of kindness" turns out to be yet another anti-clerical ploy, parodying as it does the seven deadly sins, and throughout the novel we find the female body as an object of male pursuit, seduction, capture, confinement and torture. The Lion of Belfort, refers to Bartholdi's patriotic statue erected in Belfort in commemoration of the Franco-Prussian War⁴⁹⁶, and this book invokes a particularly sadistic, quite literally "monstrous" model of masculinity, embodied in the lion-headed male, as women are variously menaced with an axe, trussed up, whipped, tortured or shot. This eruption of male violence against

⁴⁹⁶ There is also another version of this statue in the Place Denfert-Rochereau, in Montparnasse. Given the recent war and the situation in the Ernst-Eluard *ménage*; this figure becomes highly symbolic.

the female body (fig.88) strikingly recalls that of the period of the *sommeils*, some of which Ernst himself attended, as for example in the case of Crevel, as reported by Simone Breton, where the sessions involved “*toujours de scènes de cruauté dont les victimes sont, toujours, des femmes*”:

Un autre jour, c'est: “*La hache, J'ai dit la hache. Un vieillard la brandit.*

La femme sera nue. C'est naturellement une femme adultère, etc.”⁴⁹⁷

In the case of Crevel, Bonnet suggests some link with his hatred of his mother and with his unease with his own homosexuality, though as we have already observed, such misogynistic violence pervades the immediate postwar period, and as Theweleit clearly demonstrates in the case of the German *Freikorps*, was perhaps even more acute on the losing side of the conflict.

The second book of Ernst's novel begins, significantly, with a railway accident as a train plunges from a shattered bridge into the waters below, in a scene which at once invokes the concept of *trauma* and the nineteenth century obsession with what was known as “railway trauma” or “railway spine” - a modern pathology which Charcot was to re-categorise as hysteria⁴⁹⁸ and which is in turn later re-read in psychoanalytical terms. Foster has pointed out that Breton introduces the notion of shock at the end of *Nadja*, where he asserts that convulsive beauty is “like a train that ceaselessly roars out of the Gare de Lyon and which I know I will never leave... It consists of jolts and shocks destined to produce one *Shock*.”⁴⁹⁹ So that Breton's convulsive beauty draws upon both of the key concepts deployed by Freud in his early mapping of the unconscious, i.e. hysteria and shock. We should note too that in the French edition of *Nadja*, Breton places the word “Lyon” in italics, making a veiled allusion to an incident in which Emmanuel Berl, at the time Breton's rival for the affections of Suzanne Muzard, suddenly took Suzanne away for a holiday in Tunisia. According to Polizzotti, “Breton, hearing of the departure at the last minute, rushed with several friends to the Gare de Lyon in an effort to stop them”⁵⁰⁰ - a somewhat melodramatic episode which perfectly embodies the homosocial aspect of rivalry over the love object. To return to Ernst, the final section of *Une Semaine de bonté* is dominated by what are quite clearly images based upon Charcot's *grande hystérie*, and in particular the *attitudes passionnelles*, ranging from the

⁴⁹⁷ Quoted in Bonnet, *André Breton: Naissance de l'aventure surréaliste*, op.cit. p.264.

⁴⁹⁸ Lynne Kirby, *Parallel Tracks: The Railroad and Silent Cinema*, Exeter: Exeter University Press/Duke University Press, 1997, p.67.

⁴⁹⁹ André Breton, *Nadja*, New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1960, pp.159-160; Breton, *OCl*, op. cit., p.753.

⁵⁰⁰ Polizzotti, op. cit. p.290. Also see Breton, *OCl*, op. cit., pp.1562-3.

image of crucifixion (fig.89), through various forms of acrobatic bodily convulsion, to finally conclude the book with the classic *arc de cercle* (fig.90), an arched female body convulsively hovering in space.

But hysteria in Ernst is far from being simply a female affair and we find numerous images in the collage novels depicting male subjects in exaggerated postures, breaking down in tears, suffering fearful hallucinations, collapsing, or transformed into semi-monstrous creatures. Ernst's male hysterics might be read on one level as expressing the traumatic experience of the war veteran, in the sudden emergence of repressed violence, misogyny, unpredictable mood swings and hysterical outbursts. Hysteria thus provides the central model for Ernst's convulsion of everyday reality and the dismantling of any coherent or unitary identity. That the surrealists' interest in hysteria was no passing infatuation is attested by the entry for "hystérie" in Breton and Eluard's *Dictionnaire abrégé du surréalisme* (1938), which conforms with the definition given in Aragon and Breton's 1929 essay, and is accompanied by a small collage by Eluard entitled simply *L'Hystérie*. The concept of hysteria, rooted in the trauma of the surrealist group's wartime experience, provides a structural paradigm for some of the key theoretical constructs of surrealism, as well as permeating the histrionic atmosphere of post-War dada manifestations and the experiments of the period of *sommeils*. Hysteria also provides a fertile source of both textual and visual material through which surrealism is enabled to convulse the notion of subjectivity and to render that of identity both divided and alienated, and must therefore be considered a central element of the surrealist enterprise.

5. Bachelor Machines and Masculinity in the Work of Duchamp

Bodies, Power and the Erotics of Machines

"The body is nothing but a clock ..."

La Mettrie, *L'Homme machine*.⁵⁰¹

For the eighteenth century, the French physician Julien Offray de la Mettrie's *L'Homme machine* (1747), a materialist interpretation of the human organism, re-stated the problem of the mind as one of physics. La Mettrie asserted that man, like the cosmos, was "a machine,"⁵⁰² treating man, according to Aram Vartanian, as "a mechanical entity in which psychic events are regularly produced by organic causes."⁵⁰³ In considering here the mechanomorphic work of Duchamp, my concern is to site those works within a broader tradition of conception and depiction of the human body, both in *relation* to the machine as well as in terms of mechanistic *metaphors*, and more specifically, to focus upon the dynamics of the gender relationships proposed in those models and representations. Of particular relevance to this approach is the work of Michel Carrouges, whose innovative 1954 work *Les Machines Célibataires*⁵⁰⁴ was inspired by Duchamp's concept of the "bachelor machine" and based on the correspondences which Carrouges detected between that model and others found mainly in literature (particularly in Kafka and Roussel). My own approach is rather broader than that of Carrouges, extending the notion of "machine" to embrace related techniques such as mesmerism and hypnosis which utilise various devices or human-mechanical interventions - often linked to "scientific" or "medical" usages - and whose ultimate aim, like that of the machine, is to endow the user with particular *powers*. More specifically, those powers, as in Carrouges's model, pertain specifically to gender relations and may therefore further increase our understanding of the psycho-sexual dynamics of the

⁵⁰¹ Julien Offray de la Mettrie, *Machine Man and Other Writings*, edited by Ann Thomson, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.31.

⁵⁰² La Mettrie, *ibid.* p.4.

⁵⁰³ Aram Vartanian, *La Mettrie's "L'Homme machine": A Study in the Origins of an Idea*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1960, p.13.

⁵⁰⁴ Michel Carrouges, *Les Machines Célibataires*, Paris: Arcanes, 1954.

particular models of masculinity encountered with Duchamp, Picabia and their circle. We can thus outline the development of a particular fantasmatic relating to aspects of modernity such as the machine and electricity, which I wish to explore from the standpoint of masculinity. A further, related, concern in this analysis will be with the representation of the body, particularly in relation to the extremely porous boundary which we encounter between "science" and "art", in the context of early scientific and medical illustration, and which we can then later map onto the equally permeable boundary between "technical" illustration and "art" in the mechanomorphic work of Duchamp and Picabia. What I want to argue here, is that in the avant-garde project of overturning boundaries, conflating art and science, and eroticising the machine, these artists were in fact reviving an earlier tradition - which in fact had never entirely disappeared anyway - the "ghost in the machine".

According to Vartanian, La Mettrie's originality lay in his correlation of mental with physiological states, and his assumption that all psychic phenomena are based upon physical causes. In effect, La Mettrie extended Descartes' equation of animals with machines, to human beings, and asserted that the animating principle was intrinsic to the body itself: "The human body is a machine which winds itself up, a living picture of perpetual motion."⁵⁰⁵ Although in many ways anticipating Enlightenment thought, La Mettrie was attacked by both *philosophes* and *antiphilosophes* and following his early death in 1751 his work underwent many years of repression. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, and on the eve of the French Revolution, we find in the rapid spread of mesmerism a radical shift in the conception of the body; as the Baronne d'Oberkirch observed: "The end of this very sceptical century is conspicuous for this incredible characteristic - the love of the marvellous ...".⁵⁰⁶ Franz Anton Mesmer, having trained in medicine at the University of Vienna, first began to develop his own technique of bodily cure using magnets, and then went on to deploy the natural "animal magnetism" within his own body by making passes over the patient's body with his hands. Mesmer set up his own clinic in Paris in 1778 and quickly attracted a fashionable and highly lucrative clientele. Mesmerism was founded not upon mysticism as such, but rather upon the purported presence of a "superfine fluid that penetrated and surrounded all bodies"; a

⁵⁰⁵ La Mettrie, op. cit. p.7.

⁵⁰⁶ Cited in Alan Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p.4.

fluid which could be harnessed in the form of "heat, light, electricity and magnetism."⁵⁰⁷ Sickness resulted from obstructions in the circulation of this fluid, whereas cure could be effected via the "mesmerizing" or massaging of the body's poles, in order to restore balance. This technique, however, often induced a "crisis" in the form of convulsions before balance could be restored. What we therefore discover here, is a hybrid conception of the body, conceived first in terms of *hydraulics*: a body of currents and flows, obstructions and circulation. But a body also conceived as *magnetic*, with poles at the head and feet, receiving magnetic fluid from both the heavens and the earth.

What is of particular interest here, though, is the intervention of the machine, and the attendant eroticisation of the process of cure. In order to effect group cures, Mesmer developed the expedient of *baquets* or "tubs" - wooden vats containing iron filings and bottles of "magnetised water", the current from which was transmitted via metal rods. Patients sat around the tubs linked by a cord, creating a form of "electrical circuit", thus allowing the apparatus to be characterised as a kind of primitive electrical machine. Control of lighting and the addition of appropriate music - Mesmer's glass harmonica⁵⁰⁸ - served to create an appropriate atmosphere, while further extending the scope and complexity of this curative apparatus. But, as Robert Darnton points out, many mesmerists focused upon the body's "equator", which "stimulated gossip about sexual magnetism"⁵⁰⁹, as a consequence of which "it was widely believed that mesmerizing was a sort of sexual magic."⁵¹⁰ We find this expressed in popular doggerel of the period⁵¹¹ and in numerous caricatures, as for example *Le Doigt magique* (fig.91). Here we find the mesmerist - quite clearly a charlatan - depicted in the form of an animal, with bulging pockets, seducing a female client who points with one drooping hand to her sex, while amidst a backdrop of clouds, some amorous scene is being played out by mythological creatures. Sexual control is exercised here by throwing the patient into a somnambulistic state, although according to Darnton, this practice was used more by

⁵⁰⁷ Robert Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968, p.3.

⁵⁰⁸ An eighteenth century musical instrument comprising glass bowls of varying pitches, which was played by rubbing the fingers along the moistened rims of the bowls.

⁵⁰⁹ Darnton, *ibid.* p.4.

⁵¹⁰ Darnton, *ibid.* p.52.

⁵¹¹ Among the examples cited by Darnton we find:

Vieilles, jeunes, laides, belles,
Toutes aiment le docteur,
Et toutes lui sont fidèles.

Darnton, *ibid.* p.54.

followers such as the Marquis de Puységur, than by Mesmer himself.

Charles Villers, author of *Le magnétiseur amoureux* (1787), argued against fluidic theories, and according to Alan Gauld, "asserts that such powers have been misused by young men for the purposes of seduction."⁵¹² It is significant that, when two Royal Commissions were established in 1784 to investigate Mesmer's claims, a secret report was prepared by the Paris Faculty of Medicine which "dwelt upon the moral dangers occasioned by the practice of animal magnetism"⁵¹³ and pointed to the potential sexual exploitation of women by quacks and charlatans. Gilles de la Tourette, in the *Nouvelle Iconographie de la Salpêtrière* (1892), notes that the lieutenant general of police had asked whether "lorsqu'une femme est magnétisée ou en crise, il ne serait facile d'en abuser", and received an affirmative reply.⁵¹⁴ We find these fears well expressed in a contemporary print, *Le Magnétisme dévoilé* (fig.92), where Benjamin Franklin - himself a pioneer in electrical research - brandishes his commission's report, while the charlatans flee on broomsticks, leaving an almost naked woman in a collapsing tub. In relation to our concern with the modern conception of the body, the depiction of the mesmerists as animals, as asses, points too to the categorial scandal which this turn to animality must have constituted in an age which defined itself so strongly in terms of the pre-eminence of rationality and the mind. It is perhaps also worth noting that the boundaries between objective science and the erotic, were as permeable in the later case of hypnotism as with mesmerism. Gauld cites for example, the case of Charcot's favourite performing hysteric, Blanche Wittmann, who "when somnambulic was told it was hot and that she should take a bath, along with the assembled company", and that although Wittmann, after beginning to undress, began to show signs of a hysterical attack, causing the experiment to be called off, another patient, Sarah R., "had no hesitation in undressing and taking an imaginary bath."⁵¹⁵

In a little known and untitled collage from 1929 (fig.93), Ernst has based his image on an engraving of a scene in which Mesmer's "animal magnetism" is being deployed in the context of an elegant eighteenth century salon.⁵¹⁶ On the left-hand side

⁵¹² Gauld, op. cit. p.71.

⁵¹³ Gauld, op. cit. p.28.

⁵¹⁴ Paul Richer, Gilles de la Tourette and Albert Londe, *Nouvelle Iconographie de la Salpêtrière*, Paris: L. Bataille et cie, éditeurs, 1892, p.56.

⁵¹⁵ Gauld, op. cit. p.496.

⁵¹⁶ *Fragments of a Personal Universe: Max Ernst Collages and Microbes* (exh. cat.), The Mayor Gallery and Timothy Baum, New York: Nadada Editions, 1998.

of the room, a woman swoons as she is cast into a mesmeric sleep, just as another woman is carried over from the right, while in the background we see one of Charcot's celebrated *baquets*, filled with magnetized water. The eruption of the erotic in the scene is signalled by Ernst via the figure of a naked woman emerging from a hole in the floor and is strikingly similar to the use of this device in *La femme 100 têtes*, suggesting that this image was intended for that book but not used. Again the motif of the naked woman serves to make manifest the sexual sub-text of the scene, transforming a site of pseudo-medical cure into one of potential debauchery.

Nonetheless, Darnton insists that mesmerism was no more fanciful than a whole range of contemporary discoveries of various dubious fluids and gases and that Mesmer's apparatus "resembled the all-popular Leyden jar and the machines illustrated in the standard works on electricity ..."⁵¹⁷ Barbara Maria Stafford, in her detailed analysis of eighteenth century body metaphors, also points to the significance of such electrical metaphors, citing Puységur, who argued that: "All bodies are thus *saturated*, in their own manner, with the fluid we term electrical."⁵¹⁸ Man, he adds, should therefore be considered "an *electrical* animal machine, the most perfect that exists ..." Stafford also observes that a number of researchers, including Galvani and Priestley, "had demonstrated that a flow of sparks induced convulsions," and that "Dagoty maintained that animate bodies were 'electrified' by the lungs."⁵¹⁹ Darnton notes that electrical demonstrations had become very popular by the 1780s and in an image of one such demonstration, dating from 1799 (fig.94), George Adams the Younger applies electrotherapy to a young girl accompanied by her mother.⁵²⁰ That what is ostensibly simply a scientific demonstration contains an erotic surplus is immediately apparent in the admiring gaze of the beautiful young woman, peering coquettishly over the scientist's shoulder through an extraordinary hat - an image as much attuned to the fashion detail and to sexual dynamics, as to the scientific equipment it purports to depict. Indeed, all the elements characterised by Carrouges as intrinsic to the "bachelor machines" (discussed below) are already fully formed here (i.e. the "sexual units" and the "mechanical units"), both in Adams' electrical apparatus and also in Mesmer's tubs. In

⁵¹⁷ Darnton, *ibid.* p.15.

⁵¹⁸ A.-M.-J. de Chastenot, Marquis de Puységur, cited in Barbara Maria Stafford, *Body Criticism: Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1991, p.453.

⁵¹⁹ Stafford, *ibid.* p.459.

⁵²⁰ See R. Woof, S. Hebron, and C. Tomalin, *Hyenas in Petticoats: Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley* (exh. cat.), London: The Wordsworth Trust, 1997.

fact, it is precisely during this period, as Stafford demonstrates, that we witness the imposition of "methodism", of "a hard, prestigious method, deemed intellectually superior" to a more lax or "soft" method of recording and analysis, and which serves to repress such superfluous elements within scientific documentation. Stafford shows how "the major epistemological trends of the eighteenth century removed unruly sensory experiences - especially those originating in sight - from the sphere of intellectual and public importance."⁵²¹ It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that we should see their later re-eruption in the eroticised mechanomorphic forms of Duchamp, Picabia and others associated with early modernist art movements such as dada or Futurism.

In a further example from the turn of the century (fig.95),⁵²² we find yet again the same elements - the sexual units of the man and the woman, along with the mechanical unit in the form of an elaborate electrical apparatus, but where the woman herself is now more clearly the object of the experiment. In the centre of this device we discover a hypnotic, spinning disc supported upon a tripod - and a disc which bears a striking resemblance to a 1920 piece by Duchamp: *Rotary Glass Plates (Precision Optics)* (fig.96). This concern with optical devices pervades much of Duchamp's work and is seen particularly clearly in the case of the "oculist witnesses" in his *Large Glass* (1915-23), or again in *Handmade Stereopticon Slides* (1918-19), *To be Looked at (from the Other Side of the Glass) with One Eye, Close to, for Almost an Hour* (1918) and the various *Rotoreliefs* of 1935. In formal terms, these optical enquiries mark an important aspect of Duchamp's early rejection of painting:

To be a painter for the sake of being a painter was never the ultimate aim of my life. That's why I tried to go into different forms of activity - purely optical things and kineticism.⁵²³

Rotary Glass Plates (Precision Optics) was constructed by Duchamp in New York, with the assistance of Man Ray, in January 1920, and consists of segments of a circle painted upon five glass discs, powered by an electrical motor. On first sight the device apparently lacks the erotic element which pervades virtually all of Duchamp's work, but when seen in the context of the electrotherapy devices discussed above, this repressed element is implicitly restored. Duchamp's strategy points to the close association between "looking" and the erotic, as in the case of scopophilia or voyeurism,

⁵²¹ Stafford, op. cit. pp.466-7.

⁵²² From *Hyenas in Petticoats*, op. cit.

⁵²³ Marcel Duchamp, cited in Arturo Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* (Revised Edition), London: Thames & Hudson, 1997, vol.1, p.53.

and its centrality to male sexuality. That the erotic intention was in fact there from the outset is confirmed in subsequent developments of this theme, as for example in the later variant *Rotary Demisphere (Precision Optics)* of 1925, which deploys a painted wooden demisphere mounted on black velvet, and bears the inscription "*Rrose Sélavy et moi esquivons les ecchymoses des esquimaux aux mots exquis*". Whereas Duchamp insisted that what is at stake here is simply a question of *optics*, Arturo Schwarz has pointed out that "both Steefel and Robert Lebel have commented on the erotic aspect of the rotating hemisphere", adding that Steefel says it "spins with an oscillatory action of systole and diastole, boring in and out of space in an obsessive pulsation which can be correlated with copulatory motions"; while Lebel notes that the spirals are "laden with sexual allusions."⁵²⁴ The undulatory three-dimensional effect of Duchamp's ocular-erotic device therefore echoes the endless, mechanical copulation of Jarry's *Surmâle*, the terminal point of which is death, a point to which we return below.

Carrouges defines a "bachelor machine" - a term which he acknowledges as having been invented by Duchamp - in terms of "*a fantastic image that transforms love into a technique of death*"⁵²⁵ and discerns such images in the work of Duchamp, Kafka, Jarry and Roussel. The bachelor machine is "*first of all an improbable machine*", an apparently useless or incomprehensible mechanism, but which may include elements of functioning machines - a clock, dynamo, or simply fragments of machinery. But nonetheless, "*the determinant structure of this unlikely-looking machine is based on a mathematical logic*", which dictates that each such machine consists of "two equal and equivalent units", one of which is *sexual*, the other *mechanical*.⁵²⁶ The sexual units are in turn made up of both male and female units, with their mechanical equivalents, though in the course of Carrouges's analysis there is often greater complexity, with multiple characters or elements representing either unit. Carrouges's central paradigm is of course Duchamp's *Large Glass*, which I discuss below. In relation to Duchamp's *Rotary Glass Plates*, the element of death required by Carrouges's bachelor machines is provided too by the fact that the device broke apart, causing one of the spinning glass discs to almost decapitate Man Ray. If we required further confirmation of the implicit erotic target of such works, we find such evidence in related works by Picabia, from

⁵²⁴ Schwarz, *ibid.* p.56.

⁵²⁵ Michel Carrouges, "Directions for Use" In *Le Macchine Celibi/The Bachelor Machines* (exh. cat.), Venice: Alfieri, 1975, p.21.

⁵²⁶ Carrouges, *ibid.* p.21-22.

1922-23, which deploy wave patterns and target forms, as for example with *Optophone II* (1922), where, in the centre of a series of concentric circles in the form of a target, we find the figure of a naked woman, with the centre of the target focussed upon her sex (fig.97).

To take yet another parallel between these early electrical-erotic devices and their spectacular return in early twentieth century art, we might consider the electrical experiments being carried out during the early nineteenth century upon animals and even on corpses. Gauld tells us that Galvani's nephew, G. Aldini, "applied strong electrical currents to corpses and to the freshly severed heads of criminals, producing contortions and grimaces which certain spectators could not bear to look at."⁵²⁷ Stafford notes that: "Aldini's ghoulish experiments involved drowning innumerable dogs and cats and then exciting or electrifying them."⁵²⁸ There are some striking parallels between such experiments, and the imaginary productions of Raymond Roussel, and in fact Carrouges, in his analysis of bachelor machines, includes a number of examples from the work of Roussel. In *Locus Solus* (1914), the professor (Martial Canterel) explains a whole range of extraordinary devices to his guests, including a large diamond-shaped tank filled with electrified water, in which a woman (Faustine) swims "in a flesh coloured costume."⁵²⁹ Also in the tank are the remains of Danton's head, which is delicately re-animated by a hairless cat wearing a metal cone and fed on red pellets, effectively transforming it into "an extremely powerful electric battery":

Under the influence of the powerful animal magnetism which the cone released, the facial muscles trembled and the fleshless lips began to move distinctly.⁵³⁰

In this bizarre scenario, eroticism and death are combined in a device which quite clearly draws upon the traditions of both animal magnetism and also of electrotherapy, and as is well known, Roussel has been cited by both Duchamp and Picabia as a significant influence. But what we also find here is the eternal fantasy of what Maurice Hindle has characterised as "masculinist science"⁵³¹ - of usurping the female role in the creation of life, as most clearly evidenced in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

⁵²⁷ Gauld, op. cit. p.82.

⁵²⁸ Stafford, op. cit. p.461.

⁵²⁹ Raymond Roussel, *Locus Solus* (1914), London: John Calder, 1983, p.52.

⁵³⁰ Ibid., p.72.

⁵³¹ See Maurice Hindle's introduction to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, London: Penguin, 1992.

In Shelley's novel, Victor Frankenstein finally baulks at producing a female mate for his monster, fearing that his creations will reproduce and create a "race of devils", whereas in Villiers de L'Isle Adam's *L'Eve future*, the project of creating, as Peter Wollen emphasises, not simply a human being, but a woman *for man*, is actually enacted by the Professor in the figure of Hadaly: "both philosophical toy and sexual fetish or surrogate."⁵³² The book also contains at least one striking example of pure surrealism, in the sense of the incongruous encounter, when the Professor's attention is caught by "un objet d'aspect saisissant et extraordinaire": "C'était un bras humain posé sur un coussin de soi violâtre" - a living, severed hand, which is of course that of a woman.⁵³³ The Professor, modelled upon the American inventor Thomas Alva Edison is designated the "master electrician" and his creature a product of electromagnetism. Hadaly, we are told, has metallic joints which are held together by a magnetic force produced by electrical currents, and she is very much the *femme fatale*, able to strike down any man who tried to steal a kiss, with a powerful bolt of electricity: "la face noircie, les jambes brisées, souffleté par un silencieux coup de tonnerre ..."⁵³⁴

But perhaps what we can also begin to see in this substitution of electricity as the animating force of the body, is a shift in the conceptualization of the body from the earlier hydraulic model, founded upon the four bodily humours (blood, phlegm, choler and melancholy), to one founded on electrical or neurological currents. Roussel's animation of the head of Danton surely also suggests familiarity with the photographs of Duchenne de Boulogne, in his *Mécanisme de la Physionomie Humaine* (1862),⁵³⁵ illustrating electrical stimulation of the facial muscles, and in both cases a model of the body is proposed wherein a powerful electrical stimulus will automatically produce the appropriate mechanical response - effectively a form of "automatism", though very different to that intended by surrealism. Duchenne's experiments uneasily straddle that same porous border between art and science discussed above, and as Nancy Ann

⁵³² Peter Wollen, *Raiding the Icebox: Reflections on Twentieth Century Culture*, London: Verso, 1993, p.45.

⁵³³ Villiers de L'Isle Adam, *L'Eve Future* (1886), in Villiers, *Oeuvres*, Paris: Le Club française du livre, 1957, p.573.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.* , p.656.

⁵³⁵ G.-B. Duchenne (de Boulogne), *Mécanisme de la physiognomie humaine ou analyse électro-physiologique de l'expression des passions applicable à la pratique des arts plastiques*, Paris: Vve. Jules Renouard, 1862. See also Elizabeth Edwards, "Ordering Others: Photography, Anthropologies and Taxonomies", in Chrissie Isles and Russell Roberts (eds), *In Visible Light* (exh. cat.), Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1997; Sander L. Gilman, *Disease and Representation: Images of Illness from Madness to AIDS*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1988.

Roth observes, the book was intended by Duchenne as both "a textbook of physiology" and also a "reference book for artists."⁵³⁶ Of the electrical methodology itself Roth notes that: "electrical stimulation had never really become legitimate medicine", and that an "association of the technique with quackery was never far in the background."⁵³⁷ For Roth, the photographs "fit only uncomfortably in any scientific tradition", and indeed their theatricality is shown to be, in part, due to the involvement of the photographer Adrien Tournachon, brother of the celebrated portraitist Nadar (Gaspard Félix Tournachon). But equally influential is the scientific paradigm on which Duchenne draws, derived from the great *Histoire Naturelle* of Buffon, one of the cornerstones of the Enlightenment, from which he takes the model of the *tableau vivant*, together with its underlying principle or mechanism.⁵³⁸ In one series from the *Mécanisme*, we find a female subject, under the stimulus of a faradic current, enacting a series of such *tableaux vivants* (a format whose importance has already been underscored in relation to hysteria), depicting various artistic, literary and religious scenarios. In one such image (fig.98), we find an absurd enactment of a nun taking her vows, in which we have all the elements of Carrouges's bachelor machine - the Bride (of Christ), the Bachelor, and the bizarre machine itself. That these images contain an erotic surplus is obvious enough, and particularly blatant in the "Ecstasy of St. Theresa", or again in the entirely superfluous *déshabillé* introduced into other images. We are again confronted here with what psychoanalysis would designate *fantasy*, which, as Victor Burgin insists, "is not simply a matter of summoning imaginary objects, it is a matter of staging, of *mise-en-scène*."⁵³⁹ Or again, as Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis observe:

Fantasy, however, is not the object of desire, but its setting. In fantasy the subject does not pursue the object or its sign: he appears himself caught up in the sequence of images.⁵⁴⁰

Hence the significance of the *tableau vivant* as ideally suited to this condensation and staging of the fantasy, in both the work of Duchenne and in that of the Salpêtrière.

The bulk of the imagery of the *Mécanisme* - some 70% - is devoted to the

⁵³⁶ Nancy Ann Roth, "Electrical Expressions: The Photographs of Duchenne de Boulogne", in Younger (ed), op. cit., p.105.

⁵³⁷ Roth, *ibid.* p.120.

⁵³⁸ Duchenne quotes Buffon in his preface: "Lorsque l'âme est agitée, la face humaine devient un tableau vivant où les passions sont rendues avec autant de délicatesse que d'énergie ..." - in Duchenne, *Mécanisme*, op. cit. p.v.

⁵³⁹ Victor Burgin in Elizabeth Wright (ed), *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*, Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1992, p.85.

⁵⁴⁰ Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality", in Victor Burgin (ed), *Formations of Fantasy*, London: Methuen, 1986, p.26.

electrical stimulation of the face of an elderly man (fig.99). We are informed that this subject had "an extensive facial anesthesia", rendering him "almost completely insensitive to the pain of electric shocks", and of whom Duchenne significantly observes: "I was able to partially contract his muscles with as much precision and confidence as on a still-responsive cadaver."⁵⁴¹ It is striking that we find again here, as with the example of Aldini, a likely source for Roussel's electrical animation of the head of Danton. But also, in Roussel's deployment of the *tableau vivant* and its accompanying scientific explanation we can clearly detect the underlying scientific paradigm parodied in *Locus Solus*. This is particularly clear in a later episode of the book, where corpses preserved by refrigeration equipment are again re-animated using powerful doses of electricity, in order to re-stage scenes from their lives. In one such *tableau*, staged in a glass-sided stage set for the benefit of the bereaved relatives, a young man repeats his final anguish and suicide. Roussel's small playlets are accompanied by highly elaborate technical explanations of their functioning and principles, provided by the Professor, again on the model of Buffon. It is surely no coincidence too, that we find the same electrical scenario - where again the resurrection of the dead is invoked - enacted in the final scene of Jarry's *Le Surmâle*, and which I want to return to below. However, I first want to contextualise some of the issues raised here, in relation to the question of masculinity.

La Machine amoureuse: Men, Machines and Supermen

It has been argued by Maurizia Boscagli that the period between 1900 and the 1930s "witnessed a crisis of bourgeois models of masculine subjectivity and male authority."⁵⁴² Boscagli takes as her focus the more spectacular manifestations of the transformed male body, from Eugen Sander's Edwardian strongman, through Elmo Lincoln's screen *Tarzan* of 1917, to the armoured fascist bodies of the 1930s. She contrasts this eruption of the Nietzschean "blond beast", with a range of superseded masculine models, ranging from the late Victorian aesthetes of Wilde and Pater, to Forster's "unassuming black-coated clerk" and Eliot's "young man carbuncular." Whereas my own particular concerns here - the work of Marcel Duchamp and related themes in Picabia - coincide temporally with the period covered by Boscagli, and include certain influences also considered by her (Nietzsche, Jarry, Marinetti), my own approach is concerned

⁵⁴¹ Cited in Roth, *ibid.* p.121.

⁵⁴² Maurizia Boscagli, *Eye on the Flesh: Fashions of Masculinity in the Early Twentieth Century*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996, p.1.

more narrowly with the specific influence of the machine upon the subjective experience and performance of masculinity and the ways in which that experience found literary and visual expression.

For Boscagli, the celebration of the Nietzschean superman was a product of the bourgeois male's response to a threatening modernity, which took the form of new types of social and work organisation, the rise of the New Woman, the emergence of new diseases such as neurasthenia, fears of degeneracy expressed by figures such as Max Nordau (*Degeneration*, 1893), and the sociological dangers of modern life as analysed by Georg Simmel (*The Metropolis and Mental Life*, 1903) and Gustave Le Bon (*Psychology of the Crowd*, 1930). Boscagli argues that, in the vitalism of the corporeal male body, we see a typically Nietzschean re-valuation of existing values in relation to gender categories, where, in works such as *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887) and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1892), Nietzsche:

repositioned the instincts, traditionally stigmatized as female, as a symptom of virility, whereas reason and morals, the classical virtues of the masculine order, were degraded by their association with women, priests and the masses.⁵⁴³

Alfred Jarry's 1902 novel *Le Surmâle*, opens with precisely such a typically Nietzschean rejection of bourgeois moral values: "L'amour est un acte sans importance, puisqu'on peut le faire indéfiniment."⁵⁴⁴ The words are spoken before his shocked guests by André Marcueil, described as pale, balding and of unprepossessing appearance: "Marcueil réalisait si absolument le type de l'homme ordinaire que cela, en vérité, devenait extraordinaire"⁵⁴⁵; a man without any known mistress, and whose health it was assumed, forbade lovemaking - precisely, then, the kind of generalised degeneracy against which Nordau warned. Marcueil perhaps evokes the phrase used by Roger Shattuck to characterise Jarry himself - "a sensible maniac."⁵⁴⁶ But Marcueil's remark excites the curiosity of his guests and a lively conversation ensues, the focus of which becomes the limits of the human capacity for lovemaking, and which culminates in the example of the celebrated "Indian" of Theophrastus, for whom is claimed a total score of seventy times in a single day, with the aid of "a certain herb."

⁵⁴³ Boscagli, *ibid.* p.2-3.

⁵⁴⁴ Alfred Jarry, *Le Surmâle* (1902), Paris: Fasquelle Éditeurs, 1945, p.7.

⁵⁴⁵ Jarry, *ibid.* p.9.

⁵⁴⁶ Shattuck, *The Banquet Years*, *op. cit.* p.188.

We are later informed that Marcueil in fact suffers a certain hidden "déformité" - "au-dessous de la ceinture" - and that he has in fact inherited some monstrous "powers" from a strange ancestor, which he struggles to conceal.⁵⁴⁷ Marcueil's survival strategy, "se confondre avec la foule", is of interest insofar as it echoes Nietzsche's "herd mentality":

La conformité avec l'ambiance, le <mimétisme> est une loi de la conservation de la vie. Il est moins sûr de tuer les êtres plus faibles que soi que de les imiter. Ce ne sont pas les plus forts qui survivent, car ils sont seuls.⁵⁴⁸

Nietzsche opposes his Overman (or Superman) to the "last man", a figure characterised by Michel Haar in terms of "the extreme representative of weakness, a man frozen at the level of passive nihilism, totally reduced to a 'herd animal', rendered equal, uniform and level ...".⁵⁴⁹ But Marcueil begins to break out of this conformist straitjacket in the following chapter, where, accompanied by the General, he enters the Bois de Boulogne at night and encounters a dynamometer: "La fente du dynamomètre, verticale, luisait. - *C'est une femelle*, dit gravement Marcueil ... *Mais c'est très fort.*" He grabs and twists the machine without effort, saying "*Venez madame*", and destroys it:

les ressorts rompus se tordaient sur le sol comme les entrailles de la bête; le cadran grimace et son aiguille vira affolée deux ou trois fois ...⁵⁵⁰

This equation of a woman with a powerful machine is taken up again in the following chapter, with the arrival of Ellen Elson, daughter of the wealthy American chemist William Elson, in "Une automobile monstrueuse", evoking for Marcueil the word *sirène*. Ellen's desire for the "Indian" is collapsed into Jarry's eroticisation of the automobile, one of the iconic objects of modernity and one which figures centrally in both the life and work of Picabia; as Ellen returns to the racing car, the vehicle "snorts":

la machine exhibait sans pudeur, on eût dit avec orgueil, ses organes de propulsion. Elle avait l'air d'un dieu, lubrique et fabuleux enlevant la jeune fille.⁵⁵¹

Though published in 1902, Jarry's novel is in fact set in the future - in 1920 - and in scenes like this, uncannily anticipates the New Woman of the postwar period.

The following chapter describes the celebrated and absurd 10,000 miles race between a quintuple team of American cyclists fed on Elson's patent "Perpetual Motion

⁵⁴⁷ Jarry, *op. cit.* p.28.

⁵⁴⁸ Jarry, *ibid.* p.31.

⁵⁴⁹ Michel Haar in David B. Allison (ed), *The New Nietzsche*, Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1985, p.24.

⁵⁵⁰ Jarry, *op. cit.* p.49.

⁵⁵¹ Jarry, *ibid.* p.57.

Food", and a powerful steam engine. Jarry was himself a keen cyclist and appears in photographs as a muscular figure, his forearms exposed by cut-off cycling shirts; the bicycle itself is a further emblem of modernity, albeit increasingly superseded during the twentieth century by the advance of the automobile. The bicycle also figures in a number of early works by Duchamp (*Bicycle Wheel*, 1913; *To Have the Apprentice in the Sun*, 1914; *Tu m'*, 1918), while spinning wheels and discs - as already noted - figure prominently in his work. In *Le Surmâle*, Jarry pits the male cyclists against a machine which is strongly associated with the feminine, in the form of Ellen Elson, who travels in one of its carriages from which miraculous blossomings of roses suddenly appear. And again, in conformity with Carrouges's bachelor machines, the machine is also aligned with death: when one of the cyclists dies at his post, because he is strapped in he continues to "cycle" after death. Although the cyclists succeed in beating the steam engine, they in turn are overtaken by a mysterious solo cyclist, "le Pédard", who overtakes them and disappears. It is clear that this is the figure of Marcueil.

In the other central set piece of the book, Marcueil appears in the guise of the "Indian", athletic and bronzed, and sets out to create a new record in lovemaking, with Ellen (disguised by a mask) as his partner. That Jarry intends a parody of positivist science is clear enough - the couple's lovemaking, Ellen realises, is being observed by Dr Bathybius, who looks down from an "oeil-de-boeuf" window, as though looking through some "prodigious telescope":

Allons, Indien, plaisanta Ellen, la Science vous observe, la Science
avec un grand S, ou plutôt ... la SCIENCE avec une grande SCIE... ⁵⁵²

The couple eventually exceed the record boasted in Theophrastus and carry on their lovemaking; but at a certain point, Ellen suddenly turns against Marcueil, threatening to gouge out his eyes with a long sword-shaped pin which she pulls from her hair - but Marcueil's eyes, we are told "defend themselves": "Sous leur regard d'hypnotiseur, au moment où la femme abattait l'arme, elle s'endormit, cataleptique."⁵⁵³ When she drops the weapon, he fixes his index finger between her eyes in true mesmerist style, and awakens her.

After breaking the record, the couple again turn to lovemaking, but this time simply for pleasure, and to the hypnotic accompaniment of a machine - "un

⁵⁵² Jarry, *ibid.* p.111.

⁵⁵³ Jarry, *ibid.* pp.117-8.

phonographe". The glass funnel of this machine is likened to "un grand monocle pour cyclope méchant, qui les regardait" - again an anthropomorphised machine, transformed into a "vieux monsieur au monocle de cristal", a "voyeur" who through his musical refrain mesmerises the couple: "et comme par un érotisme suggéré, hypnotisés, André et Ellen obéissent."⁵⁵⁴ There are again parallels here with Duchamp's *Rotoreliefs (optical discs)*, (1935), cardboard discs with hypnotically undulating spiral designs (fig.100), which were to be operated on an ordinary gramophone player, and which Duchamp displayed at the *Concours Lépine* in October 1935, amongst all the gadgets and inventions on show there. Again though in Jarry's novel, the erotic is bound up with death, as the couple, hypnotised, carry on making love like some out-of-control sex machine, to the point of Ellen's apparent death - and echoing the motif of the dead cyclist in the 10,000 mile race; and it is only at this point, when Marcueil believes he has lost her, that he halts the machine and utters the words "je l'adore", upon which Ellen recovers.

The spectacular culmination of the story revolves around the efforts of Elson to have Marcueil marry his daughter, before which he attempts to re-humanise him by attaching him to "la Machine-à-inspirer-l'amour" - but this only after Bathybius rejects the idea of attempting to hypnotise Marcueil, given his own spectacular powers in that area. They therefore resort to "un appareil magnéto-électrique", inspired we're told, by both Faraday and the American electric chair, where the convulsions produced in killing pass over to the point of resuscitating the corpse. Jarry's black humour here clearly draws upon the electrical experiments of Aldini discussed above. The Supermale, however, proves more powerful than the machine, and the machine falls in love with the man; as a last resort they connect the machine to a battery of accumulators, which results in a catastrophic melt-down of the device and the consequent comic-gruesome death of Marcueil, his corpse entangled in a twisted mass of ironwork.

What, then, does Jarry's *Surmâle* tell us about contemporary attitudes toward masculinity and their problematic relationship with the machine? Jarry's message is surely a rather complex one, not reducible simply to a warning against male hubris in seeking to usurp the power of the machine, or the voice of a Carlyle warning that "men

⁵⁵⁴ Jarry, *ibid.* p.131.

are grown mechanical in head and in heart, as well as in mind.⁵⁵⁵ What is surely striking in Jarry's novel is the bleak view of the sexual relation, marked by a barely veiled misogyny in the face of a more powerful model of femininity allied to the machine, the male response to which threat is to evoke the invulnerability of the man-machine. Shattuck observes of Jarry's work that "he flaunts a violent misogyny",⁵⁵⁶ pointing to his difficult relationships with women and to his ambivalent sexuality, and suggesting too a "perverse father identification."⁵⁵⁷ Jarry's identification with his own characters, particularly those of the *Ubu* series, is legendary - his adoption of an automaton-like, un-nuanced tone, the adoption of the Royal "We" - and to which we can add his alter-ego of racing cyclist, again a theme from his writing. But equally bleak in *Le Surmâle* is the agonistic model of male subjectivity consequent upon the attempt to rise above the anonymity of the crowd and to assert one's difference, producing what Boscagli surely correctly characterizes as a "masochized male body."⁵⁵⁸ In terms of our concern with the erotics of machines, Jarry's novel provides ample evidence both of the equation of the feminine with the machine (the automobile, the train) and of the equation of hypnosis and automatism with the eroticisation of the machine, together with the desire of the male body, either for fusion with the machine, or to become itself machine-like. But also, in terms of Carrouges's bachelor machines, and perhaps also linked to the theme of masochism, the eruption of death at the heart of the machine.

Movement, Women, Machines: The Road to the *Large Glass*

Malgré ce refroidisseur; il n'y a pas de solution de continuité entre la machine-célibataire et la Mariée. Mais les liens seront *électriques* et exprimeront ainsi la mise à nu: operation alternative. Court-circuit au besoin.
Duchamp, la <boîte verte>.⁵⁵⁹

Duchamp's *La Mariée mise à nu par ces célibataires, même* (1915-23) - usually referred to as the *Large Glass* - has been described by the artist as "the most important single

⁵⁵⁵ Thomas Carlyle, cited in Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, p.174.

⁵⁵⁶ Shattuck, op. cit. p.197.

⁵⁵⁷ Shattuck, op. cit. p.203.

⁵⁵⁸ Boscagli, op. cit. p.164.

⁵⁵⁹ Duchamp, *Duchamp du signe: Ecrits*, Paris: Flammarion, New edition, 1994, p.59.

work I ever made."⁵⁶⁰ The piece itself is striking, not only for its many representational innovations, its densely conceptual character, and its eventual abandonment as "definitively unfinished", but also for the enormous and diverse critical attention which it has received, being interpreted variously in terms of themes of incest, alchemy, sexual desire, n-dimensional analysis, courtly love, and physiological optics.⁵⁶¹ My own interest in the *Large Glass* is rather more narrowly focused upon the functioning of gender in the conception and production of the work, and on the specific forms and metaphors through which gender issues find representation. I want in particular to consider the extent to which the work embodies issues pertaining to specific models of masculinity - most obviously, the figure of the bachelor, though the work explores a range of male role models - as well as to consider the relationship of such models to the machine metaphor of the body.

Following in the footsteps of his two artist brothers, Duchamp moved up from provincial Rouen to Paris in 1904 and over the next few years established himself as an illustrator, working for journals such as *Le Courrier Français*. In this early work, a recurring motif is that of the association of the figure of a woman with some form of machine - a wheelbarrow, a coach, a motor car, a child's pram, etc. As Dalia Judovitz has observed, eroticism for Duchamp "is defined through movement, as transition instead of stasis."⁵⁶² As a child, Duchamp had been particularly close to his sister Suzanne and we find the couple playing together in a family photograph (fig.101) which Duchamp's brother, Jacques Villon, later used as the basis of an illustration (fig.102). The most obvious alteration is Villon's having transformed the scene into a winter landscape, further reinforcing the sense of childhood innocence, with further associations of purity and virginity. It is perhaps no coincidence that this same backdrop recurs in the wintry

⁵⁶⁰ Duchamp in Schwarz, *Complete Works*, op cit. p.141.

⁵⁶¹ Beginning with Breton's classic essay, "Le Phare de la Mariée" (originally published in *Minotaure*, no.6, Second Year, Winter 1934/5), Duchamp's *Large Glass* has been variously interpreted in terms of themes of alchemy and incest (Arturo Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp*, op. cit.); as the deployment of four-dimensional analysis (Craig Adcock, *Marcel Duchamp's Notes from the Large Glass: An n-Dimensional Analysis*, UMI Research Press, 1983); in terms of courtly love (Octavio Paz, *Marcel Duchamp, or, The Castle of Purity*, London: Cape Goliard, 1970); and in terms of the scientific developments of the period (Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *Duchamp in Context: Science and Technology in the 'Large Glass' and Related Works*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998.) For an analysis in terms of hermeticism, Catholicism and gender, see David Hopkins, *Marcel Duchamp and Max Ernst: The Bride Shared*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. For a far more extensive listing, see Schwarz, *Complete Works* (3rd revised and expanded edition, 1997), and also Rudolf E. Kuenzli and Francis M. Naumann (eds), *Marcel Duchamp: Artist of the Century*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1990.

⁵⁶² Judovitz, *Unpacking Duchamp*, op. cit. p.33.

landscape of *Pharmacie* (fig.103), a work produced by Duchamp in January 1914 on the occasion of Suzanne's divorce from a Rouen pharmacist. Taking a cheap reproduction of a landscape, Duchamp simply added a red and a green dot to the horizon line, suggestive both of two distant and separate lights or figures, as well as of the coloured glass containers found in pharmacists' window displays. Duchamp has said of the work that: "It was a joke in a way, to add something with my hand by derision."⁵⁶³ and it is difficult not to see in all of this, an allusion to his sister's marital situation - particularly because on the occasion of her first marriage Duchamp presented Suzanne with his *Young Man and Girl in Spring* (1911), and on her subsequent marriage to Jean Crotti in 1919 Duchamp mailed her instructions for the construction of the *Unhappy Readymade* (1919).

The motif of the woman-machine occurs again in one of Duchamp's early humorous drawings, *Femme cocher* (1907), produced in the year in which married women gained the right to freely dispose of their income and which also saw the first women coach drivers (fig.104). If we compare Duchamp's image with a contemporary photograph (fig.105), we are able to restore the missing element - the body of the woman. We have, then, a very specific male reaction to female advances in occupations which had hitherto been male preserves. What attracted Duchamp here, was clearly the combination of woman and machine - the woman driver alongside the large *taximètre*, a recent innovation of the time. In Duchamp's drawing, the woman's empty cab is parked outside a louche hotel with its meter running, with the inscription "*Femme cocher - Tarif horo-kilométrique.*" The implication is therefore of prostitution - of mechanical sex, timed by the meter - the same mechanistic view of the sexual relation which Duchamp was to later develop far more fully in his *Large Glass*. Duchamp reflexively plays with this same concept in *Bébé marcheur* (1909), a spoof advertisement, supposedly from a commercial gift catalogue, for a mechanical doll - "se déshabillant" - aimed at "vieux messieurs." The taxi lamp in *Femme cocher* also bears the number "6969", a sly reference to the sexual position known colloquially as "69"⁵⁶⁴ - again a view of sex as masturbation, a theme of the *Large Glass* and which also figures in Duchamp's notes. Lebel has observed of the relationships depicted in the *Large*

⁵⁶³ Duchamp cited in Francis M. Naumann, *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Making Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, New York: Abrams, 1999, p.50.

⁵⁶⁴ See José Pierre, *Investigating Sex*, op. cit.

Glass that: "The result, in short, would be onanism for two";⁵⁶⁵ and we could add that Duchamp's *Boîte-en-valise* (1935-41) also includes some 69 items.

Duchamp's first purely mechanomorphic work was his *Coffee Mill* (1911), a small painting produced for his brother Raymond's kitchen, the importance of which to the orientation of his later work Duchamp has himself emphasised: "Without knowing it, I had opened a window onto something else."⁵⁶⁶ Surprisingly overlooked in this work (fig.106) are its erotic connotations. The base of the mill is anomalously asymmetrical for a mass-produced object and quite clearly echoes the hour-glass figure of the Edwardian woman. There may also be a specific reference here to Jeanne Serre (fig.107), a young artist's model⁵⁶⁷ with whom Duchamp had an affair during 1910, possibly resulting in the birth of a daughter, Yvonne, during 1911.⁵⁶⁸ There is perhaps also a suggestion of spermazoa in the serpentine handles of the mill, pursuing the direction indicated by an arrow, which would in turn suggest a process of fecundation of the female. The first of Duchamp's erotic machines, *Coffee Mill* therefore describes a series of operations or processes viewed from differing standpoints, anticipating their subsequent elaboration in the *Large Glass*.

Most commentators seem to agree that the decisive break in Duchamp's work came in 1912, the year of his trip to Munich, during which time he began the drawings for *La Mariée mise à nu*. Before leaving Paris, Duchamp had seen Roussel's *Impressions d'Afrique* at the Théâtre Antoine, together with Picabia (though probably not with Apollinaire, according to Tomkins), and of which Duchamp has observed:

It was fundamentally Roussel who was responsible for my glass, *La Mariée mise à nu* ... From his *Impressions d'Afrique* I got the general approach.⁵⁶⁹

Among the more obvious influences here, one could point to Roussel's eccentric use of language, his elaborate word-play, the invention of bizarre, functionless machines, or his construction of an alternative reality conforming only to its own self-created laws - and as Duchamp himself notes, "the madness of the unexpected." The Munich trip has also

⁵⁶⁵ Lebel, op. cit. p.67.

⁵⁶⁶ Duchamp in Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, op. cit., p.31.

⁵⁶⁷ See Duchamp's *Red Nude* (1910), Neuilly. According to Calvin Tomkins, Serre had "recently moved into an apartment just across the street from Duchamp's in Neuilly" - Tomkins, op. cit. p.41.

⁵⁶⁸ Jerrold Siegel, *The Private Worlds of Marcel Duchamp: Desire, Liberation and the Self in Modern Culture*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1995, pp.190-1.

⁵⁶⁹ Duchamp, from his *Letters to Marcel Jean*, cited in Tomkins, op. cit. p.91.

been suggested by Naumann as the time of Duchamp's discovery of the writings of Max Stirner and in particular of Stirner's insistence upon individualism.⁵⁷⁰ We have already pointed to the continuing importance of anarchism on twentieth century French art, and the work of Duchamp provides a further example of such influence. As Allan Antliff, amongst others, has pointed out, Duchamp's work shifts radically following his 1912 reading of Stirner's *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (1845), published in French in 1900 as *L'Unique et la propriété*, and in English as *The Ego and His Own* (1907), to which Duchamp attributed his "complete liberation".⁵⁷¹ In that book - also influential upon Picabia, Masson⁵⁷² and many others - Stirner "condemned subservience to metaphysical concepts and social norms, arguing they must be usurped by the will of each unique, self-determining, value-creating ego."⁵⁷³ Antliff points to the shift in Duchamp's style around this time, from Cubo-Futurism to a far more conceptual method of work - as borne out for example by his commencement of the working notes for the *Large Glass* during 1912. Even more specifically, we can point to the *Three Standard Stoppages* (1913-14), which according to Naumann, Duchamp says was specifically influenced by Stirner's philosophy.⁵⁷⁴ In this highly iconoclastic - not to say hubristic - work, Duchamp overturns the laws of science in rejecting the standard metre, substituting instead three non-standard metres obtained according to the laws of chance, by dropping three metre-long threads onto canvas, from a height of one metre, and fixing the threads in the positions in which they dropped. Herbert Moulderings⁵⁷⁵ has also pointed to the impact of the writings of Henri Poincaré, who, in works such as *Science and Hypothesis* (1902) and *The Value of Science* (1905), popularised current thinking in science - as for example in the breakdown of the old certainties and the growing sense of crisis within science. But Duchamp's gesture was not simply an assault upon the authority of State-endorsed scientific standards, but was also subsequently deployed as a functioning alternative to those standards - as for example in his *Réseaux des stoppages* (1914) and again in the *Large Glass*, where the standard stoppages

⁵⁷⁰ Francis M. Naumann, "Marcel Duchamp: A Reconciliation of Opposites", in *Dada/Surrealism*, No.16 ("Duchamp Centennial" Issue), Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1987, p.29.

⁵⁷¹ Allan Antliff, "Anarchy, Politics and Dada", in *Making Mischievous: Dada Invades New York*, edited by Francis M. Naumann with Beth Venn, New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1996.

⁵⁷² See André Masson, *La mémoire du monde*, Geneva: Éditions d'Art Albert Skira, 1974, p.157.

⁵⁷³ Antliff, *ibid.* p.212.

⁵⁷⁴ Francis M. Naumann, "Marcel Duchamp: A Reconciliation of Opposites", in Rudolf E. Kuenzli and Francis M. Naumann (eds), *Marcel Duchamp: Artist of the Century*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1990.

⁵⁷⁵ Herbert Moulderings, "Objects of Modern Scepticism", in Thierry de Duve (ed), *The Definitively Unfinished Duchamp*, Cambridge, Mass. and London, MIT Press, 1991.

determine the layout of the "capillary tubes". And we should also note here the undoubted influence of Jarry's "pataphysics".

While in Munich Duchamp also came under the influence of Cranach at the Alte Pinakothek, which he visited daily⁵⁷⁶ - presumably the standing nudes in extravagant hats - though there is also such an image in the Louvre (Cranach's *Venus in a Landscape*, fig.108⁵⁷⁷) depicting an elaborately-hatted nude in a wooded landscape, with water. One can detect parallels here with the abstracted, hooded head-shape of Duchamp's *Bride* of 1912 (fig.109), which Duchamp produced in Munich and which is in turn carried over into the *Large Glass*. I would also suggest a precedent in Duchamp's *Portrait, or Dulcinea* (1911), in which a woman is progressively stripped of her clothes, in five stage, but retains her hat - again, a be-hatted nude in a landscape. In terms of male sexuality, there is clearly a strongly voyeuristic aspect to the image which pervades much of Duchamp's work, and, perceptible in both Cranach and Duchamp, what Duchamp has said of his *Bride* - "a sort of erotic climate."⁵⁷⁸

While in Munich Duchamp also visited the recently opened Deutsches Museum, a museum of science and technology, where, according to Linda Dalrymple Henderson, he would have come across X-ray exhibits provided by Dr. C.F. Röntgen, a pioneer in this field who taught at the University of Munich. Though Henderson fails to specify what he saw, if we look to the Deutsches Museum's collection, we find the earliest X-rays ever produced, dating from 1895-96, which were probably placed on display, according to the Museum, in 1906, when Röntgen first exhibited his "demonstration apparatus". The first image (fig.110) is an X-ray of the hand of Röntgen's wife, with the wedding ring prominently displayed - in effect, an "electrical stripping" of the bride. The second image (fig.111) is of Röntgen's loaded hunting-rifle, and again, we can find a parallel in the *Large Glass*, in the form of Duchamp's use of a toy cannon to fix the position of the "Nine Shots" alongside the *Bride*. As Henderson conclusively demonstrates, there is ample evidence for Duchamp's close interest in such scientific developments - his friend Dr. Ferdinand Tribout, whose portrait he painted in 1910, was a French pioneer in radiology and became director of the Laboratory of Electro-

⁵⁷⁶ Jennifer Gough-Cooper and Jacques Caumont, "Ephemerides on and about Marcel Duchamp and Rose Sélavy, 1887-1968", in Pontus Hulten (ed), *Marcel Duchamp*, (exh. cat.), London: Thames and Hudson, 1993 (unpaginated - see entry for 7 August 1912).

⁵⁷⁷ Lucas Cranach, *Venus in a Landscape*: Louvre Cat. No. INV.1180, acquired in 1806.

⁵⁷⁸ In Cabanne, op. cit.p.88.

Radiology at the Hôpital Laennec, while Frantisek Kupka, a member of the Puteaux Group, was also well versed in such scientific developments, applying them extensively in his own work and developing those ideas in his treatise *Creation in the Plastic Arts* (1912-13).⁵⁷⁹ We could add that Duchamp's brother Raymond had trained with Albert Londe, another pioneer in X-rays, while at the Salpêtrière in 1898.

Also included in the collection of the Deutsches Museum is a hand-tinted engraving after a painting by Amedée van Loo (after 1745), illustrating a demonstration on an electrostatic machine (pl.3). This is again very much a bachelor machine, with its mechanical and erotic components, and it is tempting to see a number of elements in the image - the electrical circuit, the raised "bride" with the billowing folds behind her, and the watching bachelor - which might have attracted Duchamp's attention. More important is that the image falls within the tradition of the fantasmatic of the electrical and mechanical with which Duchamp was certainly familiar. Lebel recounts how Duchamp, while in Munich in August 1912, had a curious dream:

Upon returning from a beer hall, where, so he says, he had drunk too much, to his hotel room where he was finishing the *Bride*, he dreamed that she had become an enormous beetle-like insect which tortured him atrociously with its elytra.⁵⁸⁰

Given that the term "elytra" (*elytre*) is a quite specific technical term which refers to the hard, outer wing-sheath, the situation is somewhat odd. However, the word derives from the same Greek root (*elutron* - sheath) as the word "vagina", which would suggest some Duchampian word-play at work here.

It is surely strange, given that Duchamp developed many of the key concepts underlying his major work during the period 1912-15, that the impact of World War I on his thinking should be so universally ignored. In London, women handed out white feathers to men in civilian dress, while in France, a nation with a large swathe of territory under German occupation, for a young man not in uniform the air in Paris became almost unbreathable. Duchamp had two brothers in uniform as well as a sister and sister-in-law serving as nurses, and, as he wrote to Walter Pach, daily life revolved around the war: "Toujours la lecture des communiqués de guerre 2 fois par jour."⁵⁸¹ Lebel observes of

⁵⁷⁹ See Henderson, op. cit. pp.3-15.

⁵⁸⁰ Lebel, op. cit. p.75.

⁵⁸¹ Duchamp, letter of 19 January 1915 to Walter Pach, in Francis M. Naumann and Hector Obalk (eds), *Affect^t/ Marcel: The Selected Correspondence of Marcel Duchamp*, London: Thames and Hudson, 2000, pp.28-9

Duchamp that: "Unfit for service because of a heart condition but appearing as if in the best of health, he was spared nothing in the way of malicious remarks ..."⁵⁸² Duchamp eventually left for New York in June 1915 observing that: "*Je ne vais pas à New York, je pars de Paris. C'est tout différent.*"⁵⁸³ Interviewed in New York in September of 1915, Duchamp was fancifully described as "away from the French front on a furlough,"⁵⁸⁴ pointing to a certain unease at his civilian status. In New York, Beatrice Wood observed of Duchamp that there was a certain "deadness" about him: "It was as if he suffered an unspeakable trauma in his youth."⁵⁸⁵ In his interviews with Cabanne, Duchamp refers to himself as a "deserter", adding that: "I don't have what is called a strong patriotic sense; I'd rather not even talk about it."⁵⁸⁶ There is evidence, too, in Duchamp's *Box of 1914* of his concern with the issues of war and military service, where, amongst the papers included is the note headed "Deferment":

Against compulsory military service: a "*deferment*" of each limb, of the heart and the other anatomical parts; each soldier being already unable to put his uniform on again, his heart feeding *telephonically*, a deferred arm, etc. ...⁵⁸⁷

So that while Duchamp undoubtedly celebrated his exemption from military service, at the same time it inflicted undoubted humiliation, wounding his sense of masculine identity, and no doubt exacerbating certain misogynistic tendencies which find expression in the work.

La Mariée mise à nu: Duchamp's Bachelor Machine

Mariée en haut, célibataires en bas.

Les célibataires devant servir de base architectonique à la mariée, celle-ci devient une sorte d'apothéose de la virginité.

Duchamp, *La <boîte verte>*.⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸² Robert Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp*, Paris: Trianon Press, 1959, p.37.

⁵⁸³ Duchamp, letter to Pach of 27 April 1915, in Naumann and Obalk (eds), op. cit. p.35.

⁵⁸⁴ Marcel Duchamp, "A Complete Reversal of Art Opinions By Marcel Duchamp, Iconoclast", *Arts and Decorations*, September 1915, reprinted in *Studio International*, No.189, Jan./Feb. 1975, p.29.

⁵⁸⁵ Beatrice Wood "Marcel", in *Dada/Surrealism*, No.16 ("Duchamp Centennial" Issue), Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1987, p.16.

⁵⁸⁶ Duchamp in Cabanne, op. cit. p.85.

⁵⁸⁷ Marcel Duchamp in Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (eds), *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, New York: Da Capo Press, 1989 (originally published as *Marchand du sel*, Oxford University Press, 1973). p.23.

⁵⁸⁸ Duchamp, *Duchamp du signe*, op. cit. p.58.

The first thing we notice about the *Large Glass* is its physical form - it is, in effect, a large plate-glass "window", and there are perhaps also references here to the seductions of the window display, another aspect of modernity, as for example in August Macke's *Large, Well-lit Shop Window* (1912), or his *Milliner's Shop* (1913) - both of which link a seductive commercial display with the figure of a woman. A related work, *Fresh Widow* (1920), a miniature wooden window with leather lined glass, produced just after the end of World War I, relates to the then common figure of the widow and to the black drapes of a house in mourning. The scale of mourning is difficult to comprehend - as Jay Winter observes, amongst the European combatant nations: "Primary mourners - those directly related to the men who died in the war - numbered in the tens of millions."⁵⁸⁹ This was the first work signed by Rose Sélavy and its title contains, as Duchamp noted, "an obvious enough pun" - the usual reference is to "French window." But this widow is also "fresh" in the American sense of "foreward", or "presumptuous" - she is, in fact, a *femme fatale*. In a further collection of his notes relating to the *Large Glass*, published as *A l'infinif* (1966), Duchamp makes extended reference to the motif of the shop window:

La question des devantures:

Subir l'interrogatoire des devantures:

L'exigence de la devanture:

La devanture prouve de l'existence du monde extérieur:

Quand on subit l'interrogatoire des devantures, on prononce aussi sa propre Condamnation. En effet le choix est allé et retour. De la demande des devantures, de l'inévitable réponse aux devantures, se conclut l'arrêt du choix. Pas d'entêtement, par l'absurde, à cacher le coït à travers une glace avec un ou plusieurs objets de la devanture. La peine consiste à couper la glace et à s'en mordre les pouces dès que la possession est consommée. C.Q.F.D.

Neuilly, 1913.⁵⁹⁰

In this allusive meditation upon the shop window, we find the play of transparency, reflection and eroticism, culminating in the sense of immediately regretted consummation; again male sexuality is inflected through voyeurism and cast in fatalistic terms. The *Large Glass* is precisely such a shop window, most obvious when seen in reproductions of its original bulky wooden frame (fig.112) which quite clearly also refers to the heavy frames used in a bicycle promotion in the catalogue of the Arms of Saint-Etienne (1913)(fig.113), a branch of which was located in Rouen. The groups of "bachelors" depicted in this advertisement in the context of Rousselian, absurd machines, as well as

⁵⁸⁹ Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p.6.

⁵⁹⁰ Duchamp, *ibid.* p.105.

the "hanging man" on the gibbet-like wooden frame, also suggest links with some of the motifs developed in the *Large Glass*.

But the *Large Glass* is also a window which is rigidly divided into two halves, in what is effectively a parody of the Victorian "doctrine of separate spheres." In the top half we find the Bride, painted in black and white, as an insect-like, organic form, whereas in the bottom frame, the Bachelors are depicted in a dry, technical-drawing style, recalling the style and techniques of stained glass, and forming part of a more elaborate machine-complex. As Molly Nesbit has shown, the teaching of technical drawing and perspective in French schools, was itself gendered: "Projection was principally a male space. Perspective was common ground."⁵⁹¹ The situation is rendered more complex by Duchamp's close interest in n-dimensional perspective, and Nesbit argues that he pushes the technical drawing to "a higher form of projection, as if to reassert the masculinity in the image."⁵⁹² For Nesbit, Duchamp's deployment of geometral projection serves to evoke "the eruption of male desire in these lines", a situation which she compares to Lacan's detecting the eruption of the "phallic ghost" in the anamorphic skull projected within Holbein's *The Ambassadors*. We could add that this ghost is most obviously evoked in the phallic Bayonet and the castrating Scissors, which sit on top of the endlessly turning Chocolate Grinder.

Schwarz has characterised the work in terms of "an impossible love affair between a half-willing bride and an anxious bachelor",⁵⁹³ while Breton describes it as a "great modern legend."⁵⁹⁴ In his notes for the *Large Glass*, first published in 1934 and known as the *Green Box*, Duchamp describes the Bride as "a sort of apotheosis of virginity" - but she is also herself a part of the mechanical ensemble:

The Bride basically is a motor ... a very timid power ... a sort of automobiline, love gasoline, that, distributed to the quite feeble cylinders ... is used for the blossoming of this virgin⁵⁹⁵

In this conflation of the bride and the automobile, we therefore again have the notion of the "vamp as machine". Amelia Jones argues that New York Dada "encoded" those anxieties felt within the culture at the emergence of the newly independent, commodified

⁵⁹¹ Molly Nesbit, "The Language of History", in Thierry de Duve (ed), *The Definitively Unfinished Duchamp*, op. cit. p.366.

⁵⁹² Nesbit, *ibid.* p.372.

⁵⁹³ Schwarz, *Complete Works*, p.83.

⁵⁹⁴ Cited in Schwarz, *ibid.* p.83.

⁵⁹⁵ Duchamp, *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, op. cit., p.42.

woman associated with modernity, and that: "The Americanized New Woman, mapped into the feminized machine image, figured the threat of American industrial capitalism to European masculinity ...".⁵⁹⁶ We find perfect visual expression of this problematic in an image from a Sears catalogue from 1920 (fig.114) which uncannily echoes many of the themes which Duchamp was at that time encoding in his *Large Glass*. Here we find the fashionable "bride" surrounded by her admiring bachelors; and a bride clearly associated with technology and the machine. Alexandra Kellner observes of this image, that "we see more than just a vamp and a machine", instead we are given a vamp in a machine - "the vamp is the machine."⁵⁹⁷ And in this conflation of the organic and the mechanical we find anticipated some of the central themes of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, where, as Andreas Huyssen and Peter Wollen⁵⁹⁸ have observed, we discover "the displacement of the fear of technology-out-of-control on to that of (female) sexuality-out-of-control." We also find both sexes linked to commodity culture through fashion and design, while the clothing outlines in the lower section of the image again strikingly echo Duchamp's "malic moulds", further reinforcing this sense of a conformist model of masculinity.

There is therefore no simple divide within the *Large Glass* between an "organic" feminine and a "machinic" masculine; each sex is equally subject to the blind, repetitive drives of the machine. Eric Cameron points to the influence of La Mettrie upon Duchamp, arguing that *L'homme machine* is interspersed with machine metaphors which provide a precedent for the *Large Glass*. Cameron insists that "the pervading metaphor is that of the mechanisms of clocks and watches, just as for Duchamp in the early twentieth century it is that of the automobile."⁵⁹⁹ Whereas the ultimate aim of the rite depicted in the *Large Glass* is the stripping and "blossoming" of the bride, culminating in "the orgasm which may (might) bring about her fall ...", this happy event is in fact endlessly deferred by the proliferation of eccentric and elaborate devices which are purported to ensure its eventual achievement - a point I want to return to later. It is worth adding that another of the machine metaphors deployed by Duchamp here is that of the mill, and more specifically, the water-mill. Duchamp refers to his Bride as a "maiden", and in relation to the "blossoming" of the Bride writes of her "splendid vibrations."⁶⁰⁰ In

⁵⁹⁶ Amelia Jones Eros, "That's Life, or the Baroness' Penis", in Naumann and Venn, *op. cit.* p.241.

⁵⁹⁷ Alexandra Kellner, "Disseminations of Modernity: Representation and Consumer Desire in Early Mail-Order Catalogs", in Charney and Schwartz (eds), *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, *Op. cit.*, p.179.

⁵⁹⁸ See Peter Wollen, "Modern Times", in his *Raiding the Icebox*, *op. cit.*, p.46.

⁵⁹⁹ Eric Cameron, "Given", in de Duve (ed), *The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp*, *op. cit.* p.9.

⁶⁰⁰ Duchamp, *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, *op. cit.* pp.41-2.

the construction of water mills, the hopper into which the grain is fed in order to be crushed between the turning mill-wheels, contains a metal rod known as a "damsel" (from the Old French *damoiselle* - a young unmarried woman, i.e. a virgin) - the rod vibrates as the wheel turns, and its purpose is to feed the grain evenly onto the wheel.⁶⁰¹ Given the central role played by mills, wheels, etc. in the *Large Glass* and related notes, it seems probable that Duchamp had come across this term, perhaps in relation to a local water-mill.⁶⁰²

Duchamp separates the Bride from the Bachelors by way of a separating "cooler" - also the site of the Bride's garment - but nonetheless insists that:

Malgré ce refroidisseur, il n'y a pas de solution de continuité entre la machine-célibataire et la Mariée. Mais les liens seront *électriques* et exprimeront ainsi la mise à nu: opération alternative. Court-circuit au besoin.⁶⁰³

This "electrical stripping" of the Bride again suggests the iconography of electrotherapy. Useful parallels might be made with an image produced by Daniel Vierge (fig.115) of an electrotherapy demonstration at the Salpêtrière, where we find the chaperoned "bride" almost naked as she undergoes electrical treatment while surrounded by her "bachelors". The large pulley-wheel and its linked apparatus, on the right of the image, again suggests the interconnectedness of the various components, transforming this erotic device into another of Carrouges's bachelor machines and suggests a certain continuity within Duchamp's work with this earlier iconographic tradition. The metaphor of "woman as machine" is continued in a readymade, *Traveller's Folding Item* (1916) (fig.116), a miniature version of which Duchamp includes in his *Boîte en valise* (1941), alongside the *Large Glass*. When seen in the context of a commercial photograph demonstrating the typewriter in use (fig.117), it becomes clear that it is again a question of the conflation of woman and machine, and that the suppressed element is again the body of the woman, with Duchamp retaining only the soft typewriter cover. As Juan Antonio Ramírez observes, the cover is "conceived to look like a woman's skirt", and adds Duchamp's intuition that it was "only logical that an observer would want to bend over to see what was underneath."⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰¹ Such an arrangement can be seen in operation at the Town Mill, Lyme Regis, in Dorset.

⁶⁰² See Hulten (ed), *Marcel Duchamp*, op. cit. p.51., for an image of a water-mill on the Crevon near Blainville, which Duchamp probably visited. Such technologies are also to be found at the Deutsches Museum in Munich.

⁶⁰³ Duchamp, *Duchamp du signe*, op. cit. p.59.

⁶⁰⁴ Juan Antonio Ramírez, *Duchamp: Love and Death, Even*, London: Reaktion Books, 1998, p.43.

The lower half of the *Large Glass*, the more "masculine" domain, designated the "Bachelor Machine" as well as the *celibate* machine by Duchamp, has a more precise, mechanical air, and consists of a variety of obscure devices: the Glider, the Water Wheel, the Chocolate Grinder, and other machine-like components. The bachelors are depicted here in the automata-like forms of the nine "Malic Moulds" which together form the Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries: the gendarme, cuirassier, station-master, flunkey, department-store delivery boy, undertaker, policeman, priest and busboy. These figures combine the attributes of chess-pieces as well as recalling dress-maker's dummies; some also relate to a series of drawings of certain male occupations made by Duchamp around 1904-5, including a funeral coachman and a reservist. They are described by Duchamp as "uniforms or hollow moulds", terms which serve to emphasise their passivity and conformity, reinforced by Duchamp's assertion that "they will never be able to pass beyond the Mask." The chosen figures therefore serve to associate masculinity with social roles, as expressed through external appearance - uniforms, liveries, the badges of office and conventional symbols of male authority - and depict that authority as empty, or hollow. As Octavio Paz rightly points out, the uniforms represent a "closed society of men" in which masculinity is preserved through male bonding and separation from women: "The bachelor keeps his virility intact while the husband disperses it and so becomes feminine."⁶⁰⁵ We should also recall that the title of the work conceals a quite specific reference to Duchamp himself (MARIÉE/CELIBATAIRES) and hence to his own bachelor status. Robert Lebel also observes that the male figures recalled for Duchamp, the carnival "jeu de massacre"⁶⁰⁶ - cannon fodder set up simply to be knocked down, like those young men caught up in the war hysteria of the period. The inclusion of the department-store delivery boy also points to commercial aspects of modernity discussed above. Duchamp also tells us that each of the malic forms is "cut by an imaginary horizontal plane at a pnt. called the pnt. of sex."⁶⁰⁷ - in effect performing the same function as Picabia's circular motifs which centre on the genital area (see fig.97). Breton characterises the Bachelor Machine in terms of "grease and lubricity", while Lebel sees parallels with Bosch, in a world "spewed up in the monstrous and revolting form of a 'Bachelor Machine' ... an incestuous, masculine hell."⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁵ Octavio Paz, *Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare*, New York: The Viking Press, 1978, p.62.

⁶⁰⁶ Lebel, op. cit., p.31.

⁶⁰⁷ Duchamp, *ibid.* p.51.

⁶⁰⁸ Lebel, op. cit. p.67.

The bachelors form part of a larger ensemble described variously as the Chariot, Sleigh or Glider, a sleigh-like framework which contains a water-wheel, and which rocks onanistically back and forth. Under the heading of the Chariot, the *Green Box* notes include the following:

the litanies of the Chariot:

Slow life.

Vicious circle.

Onanism.

Horizontal. ...⁶⁰⁹

This theme is continued in the form of the Chocolate Grinder, an endlessly turning mechanical device with which Duchamp had been familiar since his childhood in Rouen (again something observed in a shop window), and which again takes up the theme of onanism: "Le *chocolat* des rouleaux, *venant* on ne sait d'où, se déposerait après broyage, en chocolat au lait ..." ⁶¹⁰ And Duchamp's notes go on to cite the French adage "*Le célibataire broie son chocolat lui-même*," further reinforcing the themes of solitary activity and lack. Duchamp also noted in a late interview:

Always there has been a necessity for circles in my life .. for .. rotation.

It is a kind of narcissism, this self-sufficiency, a kind of onanism.⁶¹¹

For Deleuze and Guattari, the celibate machine generates a pleasure "that can rightly be called autoerotic, or rather automatic ... as though the eroticism of the machine liberated other unlimited forces."⁶¹² Such a machine, they argue, produces "intensive quantities in their pure state": "an intense feeling of transition, states of pure, naked intensity stripped of all shape and form."

Duchamp's Bachelor machine also includes what is designated the "Sandow", an element which was never executed in the *Large Glass*, which refers to Eugen Sandow, the then celebrated German weight-lifter and propagandist for physical culture who was promoted as "the perfect man." The author of the popular *Strength and How to Obtain It* (1897), Sandow marketed the eponymous elasticated chest-expanders which Duchamp absurdly incorporates into his apparatus.⁶¹³ Sandow embodied Jarry's *Surmâle*, and curiously, his career was launched by destroying "Try Your Strength"

⁶⁰⁹ Duchamp, *ibid.* p.56.

⁶¹⁰ Duchamp, *Duchamp du signe*, *op. cit.* p.96.

⁶¹¹ Duchamp, cited in Tomkins, *op. cit.* p.125.

⁶¹² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, London: The Athlone Press, 1983, p.18.

⁶¹³ See Henderson, pp.159-160.

machines in Amsterdam, just as Marcueil wrecks the *dynamomètre* at the start of Jarry's novel. The early twentieth century saw something of a cult of physical culture, both in Edwardian England, as well as in France, where even figures like Jarry and Apollinaire were caught up in the fetishisation of the male body. Whereas Sandow took the Greek body type as his ideal, posing as "Harmodios" (fig.118), the effect was instead entirely kitsch, and rather than the noble inactivity of the Apollo Belvedere, presented, as Boscagli observes, a "disproportionate, short, stocky, and too stout 'lower class' build."⁶¹⁴ Duchamp's intention, then, was to pillory such an absurdly muscular, popular model of masculinity - the male body as spectacle and commodity - as against his own famed inactivity and his more aristocratic dandyism.

Henderson has argued the influence upon Duchamp of Remy de Gourmont's *Physique de l'amour: Essai sur l'instinct sexuel* (1903), which she says, "combined an overview of "primitive" sexual activity from species to species with frequent mechanical metaphors".⁶¹⁵ In that work, Gourmont argues that "Love is profoundly animal; therein lies its beauty", and that the female is "the machine and has to be wound up to go; the male is merely the key." Gourmont continues these mechanical analogies in his analysis of the sexual organs:

They are rigorously made the one for the other, and the accord in this case must be not only harmonic, but mechanical and mathematical.

They are gears that must fit one in the other with exactitude.⁶¹⁶

But whereas this simple metaphor finds quite literal expression in the work of Picabia - as for example his *Machine tournez vite* (c.1916-18), which simply depicts two meshed gears - such an apparently simplistic analogy is surely anathema to Duchamp's far more conceptual model of the sexual relation, as also is his far more sceptical view of the possibility of there ever being such a successful meshing, where sexual satisfaction is instead pursued in absurd isolation, and consummation endlessly deferred.

⁶¹⁴ Boscagli, op. cit. p.112.

⁶¹⁵ Linda Dalrymple Henderson, "Reflections of And/Or On Marcel Duchamp's *Large Glass*", in Naumann and Venn, op cit. p.232.

⁶¹⁶ De Gourmont, cited in Henderson, ibid. p.232.

Duchamp and The Influencing Machine

"[T]he apparatus is, as far as I know, always a machine - a very complicated one."
Victor Tausk, *The Influencing Machine*.⁶¹⁷

There are some striking parallels, I believe, between some of the themes contained in Duchamp's *Large Glass*, and those analysed in Victor Tausk's 1919 paper "The Influencing Machine." Tausk characterises the Influencing Machine as a "delusional instrument" frequently manifested in the delusions of schizophrenics, but of which the patient is "able to give only vague hints as to its construction", and "consists of boxes, cranks, levers, wheels, buttons, wires, batteries and the like."⁶¹⁸ That such mechanical metaphors should proliferate in what Reyner Banham has designated the First Machine Age is hardly surprising, and can also be attributed - as with their appearance in the work of Duchamp and Picabia - to the popularization of science.

If we consider first the "effects" of the machine, Tausk tells us that it "makes the patient see pictures", which are "seen on a single plane, on walls or window-panes"; this is certainly striking when we recall that Duchamp was translating three- and even "four-dimensional" phenomena into "images" on the flat surface of a pane of glass.⁶¹⁹ The machine also deploys "waves, rays or mysterious forces" in order to influence the thoughts and feelings of the patient, as well as producing "motor phenomena in the body - erections and seminal emissions."⁶²⁰ These are all phenomena which we find echoed in the mysterious functioning of Duchamp's *Large Glass*, itself a paradoxically onanistic machine which (purportedly) aims at the orgasm of the Bride. Tausk also tells us that the effects of the Influencing Machine are sensed as "electrical, magnetic, or due to air currents" - and again this recalls effects found in the *Large Glass*: the "electrical stripping" of the Bride, the "desire-magneto", the "electrical" connections between the Bachelor Machine and the Bride, the "cooler", "electrical clocks in railway stations" with their "throbbing jerk of the minute hand"; and we could add Duchamp's deployment of currents of air moving pieces of material to define the shape of the three "draft pistons"

⁶¹⁷ Victor Tausk, "The Influencing Machine" (1919), reprinted in Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter (eds), *Incorporations*, New York: Zone, 1992, p.549.

⁶¹⁸ Tausk, *ibid.* p.544.

⁶¹⁹ See Craig Adcock, "Duchamp's Way: Twisting our Memory of the Past "For the Fun of It"", in *The Definitively Unfinished Duchamp* - and also see subsequent Discussion pp.336-347

⁶²⁰ Tausk, *op. cit.* p.544.

above the Bride.⁶²¹

As with Carrouges's bachelor machines, there seems also to be a connection here with death. Duchamp has described the Nine Malic Moulds as "a sort of catafalque or coffin"⁶²² and we find the same motif in the central case analysed by Tausk (that of Natalija A.), where the patient believed herself under the influence of a machine in the form of a human body, the trunk (torso) of which "has the shape of a lid, resembling the lid of a coffin ...".⁶²³ However, this human-shaped machine undergoes increasing distortion as the limbs "lose their three-dimensional human form, flattening to a two-dimensional plane", and the device comes more to resemble the typical, complex Influencing Machine. But this is surely precisely the distorting logic which observers such as Schwarz have noted in Duchamp's work, and which they trace through the early figurative works in which Duchamp's sisters are the sitters (*Portrait of Yvonne Duchamp*, 1909; *Sonata*, 1911), becoming increasingly abstracted (*Apropos of Little Sister*, 1911), assuming machinic forms or symbolised in chess pieces (*The King and Queen Traversed by Swift Nudes*, 1912; *The Bride*, 1912), and culminating in the highly complex mechanomorphic structure of the *Large Glass*. Tausk points out that, within psychoanalysis, such distortion functions as a defence mechanism which aims to protect the conscious ego "against the appearance or reappearance of undisguised fantasies,"⁶²⁴ and it has been argued by Lawrence Steefel that the deployment of the machine metaphor in Duchamp's work is essentially a means of distancing himself from his own "obsessional impulses and fantasies", or in Duchamp's own words, to effect a separation "between the man who suffers and the mind that creates"⁶²⁵ This is surely also the functional logic of the increasingly obscure extensions to Duchamp's bachelor machine - an obfuscatory accumulation of grinding, rocking, pirouetting, splashing, stripping and blossoming, whose primary purpose is both to disguise and delay ("a delay in glass"), thus ever deferring the feared-desired consummation.

Tausk considers the possibility that "the influencing apparatus is the projection of

⁶²¹ See Richard Hamilton, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even - a typographic version of Marcel Duchamp's Green Box*, Stuttgart, London, Reykjavik: Edition Hansjorg Mayer, (1960), 1976.

⁶²² Cited in Schwarz, *Complete Works*, op. cit p.126.

⁶²³ Tausk, op. cit. p.550.

⁶²⁴ Tausk, *ibid.* p.552.

⁶²⁵ Duchamp cited in Lawrence D. Steefel Jr., "Marcel Duchamp and the Machine", in Anne d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine (eds), *Marcel Duchamp*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, and Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1973, p.70.

the patient's genitalia" and goes on to discuss the central role played by narcissism in the formation of the ego, where the subject takes its own body as its object. Development of the ego can become arrested, or the subject may experience *regression* to this early narcissistic stage in later life; in the case of the schizophrenics analysed by Tausk, this may take the form of a *projection* of the patient's own body and hence the experience of "alienation" of the body and the conclusion that the body is being persecuted by others - hence the Influencing Machine, usually seen as being operated by the patient's love objects. Such external objects, Tausk argues, pose a threat to the subject's narcissism through their "substantial demands for object libido" and are therefore "repulsed as enemies."⁶²⁶ Again we could point to direct links with the *Large Glass*, where the theme of narcissism is stressed, for example, by Schwarz, who identifies the bachelor with Narcissus: "the mirror in the Malic Mould, reflects the image of Narcissus back to Eros."⁶²⁷ We could add that the relationship of the Bride with her Bachelors is also persecutory and should recall Duchamp's Munich dream of being tortured by the insect-bride. Tausk therefore resolves the question of whether the Influencing Machine should be viewed as representing either the patient's body, or his/her genitals, in concluding that it may signify both.

Rose Sélavy and the Performance of Gender

Rose Sélavy trouve qu'un incesticide doit coucher avec sa mère avant de la tuer; les punaises sont de rigueur.

Duchamp, *Rose Sélavy*.⁶²⁸

Whereas problems of gender and sexuality pervade virtually the whole of Duchamp's oeuvre, it is perhaps in the figure of Rose Sélavy that they assume their sharpest focus. I want to consider this occasional alternative identity in terms its disruption of any coherent male subjectivity, its disruption of stable gender boundaries, and for the lessons it holds for an ontology of gendered masculinity. Taking first the problem of male subjectivity, we have already, in effect, observed its failure in Duchamp's bachelor machine; Amelia Jones argues that Duchamp's machine, "in trying to represent male

⁶²⁶ Tausk, op. cit. p.561.

⁶²⁷ Schwarz, *Complete Works*, op. cit. p.169.

⁶²⁸ Duchamp, *Duchamp du signe*, op. cit. p.153.

subjectivity, admits its inevitable failure by exacerbating the inexplicability and endlessness of the male sexual project.¹⁶²⁹ The *Large Glass*, with its rigid bar forever separating the two gendered domains, would appear to foreclose on the possibility of the sexual relation - or at the very least poses such a possibility in terms of endless deferral. Within its narrative (or allegory), some commentators (such as Schwarz) have noted the theme of the *androgyné*, a figure which already destabilizes gendered identity. But it is really only with the appearance of Rose Sélavy that the question of the nature of gendered identity is directly confronted. Duchamp has indicated that his initial intention was "to change my identity" and that his first proposal was to assume a Jewish name: "suddenly I had an idea: why not change sex? It was much simpler."¹⁶³⁰ That to alter sex should be "much simpler" seems at first paradoxical, but as we shall see, such a statement is highly significant in what it tells us of Duchamp's view of the malleability of gender.

Duchamp first appears, cross-dressed, in the guise of Rose Sélavy in two sets of photographs produced by Man Ray in 1921.⁶³¹ Dawn Ades has argued that while the first set, featuring Duchamp in feathered hat and pearls, was produced in Paris in 1921, the second set in cloche hat was produced later, ca.1923-24, in New York, and reflects the social climate which Duchamp encountered there (the New Woman, female emancipation, sexual freedom, etc. as discussed above). The first image appears in Duchamp's *Belle Haleine, Eau de toilette*, 1921, both as a photo-collage and as the label on a perfume bottle with matching case. Rose Sélavy is particularly associated with Duchamp's word-play, and in this work we find a play on *eau de toilette à la violette* and *voilette* (veil), as well as on the connotations of *voiler* - to veil or conceal, and also *violer* - to desecrate or violate. There is also the play upon *Belle Hélène*, evoking the story of the ravaging of Helen of Troy. What is violated in this quintessential symbol of femininity and "Frenchness", is of course gender itself.

In the second set of images, though, we find a rather more theatrical, heavily "feminised" and far more seductive model of femininity, achieved through lighting, make-up and retouching. The hat has been shown to belong to Germaine Everling, and there

⁶²⁹ Amelia Jones, *Postmodernism and the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p.130.

⁶³⁰ Duchamp in Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, op. cit. p.65.

⁶³¹ Dawn Ades, "Duchamp's Masquerades", in Graham Clarke (ed), *The Portrait in Photography*, London: Reaktion Books, 1994, pp.94 and 110.

is every reason to believe that these are her hands - what is even more strange, is that the hands and arms were heavily retouched in some versions of the print, presumably to make them appear more "feminine".⁶³² Beneath the hat Duchamp is wearing a blonde wig, a motif which he returns to in a striking polaroid photograph dating from around 1955 (fig.119), in a bizarre conjunction of male and female signifiers echoing that of *L.H.O.O.Q.* Such excessive signifiers of gender also oddly echo that of an early advertisement for "Dada" shampoo (fig.120), featuring a woman with absurdly luxuriant blonde waves, and cited as a possible source for the movement's name. What this all demonstrates is the artificiality of the social conventions associated with "femininity", and that gender is constituted through the *performance* of those conventions.

The conception of gender as performance is rooted in Joan Rivière's classic paper *Womanliness as a Masquerade* (1929),⁶³³ which analysed the case of a successful American businesswoman, whose work involved public speaking. This woman experienced acute anxiety before each public performance and sought reassurance by compulsively "flirting and coquetting" with her male listeners - in effect, fearing retribution from men for having taken on "masculine" characteristics, she then sought to appease the men through an exaggerated display of "femininity". Rivière concludes from this that "womanliness could therefore be assumed and worn as a mask"; but more radically, she goes on:

The reader may now ask how I define womanliness and where I draw the line between genuine womanliness and the "masquerade". My suggestion is not, however, that there is any such difference; whether radical or superficial, they are the same thing.⁶³⁴

This notion of gender as masquerade is given a further radical twist in the work of the American feminist Judith Butler.

Butler's starting point is her argument, based on Foucault, that "juridical systems of power produce the subjects they subsequently come to represent", and that the law conceals the constructedness of its categories, which come to appear as simply

"natural."⁶³⁵ On this basis, Butler goes on to assert, not only that *gender* becomes "a

⁶³² Germaine Everling appears in a photograph in an identical hat in Hulten (ed), *Marcel Duchamp*, op. cit., p.80.

⁶³³ Joan Rivière, "Womanliness as a Masquerade", in Victor Burgin, James Donald, Cora Kaplan (eds), *Formations of Fantasy*, London: Methuen, 1986. First published in *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Vol.10, 1929.

⁶³⁴ Rivière, *ibid.* p.38.

⁶³⁵ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, op. cit.

free-floating artifice", but more radically, that (biological) sex too has a history and hence can also be argued to be a gendered category; thus, for Butler, gender and sex become a function of the limits set by (socio-cultural) discourse. Butler's analysis also draws upon a Nietzschean critique of such substantive categories as "Being" or "Substance" and cites Michel Haar's argument that such categories are no more than unwarranted projections of linguistic categories (the "subject", "self", etc.).⁶³⁶ Citing de Beauvoir's statement that "one is not born a woman, but rather becomes one", Butler proposes the formula that: "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame..."⁶³⁷ Butler thus extends Rivière's conception of "womanliness" as masquerade, to argue that, in effect, gender lacks any underlying substantiality and that the performance is all there is: that "gender is an "act", as it were, that is open to splittings, self-parody, self-criticism ...",⁶³⁸ and that such performance "reveals the performative status of the natural itself."

Duchamp's performance in the role of his alter-ego Rose Sélavy is therefore readily assimilable into Butler's model of gender as performance and can be seen as part of a far broader strategy within his work (the puns, sexual objects such as *Objet-dard*, 1951, or *Feuille de vigne femelle*, 1950) which aims to subvert any notion of stable sexual identity. In 1919 Duchamp had produced *L.H.O.O.Q.* (fig.121), a reproduction of the Mona Lisa with the addition of a moustache and beard, a typically iconoclastic dada gesture which, on the one hand, through its inscription (rendered phonetically to produce "elle a chaud au cul") serves to subvert the Kantian assertion of aesthetic detachment in the appreciation of the work of art, and instead recalls the role of desire and of the body. But the work also raises issues around sexual identity, evoking for example the question of what Freud has argued is the ambiguity of Leonardo's own sexual identity.⁶³⁹ Duchamp himself has observed of the work that:

The curious thing about that moustache and goatee is that when you look at it the *Mona Lisa* becomes a man. It is not a woman disguised as a man; it is a real man.⁶⁴⁰

This would again support a performative reading of gender, insofar as masculinity here

⁶³⁶ See Michel Haar, "Nietzsche and Metaphysical Language", in Allison (ed), *The New Nietzsche*, op. cit.

⁶³⁷ Butler, op. cit. p.33.

⁶³⁸ Butler, ibid. p.146-7.

⁶³⁹ Sigmund Freud, "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood" (1910), in Freud, *Art and Literature*, op. cit.

⁶⁴⁰ Duchamp cited in Schwartz, *Complete Works*, (Volume II), op. cit. p.670.

simply is this performance of the masculine through the addition of the masculine traits of the moustache and beard.

This play upon the concept of gender, through the use of facial hair, wigs and other signifiers, is a striking feature of dada. In a photograph dating from the period of Paris dada (fig.122), we find Breton and friends posing in extravagant moustaches, with Eluard in an absurd full beard, together with a copy of *Dada 3*. Picabia also produced his *Portrait of Rose Sélavy*, based on a photo of the French boxer George Charpentier, which he used on the cover of *391* (No.19, 1924), in an image which thereby conflates an icon of hyper-masculinity with that of an implied hyper-femininity, again rendering both identity and sexuality as highly ambiguous. Picabia was employed in 1924 to produce the scenario for Satie's ballet *Relâche*, written for the Swedish Ballet, and was also involved in the short accompanying cinematic interlude, *Entr'acte*, directed by René Clair. Judi Freeman points out that Picabia sketched out a number of ideas subsequently developed by Clair, and which included "a dancer on a transparent mirror, filmed from beneath."⁶⁴¹ In the film itself, the dancer is eventually revealed to be a bearded man (fig.123), a figure said by some to be that of Picabia himself⁶⁴² - while this is an intriguing possibility, it would seem unlikely given Picabia's stocky physique. In an astonishing photograph from the album of Olga Mohler (fig.124)⁶⁴³ Picabia appears cross-dressed in the role of a Nanny, together with Nicole Groult and Germaine Everling in the guise of children, at the *Bal d'Enfants* of 1927. Picabia cuts a rather matronly figure - and a rather unlikely one, as an old *roué*, to be left in charge of two young "girls". The theme of cross-dressing and of gender transformation also occurs in Picabia's writings, as well as in other of his visual works. In some of these writings, later collected as his *Dits* (statements and aphorisms), Picabia has written that: "Moi, je me déguise en homme pour n'être rien."⁶⁴⁴ And also:

Naturellement, tu as peur que le vent soulève ta jupe et que nous apercevions ton sexe qui est faux; tes cheveux aussi sont faux, tes dents sont faux; tu as un oeil de verre et c'est le seul qui me regarde franchement ...⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴¹ Judi Freeman, "Relâche and Entr'acte", in *Picabia, 1879-1953*, Edinburgh: Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, and Frankfurt/Main: Galerie Neuendorf, 1988; p.21.

⁶⁴² In Motherwell (ed), *The Dada Painters and Poets*, op. cit., the figure is given as Picabia.

⁶⁴³ Olga Mohler, *Francis Picabia*, Torino: Edizioni Notizie Sp.A., 1975, p.56.

⁶⁴⁴ Francis Picabia, *Dits, aphorismes réunis par Poupard-Lieussou*, Paris: Le Terrain Vague, 1960 (unpaginated).

⁶⁴⁵ Picabia, *Dits*, *ibid.*

So that again the deceptiveness of appearances, including that of gender, is raised as problematic, and the performative nature of gender asserted.

From Bachelor to Bridegroom: Masculinity and Misogyny

"I was really much more of a bachelor than I thought."

Duchamp⁶⁴⁶

In 1927, Duchamp briefly gave up his bachelor status in marrying Lydie Sarazin-Levassor, the daughter of a wealthy, *haut bourgeois*, automobile manufacturer. The bride had been a childhood friend of Germaine Everling, Picabia's second wife, and Picabia himself was somehow involved in arranging the matter.⁶⁴⁷ The aim of the whole operation seems to have been for the industrialist to marry off his daughter in order to be able to divorce and assume another relationship with an opera singer, and there are surely echoes in all of this of Freud's "Dora" case history, where the daughter was again bartered by her father in order to facilitate his own affair with another woman. In a letter to Katherine Dreier, Duchamp observes of his bride that: "She is not especially beautiful nor attractive" and adds that "I am not going to be rich."⁶⁴⁸ Duchamp largely maintained his bachelor lifestyle, devoting himself to chess until his bride finally glued down the pieces; the marriage lasted only four months before Duchamp opted for a divorce. Writing again to Dreier the following year, Duchamp informs her that: "I am living in Nice 'bachelorly' - and I enjoy every minute of my old self again -"⁶⁴⁹ It is difficult not to see a certain misogyny in this somewhat cynical operation, which again underscores the importance of the homosocial and the extent to which such links are still served by the exchange of women (Duchamp's persistently sharing mistresses with Henri-Pierre Roché is another striking example of such exchanges).⁶⁵⁰

Whereas commentators such as Francis Naumann have expressed a belief in the ultimate "physical union"⁶⁵¹ of the protagonists of the *Large Glass*, or again, Calvin

⁶⁴⁶ Marcel Duchamp, in Cabanne, op. cit. p.76.

⁶⁴⁷ See Tomkins, op. cit. pp.276-283.

⁶⁴⁸ Duchamp, letter of 25 May 1927 to Katherine S. Dreier, in Naumann and Obalk (eds), op. cit. p.162.

⁶⁴⁹ Duchamp, letter to Dreier of March 12 1928, in Naumann and Obalk (eds), op. cit. p.165.

⁶⁵⁰ See Seigel, *The Private Worlds of Marcel Duchamp*, op. cit. pp. 191-3.

⁶⁵¹ Francis M. Naumann in Thierry de Duve (ed), *The Definitively Unfinished Duchamp*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1991, p.81.

Tomkins, who rejects its interpretation as a deeply pessimistic view of the sexual relation and instead sees in it a message of "deep joy",⁶⁵² this I feel is to badly misinterpret the entire intention of the work as a "delay in glass". The incompleteness of the work serves to reinforce the sense of endless frustration, of non-consummation, which is central to the view which it embodies of the sexual relation. As Jean Suquet insists, "it represents the instant before, it is a *delay in glass* ... a frozen moment when anything is *possible* but in suspense."⁶⁵³ But this separation of Bride and Bachelor is even more convincingly demonstrated when Suquet adds that:

Duchamp exiled the Bride to the fourth dimension. *Noli me tangere*. The fourth dimension allowed Duchamp to cast this untouchable Bride whose Bachelor he wanted to be, from our world into some inaccessible realm.⁶⁵⁴

The ultimate message of Duchamp's machine is therefore surely a deeply pessimistic one, premised upon his view of the impossibility of the sexual relation, an attitude which, as we have seen, had enormous consequences both for Duchamp's relationships with women as well as for his entire sense of masculine identity.

⁶⁵² Calvin Tomkins, *Duchamp: A Biography*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1997, p.11.

⁶⁵³ Jean Suquet, "Possible", in De Duve (ed), *The Definitively Unfinished Duchamp*, op cit. p.110.

⁶⁵⁴ Jean Suquet, "Discussion", in De Duve (ed), , *ibid.*, p.348.

6. Picabia's Desiring Machines: The Early Machine Works, 1915-17

There is an essentially modern tragic symbol: it is a sort of large wheel which is spinning and which is no longer being steered by a hand.

Louis Aragon, *Paris Peasant*.⁶⁵⁵

Picabia: A Passion for Motors

"C'est la plus belle voiture qu'on puisse voir!"

Picabia.

Having considered the implications of the trauma of war - the first *industrialised* war - for our conception of early twentieth-century masculinity, and having begun to map out something of the fantasmatic surrounding electricity and the machine, I want to focus more narrowly upon the implications of the latter for the work of Francis Picabia. The early mechanomorphic works of Picabia, dating from around 1915-17, remain something of an enigma. Apart from a single but highly prophetic work dating from 1913, *Mechanical expression seen through our own mechanical expression*, Picabia's machine style first emerges in the portraits created on his second trip to America in 1915. Produced partly under the influence of Marius de Zayas,⁶⁵⁶ they developed into a highly personalized, anarchic idiom which eschews both conventional symbolism, as well as the aestheticised contemplation of the machine typical of Precisionism. Frequently blunt in their flagrant sexual references, Picabia's machines nonetheless often resist further interpretation by virtue of their apparently hermetic private symbolism and use of personal references. I therefore want to analyse this crucial early period of Picabia's mechanomorphic work with a view to re-thinking its significance in terms of three approaches. First, to consider how *meaning* is created within the mechanomorphic work, particularly in relation to gender attitudes, and the ways in which Picabia's various interpreters - including Picabia himself - have attempted to explicate it. Secondly, to propose some new primary sources for a number of Picabia's machine images, which throw further light both upon the motivation

⁶⁵⁵ Louis Aragon, *Paris Peasant* (1926), Boston: Exact Change, 1994, p.118.

⁶⁵⁶ See Willard Bohn, "The Abstract Vision of Marius de Zayas", *The Art Bulletin*, Vol.62, no.3, September 1980, pp.434-452.

of the work and also upon shifts in Picabia's working practice. And thirdly, to begin to place this work within an alternative theoretical paradigm, using the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, which I believe casts a rather different light not only upon the mechanomorphic work of Picabia, but also upon the broader significance of the deployment of the machine in art during what Reyner Banham refers to as the First Machine Age.

Picabia came from an affluent Parisian bourgeois family of mixed French, Cuban and Spanish ancestry, which lent a strongly cosmopolitan flavour both to his life and art. According to Maria Lluïsa Borràs, the early loss of his mother at the age of seven years was forever linked by Picabia to the gift of a horse and carriage from his father,⁶⁵⁷ and we can perhaps see in this ensemble, combining as it does many of the elements of Carrouges's bachelor machines - the male and female sexual elements, the mechanical, and the linkage with death - one element in the genesis of the later fascination with mechanical forms in Picabia's work. Borràs also mentions another gift from Picabia's father, a set of scales, which Picabia is said to have placed on a window-cill with one side shaded, in an absurd attempt to detect any difference in weight between darkness and light. Picabia's father, something of a playboy, was an undoubted influence in terms of Picabia's extravagant lifestyle and numerous affairs, and is characterised by Cathy Bernheim as: "Futile, oisif et parfaitement superficiel."⁶⁵⁸ Among the early cultural influences, and one which endured throughout Picabia's life, was that of Nietzsche,⁶⁵⁹ whose writings were becoming increasingly fashionable around the turn of the century. According to his first wife Gabrielle Buffet: "Les seuls livres qu'il ait je crois vraiment lus et approfondis (exception faite de certains romans policiers) sont Nietzsche et Max Stirner."⁶⁶⁰ Borràs cites the impact of Nietzsche's individualism and immoralism, evident in both Picabia's lavish lifestyle as well as in his artwork, and points out that a substantial number of Picabia's titles and texts from around 1915 onwards are derived from Nietzsche's writings .

⁶⁵⁷ Maria Lluïsa Borràs, *Picabia*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1985, p.14.

⁶⁵⁸ Cathy Bernheim, *Picabia*, Paris: Éditions du Félin, 1995, p.23.

⁶⁵⁹ Jean-Jacques Lebel confirms that Duchamp had informed him in New York in 1961, that both he and Picabia had been lifelong readers of Stirner and Nietzsche. In Lebel, *Picabia, moteur à toutes tendances* (exh. cat.), Paris (no publisher given), 1987, p.2.

⁶⁶⁰ Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, cited by Ulf Linde, "Picabia", in *Francis Picabia* (exh. cat.), Paris: Centre Nationale d'Art et de la Culture Georges Pompidou, 1976, p.20. All subsequent references to this catalogue are given as "*Francis Picabia* (Pompidou cat.)."

Picabia's earliest work is rather conservative and retrogressive, shifting from the influence of the Barbizon School to that of Impressionism only around 1902, until the period from 1909-12 when he suddenly runs the whole range of modernist styles, from Cubism and Futurism, to Orphism. After meeting Marcel Duchamp in late 1910, Picabia became linked to the Puteaux Group, a loose grouping of artists organised around the three Duchamp brothers - Jacques Villon, Raymond Duchamp-Villon and Marcel Duchamp - and which also included Gleizes, Metzinger and others. Around this same time, Picabia also became friendly with Apollinaire, following the latter's split with Marie Laurencin in June 1912, and again we can see a decisive influence upon Picabia's artworks and writings - perhaps most obvious in the case of Apollinaire's *calligrammes*. Katia Samaltanos notes that Apollinaire observed of one of Picabia's early, semi-abstract works, *Procession* (1912), that:

We must look at this unfinished effort ... the way we would look at a machine whose function we do not know, but whose movements and power astonish and worry us.⁶⁶¹

Samaltanos also points to Breton's characterisation of the works of Raymond Roussel in terms of a "fascinating machine whose use is unknown",⁶⁶² and again, as with Duchamp, Roussel was to be a major influence upon Picabia.

In terms of lifestyle, Picabia continued to lead the life of the rich playboy, even after his marriage to Gabrielle Buffet in 1909 and the addition of a growing family. Apart from his artwork and a string of mistresses, Picabia's ruling passion was the automobile - an obsession which is quite apparent in a page from the family album headed "une passion", and featuring Picabia in a whole range of expensive motors.⁶⁶³ Borràs relates how Picabia and Duchamp, having driven down to Rouen together in 1912, were stopped by the police and interrogated on the grounds that their red car resembled that of Callemín ("Raymond le Science"), a member of the anarchist Bonnot gang who was to be guillotined in April 1913. Following the Salon de la Section d'Or of 1912, Picabia drove with Duchamp and Apollinaire to Étival on the slopes of the Jura, an area known to locals as the "zone", and which formed the basis of Apollinaire's poem *Zone*, first read on that trip and subsequently published in *Alcools*. But from the same trip Duchamp produced the notes subsequently published in the *Green Box* (1934), relating to the

⁶⁶¹ Apollinaire, cited in Samaltanos, *Apollinaire: Catalyst for Primitivism, Picabia and Duchamp*, op. cit., p.67.

⁶⁶² Breton cited by Samaltanos, *ibid.* p.67.

⁶⁶³ See Olga Mohler, *Francis Picabia*, op. cit.

night drive along the Jura-Paris road:

La machine à 5 coeurs, l'enfant pur, de nickel et de platine, doivent dominer la route Jura-Paris.

D'un côté, le chef des 5 nus sera en avant des 4 autres nus vers cette route Jura-Paris. De l'autre côté, l'enfant-phare sera l'instrument vainqueur de cette route Jura-Paris.⁶⁶⁴

In his evocation of this "pure headlight child" of nickel and platinum we find an early source for the anthropomorphisation of the machine so often encountered in Duchamp and Picabia. In the same piece of writing Duchamp characterises the "headlight child" as "a comet, which would have its tail in front ... which absorbs by crushing ... this Jura-Paris road" - a clear reference to the great headlamp beams of Picabia's car at night, as the car consumes the road. And we find a further reference to this motif in Duchamp's piece *Tonsure* (photograph by Man Ray, 1921), in what Pierre Cabanne describes as "a comet shaved into his hair by Marius de Zayas."⁶⁶⁵

The motor car clearly occupied a central place in the imaginary of the early twentieth century as one of the defining features of modernity in the age of the machine. However, Rayner Banham makes the point that in this early machine era, cinema was the only form of new technology readily accessible to a mass audience, and observes that:

it was into the hands of an élite, rather than the masses, that the symbolic machine of that First Machine Age was delivered, the automobile.⁶⁶⁶

Not only was the automobile a symbol of power, but more specifically it provided "a heady taste of a new kind of power",⁶⁶⁷ providing its driver with *direct* control of enormous potential, with automobiles of 60 or even 100 horsepower - what Banham describes as a "quantum leap in experience", or in Marinetti's phrase: "The Man Multiplied by the Motor."⁶⁶⁸ In "The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism" (1909),⁶⁶⁹ the automobile plays a central role in Marinetti's enthusiastic hymn to modernity - and again we find the machine both rendered anthropomorphic while also eroticised:

We went up to the three snorting beasts, to lay amorous hands on

⁶⁶⁴ Marcel Duchamp, "La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même (la <boîte verte>)", in *Duchamp du signe: Ecrits*, Paris: Flammarion, New edition, 1994, 41.

⁶⁶⁵ Pierre Cabanne, *Duchamp & Co.*, Paris: Editions Pierre Terrail, 1997, p.137.

⁶⁶⁶ Rayner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, London: The Architectural Press, 1960, p.10-11.

⁶⁶⁷ Banham, *ibid.* p.11.

⁶⁶⁸ Marinetti, cited in Banham, *ibid.*

⁶⁶⁹ First published in *Le Figaro*, Paris on 20 February, 1909.

their torrid breasts. I stretched out on my car like a corpse on its bier, but revived at once under the steering wheel, a guillotine blade that threatened my stomach.⁶⁷⁰

Already doubly figured in the bier and the guillotine, the theme of death comes to occupy a central place in the wild car chase which ensues - "we ran after Death ..." - "Death, domesticated, met me at every turn ...", and we again have all the elements of Carrouges's bachelor machine. The chase culminates in the celebrated "baptism" in a mud-filled ditch, as the automobile overturns to avoid cyclists:

Oh! Maternal ditch, almost full of muddy water! ... I gulped down your nourishing sludge; and I remembered the blessed black breast of my Sudanese nurse ... When I came up - torn, filthy and stinking - from under the capsized car, I felt the white-hot iron of joy deliciously pass through my heart!⁶⁷¹

Stylistically, Marinetti's prose adopts a braggardly swagger - what Boscagli describes as "a tone of rodomontade (spoken with a Nietzschean accent)" - in the sheer exhilaration of the exercise of power. And this same tone dominates the Manifesto proper, which at one stage extols "a new type of beauty; the beauty of speed", exemplified in a "racing car whose hood is adorned with great pipes, like serpents of explosive breath."⁶⁷²

Nowhere, perhaps, are Picabia's attitudes towards machines better revealed, than in his relationship with the automobile - and by extension, with the "mechanical" - a sensitive barometer of a whole range of sexual, moral, and artistic attitudes and views, for which the automobile serves as all-purpose symbol. Picabia's obsession with the motor car is only one aspect of his frenzied lifestyle and stands in complete contrast with Duchamp's vaunted inactivity; as William Copley points out: "Pour Picabia c'était la dépense, le jeu, la boisson, les femmes, l'opium, les voitures de course, les yachts..."⁶⁷³ Hélène Seckel observes that Picabia owned some 127 automobiles during his lifetime, each one passionately loved, but then quickly abandoned for another model - like his sexual relationships, an endless cycle of possession and abandonment. Seckel cites Germaine Everling from her autobiographical *L'Anneau de Saturne* (1970), on Picabia finally taking delivery of his treasured Mercer, an acquisition from America whose

⁶⁷⁰ F.T. Marinetti, *Let's Murder the Moonshine: Selected Writings*, Los Angeles, California: Sun and Moon Press, 1991, p.48.

⁶⁷¹ Marinetti, *ibid.* p.48-9.

⁶⁷² Marinetti, *ibid.* p.49.

⁶⁷³ William Copley, "Du lièvre et de la torture et principalement du lièvre", In *Francis Picabia*, (Pompidou cat.), *op. cit.* p.16.

progress he had closely monitored by telegram:

Picabia passa plusieurs heures à palper la machine, s'extasiant sur ses moindres détails et disant avec conviction: "c'est la plus belle voiture qu'on puisse voir!"¹⁶⁷⁴

The scene becomes even more revealing if we add Borràs' observation that Everling had sold her pearl necklace to pay for the Singer car, which the Mercer then displaced in Picabia's affections.

We find the same restless attitude in Picabia's artwork - one of continual movement, where, as the artist himself put it, "arrêt signifie mort."¹⁶⁷⁵ Robert Desnos, in 1925, noted of Picabia that "Il vit toujours à la minute prochaine ...", and notes "ce besoin perpétuel de renouvellement, cette destruction systématique de la tradition ..."¹⁶⁷⁶ Picabia observed of himself that: LA SEULE FACON D'ETRE SUIVI, C'EST DE COURIR PLUS VITE QUE LES AUTRES.¹⁶⁷⁷ But as Seckel correctly points out, this constant movement is necessary to Picabia in order to ward off boredom, a fundamental "ennui" which must be constantly staved off: "C'est l'horreur du vide" - a reference to a poem by Picabia in 391 entitled "Horreur du vide." Seckel links this in turn to sterility, again citing Picabia: "Mon ambition est d'être un homme stérile pour les autres"¹⁶⁷⁸, and to the absurd: "Tout tableau doit être absurde et inutile". These attitudes, as we shall see, are also crucial to an understanding of Picabia's machine works.

Borràs has argued that it was in 1912 that "Picabia began to see a parallel between machines and human beings, a parallel first suggested by his beloved car..."¹⁶⁷⁹ Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia has pointed to Picabia's familiarity with the mechanics of his automobiles, and a number of observers have noted his drawing upon technical manuals in his work. Borràs also cites the influence of Gaston de Pawlowksi, a writer on popular science and editor of the review *Comœdia*. Pawlowski was also a regular contributor to *L'Auto*, of which Picabia was a passionate reader, and when writing of cars, he endows them with the same animal vitality found in Jarry, Marinetti or Roussel:

From the head with its eyes to the shock absorber, the automobile

¹⁶⁷⁴ Hélène Seckel, "Don Juan unique eunuque", in *Picabia* (Pompidou Cat.), 1976, p.35.

¹⁶⁷⁵ Picabia cited by Seckel, in *Francis Picabia* (Pompidou cat.), op. cit., p.38.

¹⁶⁷⁶ Robert Desnos, "Francis Picabia" (1924), reprinted in *Francis Picabia* (Pompidou cat.), op. cit., p.121.

¹⁶⁷⁷ Picabia, *Dits*, op. cit. (unpaginated).

¹⁶⁷⁸ Seckel, op. cit. p.37.

¹⁶⁷⁹ Borràs, op. cit. p.95.

acts like a simple animal: its valves beating like the heart, the spine of the transmission ... the circulation of the water, the circulation of the oil, the electric nervous system ...⁶⁸⁰

Pawlowski also wrote of a future world dominated by technology, "in which there can be nothing successive, and therefore no history, since in that fourth dimension everything happens simultaneously ..." He proposes a cyborg world of hybrids of the biological and the mechanical, and opposes the mechanical slavery of the masses to the exalted figure of the Nietzschean superman.

In a 1921 self-portrait, *La Veuve joyeuse* (fig.125), we discover Picabia in a photograph by Man Ray, at the wheel of his beloved Mercer, labelled "photographie", while below it is a roughly executed drawing of the same scene, this time labelled "dessin." The work was one of three submitted by Picabia to the 1922 Salon des Indépendants and was surely intended in part as a riposte to the uproar of the previous year, when his *Les Yeux chauds* (1921), part of his submission to the Salon d'Automne, had been "exposed" in an article in *Le Matin* as based upon an engineering drawing.⁶⁸¹ Boulbès sees *La Veuve joyeuse*, as, at least in part, a response to Duchamp's *Fresh Widow* (1920), as well as to Man Ray's *La Veuve noire* (1916). In an interview of the time, Picabia observed that "vous savez que beaucoup de nos portraitistes abusent de ces reproductions",⁶⁸² while Bernheim notes that Picabia had used photographs as the basis of paintings right from the time of his early training as a painter.⁶⁸³ Picabia signals a clear rejection of the famous "return to order" of Lhote and Bissière, insisting instead upon the further expansion of the boundaries of art. In these works Picabia suggests a complex argument about the role of the mechanical within art, an argument which also embraces the role of the "copy" and its relationship with the issue of originality within art, while in a written response to *Le Matin* Picabia retorts:

<Picabia n'a donc rien inventé, il copie!> Eh oui, il copie l'épure d'un ingénieur au lieu de copier des pommes!
Copier des pommes, c'est compréhensible pour tous, copier une

⁶⁸⁰ Borràs, *Picabia*, op. cit., p.95.

⁶⁸¹ Anon., "La Turbine et le Dada", *Le Matin*, Paris, 9 November 1921, p.1.

⁶⁸² Picabia, *Bonsoir*, 20 January 1922, cited in Boulbès, op. cit. p.53.

⁶⁸³ We should recall, too, that Picabia's grandfather, Alphonse Davanne, had been an enthusiastic amateur photographer, and according to Camfield "taught his grandson how to operate a camera and talked at length about the relationship of art and photography." Camfield, *Francis Picabia*, op. cit. p.4. Sarah Wilson, too, insists on Picabia's "constant contact with photography" via this early relationship with his grandfather, the full significance of which emerges with Picabia's later "transparencies" - see Sarah Wilson, *Francis Picabia: Accommodations of Desire*, New York: Kent Fine Art, 1989, p.13.

turbine, c'est idiot.⁶⁸⁴

I therefore want to pursue some of these issues further in the context of Picabia's mechanomorphic works and to site them in relation to his conception of the gendered body.

New York, 1913: The Birth of the Machine

Picabia first travelled to New York, together with his then wife, Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, in January of 1913, in order to attend the Armory Show, and it was during this first trip that we find the roots of his conversion to the subject of the machine. Apart from the scandal of Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* (1912), it was Picabia who attracted the most attention at the show, with cubist-influenced works such as *Procession, Seville* (1912) and *Dance at the Source* (1912); and because available for interview in New York, Picabia was able to immediately capitalise on this public interest in his work. Unlike Duchamp, Picabia was never to learn English, and relied heavily on Gabrielle as his translator and mouthpiece, though his enthusiasm for the modernity and vitality of the American city nonetheless comes across strongly in his early American press interviews:

L'esprit de votre New York est si insaisissable, si magnifiquement atmosphérique ... pour moi, tout est émotion. ...

Votre New York est la cité cubiste, la cité futuriste. Il exprime la pensée moderne dans son architecture, sa vie, son esprit.⁶⁸⁵

Turning to the question of what constitutes art, Picabia asks: "Est-ce de reproduire fidèlement un visage ou un paysage?" and responds to his own question by asserting that "Non, cela c'est de la mécanique."⁶⁸⁶ Rejecting an art of the faithful depiction of the real as belonging to the past, Picabia insists that for the modern artist: "L'art, c'est de créer un tableau sans modèles", thus anticipating the title of a 1913 drawing, *Fille née sans mère*. Therefore, in launching his own mechanical art, Picabia interestingly turns the tables on traditional, realist art - to paint nature he insists, "c'est du génie mécanique."

While on his transatlantic journey, Picabia befriended and perhaps had an affair with the Polish dancer Stacia Napierkowska, notorious for her scandalous dances (the

⁶⁸⁴ Francis Picabia, "L'Oeil Cacodylate", *Comœdia*; 23 November 1921, p.2, re-published in Picabia, *Ecrits II, 1921-1953*, Paris: Pierre Belfond, 1978, p.37.

⁶⁸⁵ Francis Picabia, "Comment je vois New York - Pourquoi New York est la seule ville cubiste au monde" *The New York American*, 30 March 1913, in Francis Picabia, *Ecrits I, 1913-1920*, Paris: Belfond, 1975, p.23.

⁶⁸⁶ Picabia, *ibid.* p.24.

"Dance of the Bee" and the "Fire Dance"). Napierkowska became the inspiration for some of Picabia's major works of this period, including *Udnie* (1913), *Edtaonisl (ecclésiastique)* (1913), and *Je revois en souvenir ma chère Udnie* (ca.1914) - images characterised by Camfield as "psychological abstractions." These works take as their themes absence, eroticism and loss - and it is this theme of the failure of the sexual relation which is to become a recurrent motif in the mechanomorphic works. In *Danseuse étoile sur un transatlantique* (1913), Picabia combines elements of both the dancer's body and the vast machine of the transatlantic liner, where the machine is already eroticised.

Whereas such work continues the cubist-influenced style already adopted by Picabia, we find a more radical shift in style with a solitary work from 1913 which anticipates the mechanomorphic style of 1915 - *Mechanical expression seen through our own mechanical expression* (1913). In this image (fig.126), in addition to the title, the elements of text read NEW YORK and NPIERKOWSKA, thus combining Picabia's celebration of the modern city, with that of the erotic. This is very much a one-off image, produced in a style which Picabia does not return to until his second American trip of 1915. The mechanical elements comprise an inverted glass bowl of a type used in scientific experiments, connected to a cog via a crank-shaped spindle, perhaps echoing the shape of the starting crank of a car. There is the suggestion here of a sexual metaphor, anticipating those of the later machine works, while its motivating cause is indicated by the texts, pointing again to Napierkowska. The dancer also featured in the films of Max Lindau and was to appear during the war alongside Musidora in an early episode of Feuillade's *Les Vampires*. She also figures regularly amongst the gossip and announcements in *Comœdia* (fig.127), an arts journal of which Picabia was both an avid reader and occasional contributor. As Willard Bohn has pointed out, Picabia begins with a concrete object, the dancer Napierkowska, and selects some symbolic object to represent her - in this case a radiometer, a device devised by Sir William Crookes and used to measure radiant energy. Bohn notes that the radiometer twirls furiously in response to light and thus comes to symbolise the dancer, who "personifies radiant energy."⁶⁸⁷ Linda Dalrymple Henderson adds that the work also features a Crookes tube (the basis of X-ray technology), in addition to the radiometer, and that this device reflects the contemporary interest of artists in the unseen and their belief in the

⁶⁸⁷ Willard Bohn, "Picabia's 'Mechanical Expression' and the Demise of the Object", *The Art Bulletin*, Dec. 1985, Vol.LXVII, no.4, p.675.

inadequacy of human perception. Henderson cites the statement of Gabrielle Buffet, from her essay in *Camera Work* (June, 1913): "It would seem ... that in every field, the principal direction of the twentieth century was the attempts to capture the *non-perceptible*",⁶⁸⁸ and points to contemporary interest in such phenomena as X-Rays, the occult or the fourth dimension. Henderson links the geometric forms overlaying the skyscrapers on either side of the image, with similar "geometric projections used by Claude Bragdon to explain the passage from higher to lower dimensions", arguing that Picabia gives us an "anti-material, X-rayed, four-dimensional view of the city of New York."⁶⁸⁹ Again this would all support Picabia's rejection of realist depiction, searching instead for motifs within the contemporary world around him in order to give expression to internal states.

The Second American Trip, 1915: 291 and the Machine Portraits

Following the outbreak of war in August 1914, Picabia found himself in uniform and assigned, through the intervention of his father-in-law, as a chauffeur attached to the Government in Exile at Bordeaux. As Germaine Everling, revealingly observes:

Son égoïsme n'envisageait la guerre que par les petits ennuis qu'elle lui causait et sa crainte de manquer prochainement de tabac blond semblait dominer tout autre souci⁶⁹⁰

This utter lack of patriotism was in sharp contrast with the more bellicose attitude of Apollinaire, who wrote to Gabrielle that the war was "une chose forte belle" and that:

Francis a eu tort de n'y venir. Dommage que moral et physique se concertassent chez lui pour le détourner du plus beau spectacle actuel, celui qu'on donne sur le théâtre de la guerre.⁶⁹¹

Picabia was soon again drawing on family contacts and was sent on a government mission to obtain supplies of molasses in Cuba. By May of 1915 Picabia was back in New York, and quickly forgot his military mission as he renewed contact with the Arensberg circle and the group attached to Stieglitz. Despite Stieglitz's semi-retirement, the journal *291* had begun publication, rather tamely, in March of that year, under the direction of Marius De Zayas, Paul Haviland and Agnes Meyer, and Picabia was soon involved in the project, contributing a drawing, *New York*, as early as the second issue.

⁶⁸⁸ Linda Dalrymple Henderson, "Francis Picabia, Radiometers and X-Rays in 1913", *The Art Bulletin*, March 1989, Volume LXXI, no.1, p.114.

⁶⁸⁹ Henderson, *ibid.* p.121.

⁶⁹⁰ Germaine Everling, *L'Anneau de Saturne*, Paris: Fayard, 1970, p.16.

⁶⁹¹ Apollinaire, cited in Yves-Alain Bois, *Picabia*, Paris: Flammarion, 1975, p.53.

But it is only really with the fourth issue in June 1915 that the journal assumes the style of what has come to be known as "New York Dada", with a front cover from John Marin's skyscraper series, and on the back cover Picabia's drawing *Fille née sans mère* (1913). As Borràs has shown, the phrase itself - like so many of Picabia's titles - is derived from the pink pages of the *Petit Larousse*. The same phrase was to be used in issues 7-8 of 291 by Paul Haviland in a key statement on the role of the machine:

We are living in the age of the machine. Man made the machine in his own image. She has limbs which act; lungs which breathe; a heart which beats; a nervous system through which runs electricity. ... The machine is his "daughter born without a mother". That is why he loves her. He has made the machine superior to himself ... he has made his human ideal machinomorphic.⁶⁹²

But Haviland's text goes further, proposing a "mating" of man and machine, a cyborgian hybrid, through which both sexes are completed:

She submits to his will but he must direct her activities. Without him she remains a wonderful being, but without aim or anatomy. Through their mating they complete one another.⁶⁹³

Haviland's conclusion is clearly at odds with Jarry's far more dystopian view of such a fusion in *Le Surmâle*. Picabia's own notion of "unity" or "wholeness" differs very radically from the kind of harmonious whole which Haviland seems to have in mind, assuming instead the form of absurd and transitory couplings and conjunctions. In this First Machine Age, then, we find radical artists like Picabia attempting to reformulate the relationship between the mechanical and the human, which in turn requires a reconsideration of the nature of the human itself, returning them to the kind of questions which haunted La Mettrie and Descartes.

In an interview published in the *New York Tribune* in October 1915, Picabia announced "a complete revolution" in his methods of work, as he shifted from his earlier psychological studies to work centred upon the machine, declaring that: "Almost immediately upon coming to America it flashed on me that the genius of the modern world is in machinery, and that through machinery art ought to find a most vivid expression."⁶⁹⁴ And Picabia adds:

The machine has become more than a mere adjunct of life. It is really a

⁶⁹² Paul B. Haviland, statement in 291, nos.7-8, New York, Sept.- Oct. 1915, cited in Camfield, *Picabia*, op. cit. p.80.

⁶⁹³ Haviland, *ibid.* p.80.

⁶⁹⁴ F. Macmonnies, "French Artists Spur on an American Art", *New York Tribune*, 24 October 1915 - cited in Camfield, *Picabia*, op. cit. p.77.

part of human life - perhaps the very soul. ... I have enlisted the machinery of the modern world, and introduced it into my studio ...⁶⁹⁵

Though we can clearly see in this a reprise of the Marinettian rhetoric of Futurism, and indeed of the whole early modernist infatuation with machinery, technology, speed and movement - or what Stephen Kern characterises as a "culture of time and space"⁶⁹⁶ - we can nonetheless see in Picabia's wholehearted embrace of the conventions of technical depiction (the purity of technical drawing, the labelling of parts, the spatial conventions of plan, elevation and cross-section), a wholly new commitment to the spirit of technology as symbolic of the modern age. But equally important, I want to argue that the mechanical format also provided a more suitable vehicle for the more personal psycho-sexual symbolism which we see assuming greater importance in the "psychological studies" of 1913-14 in works such as *Udnie* and *Edtaonist*; and that in so doing, Picabia - as in the case of Roussel - in fact invokes the earlier tradition of pseudo-scientific representation, with its barely-veiled erotic element and its almost equally frequent invocation of the theme of death.

Apart from an early machine drawing in *291* (No.4, June 1915), *Fille née sans mère*, the first public showing of Picabia's mechanomorphic works came in a special issue of *291* (Nos.5-6, July/Aug., 1915) devoted to Picabia, and containing machine-style caricatures of figures associated with the Stieglitz group in New York: Alfred Stieglitz, Marius de Zayas and Paul Haviland. Willard Bohn argues the mutual influence of de Zayas and Picabia, asserting that both men "create subjective portraits using objective means",⁶⁹⁷ and that they are concerned only with the *symbolism* of the machine, not with the machine aesthetic or with celebrating the machine in its own right. Nonetheless, as a comparison of de Zayas' *Elle* with Picabia's *Voilà Elle* quickly reveals, and as Bohn acknowledges, de Zayas is far more the moralist, whereas Picabia transforms his work into an erotic machine;⁶⁹⁸ and it is this unremitting persistence of the erotic which distinguishes Picabia's productions and demands analysis.

It quickly becomes clear that many of these enigmatic images function in terms of

⁶⁹⁵ Picabia, *ibid.*

⁶⁹⁶ Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983.

⁶⁹⁷ Willard Bohn, "The Abstract Vision of Marius de Zayas", *op. cit.*, p.447.

⁶⁹⁸ This is not to deny Picabia's undoubted moralism - Sarah Wilson ventures that he was "certainly the greatest moralist of all painters of the twentieth century." - In Sarah Wilson, "The late Picabia: Iconoclast and Saint", in *Francis Picabia, 1879-1953* (exh. cat.), Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 1988, p.43.

two sorts of symbolism. On the one hand we find a more accessible, "public" symbolism, often expressed in terms of obvious sexual metaphors (for example pistons or back-and-forth motion), while at the same time the work frequently harbours a more private meaning which often relates to the specific individuals involved, or - and particularly in the case of women - to their relationship with Picabia. According to William Camfield:

Picabia's machines do not function in an ordinary manner ... With rare exceptions his machines are symbols which represent not only man, but man's personality, deeds, concepts and gods ...⁶⁹⁹

And though these devices can't be measured against "real", functioning machines, Camfield adds, "when considered for what they are - symbolic representations of man and human situations - then his machines do 'function' ...". Camfield also questions the effectiveness of some of Picabia's symbols, noting a certain obscurity and a lack of fixity in the way in which they are deployed. According to Jean-Jacques Lebel: "Picabia's mechanomorphism is never "literal [...] never Realistic, never Figurative, but always Conceptual."⁷⁰⁰ Lebel also considers Naumann's argument that Picabia's machines are partly inspired by masturbatory devices used for the treatment of hysteria, an argument which he finds "plausible and quite convincing". Borràs points out that: "In general, the sexual act is not consummated" and that, with Picabia, "the metaphor of the machine is an erotic simile, which excludes procreation and states man's absolute right to pleasure ..." - but at the same time is structured by *frustration*.⁷⁰¹

Ulf Linde, citing Gabrielle Buffet, points to Picabia's limited range of reading, which would clearly serve to limit the range of cultural references made in his work. Linde suggests that both Picabia and Duchamp were working with similar concerns, even during the period prior to the First World War: "la situation de l'être humain dans le monde"⁷⁰² - and though a useful pointer, this is surely rather too vague to properly assist our understanding of Picabia's symbolism. We find a more explicit statement of his methods by Picabia himself: "Dans mon oeuvre, le titre est l'expression subjective, la peinture est l'objet" - which, in part, explains the often enigmatic character of many of Picabia's works and the difficulty in reconciling image and title. We should perhaps also

⁶⁹⁹ William A. Camfield, "The Machinist Style of Francis Picabia", *The Art Bulletin*, Vol.XLVIII Nos.3 and 4, Sept.- Dec. 1966, p.317.

⁷⁰⁰ Jean-Jacques Lebel, "The Picabia Machine", in *Francis Picabia: Màquines y Espanòles*, (exh. cat.), IVAM Valencia/Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, 1995, p.190.

⁷⁰¹ Borràs, op. cit. p.158.

⁷⁰² Ulf Linde, "Picabia", in *Francis Picabia* (Pompidou, cat.), op. cit. p.21.

recall Gabrielle Buffet's warning, as cited by Picabia himself in his book *Jesus Christ Rastaquouère*:

L'erreur du public est de regarder les oeuvres modernes comme un rébus dont il faut découvrir la clé. L'oeuvre existe, sa seule raison d'être est d'exister. Elle ne représente rien que le désir du cerveau qui l'a conçue.⁷⁰³

We find further support for this position from Tristan Tzara, who, in a dada text from 1920, *Francis Picabia*, writes: "ne cherchez rien dans ces tableaux, le sujet et moyen sont: Francis Picabia."⁷⁰⁴ As we shall discover, it is perhaps this over-riding desire of the artist and the immanence of that desire, which motivates and drives the work; and that with much of the machinic work, there are in fact no "hidden meanings" - that we are in fact often confronted with a pure drive.

Amongst the machine-portraits reproduced in 291, Picabia also includes his own self-portrait entitled *Le Saint des Saints*, where he is represented, appropriately enough, in the form of a large automobile klaxon, combined with further motor components, including what appears to be an accelerator pedal. Reproduced opposite Picabia's self-portrait, the theme of the automobile is continued in *Portrait d'une jeune fille américaine dans l'état de nudité* (1915)(fig.128). This image appears at first glance to be no more than a technical drawing of an automobile spark-plug, with its title inscribed along the top of the image, and the word *FOR-EVER* inscribed like a brand-name, along the side of the plug. But in its straightforward modernity and in its straight lines, it symbolizes for Picabia the modern American woman.⁷⁰⁵ As Barbara Zabel points out: "Much like the dress fashions of the time, the straight-edged silhouette is altogether lacking in feminine characteristics", and indeed is "remarkably androgynous."⁷⁰⁶ Its threads recall that the plug is screwed into the engine, and we again find the same connotation with Picabia's *Américaine* (1917) which features a light bulb with a screw-fitting, which contains the words "FLIRT" and "DIVORCE" - again an electrical appliance which is stimulated by the application on an electrical current. Both works also evoke the "ON/OFF" alternation of a switch, suggesting a somewhat stark, mechanical view of the sexual relation. With the spark-plug too, the two contiguous poles at its base evoke the

⁷⁰³ Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, cited by Picabia: extract from *Jesus-Christ Rastaquouère* (1920) - in *Francis Picabia* (Pompidou cat.), op. cit. p.76.

⁷⁰⁴ Tristan Tzara, "Francis Picabia" (1920), in *Francis Picabia* (Pompidou cat.), op. cit. p.93.

⁷⁰⁵ Bohn argues that, since the machines portraits feature members of the 291 board, this work must be a portrait of Agnes Meyer - see Bohn, "The Abstract Vision of Marius de Zayas", op. cit. , p.446.

⁷⁰⁶ Barbara Zabel, "The Machine and New York Dada", in *Making Mischief: Dada invades New York* (exh. cat.), New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1996, p.282.

electrical spark which endlessly leaps between them, in between thrusts of the engine's piston rods - again a clear sexual metaphor. And in the word FOR-EVER, we find both an evocation of the pledge of the lovers, and also a suggestion of the sexual endurance encountered in Jarry's *Surmâle* (or more generally, of the female capacity for orgasm). As in the case of the mechanical forms in the work of Duchamp, we also discover what Borràs characterises as "parallels between the determinism of the machine and human conduct, and particularly sexual conduct ..." ⁷⁰⁷ - in effect, a kind of bleak, instinctual automatism. But what is also interesting here is the way that Picabia has somewhat perversely chosen what is quite clearly a rigidly phallic form to denote the feminine - what Zabel sees as "a masculine profile and an active sexual role" ⁷⁰⁸ - as though some play on gender is intended (perhaps a suggestion of androgyny, as in the fashions of the period).

I want to pursue this automobile metaphor further, in considering the model of the body proposed in another of Picabia's "machine portraits" of 1915, *De Zayas! De Zayas!* (pl.4), a "portrait" of Marius de Zayas which perhaps tells us more of Picabia than of de Zayas. Borràs has observed of this image that: "it describes the artist's obsession with perpetual motion in a correspondence or a parallelism between machine and sexual conduct." ⁷⁰⁹ Here we find a curious woman's "corset" linked into a diagram of what Camfield has shown to be taken from the wiring circuit of a car, with one wire leading directly down from the position of the sex (thus echoing the way Duchamp's Bachelors are linked together at their "pnt. of sex"), while the other links the position of the breast to the spark-plug of an engine. The symbol of the feminine thus assumes the position of the battery, providing the initial spark which sets this whole absurd apparatus in motion through her erotic charge. The strange garment depicted by Picabia, with its pinched hourglass form, immediately suggests the archaic design of a corset, ⁷¹⁰ and Carol Boulbès suggests the image derives from the erotic fantasies often found in corset advertisements during the period 1885-1915 (fig.129). ⁷¹¹ Moreover, Boulbès points to

⁷⁰⁷ Maria Lluïsa Borràs, "Spain, the *Mestizo* Ideal", in *Francis Picabia: Máquinas y Españolas* (exh. cat.), op. cit., p.170.

⁷⁰⁸ Zabel, op. cit. p.282.

⁷⁰⁹ Borràs in *Francis Picabia: Máquinas y Españolas*, op. cit. p.170.

⁷¹⁰ For a history of the corset as erotic symbol since the eighteenth century, see David Kunzle, "The Corset as Erotic Alchemy: From Rococo Galanterie to Mantaut's *Physiologues*", in Thomas B. Hess and Linda Nochlin (eds), *Woman as Sex Object: Studies in Erotic Art, 1730-1970*, London: Allen and Lane, 1973.

⁷¹¹ Carol Boulbès, *Francis Picabia: Le Saint Masqué*, Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 1998, p.24.

various electrical and even magnetic therapeutic corsets marketed in the United States during the late nineteenth century, such as the "electric corset of Dr. Scott", of which Picabia may have been aware.⁷¹² It is surely no accident that Picabia should look back to an outmoded female form at a time when women were adopting the more "masculine" silhouette suggested by *Portrait d'une jeune fille américaine dans l'état de nudité*, and for Boulbès, the corset in *De Zayas! De Zayas!* "symbolise autant le harnachement érotique de la femme que sa libération sexuelle."⁷¹³ The curious garters which Picabia has added to the garment are explained by Mariea Caudill Dennison as echoing the form of the "shock eliminators" found on early car suspension systems, suggesting that Picabia was playing upon the double meaning of the term i.e. both physical and electrical shocks.⁷¹⁴

In the lower part of the image is the text "DE ZAYASI DE ZAYASI!", below which is a stretch of water, and below which is the text "JE SUIS VENU SUR LES RIVAGES DU PONT-EUXIN." It has been argued by Borràs that this text echoes the exclamation of the Greek warriors - *Thalassa, Thalassa!* (*the Sea, the Sea!*) on reaching the shores of the Black Sea.⁷¹⁵ At the top of the image is the text "J'AI VU et c'est de toi qu'il s'agit", usually read as a truncated reference to Julius Caesar's *veni, vidi, vici*, and hence suggestive of Picabia's own crossing the Atlantic and conquering America through his art. Rather than being a portrait, then, the work is far more revealing as a *self*-portrait which tells us much of Picabia's own sense of masculine identity, his fantasies and fears surrounding the female body. Moreover, Borràs sees parallels in the work with Duchamp's *Large Glass*, in that Picabia's image too is divided into a female upper, and a male lower section - in effect another "bachelor machine". Both works, therefore, propose a model of sexual activity as mechanical and unceasing. We also find that Picabia traces two separate, but interwoven, circuits: one in red, linked to the electrical components (spark-plug, lights), and another in black, linked to the liquid flows through the motor (cooling system, oil, fuel). As with *Jeune fille américaine ...* the electrical circuit is clearly associated with the feminine and we can perhaps see in this an echo of the hydro-electrical model of the body of nineteenth century mesmerism and popular science - a body of hydraulic flows and electrical currents, where the electrical again

⁷¹² Reproduced in Ramírez, op. cit. p.153.

⁷¹³ Boulbès, *ibid.* p.27.

⁷¹⁴ Mariea Caudill Dennison, "Automobile parts and accessories in Picabia's machinist work of 1915-17", *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol.CXLIII, no.1178, May 2001, p.278.

⁷¹⁵ Borràs, *Francis Picabia*, op. cit. n.10, p.159.

clearly figures as metaphor for sexual excitation - the fantasy of a machinic hyper-virility, endlessly exciting a passive female body.⁷¹⁶

We perhaps obtain a fuller view of Picabia's idea of the sexual relation if we read this image in relation to a slightly later one, *Prostitution universelle* (1916-17), where we again encounter an electrical circuit, but this time featuring both a masculine and a feminine element (fig.130). Camfield points out that Arnauld Pierre has traced the source of this work to a "pyrometric device for measuring the temperature of warm bodies in ovens" and considers Picabia's view of the sexual relation, as expressed in this image, as a "bleak and cynical affair."⁷¹⁷ The masculine element appears to be emitting short, regular emissions, in the form of texts - *CONVIER IGNORER CORPS HUMAIN*, again connoting the alternation of attraction/repulsion found with *Américaine* - while the female element, labelled "sexe feminine idéologique", is equipped with a "sac de voyage" (bags, like ovens, feature in Freud as symbols of the uterus),⁷¹⁸ ready to leave at a moment's notice. Picabia has also added somewhat askew, leg-like forms, as if to suggest that the female element is already scuttling away in search of another partner. The sexual relation is thus posed, for Picabia, Camfield notes, as one of "universal prostitution."

Deleuze and Guattari: Desiring Machines and *Anti-Oedipus*

La machine, qui hante sous toutes ses formes, son imagination.

Gabrielle Buffet⁷¹⁹

It becomes apparent when we read the analyses of various commentators upon Picabia's mechanomorphic imagery, that interpretation beyond certain obvious symbols becomes obstructed by the somewhat hermetic nature of some of Picabia's symbolism, often relating as it does to personal, biographical details. Rather than speculate along such lines I want instead to suggest that an alternative approach might

⁷¹⁶ Such a reading of the two separate systems is confirmed in the recent research of Dennison, who identifies some of the sources of Picabia's automobile components. See Dennison, op. cit., pp.276-283.

⁷¹⁷ William Camfield, "Machinomorphous Designs and Dada, 1915-21", in *Francis Picabia: Máquinas y Españolas*, op. cit. p.175.

⁷¹⁸ Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, op. cit., pp.470-471.

⁷¹⁹ Gabrielle Buffet, "Picabia l'inventeur", *L'Oeil*, No.18, June 1956, p.47.

be to attempt to site the work within a more general "machinic" economy - more specifically, that of Deleuze and Guattari in their *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972). The *Anti-Oedipus*, as its title indicates, is a polemical assault upon what Deleuze and Guattari see as the "Oedipalization" of our culture, resulting in an all-pervasive modern neurosis and against which they propose an alternative social model based upon what they term "schizoanalysis", a political analysis of desire which draws upon the lessons they believe can be learned from the schizophrenic. Deleuze and Guattari combine insights from both Marx and Freud in order to propose a single socio-economic model founded upon flows of *desire*, which they view as being repressed in contemporary society, and hence proceed to suggest an alternative economy rooted in *desiring-production*, which they argue is "at work everywhere". For them "everything is a machine" - they make no distinction between man and nature - and hence "everything is production". In this model, what they term *desiring-machines* are described as "binary machines", where one machine is always coupled to others, and where it is desire which "causes the current to flow."⁷²⁰ However, they argue that the body suffers in this process, resulting in a rigid stasis at its core - what they describe, in a term borrowed from Artaud, as the "body without organs" : "The full body without organs is the unproductive, the sterile, the unengendered, the unconsumable."⁷²¹ It is, in effect, the death instinct: "For desire desires death too, because the full body of death is its motor ...".

The "body without organs" is, as Ronald Bogue points out, a particularly slippery concept within the thought of Deleuze and Guattari. Apart from its use by Artaud, the idea comes more generally from the schizophrenic's experience of his body, where "schizophrenics enter catatonic states in which they seem to inhabit a body that has no organs."⁷²² Bogue points out that the body without organs is "an entity produced by the desiring-machines" and emerges when they congeal and form "an enormous undifferentiated object"; a point at which the desiring-machines are at degree zero, a "moment of antiproduction."⁷²³ A basic opposition is thereby established between desiring-machines and the body without organs, wherein the former is productive and the latter non-productive, and Bogue argues that the two are in fact "two states of the

⁷²⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit., pp.1-5.

⁷²¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *ibid.* p.8.

⁷²² Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari*, New York and London: Routledge, 1989, p.91.

⁷²³ Bogue, *ibid* p.93.

same 'things'." The body without organs, Deleuze and Guattari argue, serves as a "recording surface" for the recording of the production of desire, an "enchanted" surface which arrogates to itself all of the productive forces, serving as its "miraculate, enchanted surface." Much of this derives, of course, from their reading and experience of schizophrenia (Guattari worked for many years at Jean Oury's Clinique de la Bord) and they make frequent reference to Freud's analysis of the Schreber case - hence the origin of such terms as "miraculating" (Judge Schreber's body was "miraculated" by the rays from God).⁷²⁴

The relationship between the desiring-machines and the body without organs is characterised in terms of various "machines" - the "paranoiac machine", the "miraculating machine", the "celibate machine" - depending on whether the relation is one of repulsion or of attraction (for example, if the relation is one of repulsion, this may be experienced in terms of paranoia or persecution, hence the "paranoiac machine"). The "celibate machine" is in fact the Bachelor Machine of Carrouges, re-formulated in the terminology of Deleuze and Guattari, and which they say achieves a "genuine consummation", and "a pleasure that can rightly be called autoerotic, or rather automatic..."⁷²⁵ It is a machine, they argue, which produces "intensive quantities", an intensity akin to that of the schizophrenic, for example in the form of hallucinations or as delirium. Jarry's *Le Surmâle*, one of the examples chosen by Carrouges, would also meet the case of Deleuze and Guattari's "celibate machines", with its divided central character of Marcueil, who transforms himself into an endlessly producing, but ultimately sterile, sex machine (the celebrated "Indian" of Theophrastus). Marcueil's transformation is experienced as a series of *intensities*, expressed as various hallucinatory events - the encounter with the female "dynamomètre" at night in the Bois de Boulogne; the miraculous blooming of roses on the locomotive during the 10,000 miles race; or the hallucinatory aura of Marcueil's lovemaking with Ellen Elson during their record-breaking attempt.

I want to argue that one can discern strong correspondences between the machinic model of Deleuze and Guattari and the mechanomorphic works of Picabia. Each model takes the machine as its central paradigm and in each case we discover a machinic economy based upon desiring-production. In both cases, too, the machine

⁷²⁴ Sigmund Freud, "Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of Paranoia (*Dementia Paranoides*), in Freud, *Case Histories II*, op. cit.

⁷²⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, op. cit. p.18.

"functions" only when broken down - in Deleuze and Guattari this assumes the fragmented form of the desiring-machines, while in Picabia it takes the form of improbable or absurd mechanical combinations. And with each, the concept of *desire* is reformulated such that it eschews *representation* and instead embraces *production*. The psychoanalytic concept of "desire" is also re-formulated in Deleuze and Guattari, such that, rather than being conceived in terms of *lack*, in a tradition which could be traced back to Plato, it is rather conceived in very material terms, as production. Psychoanalysis is also criticised for substituting in the place of the productions of the unconscious, a "classical theatre" of representations; for Deleuze and Guattari, by contrast, the unconscious is conceived as a *factory*. Desire thus becomes "the set of *passive syntheses* that engineer partial objects, flows and bodies, and that function as units of production."⁷²⁶ It is therefore not desire which lacks anything, but rather "the *subject* that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is no fixed subject unless there is repression." As John Marks observes of Deleuze's thought, the thinking subject is placed under question, and "individuals are in fact multiplicities."⁷²⁷ We can perhaps see in the various personae adopted by Picabia, this same unfixing of the subject, an array of alter egos which include "Le Saint des Saints", the *Rastaquouère* or "flashy foreign traveller", or the various aliases adopted in *391 - Pharamousse, Le Raté*, or "Funny Guy" (in *Le Pilhaou-Thibaou*) - and which serve to undermine fixed subject positions and propose a multiple subject.

Much of this model is also surely directly applicable to many of the mechanomorphic works of Picabia, where we encounter a persistent eschewal of the "theatre of desire", and where instead the unconscious is posed very much as a *factory*, very much on the side of *production* rather than that of representation. Picabia's eroticism is briskly functional, at times brutally mechanistic in its deployment of mechanical metaphors comprising engaged cogs, linked wheels, pistons, or the basic rocking and thrusting motions of pistons and connecting rods - a functionalism which often teeters over into the absurd in various proto-dada productions (*Novia II*, or *Parade amoureuse*). Deleuze and Guattari also argue that art often introduces an "element of dysfunction" into desiring-production:

the artist presents paranoiac machines, miraculating machines, and celibate machines as so many technical machines, so as to cause

⁷²⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, op. cit. p.26.

⁷²⁷ John Marks, *Gilles Deleuze: Vitalism and Multiplicity*, London and Sterling, V.A.: Pluto Press, 1998.

desiring-machines to undermine technical machines.⁷²⁸
 Again, this perfectly suits the case of Picabia in his absurdist modifications of functioning machines, serving to subvert their rational functioning, in works such as *Prostitution universelle* (1916) or *Portrait de Marie Laurencin* (1916-17), and where the addition of more personal elements, often with sexual connotations, serves to eroticise their production and hence to transform what were initially technical machines into desiring-machines. Another obvious example might be that of the dysfunctional camera used by Picabia in *Ici, c'est ici Stieglitz* (fig.131) to suggest Stieglitz's failure to attain his ideal - a collapsed bellows hinting at sexual malfunction, and the whole device firmly arrested by the addition of a car gear lever set in neutral, with the hand-brake firmly on. A machine, then, which is clearly going nowhere and incapable of properly functioning - but nonetheless, a *desiring* machine, which struggles on. The consequence of such a transformation, for Deleuze and Guattari then, is that "the work of art is itself a desiring machine."⁷²⁹

Deleuze and Guattari further argue that desiring-production is multiplicity - "pure multiplicity" which is "irreducible to any sort of unity" and that we inhabit an "age of partial objects", of left-overs, of bits and pieces which refuse to cohere into any whole.⁷³⁰ Writing of Proust, but in terms which seem equally applicable to Picabia, Deleuze and Guattari lay emphasis upon the element of fragmentation and of a lack of totality in the work, when they speak of:

... pieces of a puzzle belonging not to any one puzzle but to many ...
 their unmatched edges violently bent out of shape, forcibly made to fit
 together, to interlock, with a number of pieces always left over.⁷³¹

Again, there are many such works by Picabia in which various mechanical, electrical or other such components are raggedly stitched together in far from seamless combinations (*Voilà la femme*, 1915), producing absurdist structures without any possibility of rational construction, but which nonetheless cohere upon another level - for as Deleuze and Guattari argue, "the whole" coexists *alongside* the parts, rather than comprising their sum.⁷³²

⁷²⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, op. cit. p.32.

⁷²⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *ibid.*

⁷³⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *ibid.* p.42.

⁷³¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *ibid.* p.43.

⁷³² Deleuze and Guattari, *ibid.*

New York, 1915-16: Broken-down Machines

Desiring-machines ... continually break down as they run, and in fact run only when they are not functioning properly ...

Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*.⁷³³

Picabia's frenzied lifestyle while in New York triggered a deterioration in his health, a decline further exacerbated by abuse of alcohol and by his continued use of opium, a drug he had been smoking in Paris since 1909. Duchamp recalls of Picabia that: "In 1911-12 he went to smoke opium almost every night. It was a rare thing, even then."⁷³⁴ Sanouillet tells us that he would obtain the drug, together with Apollinaire, at Luna Park, an attraction described by its proprietor in an advertisement of the period (motto "Du nouveau; toujours du nouveau!"), as "la Ville Enchantée". The same advertisement boasts of an erupting volcano and "La Rivière Diabolique avec ses monstres étranges" which gave the illusion of "un voyage mystérieux dans le royaume de Pluton", making the opium seem rather unnecessary. Lebel also notes that in 391 (No.4) Picabia wrote "MAGIC CITY: Opium, Whisky, Tango", and that in his poem *Histoire de Voir* wrote "my body is a jar of fine opium that enchants my leisure hours", as well as writing another poem entitled *Marihuana* and entitling an image *Haschich*.⁷³⁵ But Lebel goes even further, arguing that in the world inhabited by Picabia "the consumption of opium and cocaine had become almost banal", and that "the influence of drugs was present throughout his life and work, notably in the hallucinatory circles of the Dalmau period."⁷³⁶ By 1916 Picabia had plunged into a nervous depression and was unable to paint; amongst his numerous symptoms Michel Sanouillet lists: a fear of confinement, inability to sleep alone, crises of "delirium tremens", tachycardia (abnormal heartbeat), and a morbid fear of death.

Picabia's illness was fortuitous insofar as it served to absolve him of what his former wife describes (surely ironically) as his "important military mission to Cuba" and resulted in a medical discharge which "carried him to the end of the war."⁷³⁷ Buffet-Picabia gives us a flavour of their life in New York, where the Picabias "became part of a motley

⁷³³ Deleuze and Guattari, *ibid.* p.31.

⁷³⁴ Duchamp, cited in Tomkins, *op. cit.*, p.62.

⁷³⁵ Lebel, "The Picabia Machine", *op. cit.*, p.188.

⁷³⁶ Lebel, *ibid.*

⁷³⁷ Buffet-Picabia, "Some Memories of Pre-Dada: Picabia and Duchamp" (1949), in Robert Motherwell (ed), *The Dada Painters and Poets*, *op. cit.*, p.258.

international band which turned night into day, conscientious objectors of all nationalities and walks of life living in an inconceivable orgy of sexuality, jazz and alcohol." But a world which she also characterises as "brutal", as a world of profiteering, "shameless speculation", and wartime spy paranoia. This lifestyle clearly exacted its toll on Picabia's health, and Lebel notes that he "submitted to several detoxification cures in various clinics."⁷³⁸ We might also consider the impact of Picabia's accelerated lifestyle while in New York, in terms of a confrontation with some of the newly emergent pathologies associated with modernity itself.

The impact of rapid urbanisation, new forms of transport and the proliferation of new technologies as a central feature of modernity, has been explored in the writings of Walter Benjamin, Georg Simmel⁷³⁹ and Siegfried Kracauer,⁷⁴⁰ in what Ben Singer has characterised as a "*neurological conception of modernity*."⁷⁴¹ As Singer observes, the modern metropolis subjected the individual to "a new intensity of sensory stimulation, ... a barrage of impressions, shocks and jolts", while "the tempo of life had become more frenzied" as a consequence of "new forms of rapid transportation" and "the pressing schedules of modern capitalism."⁷⁴² The term "neurasthenia" had been popularized in the United States by the New York physician George Miller Beard, through his pioneering text *American Nervousness* (1881), which pointed to the proliferation of nervous diseases as the apparently inevitable accompaniment of modernity, to which Americans, he argued, were particularly prone. As Anson Rabinbach has shown, Beard's thesis was broadly in line with the standard French text of Achille-Adrian Proust and Gilbert Ballet - *L'Hygiène du neurasthénique* (1887) - which linked the condition to "the social pressures of modern life."⁷⁴³ A dissenting view, in the model of clinicians like Charcot, presented the disease as hereditary. The principal symptom of neurasthenia, as stated in Proust and Ballet, was the "perpetual sensation of fatigue", while Rabinbach notes that:

Neurasthenia resembled both hysteria and melancholia, but it was far

⁷³⁸ Lebel, op. cit. p.188.

⁷³⁹ See Simmel's classic essay "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1903), reprinted in Philip Kasinitz (ed), *Metropolis: Centre and Symbol of Our Times*, London: Macmillan, 1995.

⁷⁴⁰ Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995.

⁷⁴¹ Ben Singer, "Modernity, Hyperstimulus, and the Rise of Popular Sensationalism", in Charney and Schwartz (eds), op. cit., p.72.

⁷⁴² Singer, *ibid.* p.73.

⁷⁴³ Anson Rabinbach, "Neurasthenia and Modernity", in Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter (eds), *Incorporations*, New York: Zone/MIT Press, 1992, p.179.

more elusive and shrewdly deceptive in its plethora of physical disorders.⁷⁴⁴

Proust and Ballet pointed to the dangers of the "exaggerated development of the sexual instincts" as "giving rise to debauchery and lubricity", where physicians of the time would have found striking correspondences with Picabia's own early development (his elopement to Switzerland with a mistress at eighteen years) and dissipated lifestyle. It is perhaps worth noting here, that even those familiar with advanced art at times castigated the dadaists, both for their dissolute lifestyle and for the erotic content of their art: Albert Gleizes, in *L'Affaire Dada* (1920) points to their "lashing of the nervous system with liquor and drugs", and goes on to identify certain "leit-motifs" which occur in their work:

Et le cas pathologique apparaît brutalement. On trouve constamment leurs cerveaux hantés par un délire sexuel et une fringale scatologique. ... Leurs ébats se donnent libre cours autour des appareils génitaux de l'un et l'autre sexe. ... Cas bien connu des neurologistes, ils confondent les déjections avec les productions du cerveau.⁷⁴⁵

Picabia's sharp response in *Cannibale*, refers pointedly to Gleizes' own apparent failure to put his "genital apparatus" to good use in producing children: "Son appareil sexuel, ainsi qu'il le nomme si élégamment, à quoi peut-il bien lui servir? Sans nul doute à construire du cubisme aquatique!"⁷⁴⁶ As well as pointing to the hostility between certain sectors of dada and cubism, this exchange also points to the entanglement of issues of gender and sexuality within art of the time and is quite revealing of the range of attitudes of the period.

It would seem highly likely that Picabia became familiar with many of the concepts relating to his own neurasthenia, along with ideas on the various linkages between nervous and sexual energy, and that these ideas and the electrical-neurological metaphors used to express them, found expression in his work. Picabia received treatment for neurasthenic disorders in various sanatoria and in fact even dedicated his 1918 collection *Poèmes et dessins de la fille née sans mère*, "à tous les docteurs neurologues."⁷⁴⁷ Albert Deschamps, in his *Les Maladies de l'énergie* (1908), argues that the body should be considered in terms of "un vaste réservoir d'énergie" which

⁷⁴⁴ Rabinbach, *ibid.*, p.179.

⁷⁴⁵ Albert Gleizes, "L'affaire Dada", *Action*, no.3, April 1920, p.30.

⁷⁴⁶ Picabia, "L'affaire Dada", *Cannibale*, Paris, no.2, 25 May 1920 - in Picabia, *Ecrits I*, op. cit. p.228.

⁷⁴⁷ Francis Picabia, *Poèmes et dessins de la fille née sans mère*, Lausanne: Imprimeries Réunies, 1918; republished Paris: Editions Allia, 1992.

flows through the organism by way of "nervous waves" ("*l'onde nerveuse*").⁷⁴⁸ And Deschamps also draws upon the man-machine metaphor, posed in terms of an electrical analogy: "L'organisme est à la fois un transformateur et un accumulateur; il est comparable à une machine destinée à fournir de l'énergie." And he observes of the neurasthenic that: "Ces malades sont des machines humaines qui manquent du courant nerveux nécessaire aux besoins fonctionnels de l'organisme."⁷⁴⁹ We find a somewhat similar idea expressed in an advertisement of the period taken from *Comœdia*, aimed specifically at neurasthenics (fig.132), where a deficiency in energy is again conceived in terms of an electrical flow to the body, and while later than *De Zayas! De Zayas!*, both images are clearly immersed in the same fatasmatic surrounding the electrical.

It is noteworthy that a large number of the works exhibited at Picabia's 1922 exhibition at the Dalmau Gallery in Barcelona, feature wave patterns in a variety of forms: *Optophone II* (1922) features concentric circles, with the figure of a woman at its centre (fig.97); in other paintings we discover diminishing, black vertical bands, which create a horizontal wave pattern - (*Conversation I* (1922), *Volucelle II* (1922-23); while other works feature zig-zag or spiralling wave-patterns, as in *Tickets* (ca.1922) and *Résonateur* (ca.1922). Thus, even an apparently highly abstract work such as *Tickets* (fig.132) can be interpreted in terms of such bio-medical metaphors, when we note the diminishing zig-zag wave which leads directly to Picabia's signature at the bottom of the image. Borràs has pointed to the "human-electrical analogies" suggested by *Optophone*, which she says, resembles a "magnetic field around a current bearing conductor", and, given that an Optophone converts energy from one form to another, suggests that "Picabia seems to have in mind an optophone which converts electrical energy into sexual energy."⁷⁵⁰ Picabia, himself a "broken down machine" can therefore be seen to draw extensively upon such medical concepts as neurasthenia in his work.

Barcelona, 1916-17: 391 and the Early Machine Works

By June of 1916 Picabia had decided to travel to Spain to convalesce and left New York for Barcelona. Apart from its climate and closeness to the French border, Barcelona

⁷⁴⁸ Albert Deschamps, *Les Maladies de l'Energie*, Paris: Félix Alcan, 1908, pp.46-8.

⁷⁴⁹ Deschamps, *ibid.* pp.3-5.

⁷⁵⁰ Borràs, *Picabia*, *op. cit.* p.193.

was also attractive to Picabia as it already harboured a cosmopolitan group of exiles fleeing the war in Europe. Marie Laurencin and her German husband had fled there in 1914, following the outbreak of war, and Albert and Juliette Gleizes arrived in May 1916, a little before Picabia. Arthur Cravan had also reached Barcelona during 1916, where in April he fought and badly lost an entirely dubious title bout with the American Jack Johnson.⁷⁵¹ Nonetheless, the fight provided him with the funds to travel to New York, where he was to take part in the New York Dada scene and gave his celebrated drunken lecture before a smart audience, during the course of which he began to remove his clothes, before being finally restrained by the police.⁷⁵² Cravan was also joined in Barcelona by his brother, Otto Lloyd, along with his wife, the Russian artist Olga Sackaroff. Although Barcelona must have seemed extremely provincial for the exiles in comparison with Paris or New York, it was there that Picabia met the gallery owner Josep Dalmau, who showed the work of Picabia, Delaunay, Gleizes, Laurencin, and others, during 1916-17. It was also Dalmau who agreed to publish Picabia's latest project, the journal *391*, modelled on Stieglitz's *291* (though without Stieglitz's prior knowledge). When Picabia mailed Stieglitz a copy of the first issue, dated 25 January 1917, he also wrote to him, rather revealingly, that: "Il n'est pas aussi bien fait, mais c'est mieux que rien, car vraiment ici, il n'y a rien, rien, rien."⁷⁵³

Sanouillet notes that the origin of the mechanomorphic images which appear in *391* has long been obscure, but that press cuttings in the Fonds Doucet:

nous révèle que la plupart des dessins mécaniques avaient été inspirés à Picabia par un lot d'épures d'ingénieurs, achetées à vil prix par le peintre pour en pouvoir utiliser le papier, d'excellente qualité, et fort rare alors.⁷⁵⁴

Quite clearly, the acquisition of these technical drawings served a double purpose, attractive to Picabia in terms of their subject matter i.e. the machine, but also providing a source of high quality paper, rare in wartime. In part, this scarcity - "ici, il n'y a rien" - helps explain the shift in Picabia's methods, recycling these drawings almost as Duchampian "ready-mades", by the application of paint and texts, the obliteration of details which

⁷⁵¹ Maria Lluïsa Borràs, *Cravan: Une stratégie du scandale*, Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 1996.

⁷⁵² See Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, "Arthur Cravan and American Dada" (1938), in Robert Motherwell (ed), *The Dada Painters and Poets*, op. cit. pp.13-17.

⁷⁵³ Picabia, letter to Stieglitz, 22 January, 1917, cited in Michel Sanouillet, *Francis Picabia et "391"*, Paris: Eric Losfeld, 1966, p.46.

⁷⁵⁴ Sanouillet, *ibid.* p.48. Sanouillet is probably referring to a cutting from *Le Matin*, 9 November 1921, containing the article "La Turbine et le Dada", which makes a similar claim about the origins of the mechanical works - Tzara Dossier VIII, Bibliothèque Littéraire Jacques Doucet.

might reveal his sources, in order to transform the originals. Nonetheless, we are also now in a better position to positively identify the source of a number of these images dating from the Barcelona era and hence to come to a fuller understanding of the origins of some of the imagery figuring in *391* and also of Picabia's working methods.

If we turn first to the inaugural cover of *391*, published in Barcelona in January of 1917, the image by Picabia is entitled *Novia II* (fig.134), the Spanish word for both "bride" and "fiancée", and a term which recurs in a number of his mechanomorphic works. This immediately suggests the influence of Duchamp, who had presented his *La Mariée* to Picabia in August of 1912.⁷⁵⁵ Apart from the title "Novia", the text at the top of the image reads "au premier occupant", providing the work with a sexual orientation, while above Picabia's signature is the inscription "Le Saint des Saints", which as Sanouillet points out, is suggestive of such puns as "seins des seins", or "saint dessin", and an alter ego used previously by Picabia in such works as his self-portrait *Le Saint des Saints* (1915). Sanouillet adds that the original maquette of *Novia* too bears the additional inscription "Le Saint des Saints, c'est de moi qu'il s'agit dans ce portrait", making clear that we are in fact again faced with a self-portrait by Picabia.

The image features two wheels, one much larger than the other, apparently connected by a complex of linking rods, the whole of which has neither clear purpose, nor any real likelihood of functioning in practice - in effect, an *absurd* machine. Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia has characterised the birth of *391* in terms of an "explosion of protest" at their wartime circumstances, "no longer a mere break with tradition but a voluntary break with reason, a kind of auto-inoculation of the absurd by the absurd ...";⁷⁵⁶ and an attitude which manifests clear links with contemporary developments in Zurich. Borràs views the apparatus depicted in *Novia* as one of Carrouges's Bachelor Machines:

This machine is undoubtedly *célibataire*: the mechanism allows uninterrupted amorous action, evidently without any purpose of reproduction.⁷⁵⁷

But the image would equally support a Deleuzian reading of Picabia's mechanomorphic works, expressive of a constantly whirring unconscious on the model of the machine, and a machine whose constant output is that of desire. Deleuze and Guattari argue that:

⁷⁵⁵ Jean Hubert Martin, "Ses tableaux sont peints pour raconter non pour prouver", in *Francis Picabia*, (Pompidou cat.), op. cit. p.45.

⁷⁵⁶ Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, "Some Memories of Pre-Dada: Picabia and Duchamp" (1949), in Motherwell (ed), *The Dada Painters and Poets*, op. cit., p.263.

⁷⁵⁷ Borràs, *Picabia*, op. cit. p.174.

"Desire constantly couples continuous flows of partial objects that are by nature fragmentary and fragmented"⁷⁵⁸ and that "the machine passes into the heart of desire, the machine is desiring and desire, machined."⁷⁵⁹ This breakdown of the distinction between the organic and the inorganic is a recurring theme in Deleuze and Guattari's thought, where both the subject and the social come to be re-conceived in terms of "machinic materialism" - as a series of interconnected "desiring-machines" through which there are material flows. Likewise in Picabia's mechanical unconscious, where we again discover an absurd world of machines - a Jarryesque world, more 'Pataphysical than Taylorised - a factory engaged in the production of desire.

The original source for this image is undoubtedly an undated engineering drawing by Stanislas Petit, of the wheels and track-rods of a steam locomotive designed by Robert Stephenson (fig.135),⁷⁶⁰ and from the inscription on the top of the image, almost certainly supplied with the technical journal *Le Praticien Industriel*, published in Paris from 1894 until at least the mid-1920s. *Le Praticien Industriel* (fig.136) described itself as a "Journal des Arts et Métiers" and provided its readers with a diet of popular science and technology, ranging from aeronautics and agriculture, to surgery and electricity. However, the images acquired by Picabia - as will become clear - appear to come from early issues (ca.1900-1905) and consist mainly of basic engineering components and apparatuses - gears, cogs, wheels, steam engines, etc., thus determining the basic nature of the mechanical metaphors deployed by Picabia. The fact that the texts, unusually, are given in both English and Spanish, as well as in French, provides a further important reason for their proving attractive to Picabia as "self-portraits", given his mixed Cuban-French background and his immediate immersion within an English-language culture in New York.

Several variants of this particular image exist, providing further confirmation of the source and also clarifying Picabia's working methods and symbolism. In *Study for Novia* (1916-17), we see Picabia's initial response to his source material, in the form of a

⁷⁵⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, op. cit. p.5.

⁷⁵⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, op. cit. p.285.

⁷⁶⁰ An uncatalogued image when first inspected in the collection of the Wellcome Institute, London, where the curators were unable to provide a reference for the work. (Subsequently catalogued, but with no source, and dated ca.1905.) That this image provides the source of Picabia's *Novia* can be confirmed not only by the general design, but also by the shadows which Picabia reproduces from the original drawing, but which make no sense in relation to the way he freely adapts the layout of the parts; such alterations also further reinforce the absurdity of the image.

loosely treated watercolour (fig.137), a freely rendered translation in striking contrast with its technical source. Picabia's image nonetheless contains some detail of the mechanics of the original engineering drawing, allowing his source to be positively confirmed. Camfield sees in this image "a beguiling, beautiful machine, a sweetheart", a machine which he reads as the "antithesis" of precision and efficiency.⁷⁶¹ In a further variant, *Novia I* (1917), Picabia is working in oils on a much larger scale (fig.138), altering the proportions of the wheels to produce a far more balanced and geometric, an apparently more "rational" variant, than the more overtly absurd machine used on the cover of *391*. In each case Picabia has simply rotated his source through 90 degrees before simplifying and modifying its mechanics and detailing. We can now see in comparing Picabia's work with the original, that in the case of the *391* cover, he has also exaggerated the size differential between the two wheels. In terms of the sexual symbolism of these images, we are surely faced here - and not withstanding Camfield's claims for the "femininity" of the *Study for Novia* - with a play upon a very *virile* form of masculinity, albeit rather tongue-in-cheek in the case of the *391* variant. Sanouillet observes that: "Il est hors de doute ... qu'il a ici une intention obscène",⁷⁶² though he accepts that the symbolism is somewhat obscure. Nonetheless, in its deployment of the two engaged wheels, the thrusting of the connecting rods, and the rocking back-and-forth movement, we find all the components of the modernist equation of the machine with the erotic, as found for example in Jarry's *Le Surmâle*, where we find a similar concern with the erotics of perpetual motion, together with the eroticisation of various machines - particularly the bicycle, the steam engine, and the automobile. The notion of perpetual motion seems to have enjoyed a massive resurgence during the First Machine Age, as Aragon observes in a review of J. Michel's *Mouvements perpétuels* (1927). Aragon notes that, of some 600 patents taken out for such devices in England between 1677 and 1903, (patents taken, as Aragon observes, on *absurd* devices which clearly *didn't* function perpetually), only 25 date from prior to 1855.⁷⁶³ We find Picabia making overt reference to the concept on the cover of the final issue of *391* (No.19, October 1924), where he writes:

IL N'Y A QU'UN MOUVEMENT
C'EST LE MOUVEMENT PERPETUEL!

⁷⁶¹ William A. Camfield, *Francis Picabia: His Art, Life and Times*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979, pp.318-319.

⁷⁶² Sanouillet, op. cit. p.48.

⁷⁶³ Louis Aragon, review of J. Michel, *Mouvements perpétuels* (1927), *La Révolution surréaliste*; Nos.9-10, 1 October 1927, p.61.

In relation to the eroticisation of the machine in Jarry, one could point to the 10,000 miles race between the locomotive, with its passenger the American heiress Ellen Elson, and a team of racing cyclists; or again, Jarry's description of Ellen's motor, which must surely have appealed to Picabia:

la machine exhibait sans pudeur, on eût dit avec orgueil, ses organes de propulsion. Elle avait l'air d'un dieu lubrique et fabuleux enlevant la jeune fille. La bête métallique, comme un gros scarabée, essaya ses élytres, gratta, trépida avec ses palpes et s'en alla.⁷⁶⁴

In essence, then, Picabia's focus is unerringly upon the erotic, transforming the basic mechanics of his source material into a fully-fledged Deleuzian desiring-machine.

In a slightly earlier work dating from the period of the machine portraits, *Gabrielle Buffet. Elle corrige les moeurs en riant* (1915) (fig.139), Picabia provides a humorous portrait of his wife in the form of an adjustable automobile windscreen. This image therefore takes its place alongside a number of others where automobile components are deployed to signify women or the erotic: *Portrait d'une jeune fille américaine dans l'état de nudité* (1915), *De Zayas! De Zayas!* (1915), *Portrait de Marie Laurencin* (1916-17), etc. We discover similar images in an article on automatic windscreens dating from March 1911, found in *Le Praticien Industriel* (fig.140) and it seems likely that Picabia would have been very familiar with such imagery, given his keen interest in such areas as motoring, aeronautics and mechanics. We know too, from Arnauld Pierre, that Picabia read journals of popular science, and that, with the later machine works of the early 1920s: "Picabia poursuit des habitudes prédatrices inavouées et continue à prendre comme modèle direct des illustrations publiées dans le magazine populaire *La Science et la Vie*."⁷⁶⁵ In another essay Pierre traces some thirty of Picabia's slightly later machine works, dating from 1918-22, to sources in *La Science et la Vie* and insists upon Picabia's unconcern for the actual functioning of these devices, which he views as part of the artist's general sexual-mechanical vocabulary.⁷⁶⁶ Picabia has added to the image the text "elle corrige les moeurs en riant", which as Borràs has pointed out, again derives from the pink pages of the *Petit Larousse*: "Castigat ridendo mores" - "Devise de la comédie, imaginée par le poète Santeuil ..."⁷⁶⁷ In the original gouache, Picabia has tinted the top

⁷⁶⁴ Jarry, *Le Surmâle*, op. cit., p.57.

⁷⁶⁵ Arnauld Pierre, "Le dernier style machiniste de Francis Picabia: nouvelles sources", in *Francis Picabia: galerie Dalmau, 1922*, Paris: Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1996, p.35.

⁷⁶⁶ Arnauld Pierre, "Sources inédites pour l'oeuvre machiniste de Francis Picabia, 1918-1922", *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art française*; 1991/2, pp.255-281.

⁷⁶⁷ In *Francis Picabia* (Pompidou cat.), op. cit. p.49.

screen red and the lower one green, suggestive of traffic lights or "stop/go" symbolism, thus creating a humorous metaphor for Buffet's double role, both restraining as well as stimulating him. There is perhaps also a suggestion here, given that Picabia saw so much of the world through a car windscreen, of Buffet as a kind of medium through which many of his ideas were filtered - certainly she was a highly intelligent and cultured woman, far more widely-read than Picabia, and as already noted, she served as his mouthpiece in New York, compensating for her husband's lack of English. Sanouillet also notes that Gabrielle was able to make good some of Picabia's shortcomings by summarising works and providing him with information on current ideas, literature and music. We should add that it was after meeting Buffet, then freshly returned from Berlin, in 1908, that Picabia renounced his lucrative contract with Danthon, and that we see the start of a radical shift in his work, away from the more conservative neo-impressionism which had guaranteed his financial success as a painter and the beginning of his more radical, modernist period. Buffet is also credited with Picabia's influence by the Symbolist theory of "equivalents", which undoubtedly exercised an important and enduring impact upon his work.

If we turn now to a second series of images based on the same source, we discover a rather different form of mechanical symbolism, as well as a shift in Picabia's working methods. *Machine tournez vite* (1916-17) is one of Picabia's most important and most frequently reproduced mechanical works (fig.141) and again dates from the period of recuperation in Barcelona. We again encounter here the engagement of two differentially sized wheels, here in the form of two engaged cogs, one now far larger than the other, and with an added text which identifies the smaller cog as "1.FEMME", while the larger is labelled "2.HOMME" - a clear parody of the conventions of technical drawing. We can again trace the source of this series to an engineering drawing by Petit from *Le Praticien Industriel* (fig.142) which is clearly from the same lot of images acquired by Picabia, most probably in Barcelona, soon after his arrival in July 1916.⁷⁶⁸ Again the text is trilingual and examination of the annotation reveals a number of body metaphors which must surely have appealed to Picabia, even in so simple a piece of basic engineering: the "body of the pinion", the "crown of the wheel", the "teeth of the pinion",

⁷⁶⁸ Given the French source of the journal, it is highly unlikely that the images were obtained in America. Equally unlikely is that Picabia took them to New York from France, and then on to Barcelona, without their exercising any influence upon his American mechanomorphic work. The conclusion must be that the prints were picked up in Barcelona, which is close to the French frontier; lacking materials due to wartime shortages, Picabia obtained them cheaply there after arriving in July 1916.

the "ribs" of the spokes, the "faces" of the wheel planes. Borràs, too, points to the persistence of the theme of cogs in Picabia's work, where they frequently serve as a metaphor for the sexual act - for continual, endless activity, but without issue - and hence ultimately signify a certain lack of purpose. We also discover from the notation of the original image, that the apparent symbolism of relative size is in fact reversed, because it is the small, "female" cog which is in fact the driving pinion, turning the much larger (male) wheel. A machine driven by desire, then, turning endlessly within a dark void, further reinforcing the sense of pointlessness, or *sterility*, noted by Borràs.

I would also suggest that, in its focus on the bare, even brutal, engagement of the two elements via their angular, meshed teeth, we might discern here a kind of "castrating machine", thus further reinforcing Picabia's bleak view of the sexual relation at the time of his illness. Carrouges's concept of the "Bachelor Machine" is also extremely useful here, where: "A bachelor machine is a fantastic image that transforms love into a technique of death:"⁷⁶⁹ Carrouges, we should recall, says that the Bachelor Machine is "first of all an improbable machine" - "it is a semblance of machinery" - and comprises two equal and equivalent units, one of which is *sexual*, the other *mechanical*. The sexual unit in turn comprises of two elements, one male the other female, though these may be represented by several "bodies". And Carrouges adds that:

In their splendid ambiguity the Bachelor Machines stand simultaneously for the omnipotence of eroticism and its negation, for death and immortality, for torture and Disneyland, for fall and resurrection ... [And that] ... what becomes evident from the Bachelor Machines is the denial of women and even more of procreation as a basic condition for a break with cosmic law ... ⁷⁷⁰

It becomes clear that all of the elements demanded of Carrouges's Bachelor Machines are present in the works discussed (*Novia* and *Machine tournez vite*), including the element of sterility, or the negation of female precreation. Bazon Brock, in an essay "Parthenogenesis and Bachelor Machine", focuses upon the "creation ex nihilo" aspect of the Bachelor Machine, and discerns the elevation of the figure of the Bachelor as creator into a God-like position - as also in the case of Picabia as "Saint des Saints". Brock also detects in this elevation of the Bachelor, an evasion of procreation and the family, and a diversion of energy into artistic creativity, together with the continuation of efforts to create the "perpetuum mobile", whereby such creators put themselves in the

⁷⁶⁹ Carrouges, "Directions for Use", in *Le machine celibi/ The Bachelor Machines*, op. cit. p.21.

⁷⁷⁰ Carrouges, *Les Machines Célibataires*, (1954), cited in *Le machine celibi/ The Bachelor Machines*, op. cit. p.7.

position of "prime movers".⁷⁷¹

We also see here a shift in Picabia's working methods, for, in the case of *Machine tournez vite*, the artist has simply painted over his source material, obliterating all the background details to conceal his sources and to isolate the two engaged cogs, while also blanking out all the coded numbers and letters on the cogs themselves. There are also two further works which relate to the same source; the first, *Le fiancé* (1916) comprises only a single, disengaged cog (fig.143), apparently symbolising the chaste, solitary fiancé. But we also need to read this alongside a related work *Vertu* (1916-17), which again features a single cog, this time viewed from the side (fig.144). From its shape, proportions, the number of teeth, etc. it is clear that *Vertu* can also be traced to the same source in *Le Praticien Industriel*.⁷⁷² In a 1920 essay entitled "L'art", Picabia wrote that: "La vertu comme le patriotisme n'existe que pour les intelligences moyennes ...,"⁷⁷³ suggesting that both *Le fiancé* and *Vertu* need to be read in the light of Picabia's cynical, perhaps Nietzschean, revaluation of moral virtues. And indeed we could cite other such counter-moral views amongst Picabia's writings: "Dieu a inventé le concubinage, Satan le mariage", "la morale est l'épine dorsale des imbéciles", or "la morale est le contraire du bonheur."⁷⁷⁴ Terms like *fiancé* or *virtu* are thus deployed ironically in relation to these mechanomorphic forms, subverting the usual connotations of logic and rationality which conventionally inhabit the machine. Far from celebrating any kind of "machine aesthetic", these baldly depicted cogs come to signify the cold sterility of the rationality that they embody, while also signalling Picabia's disdain for conventional social values.

It should be stressed that, with Deleuze and Guattari, the reconception of the body in terms of interconnected desiring-machines is in no way a revival of the eighteenth century concept of *L'homme machine* - as Ronald Bogue insists, "theirs is not a mechanistic model of reality"; that their "machines" lack the wholeness of technical

⁷⁷¹ Bazon Brock, "Parthenogenesis and Bachelor Machine", in *Le machine celibi/The Bachelor Machines*, *ibid.*

⁷⁷² From their dimensions, the fact that both works were originally executed on paper, and appear to use the "overpainting" technique, I would also suggest that both came from a single sheet of paper - together they would form a sheet approx. 49 x 32, the same size as some of the other prints issued by *Le Praticien Industriel*.

⁷⁷³ Francis Picabia, "L'art" (1920), in *Francis Picabia*, (Pompidou cat.), *op cit.* p.93.

⁷⁷⁴ Francis Picabia, cited in Seckel, in *Francis Picabia*, (Pompidou cat.), *op. cit.* p.36.

machines and "work only when they break down."⁷⁷⁵ It quickly becomes apparent that Picabia's mechanomorphic works too, when viewed from a Deleuzian perspective, fail to conform to the traditional mechanistic formula of *L'homme machine*. This is made clear if we briefly consider an article entitled "L'homme machine", taken from *Le Praticien Industriel* of 30 July, 1911, typical of such articles of the period, and which indicates that this conception of the body-as-machine was common currency during this First Machine Age. In that article, the body is posed as "Exactement comme une machine délicate":

l'estomac en est la chaudière et la nourriture le combustible; les poumons sont les chambres à air; les jambes et les bras des flèches; l'épine dorsale est le support central; les glandes qui lubrifient les joints sont des graisseurs; et la bouche est la porte du foyer.⁷⁷⁶

Such crudely literal, holistic bodily-mechanical metaphors are very far from the fragmentary desiring-production of Deleuze and Guattari, or of Picabia, and point to the distance separating the latter from *L'homme machine*; Picabia's desiring-machines are fuelled only by desire and have only a single aim - that of desiring-production.

Another significant work, *Fille née sans mère* (1916-17), can also now be seen (fig.145) to relate to the overpainting method adopted by Picabia with *Machine tournez vite*. From an examination of the original painting, it is clear from what can be made out of the original engineering drawing (the layout, its trilingual presentation, text, etc.) that this too is based upon another of the *Praticien Industriel* drawings acquired in Spain. According to the catalogue of the Gabrielle Keiller Collection,⁷⁷⁷ of which this work forms a part, *Fille née sans mère* was first acquired by Josep Dalmau and was "probably left with Dalmau when Picabia returned to New York in the late Spring of 1917." Paul Haviland, in his 291 essay on the machine, asserts that man has made the machine in his own image, and that "The machine is his 'daughter born without a mother' ..., "⁷⁷⁸ but as Borràs shows, Picabia has again drawn upon the pink pages of the *Petit Larousse*, where the phrase "Prolem sine matre creatam" is to be found: "An epigraph from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* which Montesquieu placed at the beginning of his *Esprit des lois* to signify that he had had no model for it."⁷⁷⁹ That Picabia has in mind here some blasphemous intention, suggestive of a parody of the virgin birth, is clear not only from

⁷⁷⁵ Bogue, op. cit., p.92.

⁷⁷⁶ Prof. J.-C. Bennett, "L'homme machine", in *Le Praticien Industriel*, 17th Year, No.28, 30 July, 1911.

⁷⁷⁷ Now part of the collection of the Scottish Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh.

⁷⁷⁸ Haviland, statement, op. cit.

⁷⁷⁹ *Petit Larousse illustré*, cited in Elizabeth Cowling et al, *Surrealism and After: The Gabrielle Keiller Collection*, Edinburgh: Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, 1997.

the text, but also from the style of the image, with its background of gold metallic paint, suggesting the appearance of a Byzantine icon: a devotional image whose object is the machine. Such a reading is further reinforced by subsequent works with an even more overtly blasphemous intention, as most obviously in the case of *La Sainte vierge* (1920), a violent splash of black ink.⁷⁸⁰ Elizabeth Cowling provides a technical analysis of *Fille née sans mère*; which indicates that Picabia has in fact also radically altered the right hand side of the machine, to create a device "which could not have worked in engineering terms", while at the same time destroying the symmetry of the original.⁷⁸¹ Again, then, this assault upon rationality, functionality and logic, to produce an absurd machine which functions - in a perversely Deleuzian manner - only when it is broken down.

The Final American Trip, 1917

Il faut être nomade, traverser les idées comme on traverse
les pays et les villes ...

Picabia⁷⁸²

Picabia, on his third and final trip to New York in 1917, discovered a radically altered art scene, with the disappearance of 291 and subsequent break-up of the group organised around Stieglitz and De Zayas, and where the spotlight had clearly shifted from himself to Duchamp and the Arensberg circle. Picabia arrived four days before the opening of the exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists, where he showed two of his earlier works (*Culture physique*, 1913 and *La Musique est comme la peinture*, ca. 1913-17), but the scandal of the exhibition was that of *Fountain* (1917), the urinal submitted by Duchamp under the pseudonym "R.Mutt". It is during this period that Picabia produced *Parade amoureuse* (1917) (fig.146), which Borràs considers to be "a resumé or final synthesis of all the machines that Picabia had been building; the genuine *Daughter born without mother*, taken to its ultimate consequences."⁷⁸³ Borràs reads some of the

⁷⁸⁰ See Elizabeth Legge, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Virgin: Francis Picabia's *La Sainte Vierge*", *Word and Image*, Vol.12 no.2, April-June 1996, pp.218-242; David Hopkins, "Questioning Dada's Potency: Picabia's *La Sainte Vierge* and the Dialogue with Duchamp", *Art History*, Vol.15 no.3, September 1992, pp.317-333.

⁷⁸¹ Cowling et al, *ibid.*, p.121.

⁷⁸² Francis Picabia, "Monsieur Picabia se sépare des Dadas" (1921), in *Francis Picabia* (Pompidou cat.), op. cit., p.94.

⁷⁸³ Borràs, *Picabia*, op. cit. p.177.

elements of this work through Duchamp's *Green Box* notes (published in 1934) for the *Large Glass*, though it is by no means certain that Picabia would have had access to Duchamp's working notes at this early date. That an erotic intention is proposed is obvious from the title and entirely in line with Picabia's previous mechanomorphic works. The image surely depicts two mechanical components, stand-ins for human elements, tied together via a mechanical linkage and engaged in some erotic display. Ades sees the work as "a metaphor for the human sexual act", but which "also presents the image of a threatening amorous machine."⁷⁸⁴ Considered from the viewpoint of the model of desire in the *Anti-Oedipus* of Deleuze and Guattari, we have already noted their rejection of a model of desire premised upon lack; instead, they insist that "Desire is a machine, and the object of desire is another machine connected to it"⁷⁸⁵ - which is precisely the structure of many of Picabia's mechanomorphic works. That the entire apparatus is wholly absurd again reflects Picabia's cynical view of the sexual relation, while its mechanistic nature recalls the striking opening sentence of Jarry's *Le Surmâle*, tossed like a bombshell into his dinner party, by André Marcueil: "L'amour est un acte sans importance, puisqu'on peut le faire indéfiniment."⁷⁸⁶ Again, then, we discover an absurd, malfunctioning Deleuzian machine - an erotic machine which works only when broken down.

On 16 September 1917, Picabia left New York for the last time. He had arrived in April, only days before America declared war on Germany, making the United States far less attractive to its European exiles and was now leaving, his health again in a precarious condition and his marriage breaking up. Because of his still-dubious military status Picabia first returned to Barcelona, before moving later that year to Paris where he embarked on an affair with Germaine Everling. By the following February his mental state had continued to deteriorate and he was moved to Lausanne, under the care of the neurologist Dr. Brunnschweiler. In August of the same year, Picabia received a letter from Tzara, requesting a contribution to a Dada publication, and initiating an exchange of correspondence which culminated in their finally meeting, in Zurich, in January 1919. The Zurich Dadaists were surprised to come across Picabia creating a machine-work by dismantling an alarm clock, the cogs of which he then dipped in ink in order to produce *Réveil matin* (1918) (fig.147), and they were sufficiently impressed to use a variant of

⁷⁸⁴ Dawn Ades, *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed*, op. cit. p.156.

⁷⁸⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, op. cit. p.26.

⁷⁸⁶ Jarry, *Le Surmâle*, op. cit. p.7.

this image as the cover of their journal *Dada*, issue 4/5 (1919). It is also again a question of a body metaphor here - Arp has recalled that: "Nous le trouvâmes disséquant affairé un réveille-matin. J'ai dû penser à <'Anatomie> de Rembrandt qui se trouve au musée d'Amsterdam."⁷⁸⁷ And Arp too refers to Picabia as producing "des machines antimécaniques." We are therefore again confronted here with a machine which functions only through breaking down, so that a former symbol of regulation, an ordering device used to rationally apportion time and to regulate daily life, is liberated from its disciplinary function and instead freed for more creative ends, as an absurdly functioning machine. As Deleuze and Guattari observe in the *Anti-Oedipus*:

The only question is: how does it work? Schizoanalysis renounces all interpretation because it deliberately avoids the search for unconscious matter; the unconscious does not wish to say anything. On the contrary, the unconscious makes machines, machines with desires ...⁷⁸⁸

I want to conclude with a final image by Picabia, *Érotique* (fig.148), dating from 1924, where we are confronted with a monstrous heap of interlinked body parts and couplings. Deleuze and Guattari argue that:

It is at work everywhere ... It breathes, it heats, it eats. It shits and fucks. ... Everywhere *it* is machines - real ones, not figurative ones: machines driving other machines, machines being driven by other machines, with all the necessary couplings and connections. ... The breast is a machine that produces milk, and the mouth a machine coupled to it. ... all the time, flows and interruptions.⁷⁸⁹

And in Picabia's image, too, the individual bodies become subsumed within a quivering pile of flesh, an erotic *machine* through which the current of desire continually flows. Shorn of all trace of the mechanical, Picabia's organic device is nonetheless purely machinic - a machine which is endlessly, pointlessly producing.

⁷⁸⁷ Jean Arp, in Jean Arp, P.A. Benoit, Camille Bryen, Marcel Duchamp, *et al*, *Francis Picabia, 1879-1954*, Paris: Orbes, 1955 (unpaginated).

⁷⁸⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, cited in Jean-Jacques Lebel, "The Picabia Machine", in *Francis Picabia: Máquinas y Españolas*, op. cit.

⁷⁸⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. pp.1-2.

7. *La femme cachée*:

Tales from an Enchanted Forest

*J'ai toujours incroyablement souhaité de rencontrer la nuit,
dans un bois, une femme belle et nue ...
Supposer une telle rencontre n'est pas si délirant, somme toute:
il se pourrait.*
Breton, *Nadja*.⁷⁹⁰

Surrealism, Fantasy, *Nadja*.

As we have seen in the case of Picabia, one of the key pathways of male desire has been that of the fantasmatic of the machinic and electrical and I therefore want to turn to consider the role of male fantasy within surrealism, in the context of the inter-relationship of image and text. It would seem hardly surprising that we should find Breton's fantasy of the naked woman in the woods, staged in a composite image designed by Magritte, to be found in the closing pages of the final edition of *La Révolution surréaliste* (fig.149).⁷⁹¹ The layout figures in the context of a surrealist enquiry into the subject of "love", and appears only a year after the publication of *Nadja* (1928). In the centre of the image is Magritte's painting of a naked woman, *La femme cachée* (1929), with the inscription *je ne vois pas la ... cachée dans la forêt*, and a surrounding "frame" comprising photo-booth portraits of sixteen young surrealists,⁷⁹² eyes closed, apparently in a state of dreaming - as though jointly conjuring up the shared image of the naked woman. Their pose recalls that of the pale figure in de Chirico's *Le Cerveau de l'enfant* (1914), an image which long looked down upon their activities from the wall of Breton's rue Fontaine apartment. Like Duchamp's Bachelors, this group of dreaming suitors suggests some homosocial enterprise in which "woman" is the stake and immediately alerts us to the gender implications at play here. This layout also neatly reciprocates that of the inaugural edition of the same journal (December, 1924), in which we again find portrait

⁷⁹⁰ André Breton, *Nadja*, in Breton, *OCl*, op.cit. p.668.

⁷⁹¹ *La Révolution surréaliste*, No.12, 15 December 1929, p.73.

⁷⁹² The portraits are those of the contributors to the final edition of *La Révolution surréaliste*, arranged in alphabetical order, with the place of honour reserved for Breton: Maxime Alexandre, Aragon, Breton, Buñuel, Jean Caupenne, Dalí, Eluard, Ernst, Marcel Fourrier, Camille Goëmans, Magritte, Paul Nougé, Georges Sadoul, Tanguy, André Thirion and Albert Valentin.

photographs of some of the principal surrealists together with other admired figures (Freud, Picasso, de Chirico), together with an emblematic quotation from Baudelaire: *La femme est l'être qui projette la plus grande ombre ou la plus grande lumière dans nos rêves* (fig.150).⁷⁹³ Michel Poivert has characterised the image as being, not so much a genealogical tree of influence, as "une sorte de scène d'adoration."⁷⁹⁴ Here again, the central image is that of a woman - but this time a photograph of the distorted, not to say *deranged* features of the anarchist Germaine Berton, then notorious for having recently murdered the royalist Marius Plateau, a *Camelot du roi* and editor of *L'Action française*. Poivert notes that the image is a police photograph, thus further reinforcing surrealism's rebel image and its revolutionary credentials. The context is again significant - reports of dreams by surrealists, interspersed with garish accounts of suicides taken from daily newspapers. Needless to add that in the case of each layout, all of the surrounding figures are men, thus underlining the fact of surrealism as an essentially *masculine* project in which the figure of the woman serves rather as muse and (ambiguous) object of desire, than as active producer in her own right. But this enactment of male desire around the body of Germaine Berton, in the context of a graveyard of suicides, is given added piquancy by virtue of the subsequent suicide of Plateau's son, who took his life, we are told, "for love of her".⁷⁹⁵ That the suicide theme was no passing interest is attested by the major enquiry launched into the subject of suicide in the second issue of *La Révolution surréaliste*, together with a short essay by Jacques Vaché, whose own death by opium overdose was claimed by Breton as suicide. Also worthy of note is that the enquiry was launched under the banner "on tue comme on rêve",⁷⁹⁶ thus reaffirming surrealism's project of eliminating the barriers between waking life and that of the dream. I want to consider here the significance of this intersection of death and the erotic within the surrealist imaginary, posed in terms of masculine desire, and to analyse some of the specific fantasies through which these themes are encoded within surrealist works. More broadly, I want to also contextualise these phenomena historically in relation to the unfolding debate within surrealism during the crucial period of the mid- and late-1920s, on the role of the visual within what had hitherto been considered primarily a literary enterprise - and in the process to consider too the complex inter-relationship of

⁷⁹³ *La Révolution surréaliste*, No.1, 1 December 1924, p.17.

⁷⁹⁴ Michel Poivert, "Le phénomène d'extase ou le portrait du surréalisme même", *Etudes photographiques*, no.2, May 1997, p.101.

⁷⁹⁵ Krauss and Livingston, *L'Amour fou: photography and surrealism*, op. cit., p.159.

⁷⁹⁶ Enquête, "Le Suicide est-il une solution?", *La Révolution surréaliste*, no.2, 15 January, 1925, pp.8-15.

image and text within surrealist productions.

In psychoanalytic terms, Breton's minimal fantasy requires that we consider the question of psychical reality and the bearing this has upon the surrealist project as set out by Breton in the first *Manifeste du surréalisme* (1924): of surrealism as an assault upon the "realistic attitude" with its grounding in logic, and a corresponding elevation of the realm of the imagination and the unconscious. Breton asserts the claims of the dream against those of waking life, and the pull of childhood as against the corrosive demands of everyday utilitarian reality. But he also anticipates "la résolution future de ces deux états, en apparence si contradictoires, que sont le rêve et la réalité, en une sorte de réalité absolue, de *surréalité*..."⁷⁹⁷ And it is surely in the resolution of this contradiction that we approach the core of the surrealist project, while also shedding light upon the related issue of sexuality - and more specifically, masculinity - within surrealist circles. In this regard, it is significant that Breton appends to his fantasy the comment that "it might happen", and immediately proceeds to add plausibility to this assertion by relating an anecdote in which, "l'année dernière, aux galeries de côté de l'<Electric-Palace>, une femme nue, qui ne devait avoir eu à se défaire qu'un manteau, allait bien d'un rang à l'autre, très blanche."⁷⁹⁸ That Breton should make this connection with an "illicit sexual rendezvous" in relation to his fantasy of the woman in the woods, suggests that the two scenarios must be read in tandem - and we might add to this, the subsequent account given by Breton of the staging of the extraordinary play *Les Détraquées*, at the *Théâtre des Deux-Masques*, in which a small girl is murdered, apparently by the school's principal and her ambiguous friend Solange - a couple clearly implied to be bound up in a lesbian relationship. In following Breton here, we see him "descend into what is truly the mind's lower depths", suggesting something significant at stake in this anecdote. What is also striking about this production is Breton's caveat that the play "perd presque tout à n'être pas vue ... à ne pas être mimée"⁷⁹⁹ - a somewhat surprising claim on the part of the visual given surrealism's earlier general presumption in favour of the linguistic, and pointing toward the new, more visual direction surrealism would take in the wake of Breton's *Le Surréalisme et la peinture* essays. Taking these three scenarios together then, we have: the fantasy of a naked woman in a wood, at night; the illicit sexuality of the naked, "très blanche" woman in a darkened cinema; and a theatrical tableau of barely

⁷⁹⁷ André Breton, "Manifeste du surréalisme" (1924), in Breton *OCl*, op. cit. p.319.

⁷⁹⁸ Breton, *Nadja* (1928), in Breton, *OCl*, op. cit. p.668.

⁷⁹⁹ Breton, *ibid.* p.669.

veiled lesbianism with a murdered child - a murder, we might add, which precisely repeats that of another child within the play, the previous year. Breton's fascination with *Les Détraquées* apparently finds its focus in the fate of the child, and in "ce dont Solange et sa partenaire peuvent exactement être la proie pour devenir ces superbes bêtes de proie."⁸⁰⁰ What, therefore, links and underlies these three psychically and sexually charged scenarios for Breton, and more specifically, what is the role of this fantasied image of the woman as predator?

In pursuing Breton's chain of thought in *Nadja*, we find that his initial, somewhat romantic fantasy comes to assume an increasingly darker tone and one ultimately more akin to a Bataillean conception of *sacrifice*.⁸⁰¹ For Bataille, sacrifice constitutes a specific form of non-productive expenditure, a concept which embraces "luxury, mourning, war, cults ... spectacles, arts, perverse sexual activities"⁸⁰² and which Bataille finds epitomized in the Northwestern American Indians' practice of *potlatch* - the spectacular sacrifice of goods, animals and even the human sacrifice of slaves - which took place particularly at the time of rituals of changing life situation ("initiations, marriages, funerals"). This sacrificial theme also corresponds more closely to the far more threatening and feared figure of the castrating woman, as figured in the image of Germaine Berton, and which we find echoed, for example, in the obsessive dread of the figures of Judith and Medusa in the writings of Michel Leiris, and particularly in his autobiographical confession *Manhood*.⁸⁰³ Let's consider first the motif of the naked woman in the woods and its extension to the fantasy in its expanded form, embracing themes of illicit sexuality and sacrifice.

⁸⁰⁰ Breton, *ibid.* p.673.

⁸⁰¹ Bataille, in his essay "The Notion of Expenditure", considers phenomena such as loss, sacrifice and potlatch ceremonies, as part of a symbolic economy of excess expenditure. He observes that: "In unconscious forms, such as those described by psychoanalysis, it symbolizes excretion, which itself is linked to death, in conformity with the fundamental connection between anal eroticism and sadism." Bataille, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-39*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985, p.122.

⁸⁰² Bataille, *ibid.* p.118.

⁸⁰³ Michel Leiris, *Manhood: A Journey from Childhood into the Fierce Order of Virility*, New York: Grossman Publishers, 1963.

Profligacy and Waste: The Tale of Nastagio degli Onesti

I have always been attracted by allegories, enigmatic lessons in images which often are alluring female figures powerful in their own beauty and in all that is disturbing, by definition, in a symbol.

Michel Leiris, *Manhood*.⁸⁰⁴

My suggestion is that we are confronted here with a variant of a rather deep-rooted and stable masculine fantasy and I therefore want to begin by making a parallel with an earlier cultural context. In Madrid's Prado Museum are to be found three of a series of four *spalliera*⁸⁰⁵ panels by Botticelli, depicting the very bloody "Story of Nastagio degli Onesti" from Boccaccio's *Decameron*.⁸⁰⁶ The panels date from 1483 and were, rather surprisingly, commissioned by Lorenzo de Medici as a wedding gift to commemorate the binding in marriage of the Pucci and Bini families. Boccaccio locates his tale in a forest of pines outside Ravenna, where we first encounter the young nobleman Nastagio degli Onesti, spurned in love by a beautiful girl who shows herself "cruel, harsh and unfriendly towards him".⁸⁰⁷ Nastagio first distractedly squanders his resources and "was in danger of exhausting both himself and his inheritance";⁸⁰⁸ he contemplates suicide, before being persuaded by friends to leave the city. In the first scene portrayed by Botticelli (fig.151), we find Nastagio wandering disconsolately in the forest, meditating on his "cruel mistress" when he is suddenly brought up short by an astonishing apparition - "a naked woman, young and very beautiful" being hunted down by a knight on horseback with two savage hounds. Nastagio is warned against intervening by the knight, who then relates his story; he too was rejected by a woman and in his despair had committed suicide - an act then severely proscribed by the Church. When the woman too died, they were punished for their respective sins by being compelled to endlessly re-enact this hunt for as many years as the woman had been cruel to her lover. In the second scene (fig.152), as Nastagio looks on in horror, the knight leaps from his horse and stabs the woman to death, sadistically cutting out her heart and entrails which he tosses to the

⁸⁰⁴ Leiris, *ibid.* p.24.

⁸⁰⁵ *Spalliera* panels are carefully finished, painted panels usually set low in a wall or in pieces of furniture and intended for close viewing. They were characteristic of the lavish expenditure found in late Quattrocento Florence.

⁸⁰⁶ The fourth panel is owned by a private collector in Florence.

⁸⁰⁷ Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. G. H. McWilliam, London: Penguin Books, 1972, p.457.

⁸⁰⁸ Boccaccio, *ibid.* p.458.

waiting hounds. But even as this gruesome sacrifice is enacted, in the distance we see that the ritual hunt is already renewed and the woman's torments begun afresh.

Nastagio, recognising parallels with his own situation, determines to make use of this incident and invites his recalcitrant mistress to a banquet in the forest, at precisely that spot where he knows the hunt will be re-enacted. In Botticelli's third panel (fig.153), we find the ensuing banquet thrown into disarray as the gruesome hunt suddenly erupts in its midst, whilst Nastagio expounds its moral tale to his startled guests. Nastagio's arrow finds its target, the mistress relents, and in the final scene we find the forest transformed into classical arcades, as the marriage feast is celebrated with the no doubt chastened bride.

Christina Olsen has provided an excellent analysis of Botticelli's panels, in which she poses the narrative's main themes in terms of "gastronomical, financial and amatory over-indulgence",⁸⁰⁹ arguing that their moral function is, in essence, the conservation and perpetuation of the patrilineal inheritance. For Olsen, the imagery is permeated by the various senses of the Italian verb *consumare*, the meanings of which embrace "to use up", "to pine away", "to eat and ingest" and "to waste and squander". Hence, the main tropes of the tale are "male expenditure of self, sexuality, wealth and status, cumulatively threatened by women and marriage." In relation to our concern with male fantasy and models of masculinity, the figure of the bachelor, consumed by the conflict of love and marriage, is particularly acutely posed here (the suicide of the horseman, Anastagi, and Nastagio's considering the same solution). Olsen reinforces this analysis by way of reference to Dante's *Divine Comedy* and to Ovid's *Diana and Actaeon*, both of which highlight the sin of profligacy.⁸¹⁰ What's also interesting here, though, is the way in which the Bataillean conception of waste is displaced from material possessions (Nastagio's squandering of his inheritance) and is instead visited upon the body of the woman in the form of the continually repeated sacrifice. But I also want to suggest the existence of a broader framing device at work here, uniting the various tales of the *Decameron* - that of the plague which initiates Boccaccio's cycle of tales. We should recall that Boccaccio's narrators are in flight from the plague of 1348 which rages in their native Florence, where, "in the face of so much affliction and misery all respect for the

⁸⁰⁹ Christina Olsen, "Gross Expenditure: Botticelli's Nastagio degli Onesti Panels", *Art History*, Vol.15 no.2, June 1992, p.146.

⁸¹⁰ Olsen observes that in the *Divine Comedy*, "suicide and immoderate spending, are identified in the "Inferno" as kinds of prodigality." Olsen, *ibid.* p.151.

laws of God and man had virtually broken down and ... everyone was free to behave as he pleased."⁸¹¹ We might therefore view the moral imperative which organises the tale of Nastagio degli Onesti in terms of the re-assertion of patriarchal authority, as against its erosion in the face of natural catastrophe. More specifically, the tale of Nastagio traces a shift from disorder to order, in which the liminal and dangerous figure of the bachelor is re-inserted within a new family unit, while the dismembered virgin is reconstituted as bride - while both are transformed from a condition of "waste" into (re)productive utility. We should note in passing, that there are obvious parallels here with the situation which we encountered in Duchamp, posed in terms of the pining Bachelors and the un-reachable Bride. In terms of our concern with masculinity, as Olsen concludes, "regained masculine authority" is the eventual outcome of the hunt.⁸¹²

Applying these lessons to our earlier context of surrealism in post-World War I Europe, one might even make parallels with the situation then prevailing between the sexes, where again social relationships were distorted, and often strained: by women's co-option into wartime production, by the absence of men from the domestic sphere, and as a consequence of the postwar maturity of the New Woman. As we have already observed, a number of commentators have argued a "crisis in masculinity" as a consequence either of World War I (Joanna Bourke⁸¹³) or more broadly, as a product of modernity itself (Cinzia Sartini Blum⁸¹⁴, Maurizia Boscagli⁸¹⁵). Margaret R. Higonnet has pointed out that "women everywhere suffered the effects of postwar gender backlash",⁸¹⁶ but that the advances made by women in France and Italy were less than those made by their counterparts in the United States, Canada and in other parts of Europe. Michelle Perrot has argued that the French experience was particularly conflictual, and that alongside the newly emergent New Woman of the late 1890s and early twentieth century, there developed a "male identity crisis" for which the First World War was eventually to provide a heroic outlet. "[A] postwar death cult and celebration of male virility served to put women back in their place,"⁸¹⁷ writes Perrot, who concludes that

⁸¹¹ Boccaccio, *op. cit.* pp.52-53.

⁸¹² Olsen, *op. cit.* p.160.

⁸¹³ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, *op. cit.* (though Bourke rejects any long-term male alienation).

⁸¹⁴ Cinzia Sartini Blum, *The Other Modernism: F.T. Marinetti's Futurist Fiction of Power*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1996.

⁸¹⁵ Boscagli, *Eye on the Flesh: Fashions of Masculinity in the Early Twentieth Century*, *op. cit.*

⁸¹⁶ Higonnet (ed), *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, *op. cit.*, p.7.

⁸¹⁷ Michelle Perrot, "The New Eve and the Old Adam: Changes in French Women's Condition at the Turn of the Century", in Higonnet (ed), *ibid* p.51.

the advances made by women were fundamentally "superficial" and that the War itself had a "profoundly conservative, even regressive" impact upon French gender relations. Interestingly, Perrot includes the writings of Breton amongst what she identifies as an "antifeminist literature", as one of the cultural expressions of this masculinity crisis.

Death, femininity and the *femme fatale*

(T)he death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world.

Edgar Allan Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition".⁸¹⁸

Elisabeth Bronfen, taking a long historical perspective in her book *Over Her Dead Body*,⁸¹⁹ has pointed to the pervasiveness of the motif of the death of the woman within Western culture, arguing that it functions in the manner of a symptom, as a return of the repressed: we "experience" death vicariously through the other, in which capacity "woman" functions as epitome of the site of alterity. Of particular interest in relation to our analysis of the tale of Nastagio is Bronfen's assertion that:

Femininity and death cause a disorder to stability, mark moments of ambivalence, disruption or duplicity and their eradication produces a recuperation of order, a return to stability.⁸²⁰

In this regard, the growing moral laxity and the abeyance of normal order consequent upon the outbreak of pestilence in Boccaccio's Florence, are manifested in terms of disruptive female sexuality. Relations between the sexes become marked by ambivalence, while the refusal of the woman to conform to the demand to marry is posed precisely in terms of duplicity. Traditional power relations are thus re-asserted and female power curbed in Boccaccio's tale, through the violent and exemplary death of the woman. Likewise, too, in post-World War I Europe, where the figure of the New Woman comes to embody in exaggerated and parodied form, the reaction against the disruption to gender relations occasioned by the war.

The sexual fantasy at the core of Michel Leiris's confessional autobiography *Manhood* centres upon Cranach's *Judith and Lucretia* (fig.154), two allegorical nudes

⁸¹⁸ Edgar Allan Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition", in *The Portable Poe*, New York: Penguin Books, 1945, p.557.

⁸¹⁹ Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*, op. cit.

⁸²⁰ Bronfen, *ibid.* p.xii.

which again raise the theme of sacrifice, and where Leiris is struck not only by their beauty and eroticism, but above all by "their profoundly cruel aspect." For Leiris, the sexual imaginary oscillates between the poles of the chaste Roman Lucretia, whose suicide serves to expiate the humiliation of her violation by Sextus Tarquin, and that of Judith, the Hebrew castrating woman who seduces and then beheads the Assyrian general Holofernes. Leiris adopts the term "terrain of truth" to describe the *mise en scène*, the "theater", of the erotic act, a term which significantly derives from that of the bullfighting arena, again returning us to the theme of the bloody sacrifice. It is also worth noting that, with Bataille too, in his essay "The Sacred", the bullfight is posed in terms of a tragic, sacrificial rite "close to ancient sacred games."⁸²¹ For Leiris, then, the case of sexual relations echoes that of the bullfight, a life-threatening drama wherein "man discovers himself confronting a reality", and which Leiris characterises in terms of sacrifice, "close contact with the victim... and - in most cases - actual absorption of its substance by the eating of its dead flesh."⁸²² There are surely also striking parallels between this intensely theatrical and sacred space of bloody sacrifice, the *corrida*, and that of the sacred grove depicted by Ovid in his tale of Diana and Actaeon, or again, in Boccaccio's enchanted forest. It is perhaps in Leiris that the metaphysical aspect of this sacrificial drama is most acutely posed, and where in his consideration of the deaths of figures such as Lucretia and Cleopatra the connection with the theme of suicide becomes most explicit. Leiris argues that, for him, the "profound meaning of suicide" consists in: "to become at the same time *oneself and the other*, male and female, subject and object, killed and killer - the only possibility of communion with oneself."⁸²³ This might throw further light upon the surrealists' concern with the subject of suicide in *La Révolution surréaliste*, and more specifically, upon the significance of the case of Germaine Berton. And we can perhaps see in the death of Actaeon, torn apart and devoured by his own hounds, an echo of this sense of suicide - of suicide as an act of expiation through which absolute communion is to be attained - and a consummation most eloquently figured in Titian's late and perhaps unfinished work, *The Death of Actaeon*. As Olsen points out, during the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Actaeon was increasingly portrayed as a cuckold, just as he appears horned in Titian's image; Boccaccio's tale can therefore be read as exacting Actaeon's revenge, insofar as he inverts the power relationship of the myth of Diana and Actaeon, thereby reasserting male authority. There

⁸²¹ Georges Bataille, "The Sacred" in Bataille, *Visions of Excess*, op. cit. p.243.

⁸²² Leiris, op. cit. p.39.

⁸²³ Leiris, op. cit. p.93.

are again parallels with postwar France, where wartime absence had raised for many men the fear of being cuckolded, an anxiety most vividly portrayed in Raymond Radiguet's *Le Diable au corps* (1923).

In *Nadja*, too, we have seen how Breton's sexual fantasy comes to find its focus in *Les Détraquées*, culminating in the sudden and somewhat *grand-guignolesque* eruption into the scene, to screams from the audience, of the murdered girl's body: "Le corps ensanglanté de l'enfant apparaît la tête en bas et s'écroule sur le plancher."⁸²⁴ We should recall too the fate of Nadja herself - abandoned, incarcerated as insane - at the end of Breton's tale, a fate worthy of the heroine of any Victorian melodrama of the "fallen woman." Rosalind Krauss has convincingly demonstrated, in her essay "Corpus Delicti",⁸²⁵ the striking persistence within surrealist imagery of violent assaults upon the female body (as for example in the disturbing photographic work of Bellmer, Boiffard or Ubac), while at the opposite pole we find the perceived threat posed by the sexually voracious or castrating female, as in the recurring theme of the praying mantis. As noted by William L. Pressly, both Breton and Eluard kept mantises in their homes, and the insect came to assume a mythical status within the surrealist sexual imaginary, figuring in numerous artworks, as for example in Ernst, Seligmann and Dalí. A major stimulus to this interest in the mantis was the pioneering entomological work of J.H. Fabre, and in particular, the ten volumes of his *Souvenirs entomologiques* (1914-25). Pressly has pointed to Fabre's contention that "as one of the oldest of land creatures this insect's sexual habits are a vestige of the most primitive forms of love".⁸²⁶ Male fascination with the mantis finds its focus in the female's legendary cannibalism during copulation, serving to cohere male fears of female sexuality, of being literally "devoured" by the other, or again, recall the menace of the *vagina dentata*. Pressly points too, to the relevance of Roger Caillois's striking paper "Mimétisme et psychasthénie légendaire", first published in *Minotaure* in 1935,⁸²⁷ which concludes that "man's fascination with the mantis was based on a reaction to its humanoid form and a psychological response to its primordially violent coitus."⁸²⁸ Krauss too asserts the importance of this paper, adding that Caillois "depicts the insect in a condition of androidlike automation", and insists that:

⁸²⁴ Breton, *Nadja*, in Breton, *OCl*, op. cit. p.672.

⁸²⁵ Rosalind Krauss, "Corpus Delicti" - In Krauss and Livingston *L'Amour fou*, op. cit.

⁸²⁶ For a detailed analysis of the iconography of the mantis within surrealism, see William J. Pressly "The Praying Mantis in Surrealist Art", *The Art Bulletin*, Vol.LV No.4, December 1973, pp.600-615.

⁸²⁷ Roger Caillois, "Mimétisme et psychasthénie légendaire", *Minotaure*, No.7, June 1935.

⁸²⁸ Pressly, *ibid.* p.600.

Caillois concluded that it is in this opening onto the imaginative possibility of the robot, the automaton, the nonsentient, mechanical imitation of life, that the mantis's link to the phantasm of human sexuality is to be found.⁸²⁹

This also strikingly recalls Duchamp's *Bride*, characterised by Robert Lebel in terms of "the juxtaposition of mechanical elements and visceral forms"⁸³⁰ and which is also designated by Duchamp as the "pendu femelle", further underlining this intersection of eroticism and death. We could add that the mantis assumes the surrogate form of the locust or the grasshopper, in the work of Dalí (*The Great Masturbator*, *Portrait of Paul Eluard*), where it again functions as a signifier of male sexual trauma. But there is surely also in all of this, whether introduced via humour, melodrama or *grand guignol*, an element which points to the absurd in the sexual relation, a point which comes across particularly clearly in many of the surrealists' exchanges on the subject of sex in their *Recherches sur la sexualité*,⁸³¹ the first of which took place in 1928, the year of *Nadja*'s publication.

We might therefore suggest that what is truly repressed in these various male assaults upon the female body, is what is represented allegorically by the hunt of Diana - a power relation inverted in the story of *Nastagio*, where the woman is transformed from huntress to prey. Such a reversal echoes *Leiris*'s oscillation between the poles of *Lucretia* and *Judith* - the suicide and the murderess - and is in fact a frequently encountered psychic leap, found for example in Dalí's depiction of the mantis/grasshopper both as feared castrator as well as "a composite of edible morsels",⁸³² both devourer and devoured. Octavio Paz, in his superb analysis of Duchamp's two major works - the *Large Glass* and *Etant donnés* - points to correspondences to be found between Duchamp's landscape (in *Etant donnés*) and that in Ovid's telling of the *Diana and Actaeon* myth: "Ovid describes Diana's sanctuary as a valley wooded with pines and cypresses, surrounded by mountains. A waterfall tumbles down a rock, into a small lake."⁸³³ Such a landscape with moving waterfall is indeed found in Duchamp's final work, *Etant donnés*, beyond the splayed, naked body of a woman, suggestive of some violated and abandoned corpse. We might add that this enchanted forest is also uncannily like that depicted by Boccaccio and Botticelli. Paz

⁸²⁹ Krauss, op. cit. p.70.

⁸³⁰ Robert Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp*, Paris: Trianon Press, 1959, p.15.

⁸³¹ See José Pierre (ed.), *Investigating Sex: Surrealist Discussions, 1928-1932*, op. cit.

⁸³² See Pressly, op. cit. p.602.

⁸³³ Octavio Paz, *Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare*, op. cit. p.118.

also draws on Pierre Klossowski's *Le Bain de Diane*,⁸³⁴ characterizing the act of voyeurism in both Ovid and Duchamp, as one of "visual violation", pointing out that in each case this is preceded by the "disorientation" of the male voyeur: again, this is strikingly echoed in Boccaccio, where the lovesick Nastagio distractedly wanders the forest, lost in his reverie. In Duchamp's *Large Glass* too, where the eventual aim is the "stripping of the Bride", violation is again at issue, while the whole right-hand side of the work is densely referenced with visual themes. Paz interprets the *Large Glass* as a "scene from myth",⁸³⁵ while Breton, in his ground-breaking essay on Duchamp, "The Lighthouse of the Bride", returns us to his own initial sexual fantasy of the naked woman in the forest, when he observes that: "In this work it is impossible not to see at least the trophy of a fabulous hunt through virgin territory and at the frontiers of eroticism ..."⁸³⁶ Breton's fantasy can thus be sited within a specific surrealist tradition in terms of the attitudes it manifests in relation to the female body - an attitude which oscillates wildly between the poles of predator/prey - but one which we have also seen rooted in far deeper channels of the male imaginary, and more specifically, within a conception of the sexual relation as imbricated in notions of expiation and sacrifice.

The figure of the *bachelor* is also crucial in all of this - a *liminal* figure in the sense intended by Mary Douglas in her classic text *Purity and Danger*,⁸³⁷ where forms of marginality pose a threat to order: whether as the spurned Nastagio, the automata-like Bachelors of the *Large Glass*, or indeed as in the figure of Duchamp himself. In Duchamp's dialogues with Cabanne, for example, we find the following exchange:

Cabanne: At twenty-five, you were already known as "the bachelor". You had a well-known antifeminist attitude.

Duchamp: No, antimarriage, but not antifeminist.⁸³⁸

For it is surely in this liminal figure of the bachelor - that figure most closely associated with pursuit of the female body - that the slightest social shift in gender relations is most sensitively registered, and where we observe the acutest counter-reaction to any perceived shift in the position of women - and hence, in part too, the centrality of the hunt fantasy within the surrealist imaginary. And we should add to this the impact of the War, as both complicating and exaggerating the impact of such gender shifts in the imaginary

⁸³⁴ Pierre Klossowski, *Le Bain de Diane*, Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert Editeur, 1956.

⁸³⁵ Paz, "The Castle of Purity", in *Appearance Stripped Bare*, op. cit. p.63.

⁸³⁶ André Breton, "The Lighthouse of the Bride", in Robert Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp*, op. cit., p.90.

⁸³⁷ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, London and New York: Routledge, 1966.

⁸³⁸ Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Duchamp*, op. cit. p.32.

of a generation of young males. For Sedgwick, following Foucault, sexuality has come to occupy an increasingly central role within modern Western culture, assuming a "more and more distinctively privileged relation to our most prized constructs of individual identity, truth and knowledge..."⁸³⁹ Sedgwick also draws upon the social anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss, who defines culture in terms of a:

total relationship of exchange ... not established between a man and a woman, but between two groups of men, [in which] the woman figures only as one of the objects in the exchange, not as one of the partners.⁸⁴⁰

Such a conception is by no means confined to an earlier historical period, as for example in the case of the tale of Nastagio, but is surely also strikingly exemplified in Duchamp's arrangement with the father of Lydie Sarrazin-Levassor. For Sedgwick, though, the bachelor is a figure who emerges only during the early nineteenth century, as one response to the "male homosexual panic", i.e. the development of far closer homosocial bonds between men, which always contained the threat of developing into homosexual relationships.⁸⁴¹ This, then, is what might be designated the "confirmed" bachelor, a somewhat self-centred figure who may be defined in terms of a refusal both of marriage and of normative (particularly reproductive) relationships with women.

Magritte's *La femme cachée*: word, image and rhizome

And does not the image, as such, possess its own reality which is its application to knowledge, its substitution for it?

Louis Aragon, *Paris Peasant*.⁸⁴²

Returning once more to our starting point in Magritte's *La femme cachée*, I want to consider the question of the status of the image of the naked woman and to then consider the relationship between image and text. Robin Greeley, pointing to the lack of fit between image and text in this piece, argues that:

The woman in the surrealist text is present no longer as an inspirational muse, but rather as an enigma. Above all, she is a problem of

⁸³⁹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990, p.3.

⁸⁴⁰ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, cited in Sedgwick, *ibid.* p.184.

⁸⁴¹ Sedgwick, *ibid.* pp.189-212.

⁸⁴² Louis Aragon, *Paris Peasant*, *op. cit.*, p.201.

representation.⁸⁴³

What, then, are the actual problems of representation raised by this piece and how do they assist our understanding of the surrealists' relationship with femininity? The actual canvas *La femme cachée* was in fact acquired by Breton, and extensively damaged as a consequence of his efforts, around 1960, to clean it. As David Sylvester⁸⁴⁴ has pointed out, the image had darkened considerably over time, and Breton was in effect attempting to bring the naked woman back out of the darkness and into the light of day, but in the process almost destroyed her - though Sylvester argues that the image is considerably enhanced through this accident, being effectively rendered more lyrical in the same manner as Duchamp's *Large Glass*, following the splintering of its panes. We know that Magritte has depicted here his wife Georgette and hence that the referent of this jointly-conjured vision was thus an actual woman. Dawn Ades has pointed to the fact that this question of the woman's status relates to an issue which was often raised during the surrealists' investigations of sex: "What representations accompany desire?"⁸⁴⁵ - and that the participants' general view was that "this could not be an entirely imaginary figure." Ades also points to Aragon's *Le paysan de Paris*, in which Aragon, bored and restless, takes a night-time walk in the woods of the Buttes-Chaumont along with fellow surrealists Breton and Noll, where they experience the joint mirage of a woman "so truly ready for anything that it would for her sake be worth the trouble of overturning the universe."⁸⁴⁶ But we could also point to Aragon's comment, as they begin their search in the woods, that "a miraculous hunt opened up before us" and that Aragon characterises the park as "a shady zone where the atmosphere is distinctly murderous ..."⁸⁴⁷ The phantom image of the woman which erupts in the woods continues to expand and grow, eventually becoming contiguous with the landscape itself, a "marvellous landscape" which Aragon equates with the state of "love", and of which he observes "I hope never to leave this enchanted forest."⁸⁴⁸ But I also want to point to a more theoretical discussion toward the end of the same text, where Aragon goes on to reject material reality and instead celebrates the image (more specifically, the "poetic image") as "a secret stairway" to the real, concluding with the observation that "the image is the path of all knowledge." As

⁸⁴³ Robin Adèle Greeley, "Image, Text and the Female Body: René Magritte and the Surrealist Publications", *The Oxford Art Journal*, 15:2, 1992, p.53.

⁸⁴⁴ David Sylvester, "La grande icône surréaliste", in *André Breton: La beauté convulsive*, op. cit., pp.192-3.

⁸⁴⁵ Dawn Ades, "Afterword", in Pierre (ed), *Investigating Sex*, op. cit. p.200.

⁸⁴⁶ Ades, *ibid.* p.200.

⁸⁴⁷ Aragon, op. cit. p.133.

⁸⁴⁸ Aragon, *ibid.* p.199.

Sylvester points out, Magritte's montage featuring *La Femme cachée* appears at a crucial point in the history of the surrealist movement, following the convulsions which culminate in the appearance of the *Second manifeste du surréalisme*, and appears in the same final issue of *La Révolution surréaliste* together with the new manifesto. Sylvester points to a split between the proponents of automatism and those tending toward a more visual position based on the work of de Chirico and Magritte, with the latter tendency in the ascendant. Aragon's "poetic image", while clearly rooted in the literary, is nonetheless strongly oriented toward the image and can thus be seen as a decisive point in this theoretical shift within surrealism.

Before leaving this question of the status of the image - and more specifically, that of the woman - I want to consider the enigmatic figure of the *succubus*. Ades points to the surrealists' "apparent fascination with succubacy" in the *Recherches*, which she roots in their interest in romantic diabolism from Baudelaire to Barbey d'Aureville, for the challenge it posed to the distinction between the real and the imagined. The succubus is defined as "a demon which according to popular belief takes the form of a woman in order to have commerce with a man"¹⁸⁴⁹ and Ades demonstrates how, for the surrealists, succubacy "was regarded as a poetic manifestation of symptoms later defined as "hysterical" ...",¹⁸⁵⁰ thus also serving as a challenge to the dominant clinical model of hysteria. For the clinicians of the Salpêtrière by contrast, under Charcot, succubacy was categorised under the heading of "hystéro-épilepsie."¹⁸⁵¹ In his often hilarious baiting of the defrocked Jesuit Abbé, Jean Genbach, during the *Recherches on sex*, Breton insists both that "The succubus is not something imaginary", and that "It is not a matter of a real woman."¹⁸⁵² This categorial undecidability of the succubus recalls Mary Douglas's insistence upon the threat posed by the marginal: "To have been in the margins is to have been in contact with danger, to have been at a source of power."¹⁸⁵³ This liminality is strongly apparent in Aragon's detailed discussion of the succubus in his 1926 text *Entrée des succubes*, published in *La Révolution surréaliste* in March 1926¹⁸⁵⁴ and dedicated to Breton. In that piece Aragon characterises the succubus as a "mauvais ange" and as a "diabliesse", repeatedly returning and draining its male victims of their

¹⁸⁴⁹ Cited in Ades, op. cit. p.203.

¹⁸⁵⁰ Ades, *ibid.* p.204.

¹⁸⁵¹ See Bourneville and Régnard, *Iconographie photographique*, Vol.II, op. cit., plate XXXIX.

¹⁸⁵² Pierre (ed), op. cit. p.59.

¹⁸⁵³ Douglas, op. cit. p.97.

¹⁸⁵⁴ Louis Aragon, "Entrée des succubes", in *La Révolution surréaliste*, no.6, 1 March 1926, pp.10-13.

vigour in the manner of the vampire. Rather than being seduced by the succubus, the victim instead succumbs to the creature's "puissance animale", a power which Aragon characterises in terms of a "bestialité" impossible to resist. Thus, while straddling the categories of real and imaginary, the succubus also blurs the boundaries between the human and the animal. Desnos, too, explores this obsession with the succubus in his equally disturbing "Journal d'une apparition" (1927). Written up in the form of a diary, Desnos's article insists upon the reality of his nocturnal visitations: "**** est réellement venue chez moi. Je l'ai vue. Je l'ai entendue. J'ai senti son parfum et parfois même elle m'a touché."⁸⁵⁵ Torn by doubts about this "phantom", Desnos resolves to kill her "avec un poignard malais à longue lame", but is ultimately unable to put this plan into action, and the visits eventually cease. Again, then, the succubus is clearly a liminal and highly ambiguous figure, and one which is far from any kind of unambivalently desired object. While muddying the waters between imaginary and real, the figure of the succubus also throws further light upon Breton's fantasy of the naked woman in the woods - one which now comes to appear a far more ambiguous, perhaps feared, figure - as well as pointing to the more general oscillation between attraction-repulsion, or between desire and fear, in the surrealists' dealings with the figure of the woman, most obviously in the case of Leiris with the figures of Lucretia and Judith.

Turning now to the question of the image-text relation, we find that Foucault, in his analysis of Magritte's structurally closely related image *La Trahison des images* (*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*) (1926), characterises the work (fig.155) in terms of the calligram - a format particularly associated with Apollinaire, and one in which the words of a poem "are arranged in such a fashion as to form a picture of its "topic"..."⁸⁵⁶ But in the case of Magritte's image, Foucault argues we are confronted with a calligram which has "unraveled". More specifically, Foucault opposes the calligram, which is "tautological", to *rhetoric*, which by contrast "toys with the fullness of language" and whose essence "is in allegory."⁸⁵⁷ It is significant that in the same final edition of *La Révolution surréaliste* as we find the dreaming surrealists around Magritte's naked woman, we also find Magritte's short illustrated piece *Les mots et les images* (fig.156). In the deadpan style of an illustrated school primer, Magritte outlines the various possible relationships between

⁸⁵⁵ R.D., "Journal d'une apparition", *La Révolution surréaliste* no.9-10, 1 October 1927, p.9.

⁸⁵⁶ Michel Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982 - footnotes (by James Harkness), p.60.

⁸⁵⁷ Foucault, *ibid.* p.21.

image and text, and between image or text and the object thereby designated. Magritte effects a substitutive dance of words and things, where the word contradicts the thing, substitutes for the thing, replicates the thing, or conceals the thing; tautological circles which often effect an uncanny "doubling" of word by thing, or of thing by word. Aragon makes a similar point in *Paris Peasant* when, in attempting to account for the enchanting effect of certain places and objects, he observes that:

The way I saw it, an object became transfigured: it took on neither the allegorical aspect nor the character of the symbol, it did not so much manifest an idea as constitute that very idea.⁸⁵⁸

In a similar spirit, Magritte's friend Scutenaire has observed of him that: "He doesn't study objects, he uses them. He doesn't represent them, he presents them."⁸⁵⁹

Frederik Leen has noted that Magritte's use of texts in his images is concentrated in the period from 1927-1931 and was at its most intense during 1928, perhaps also reflecting, as Leen argues, the concern of contemporary theoreticians with the nature and structure of language (Saussure, Frege, Peirce, Wittgenstein).⁸⁶⁰ But we also discover in *Les mots et les images*, slyly placed at the heart of the article, that Magritte sets an image of a forest beside the word "forêt", while alongside it are two texts, one of which reads "*corps de femme*", and in the clash of these elements - like some puzzle of hunt-the-naked-lady in this forest of signs - the tautological circle is broken, as the image-text opens out onto a fantasy echoing that of *La femme cachée*; almost as though the allegorical has here returned to haunt the metaphoric, and suddenly opening out a dry treatise about the sign onto the realm of the erotic.

In relation to our concern with the theoretical point about the integration of the visual within surrealism, Lisa Lipinski has pointed to the role which Magritte's pictorial essay played in extending surrealist techniques beyond the reliance hitherto placed upon methods rooted in automatism, hallucinations, and dream imagery.⁸⁶¹ As James Harkness observes, there are persistent strands within Western thought which have "conceived the bond between language and reality as fundamentally mystical, a mutual sharing of essences."⁸⁶² Foucault identifies two principles which he views as ruling

⁸⁵⁸ Aragon, *Paris Peasant*, op cit. p.114.

⁸⁵⁹ Cited in Frederik Leen, "A Razor is a Razor", in Gisèle Ollinger-Zinque and Frederik Leen (eds), *Magritte, 1898-1967*, Brussels: Royal Museums of Fine Art, 1998, p.25.

⁸⁶⁰ Leen, *ibid.* p.26.

⁸⁶¹ Lisa K. Lipinski, "When the trees of language are shaken by rhizomes in René Magritte's *Les mots et les images*", *Word and Image*, Vol.II, No.3, July-September 1995.

⁸⁶² James Harkness, Translator's Introduction to Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe*, op. cit. p.6.

Western painting from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries: "The first asserts the separation between plastic representation (which implies resemblance) and linguistic references (which excludes it)." The second principle affirms "an equivalence between the fact of resemblance and the affirmation of a representative bond", i.e. "What you see is *that*."⁸⁶³ For Foucault, Magritte's art is contradictory: on the one hand it is "more committed than any other to the cruel separation of graphic and plastic elements"⁸⁶⁴ - yet when Magritte *does* bring the two together, it is only on condition that they are mutually contradictory. Lipinski points out that, for Foucault, Magritte's ploy was to "bring similitude into play against resemblance", so that similitude "or the circulation of the simulacrum, disavows this relation between a model and a copy, offering in its place *an indefinite and reversible relation*."⁸⁶⁵ Magritte's real achievement, then, for Foucault, is his break with the principle of *resemblance*, where ontological priority is accorded some pre-eminent entity of which the copy is only a secondary effect. The value of such an undermining of the traditional priority accorded to reality for the surrealist movement is immediately apparent and proposes a substantial theoretical gain, both in relation to surrealism's investigation of language as well as with regard to the relationship between the linguistic and the visual. Developing Foucault's critique of resemblance further, Lipinski poses Magritte's tactic in Deleuzian terms using the concept of the "rhizome".⁸⁶⁶ With its emphasis upon "becoming" rather than upon fixed relations, the rhizome provides a model in which both "image and word move in two directions rhizomatically" - that is, they are "allied", but not hierarchically fixed. She thus poses these shifts in terms of "movements of deterritorialization and destratification",⁸⁶⁷ whereby image and object are de-linked, and primacy denied to the real object over its representation. The rhizome therefore designates the "becoming-image of the word" and the corresponding "becoming-word of the image": the image thus "contaminates" the word, and vice-versa. If we were to apply such a rhizomatic analysis to, for example, Lautréamont's classic formulation, "beautiful as the chance encounter upon a dissecting table, of a sewing machine with an umbrella", we see at once how, on the one hand image and word co-exist in a non-hierarchical relationship, while at the same time signifier (either textual or visual) and meaning are disengaged, allowing a whole range of new meanings to

⁸⁶³ Foucault, op. cit. pp.32-34.

⁸⁶⁴ Foucault, *ibid.* p.35.

⁸⁶⁵ Lipinski, *ibid.* p.218.

⁸⁶⁶ Deleuze opposes the rhizome to the organic, hierarchical model of the tree; instead, the rhizome is an "acentred" structure, a multiplicity composed of "lines".

⁸⁶⁷ Lipinski, op. cit. p.219.

suggest themselves out of this encounter.⁸⁶⁸

Magritte's *La femme cachée* could therefore be argued to propose two quite different, but loosely linked, orders of reality: on the one hand writing, which falls on the side of the rational and conscious, but which none the less fails to see - *je ne vois pas ...*; and on the other hand the image, proposing a rather different order of reality - that of the unconscious, of psychical reality - and an order which the surrounding photos of dreaming surrealists suggests is accessible only through the dream, the seance, or via hypnagogic states. I also want to suggest here the influence of Freud's 1915 paper "The Unconscious", in which Freud concludes that the difference between the "conscious presentation" and the "unconscious presentation" consists in that "the conscious presentation comprises the presentation of the thing plus the presentation of the word belonging to it, while the unconscious presentation is the presentation of the thing alone."⁸⁶⁹ Thus, the image of the woman in the absence of the signifier *femme*, serves to shift that image into another dimension, that of the unconscious, conjured up as the shared erotic fantasy of the dreaming male surrealists. Magritte's composite image might therefore be said to perfectly enact the surrealist project, as stated by Breton in the first *Manifeste*, of "the future resolution of these two states, dream and reality, which are seemingly so contradictory, into a kind of absolute reality, a *surreality*."⁸⁷⁰

⁸⁶⁸ A semiotic analysis, for example using Saussure, would of course make a clear distinction between the *signified* (the meaning which attaches to the signifier) and the *referent* i.e. the real world object which the sign designates.

⁸⁶⁹ Sigmund Freud, "The Unconscious", in Freud, *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, The Pelican Freud Library, Vol.11, Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin Books, 1984, p.207.

⁸⁷⁰ André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, op cit. p.14.

Ernst, Desire and the Hunt: *La chanson de la chair*

It is in so far as his desire is beyond or falls short of what she says, of what she hints at, of what she brings out as meaning, it is in so far as his desire is unknown, it is in this point of lack, that the desire of the subject is constituted.

Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*.⁸⁷¹

Returning once more to the theme of the hunt, we find a very different form of image-text relation proposed in Max Ernst's photomontage *La chanson de la chair* (1920) (pl.5), an image which returns us to the question of gender relations within surrealism and the underlying issue of the nature of masculine desire, as well as the forms in which these issues find expression in terms of the inter-relationship of image and text. In this enigmatic image, two furiously racing greyhounds are seen in pursuit of a rolling ball, from which a woman's bare arm protrudes, signalling toward the dogs; meanwhile, a flayed animal corpse holding a coquettish fan apparently leaps across the scene, travelling in the opposite direction. This bizarre hunt is enacted within a vast, dreamlike space, which extends to the horizon where it terminates in a range of mountains - Werner Spies has observed of another such mountain range in Ernst's *La femme visible* that the outline is in fact the tracing of a galvanometer, a kind of metaphor for a sexual current, such that the entire landscape becomes sexually charged.⁸⁷² We should also note the text appended to the top and bottom borders of the image: *le chien qui chie le chien bien coiffé malgré les difficultés du terrain causées par une neige abondante la femme a belle gorge la chanson de la chair*. How then to decipher Ernst's enigma?

We might claim some support for a reading of such imagery in terms of male desire, in Ernst's *Au-delà de la peinture* of 1936. In his much-cited epiphany of 1919, Ernst describes the disorienting, hallucinatory effect consequent upon his discovery of an illustrated catalogue with its unsettling juxtapositions of objects, out of which he was to develop his own collage technique: "thus I obtained a faithful fixed image of my hallucination and transformed into revealing dramas my most secret desires ..."⁸⁷³ We

⁸⁷¹ Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin Books, 1979, p.218-219.

⁸⁷² Spies, *Max Ernst - Collages*, op. cit.

⁸⁷³ Max Ernst, "Au-delà de la peinture", cited in Robert Rainwater (ed), *Max Ernst: Beyond Surrealism* (exh. cat.), New York and Oxford: New York Public Library/Oxford University Press, 1986, p.7.

need to read Ernst's *La chanson de la chair* alongside a contemporaneous collage, *Augustine Thomas et Otto Flake* (1920)(fig.157), produced by Luise Ernst-Straus, Ernst's first wife, under the assumed name Armada von Duldgedalzen, alias the Dada Rosa Bonheur. The reference to the painter Rosa Bonheur, who, after the example of George Sand, assumed masculine attire and short-cropped hair, immediately raises the issue of sexual ambiguity. Within a bourgeois interior a female figure reclines seductively upon an armchair, while beside her, an androgynous figure with an oversized male head upon a female torso, appears torn between the reclining woman and the overhanging flayed animal torso. According to Werner Spies, Ernst sent the collage to Tzara with the following message on a postcard:

Otto Flake synthétise l'art du corset au goût de la finesse de tissu et de la viande métaphysique.

*ARP aime mieux la viande des fleurs du mal.*⁸⁷⁴

The inclusion of the writer Otto Flake, whose head is pasted upon one of the female figures, is, according to Raoul Schrott, a reference to a "love rectangle" with an actress in which he became involved while spending the summer of 1921 in the Tyrol, with members of the Dadaist group.⁸⁷⁵ The animal cadaver is precisely the same in each image, and Werner Spies tells us that it was in fact Ernst who added the same motif to his wife's image,⁸⁷⁶ noting that the flayed cadavers "have the effect of something unreal irrupting into the image." This observation of something "irrupting" into the image is surely correct, though not something "unreal"; in psychoanalytic terms we might read this as an irruption of some presymbolic substance, the Lacanian Real - the real of the unconscious and of desire - within the Symbolic. A metaphoric leap is made from the seductive female to the butchered carcasses hanging from the ceiling, where they strangely echo the visceral "pendu femelle" that dangles from the top of Duchamp's *Large Glass*, and in which we might again suggest the impact of the War, then just ended, and of the consequent shift in the status of women, where murderous male rage finds its outlet in such fantasied assaults upon the female body. As noted above, in addition to Theweleit's *Male Fantasies*, which explores such anti-feminine sentiments in Weimar Germany,⁸⁷⁷ one might also point to further evidence of such aggressive fantasies as cited in Maria Tatar's study *Lustmord*,⁸⁷⁸ which analyses the striking

⁸⁷⁴ Spies, op. cit. p.73

⁸⁷⁵ See Camfield, *Max Ernst: Dada and the Dawn of Surrealism*, op. cit., n.45, p.343. If this were correct, the date of the work would also have to be reconsidered.

⁸⁷⁶ Spies, *ibid.*

⁸⁷⁷ Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, op.cit.

⁸⁷⁸ Maria Tatar, *Lustmord: Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany*, op. cit.

phenomenon of sexual murder in the context of Weimar Germany, as well as its manifestation in the works of such artists as George Grosz and Otto Dix. Roland Penrose observes that, at the end of the war, Ernst was discharged from the 36th East Prussian Regiment, the officers of which were formerly "Death's Head Hussars", so that we can at least assume Ernst's familiarity this type of misogynistic rhetoric.⁸⁷⁹ We should also note Ernst's use of the same motif of carcasses of meat in his satirical lost image *The Last Judgement*, which dates from immediately after the War (1919), in which a portly naked figure walks between two rows, not of people, but of butchered carcasses, in a clear indictment of the slaughter of the trenches. Like the father in *Aquis submersus*, God-the-Father here becomes an absurd, ridiculous figure.

There are also striking structural similarities between *La chanson de la chair*, and Ernst's much larger canvas *Celebes*, of 1921 (fig.158). In *Celebes*, the central bulky, elephantine figure, with its trunk-like appendage terminating in a horned, bull-like head, surely figures as a manifestation of the masculine. Alongside it stands a similarly-hued tower of cone-like shapes, similar to those which appear in Ernst's *c'est le chapeau qui fait l'homme* (fig.30) and in each image we discover a red "erection" at the mid-point of the tower. But gesturing seductively to the elephant-like figure is the white, headless torso of a woman, dressed only in a red glove, echoing the gesture of the hand protruding from the rolling ball in *La chanson de la chair*. In each case, there is a striking disjuncture between pursuer and pursued, which, despite their apparent contiguity suggests a radical skewing of the sexual relation. A central issue in all of these images is surely the question of *desire* and therefore a brief consideration of its role in Lacanian theory might throw more light on the processes in play here.

As Malcolm Bowie points out, Lacan distinguishes desire from instinctualism or "animal energy"; instead, for Lacan, desire is "purest quicksilver", "the moving mover of all signifying processes"⁸⁸⁰ - or in Lacan's own words, desire entails "being caught in the rails - eternally stretching forth towards the *desire for something else* - of metonymy."⁸⁸¹ There's surely a strong sense in Ernst of being dragged by the nose, of being hauled along by something which comes from outside the subject - where, as Bowie

⁸⁷⁹ Roland Penrose, *Max Ernst's "Celebes"*, Charlton Lectures on Art, Newcastle: University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1972.

⁸⁸⁰ Malcolm Bowie, *Lacan*, London: Fontana Press, 1991, pp.130-131.

⁸⁸¹ Lacan, "The agency of the letter in the unconscious", cited in Bowie, *Ibid.* p.132.

observes, "the subject is at its mercy and 'his' desire is not his."¹⁸⁸² Such desire is neither reducible to "need", nor compatible with any straightforward aim of "satisfaction"; instead, the desiring and divided subject "looks to the other not simply to supply his needs but to pay him the compliment of an unconditional yes" - a demand which can never be fully met. Desire is therefore rooted in this "non-adequation between need and the demand for love, and in the equally grave discrepancy between the demand itself and the addressee's ability to deliver."¹⁸⁸³ We could recall here, Aragon's fantasied woman "truly ready for anything", emblematic of a desire, which, ever-growing, expands to encompass the entire field of vision.

On one level, both *La chanson de la chair* and *Augustine Thomas et Otto Flake* function in the manner of the traditional *vanitas*, where a desiring subject is shown to be seduced by outer appearances, which are then stripped away by a third element to reveal the true corruption of the flesh lurking behind that deceptive facade; or again, which might conceal some vampiric creature such as the succubus. But this is further complicated in Ernst, not only by the ambiguity (as we noted earlier with Botticelli) of the motif of the hunt, but also by the way in which hounds and flayed cadaver race in opposing directions, again suggesting a radical disjuncture between desiring subject and its ostensible object. Bowie points to the way in which Lacan spatializes his model of desire, as falling always either short of (*en deça de*) or beyond (*au-delà de*) its object, and concludes that desire is thus "not a state or a motion but a space, and not a unified space but a split and contorted one."¹⁸⁸⁴ It is a space mapped by *need* and *demand*, but which "cannot be coordinated" - "a dimension in which the subject is destined to travel too far or not far enough." This "desire-space", Bowie concludes, "is not just mobile and unmappable by the subject: it is a place of permanent catastrophe."¹⁸⁸⁵

¹⁸⁸² Bowie, *ibid.* p.133.

¹⁸⁸³ Bowie, *ibid.* p.136.

¹⁸⁸⁴ Bowie, *ibid.* p.137.

¹⁸⁸⁵ Bowie, *ibid.* p.138.

Conclusion

The present thesis set out to explore the role played by masculinity in the work of the dada and surrealist movements. In this my purpose was to consider the participants' attitudes towards factors such as gender, the body, and their own understanding of their masculinity, and to consider how these factors found expression in their writings and artworks. Moreover, masculinity has itself been approached here with a view to testing the validity of an alleged "masculinity crisis", consequent upon the impact on a generation of young males of the carnage of World War I, and as a consequence, too, of changes in the status of women within European society, together with other social changes of the period. The thesis is therefore framed by the notion of "trauma", considered variously in terms of the impact of war, Oedipal conflict, castration anxiety and gender uncertainty.

There is ample evidence that World War I constituted a major trauma for the group of young men under discussion here, though the extent of that trauma clearly varied greatly from individual to individual. The case of Vaché, subject to increasing despair towards the end of the war, suffering periods of imprisonment, and culminating in his eventual suicide at the time of the armistice, provides an example at the extreme end of that trauma. It is clear from the work of Ernst during the early postwar period, that the conflict exercised a deep and enduring influence. Much of his work of this period deals either directly with the wartime experience, or deals with that experience more indirectly via the theme of Oedipal conflict and the notion of betrayal. We have noted, too, the prominence of gender-related themes within that body of work, reflecting a fragmented sense of masculine identity, and in which the depiction of femininity swings between the poles of the threatening and the seductive. We also find evidence in support of Bronfen's assertion that in representations of death within Western culture, we frequently encounter a displacement of violence and death onto the body of the woman (for example in Ernst and Masson). Gilbert argues the paradoxically emasculating impact of war upon men, under the rigours of military discipline, an obvious example of which is again that of Vaché. Foster's analysis showed that many of the key surrealist techniques (automatism, convulsive beauty, etc.) can be read as compulsively repeated attempts to master trauma., and can thus, at least in part, be traced directly back to the experience of war. One might also add the persistent surrealist interest in the theme of suicide (including, for some, its practice), which might similarly be rooted in

the trauma of war.

While there are some indications of increased misogyny as a consequence of the war, the evidence seems to favour Bourke's thesis that this was more confined to areas of particular social conflict, or tended to be concentrated within specific groups such as the far-right military factions analysed by Theweleit. Nonetheless, as Tatar has shown, there is some evidence of such views amongst German artists like Grosz and Dix, and Ernst is not immune to such influence. We should recall that in Germany, the sense of male trauma was particularly acute in view of the German defeat in the war, and the subsequent accusations of the "stab in the back." We should note, too, the importance of Weininger as a source of many of these views, the influence of whom was stressed by Žižek.

Masculinity itself has been shown to be a highly variable and relatively flexible concept, subject to long-term historical shifts as well as manifesting enormous variation at any single historical moment. We have noted the shift from a Victorian model of masculinity and the breakdown of the "doctrine of separate spheres", in the shift toward a more recognisably modern conception of gender relations. The case of fetishism, characterised by Foucault as the "master perversion" of the late nineteenth century, revealed to us many of the anxieties underlying male sexual identities, and their corresponding defence mechanisms, and underscored the importance of the feminine to our understanding of masculinity. As Silverman shows, using a psychoanalytic analysis, mainstream masculinity is founded upon a denial of castration and a projection of male lack onto the feminine. Silverman cast masculinity in ideological terms, as a "dominant fiction", and one which was therefore particularly susceptible to what she calls "historical trauma" - as in the case of the war - when that fiction can no longer be sustained. We saw in Klinger's *Glove* series how male anxieties around gender (castration anxiety, etc.) found expression in terms of fetishism, and how a number of those visual motifs came to be recycled in the work of Ernst. For surrealism, fetishism provided a crucial model through its insistence upon the *materiality* of the fetish, thus establishing an important paradigm for Breton's project of erasing the boundaries between the realms of dream and of reality.

Butler, drawing upon the earlier work of Rivière, has produced a convincing

model which asserts the performative nature of gender itself. We saw in the case of Vaché, how masculinity becomes conceived in terms of the theatrical and performative. Duchamp's assumption of the feminine in the form of his alter ego Rose Sélavy is only the most outstanding example of a persistent theme within his work, pointing to an understanding of gender as performative, and we could cite here works such as *L.H.O.O.Q.*, or objects like *Objet-dard* which similarly serve to disrupt stable notions of gendered identity. Such a conception of gender is similarly played upon in Clair's *Entr'acte*, as well as in some of the photographic work of Man Ray, Claude Cahun and Brassai.

Oedipal conflict has been shown to be particularly acute amongst this generation of young dadaists and surrealists, a factor which is especially obvious in the work of Max Ernst where it is handled in an overt and very knowing way, by way of an astute deployment of the findings of psychoanalysis. The reasons for this conflict have been detailed: most obviously the impact of war and the sense of being betrayed by the generation of fathers responsible for the slaughter of the trenches; as well as the challenge posed by women, which also no doubt enhanced the sense of ambiguity surrounding gender roles, as compared with the certainties of the previous generation. Although beyond the scope of this study, we could perhaps also add the impact of a broader shift in mentalities, for which there is already ample evidence during the period of the *fin de siècle*, particularly in the ferment which is manifested in terms of gender relations and gendered identity (Showalter). The writings of Freud provided the ideal vehicle through which artists and writers might explore this Oedipal theme, enabling a troubled generation to analyse its relationship with the figure of the father, though again, the self-reflexive nature of this deployment must be underscored. This often traumatic relationship with the father became apparent in a number of texts (the dream reports and fantasies of Ernst and de Chirico) and artworks, making apparent the enormous *ambivalence* surrounding that figure. While for de Chirico the father figures as an object of desire and loss (*The Child's Brain*, *The Prodigal Son*), for Ernst he is frequently a buffoonish and despised figure (*Aquis submersus*), while deeper analysis again reveals him as a desired object (*Pietà*, or *Revolution by Night*). Likewise in the case of Vaché (and as we shall see in the appendix, of Artaud), the problematic relation with the father was seen to be a significant factor.

In our analysis of the surrealist fascination with hysteria it became apparent that the repressed strand in all of this was the link with wartime shell-shock and the hitherto dismissed notion of hysteria in the male. Surrealism's identification with the convulsions of the female hysteric was seen to relate to the erotic fantasies of the *attitudes passionnelles* as identified by Charcot, while also providing the stimulus for such key surrealist concepts as "convulsive beauty." The importance of medical and psychiatric texts as the source of methods (such as automatism), motifs, themes and as the material source of collages, has been a striking feature of this study, whether in Ernst's deployment of hysteria in his collage novels, or Picabia's adaption of neurasthenic concepts in his paintings. Such models allow the creative subject to identify with deviant models of subjectivity and to propose an alternative world to that of everyday reality, as strikingly evidenced, for example, in Breton's identifying with the shell-shocked soldier in his *Sujet*. A distinction might be made between such a "knowing" deployment of hysteria, and the more immediate lived experience of shell-shock of a clearly deeply-traumatised figure such as Masson. Though not pursued here due to restrictions of space, there are further strong parallels between nineteenth century hysteria, and the various manifestations of extreme, almost "hysterical" masculine behaviour at dada events and demonstrations. Of particular interest are the direct inscriptions upon the body found in photos of Picabia, Tzara and others, in the form of words, symbols, tattoos, etc., which find parallels in the manifestation of dermographic inscriptions upon the body of the hysteric.

Surrealism, particularly during the period of the twenties, was an essentially masculine enterprise, and it is only during the thirties that women become actively engaged as producers in any significant numbers. "Homosociality", in the sense intended by Sedgwick, has been seen to have been a central component of surrealist social relationships and one of the pillars of the group's sense of masculine identity. The figure of the bachelor has been shown to be crucial in all of this and has been seen to embody a central paradigm of masculine identity for the group, not least through the influence of Marcel Duchamp. Duchamp's own self-confessed "bachelorly" behaviour has been shown to have provided a central theme of his work, while also serving as a model for other members of his circle (with Breton, for example, holding him up as an example to the group). The related issue of homosexuality has emerged as a significant factor at certain points in this study, as for example in the circumstances of

Vaché's death, or in relation to Breton's occasional outbursts against it. Importantly, homosexuality poses the ever-present threat for homosociality, of breaching the permeable boundary which divides the two states. However, given the reticence of many of the records in this area, as well as the many additional issues which it would inevitably raise, a fuller consideration of the role of homosexuality falls outside the scope of the present study.

Our analysis of the role of the machine reveals that the dadaist and surrealist deployment of absurd or eroticised machines marks, in many ways, a return to a pre-“hard” scientific method mode of representation (Stafford) - as encountered in the tradition of Mesmerism, electrical and early photographic experimentation. Such parallels are particularly clear in the absurd, erotic assemblages of Duchamp, Picabia and Ernst. The persistence of such motifs is explicable in terms of an enduring fantasmatic surrounding electricity and the machine, which we have traced from Mesmerism, through the photographs of Duchenne, the machine fantasies of Jarry and Roussel, to the mechanomorphic works of Picabia. As we shall see in the appendix, these motifs also extend to the machines and electroshock devices which figure in the drawings of Artaud. Jarry's *Surmâle*, with its central male fantasy of being transformed into an erotic machine, is surely an important marker in the development of this machine fantasmatic, while the novel's bleak view of the sexual relation also has important echoes (as for example in Duchamp's *Large Glass*, with its portrayal of the bachelors as automata, and which similarly posits the impossibility of the sexual relation).

In examining Picabia's mechanomorphic work, the determinative role of gender attitudes became clear, while we were also able to clarify the artist's conception of the body-machine relation, and to explore something of the relationship of the work to his own body and to conditions such as neurasthenia. Our analysis of some of the sources of Picabia's machine works served to underscore the role played by his re-cycling of pre-existing imagery and cast further light upon the creative process. Reading Picabia's machine works through Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, we arrive at an ultimately pessimistic conclusion, with its emphasis upon autoeroticism and sterility - a message which is again close to Duchamp's (in his *Large Glass*) of the impossibility of the sexual relation. This is also in line with the reading of the Bachelor Machines found in Carrouges, who also sees in them “the denial of woman”, as well as the denial of procreation as the

basis of the natural order - in effect, the male fantasy of usurping the role of creator (as also found in Picabia's *Fille née sans mère*, or in his assault on the Immaculate Conception in his sacrilegious *Sainte vierge*). One of the central themes of a Deleuzian reading, that these absurd machines work only by breaking down, was again borne out by the analysis.

Among the thematic strands running through this thesis, that of the body is perhaps the most prominent, from the young male bodies shattered by the experience of war and the performance of masculinity, to the machinic body metaphors of Picabia and Duchamp. And as we shall see in the case of Artaud, this might be extended to the exploded, assaulted bodies of Artaud's drawings and related texts. Whereas themes such as madness, hysteria or shell-shock at first glance present as psychic phenomena, the physical, corporeal body is never far away - whether as the convulsive body of the hysteric or the shattered body of the electroshock victim. Throughout the present study, the physical body has figured as the bedrock of the subject and as the primal source of artworks and writings, and perhaps nowhere more astutely and comprehensively analysed as in Artaud. We could perhaps add that this is also frequently a body *in revolt*, where the influence of anarchism and the writings of Stirner have been seen to exercise an important influence upon the sense of masculine identity manifested by many of those involved in the dada and surrealist movements.

The key role played by fantasy in the male imaginary and its linkage with desire has been underscored at various points in this study. As was noted in the case of Breton, notwithstanding his celebration of woman and of the theme of romantic love, a deeper analysis of his own fantasies reveals an often dark undercurrent, in which the figure of the woman oscillates between the roles of victim and predator. Again we find in these deep-rooted fantasies - in Breton, Ernst, Duchamp, Leiris, and others - support for Bronfen's contention that death in our culture, is frequently displaced onto the body of the woman, a tendency which I would suggest was reinforced by the recently ended war. The Lacanian analysis of Ernst's *La chanson de la chair*, read in terms of the pursuit of male desire, led us once more to the conclusion of the skewed nature of the sexual relation, further reinforcing the bleak view of that relation already encountered in Picabia, Duchamp and others.

Looking beyond the main body of this study to the case of Artaud, as his early correspondence with Rivière makes strikingly clear, we are confronted in Artaud with a deep ontological malaise, expressed as a split between the subject and his own intellectual being. We encounter in Artaud a body of thought deeply opposed to the concept of representation and in search of some unattainable immediacy - a conception partially realised in Artaud's late spells and drawings. The persistence within Artaud's writings and drawings of themes relating to a tormented masculinity is quite striking - perhaps nowhere more so than in his work on Heliogabalus, with its endless flows of bodily fluids and its sacks of dismembered male organs. Artaud's obsessions around the purity of sexual relations and his notion of the body without organs again serve to highlight the centrality of the body - a body which, in the case of Artaud, was one racked by both illness and opium addiction, and whose defining experience was that of *suffering*. For Artaud too, the trauma of his masculinity was at least in part rooted in the deeply ambivalent relationship with the father.

In the case of Artaud's experience of electroshock therapy we shall observe his subsequent attempt to give expression to the sensation of death and to reassemble his fragmented, shattered body through his drawings and through his struggle with what he terms the "subjectile." Artaud's deployment of the fantasmatic surrounding the machine marked a radical break with that found in Picabia or Duchamp, portraying the machine and the machinic body from the standpoint of the schizophrenic, as celebrated and valorised in the writings of Deleuze and Guattari. Artaud asserts that the drawing itself becomes a "machine which has breathed", but if so, a machine we might add, which functions like so many other Deleuzian machines, only when it has broken down. And with Artaud, too, we rediscover the fantasy of remaking man's anatomy, of assuming the role of creator and denying the procreative role of woman.

Gender then, and more specifically here, masculinity, can be seen a central, constitutive factor within the creative process itself - the creative subject is also a gendered subject, where gender must be considered, not as some internal, innate "essence", but rather as a malleable construct which is subject to historical mutation and which manifests a high degree of personal adaptation. One of the lessons of World War I was perhaps that masculinity was an inherently unstable category, in which few men were actually capable of meeting its ideals. Masculinity has therefore been seen to

be a key concept in our understanding of the productions of a generation of young men shaken by their experience of war and adapting to the demands of a rapidly transforming world and as such demands a re-evaluation of our conception of its role in the production of both literary and visual artworks.

Appendix

To Voice the Unrepresentable: Artaud, Electroshock and the Body Without Organs

J'ai à me plaindre d'avoir dans l'électro-choc rencontré des morts
que je n'aurais pas voulu voir.
Artaud, "Alienation et magie noire".⁸⁸⁸

Introduction: The Unrepresentable Body

Antonin Artaud presents perhaps the most extreme example of the traumatised male considered in this study and his drawings provide a painful inventory of the sufferings of the pathologised male body. I want to focus here on the question of our understanding of a series of drawings produced by Artaud during the period 1945-46, while incarcerated in the asylum at Rodez, which, though a little later than the events already considered, nonetheless continue and further enhance our understanding of certain themes - as for example in the case of electricity and the machine. As the source of some of the key ideas already considered from Deleuze and Guattari - particularly that of the "body without organs" - an analysis of Artaud's work allows us to further develop some of those concepts in relation to the representation of the body. Nonetheless, in order to acknowledge the historical gap between these drawings and the events analysed within the main body of this study, the discussion of Artaud is presented here as a separate appendix.

Artaud is perhaps best known for his writings on the theatre, and in particular, the concept of the "Theatre of Cruelty", though his *Œuvres complètes* run to some 26 volumes, including poetry, essays, manifestoes and letters, to which we can add Artaud's career as an actor, both on stage and screen. One of the central problems, for me, with the late drawings, is that of the representation of electroshock - or rather its impossibility. Electroshock, I want to argue, is the unrepresentable, existing only as a gap in representation. Firstly in a quite literal sense, somewhat surprisingly, such images simply don't exist in the medical literature. But secondly, unrepresentable in a logical or theoretical sense, insofar as to undergo electroshock is to undergo a kind of death - or as Artaud writes:

⁸⁸⁸ Antonin Artaud, "Alienation et magie noire", from *Artaud le Mâmo*, in Artaud, *Œuvres complètes*; Vol. XXII, Paris: Gallimard, 1974, p.65. Subsequent references to Artaud's *Œuvres complètes* are abbreviated as *OC*, together with the volume number.

I died at Rodez under electroshock.

I died. Legally and medically died.⁸⁸⁷

Failing to regain consciousness after more than an hour, he says he was declared dead, and instructions given for his body to be removed to the morgue. But every electroshock is, in a sense, a small death: an instant extinction of consciousness, a period of coma, with no memory afterwards of what happened. Electroshock carries around with it the smell of death - too close to electrocution, to the electric chair, to the stunning of animals prior to slaughter.

Artaud's works are all so inextricably bound up with the man himself, that they are almost unintelligible outside some appreciation of Artaud's ideas about himself and of his relationship with his body. This understanding becomes crucial when we come to analyse the works produced during his period of incarceration at Rodez, where he was diagnosed as schizophrenic, and where because of his isolation and mental condition, the works which he produced came to focus very much upon his own writings and highly personal conception of the body, as elaborated over many years. As a result of severe illness during childhood, Artaud's own body as corporeal entity was to figure prominently in his existence and writings - as a source of constant suffering, as the wellspring of his being, the central inspiration of his work, and the object of his lifelong self-analysis. Yet his public persona, despite his constant poverty, was that of the elegant dandy. I want to first briefly sketch out something of Artaud's reworking of reality, by pointing to some of the relevant key concepts in those writings.

Artaud's writings first came to the attention of a wider public in 1924 through the publication of his correspondence with Jacques Rivière - whereas Artaud had been looking to Rivière to publish his poems, Rivière found Artaud's incisive self-analysis in the letters to be of far greater interest, and instead proposed publishing the correspondence.⁸⁸⁸ There, in a letter dated 5 June 1923, Artaud writes that:

Je souffre d'une effroyable maladie de l'esprit. Ma pensée m'abandonne à tous les degrés. ... Je suis à la poursuite constante de mon être intellectuel.⁸⁸⁹

Further in the correspondence, in his letter of 25 May 1924, Artaud analyses his condition in terms of a "central collapse of the soul", and, pointing to writers like Breton and Tzara, insists that:

Il n'en reste pas moins qu'ils ne souffrent pas et que je souffre, non pas seulement dans l'esprit, mais dans la chair et dans mon âme de tous les jours. ... Je puis dire, moi, vraiment, que je ne suis pas au monde, et ce n'est pas une

⁸⁸⁷ Antonin Artaud, "Electroshock" (title provided by translator, not Artaud), *Artaud Anthology*, edited by Jack Hirschman, San Francisco: City Lights, Second edition, 1965, p.183.

⁸⁸⁸ Artaud's correspondence with Rivière appeared in *La Nouvelle Revue Française* in September 1924.

⁸⁸⁹ Artaud, *OCI*, p.30.

simple attitude d'esprit.⁸⁹⁰

Turning in a later letter (6 June, 1924) to the problem of giving expression to his mind, Artaud writes that, when on the point of expressing the clear reality of a feeling, "une volonté supérieure et méchante attaque l'âme comme un vitriol ... et me laisse, moi, pantelant comme à la porte même de la vie." At this point Artaud adopts a striking electrical analogy:

Et cette volonté, maintenant, supposez que j'en ressente physiquement le passage, qu'elle me secoue d'une électricité imprévue et soudaine, d'une électricité répétée.⁸⁹¹

Artaud refers to these eruptions in terms of *tempests*, thus suggesting the idea of electrical storms raging through his mind, in a way which disturbingly anticipates, some twenty years later, the repeated electroshocks designed to restore him to his senses.

Artaud had been acutely aware of a sense of *difference* from a very early age. He suffered a severe infection - probably meningitis - at the age of five, leaving in its wake a lifelong nervous disposition. He also suffered from neuralgia and stammering, as well as what Stephen Barber describes as a "nervous, irritable temperament during adolescence."⁸⁹² From around eighteen years, he began to suffer from depression and experienced his first sanatorium cure during 1915-16. In 1916 he was drafted into the French army, but discharged after persistent (self-induced) sleepwalking and spent the next three years in and out of various sanatoria and health resorts. He was first prescribed laudanum in 1919, launching him on a lifelong path of addiction to opium and later heroin. So that Artaud's conception of the body centres upon both physical and mental *suffering*: a body racked by cravings and pain, and experienced as constitutionally detached from the self.

As in the case of many of the other men already discussed, the figure of the father occupies a particularly significant position in the work of Artaud. Moreover, as with de Chirico and Ernst, the father is conceived as a particularly traumatic figure, often associated with death. In the transcript of a lecture dating from 1936, Artaud discusses surrealism's assault upon nation and family, before turning to his relations with his own father:

J'ai vécu jusqu' à vingt-sept ans avec la haine obscure du Père, de mon père particulier. Jusqu'au jour où je l'ai vu trépasser. Alors cette rigueur inhumaine, dont je l'accusais de m'opprimer, a cédé. Un autre être est sorti de ce corps. Et pour la première fois de la vie ce père m'a tendu les bras. Et moi qui suis gêné dans mon corps, je compris que toute la vie il avait été gêné par son corps et qu'il y a un mensonge de l'être contre lequel nous sommes nés pour protester.⁸⁹³

⁸⁹⁰ Artaud, *ibid.* p.50-1.

⁸⁹¹ Artaud, *ibid.* p.53.

⁸⁹² Stephen Barber, *Antonin Artaud: Blows and Bombs*, London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1993.

⁸⁹³ Artaud, "Messages révolutionnaires", *OCVII*, p.178.

As we shall see in relation to drawings such as *L'exécration du Père-Mère* (April 1946), the father function was to exercise a decisive role within Artaud's oeuvre.

From October 1924, Artaud was an active participant within the nascent surrealist movement. In January 1925 he became director of the Surrealist Bureau de Recherches, a short-lived experiment in providing the movement with a shop-front - a direct interface with the public; the effort never really took off and was closed down by April of that year. More significant, Artaud edited the third issue of *La Révolution surréaliste* (15 April 1925), an issue which saw the journal assume a very different voice, featuring a whole series of extravagant, declamatory proclamations, for which Artaud himself was either directly responsible or which he encouraged in others: "Lettre aux Recteurs des Universités Européennes", "Adresse au Pape", and the "Lettre aux écoles du Buddha." Artaud's "Adresse au Dalai-Lama" gives the tone:

Nous sommes tes très fidèles serviteurs, ô Grand Lama, donne-nous, adresse-nous tes lumières, dans un langage que nos esprits contaminés d'Européens puissent comprendre ... [...]

Fais-nous un Esprit sans habitudes ... [...]

Enseigne-nous, Lama, la lévitation matérielle des corps ...⁸⁹⁴

The next issue of the journal began with an editorial by Breton, headed "Pourquoi je prends la direction de *La Révolution surréaliste*". Just as when Breton hurriedly ended the "period of sleeps" when members of the group seemed to be stumbling towards mass suicide, Breton quickly senses a dangerous deviation of the surrealist project under Artaud and grabs the wheel, in order to bring the project back on course.

Outside surrealism, Artaud continued with his writing, while developing his work on the theatre, as well as a career in film, appearing in Gance's *Napoleon* and Dreyer's *Joan of Arc*. After seeing the Balinese dance theatre at the Colonial Exhibition in Paris, in August of 1931, Artaud became preoccupied with the idea of an intensely physical theatre - a theatre characterised by Barber as one of "compulsive gesture and physical crisis." He sought a theatrical experience of *immediacy*, bringing together physical gestures, cries, laughter, magic and the intervention of supernatural forces. In 1932 Artaud issued his first manifesto for the "Théâtre de la cruauté", in which he argues that theatre's only value consists in "une liaison magique, atroce, avec la réalité et avec le danger," insisting upon overturning the dominance of the text in favour of "une sorte de langage unique à mi-chemin entre le geste et la pensée."⁸⁹⁵ But behind all of this, he adds, there must be "un appel à certains

⁸⁹⁴ Artaud, "Adresse au Dalai-Lama", *La Révolution surréaliste*, no.3, 15 April, 1925, p.17.

⁸⁹⁵ Artaud, "Le Théâtre de la Cruauté (Premier manifeste)", from *Le Théâtre et son Double*, in *OCIV*, p.106.

idées inhabituelles," ideas "qui touchent à la Création, au Devenir, au Chaos, and which are "toutes d'ordre cosmique."⁸⁹⁶ I want to argue that we see a resurgence of such concerns in Artaud's late drawings, which, far from being simply some form of psychopathological expression, in fact show a striking continuation of Artaud's pre-existing concerns.

Another important influence upon this theatrical project was Lucas van Leyden's *Lot and his Daughters* (fig.159), dating from ca.1509, a painting which first came to Artaud's attention in 1931. In this apocalyptic image, the theme of incest is foregrounded, as Lot cavorts drunkenly with his daughters, while in the background, divine retribution in the form of fireballs or flaming meteors is inflicted upon a burning city. With its contorted architecture, spatial distortions, and the collapse of different timescales within the same moment, Leyden's image provided for Artaud a model of spectacle which might be realised on stage without resort to narrative conventions. Artaud discusses this image in his essay "La Mise en scène et la Métaphysique", where he emphasises its intense emotion, observing that "il frappe l'esprit par une sorte d'harmonie visuelle foudroyante."⁸⁹⁷ He describes Lot watching his daughters parading before him "comme s'il assistait à une sorte d'harmonie visuelle foudroyante," and this theme of incest also served to form Artaud's increasingly hostile attitudes towards sexuality.⁸⁹⁸ We also have the notion of divine anger and retribution, and Artaud's growing obsession with the idea of purification, of stripping the body of its sexual organs - ideas which become crucial in the late drawings.

During 1933 Artaud was commissioned by Denoël to produce a biography of the third-century Roman Emperor, Heliogabalus. His brief four-year rule was marked by incest, debauchery, murder and an anarchic disregard for the conventions of rule. Artaud's rather loose rendering of this history tells us as much about his own obsessions as of those of Heliogabalus. As Barber observes, "Artaud structured his account of Heliogabalus's life around the breaking of borders and the expulsion of fluids, notably blood and sperm",⁸⁹⁹ as announced by Artaud in the striking opening lines of the book:

S'il y a autour du cadavre d'Héliogabale, mort sans tombeau, et égorgé par sa police dans les latrines de son palais, une intense circulation de sang et d'excréments, il y a autour de son berceau une intense circulation de sperme.⁹⁰⁰

Barber points to Artaud's intense identification with the figure of Heliogabalus, citing as evidence a letter he wrote to Jean Paulhan, in which he emphasises "the central figure where I have described

⁸⁹⁶ Artaud, *ibid.* p.107.

⁸⁹⁷ Artaud, "La Mise en scène et la Métaphysique", from *Le Théâtre et son Double*, *ibid.* p.40.

⁸⁹⁸ Artaud, *ibid.* p.41.

⁸⁹⁹ Barber, *Blows and Bombs*, *op. cit.* pp.60-1.

⁹⁰⁰ Artaud, *Héliogabale, ou l'Anarchiste couronné*; in Artaud, *OCVII*, p.15.

myself."⁹⁰¹ Or again, Anaïs Nin in her diaries, describes Artaud in a café, proclaiming "I am Heliogabalus, the mad Roman Emperor", and travelling with her in a taxi suddenly pointing at the crowded streets and declaring "The revolution will come soon. All this will be destroyed."⁹⁰² If we look to Artaud's text on Heliogabalus, which he subtitled "L'Anarchiste couronné", we also find some curious elaborations which surely tell us more of Artaud's own fantasies and complex sexual identity. We could cite the extraordinary passage describing Heliogabalus' arrival in Rome "après une étrange marche du sexe, un déchaînement fulgurant de fêtes à travers tous les Balkans":

Tantôt courant à fond de train avec son char, recouvert de bâches, et derrière lui le Phallus de dix tonnes qui suit le train, dans une sorte de cage monumentale faite, semble-t-il, pour une baleine ou un mammouth. [...] Traîné par trois cents taureaux que l'on enrage en les harcelant avec des meutes de hyènes hurlantes, mais enchaînées, le Phallus ... traverse la Turquie d'Europe, la Macédoine, la Grèce ... à la vitesse d'un zèbre qui court.⁹⁰³

Already here, in this extraordinary image of enraged yet caged desire, in its coupling of the phallus with the carriage, of the organic with the inorganic, we have a kind of Deleuzian "desiring machine".

Ritual castration also figures strongly in Artaud's fantasy of Heliogabalus:

Des sacs de sexes sont jetés du haut des tours avec la plus cruelle abondance, le jour des fêtes du dieu Pythien. [...]

Le bien, le mal, le sang, le sperme, les vins rosats, les huiles qui embaument, les parfums les plus chers créent, autour de la générosité d'Héliogabale, d'innombrables irrigations.⁹⁰⁴

Or again, Heliogabalus' gory death as he flees, terrified, from his own palace guards, tumbling headlong into the soldiers' latrines, where "il plonge dans les excréments":

C'est ici une scène d'étal, une boucherie répugnante, un antique tableau d'abattoir.

Les excréments se mêlent au sang, giclent en même temps que le sang sur les glaives qui fourragent dans les chairs d'Héliogabale et de sa mère.⁹⁰⁵

We will see in the drawings, the return of this confusion of elements; of the flows of bodily fluids, organs and members; a return of these machinic assemblages of body and machine; of these retributive assaults upon the body - particularly upon the sexual organs; and an obsessive concern with cycles of procreation and destruction.

Following the critical failure of the Theatre of Cruelty, and with it the collapse of his plans to revolutionise theatre during the early thirties, Artaud turned toward Mexico, which together with Tibet, he considered the two nodal points of world culture. Artaud believed that he might approach there

⁹⁰¹ Barber, *Antonin Artaud: Blows and Bombs*, op. cit. p.61.

⁹⁰² Ibid.

⁹⁰³ Artaud, *Héliogabale ou l'Anarchiste couronné*; op. cit. p.119.

⁹⁰⁴ Artaud, *ibid.* p.128.

⁹⁰⁵ Artaud, *ibid.* p.136.

the primitive wellspring of Mexican myth, and travelled across the Mexican Sierra during 1936 to take part in the peyote ceremony of the Tarahumaras. Withdrawing from heroin in order to be in a suitably pure state for the ritual, Artaud began to experience "visions" of strange figures in the rocks of the Mexican landscape: "Cet homme nu qu'on torturait, je l'ai vu cloué sur une pierre ..." ⁹⁰⁶ Artaud sees rocks which "avaient tous la forme d'une poitrine de femme avec deux seins parfaitement dessinés," as well as "une sorte de dent phallique énorme", and all around him "une histoire d'enfantement dans la guerre, une histoire de genèse et de chaos ..." ⁹⁰⁷ So that again, in this semiotics of nature, Artaud discerns these same cycles of creation-destruction. But also superimposed on nature are the signs of the Tarahumaras themselves, branded and cut into trees and rocks - and again this layering of natural and semiotic signs will feed into Artaud's drawings.

Becoming increasingly obsessed with the Tarot, Artaud issued an apocalyptic pamphlet *Les Nouvelles Révélation de l'Etre* in July 1937. It is worth observing that Artaud's extravagant predictions in that pamphlet are heavily gendered, announcing the closure of a "World-Cycle" under "the supremacy of Woman" and proclaiming, somewhat hysterically, that:

LE MALE ABSOLU DE LA NATURE A COMMENCÉ A REMUER DANS LE CIEL.
IL EST RESSUCITÉ POUR LA JUSTICE DU MALE. ⁹⁰⁸

Artaud interprets this prediction in terms of "Man is to recover his stature", while woman, associated strongly with sexuality, is to be eclipsed. Artaud also mentions a cane, given to him by René Thomas, which he believed had belonged to St. Patrick and had magical powers; men were not allowed to touch the staff, though women were. Martin Esslin observes that, with the collapse of his hopes for theatre, and perhaps also reacting against the after-effects of syphilis, Artaud abandons all sexual activity and creates a mythology about God having created man without sexual and digestive organs, asserting that "man had been degraded into a sexual and defecating being by the intervention of evil extra-terrestrial forces." ⁹⁰⁹ And with this, a rejection of both the paternal and maternal functions:

Je ne crois à ni père
ni mère
ja na pas
a papa mama ... ⁹¹⁰

Or, more accurately, we could say that Artaud himself assumes those functions:

Moi, Antonin Artaud, je suis mon fils, mon père,
ma mère,

⁹⁰⁶ Artaud, *Les Tarahumaras*, in *OCIX*, p.44.

⁹⁰⁷ Artaud, *ibid.* p.46.

⁹⁰⁸ Artaud, *Les Nouvelles Révélation de l'Etre*; *OCVII*, p.155.

⁹⁰⁹ Martin Esslin, *Artaud*, London: Fontana/Collins, 1976, p.101.

⁹¹⁰ Artaud, "Ci-Gît", in *OCXII*, p.99.

At the same time Artaud began to make all manner of strange predictions and to send eccentric letters to both friends and strangers. One such letter, sent to André Breton, warned him of the coming apocalypse, adding that, "Car si burlesque que cette idée vous paraisse l'antechrist fréquente les Deux Magots."⁹¹² It was at this time that the first of Artaud's "spells" were produced, with many more following during 1939, as for example *Spell for Sonia Mossé*, 14 May 1939 (fig.160). The spells were letters which Artaud sent mainly to friends - particularly women - and to his doctors, which contained various magical symbols intended to harm, warn or protect their recipients. They were produced in different coloured inks or with coloured crayon, and the paper surface stained or burned through with cigarettes. For Agnès de la Beaumelle, the burns are "obvious traces of aggression and purification" and recall both Leyden's *Lot and his Daughters*, as well as the role of fire as a means of purifying encountered by Artaud in Mexico.⁹¹³ The sexual violence of the spells is also quite striking, as for example in the *Spell for Lise Deharme* (5 September, 1937), which contains the threats:

Je ferai enfoncer / une croix de fer / rougie au feu dans ton / sexe puant de Juive /
et cabotinerai ensuite / sur ton cadavre ...⁹¹⁴

Deharme was of course Breton's "lady of the glove", and Artaud sent the spell via Breton. Sylvère Lotringer notes Artaud's overestimation of Breton during this period, and that, together with his "Redeemer" phantasy and his delusions of emasculation, Artaud's various symptoms all fit within Freud's model of paranoia as contained in his *Schreber* case analysis.⁹¹⁵ However, Artaud also manifests symptoms which would clearly fall within a diagnosis of schizophrenia and it is this avenue which I now want to pursue.

In his essay "The Schizophrenic and Language: Surface and Depth in Lewis Carroll and Antonin Artaud", Deleuze argues that while there are superficial similarities between the writings of the child and those of the madman, the two are in fact radically different, and he therefore condemns what he calls "the grotesque trinity of child, poet and madman."⁹¹⁶ Taking the specific example of the work of Lewis Carroll, Deleuze argues that the work is concerned only with *surface*, with flatness and a rejection of depth; and he is thus able to equate it with superficiality. In this, he follows the example of

⁹¹¹ Artaud, *ibid.* p.77.

⁹¹² Artaud, letter to André Breton, 14 September 1937, in *OCVII*, p.290.

⁹¹³ Agnès de la Beaumelle, "Spells and Gris-Gris: Introduction", in Margit Rowell (ed), *Antonin Artaud: Works on Paper*, New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1996, p.40.

⁹¹⁴ Artaud, *Spell for Lise Deharme*, in Rowell (ed), *op. cit.* p.43 and p.149.

⁹¹⁵ See Sylvère Lotringer, "The Art of the Crack Up", in Edward Scheer (ed), *100 Years of Cruelty: Essays on Artaud*, Sydney: Power Publications and Artspace, 2000, p.179.

⁹¹⁶ Gilles Deleuze, "The Schizophrenic and Language: Surface and Depth in Lewis Carroll and Antonin Artaud" in J.V. Harari (ed), *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, London: Methuen and Co., 1980, p.277.

Artaud, who translated some of Carroll's work, but was very dismissive of it, judging it rather hollow and superficial. By contrast, the schizophrenic, Deleuze argues, discovers that "there is *no more surface*". For the schizophrenic, he says, "the surface is punctured" and the schizophrenic body "appears as a kind of body-sieve."⁹¹⁷ Hence, "everything is body and corporeal"; all becomes "a mixture of bodies ... telescoping, nesting and penetrating each other." In terms of language, Deleuze argues that, for the schizophrenic, "all words lose their meaning", becoming unable to express incorporeal effects. In effect, the distinction between words and the physical body, normally separated by an incorporeal borderline, that of meaning, is entirely lost. The only duality now exists within language itself, oscillating between what Deleuze calls "*passion words, which explode in wounding phonetic values, and action words which weld together inarticulated tonic values.*"⁹¹⁸ Such a duality, as we shall see, applies very much in Artaud's drawings, where all is corporeal, all expression directly via the body. We also find this same oscillation between destruction and creation; on the one hand exploding and fragmenting the body, while on the other, stitching and welding together body parts, creating machinic assemblages, monstrous births. And in the spells too, as in Artaud's *Spell for Roger Blin*, ca.22 May, 1939, this loss of surface, where the support is itself assaulted, pierced and burned, collapsing into depth; where the language is intended to have directly physical, magical effects; and where body and language merge as one.

The first of the spells (that sent to Lise Deharme) was sent from Dublin during Artaud's fateful Irish journey of 1937, a trip during which his behaviour grew increasingly erratic, leading to his violent arrest while trying to gain entry to a monastery for shelter, and his subsequent expulsion from Ireland in late September. During the return boat journey he attacked the crew when they entered his cabin and arrived back in France in a straitjacket, where he was interned initially in the psychiatric hospital at Rouen. This marked the beginning of a long period of incarceration which was to last until 1946, and which saw Artaud moved to the asylum of Sainte-Anne in Paris in 1938, to Ville-Evrard in a Paris suburb in 1939, and then finally hundreds of miles south, to Rodez in January 1943. Artaud was eventually discharged in March 1946, into the care of the clinic at Ivry, having spent over eight years in French asylums.

⁹¹⁷ Deleuze, *ibid.* p.286.

⁹¹⁸ Deleuze, *ibid.* p.288.

Electrotherapy, Epilepsy and Hysteria

During his period at Rodez, Artaud underwent some fifty-one electroshock treatments, administered by Dr. Gaston Ferdière, the chief psychiatrist, a relatively liberal physician and friend of the surrealists, who had been approached by Robert Desnos to care for him. Ferdière firmly believed that he had restored Artaud to creative activity, and Barber tells us that he was reduced to tears whenever the question of Artaud's violent denunciations of him was raised.⁹¹⁹ When Artaud began this treatment in June 1943, electroshock was still in its infancy and little understood, and in fact it has largely remained a controversial treatment of last resort, for use when all else has failed. Electroshock treatment needs to be sited within two quite separate therapeutic traditions: firstly that of electro-therapies; and secondly, that of epilepsy. The two in fact merge in the notion of *shock*: of the "shock" to the system and the consequent fit which results, but I want initially to separate the two paths. Dealing first with electricity, I want to emphasise the role of what Florence de Mèredieu characterises as the popular "fantasmatic" - in a kind of socio-cultural fantasy stretching from Shelley's *Frankenstein*, to the Deleuzian "desiring-machine" - surrounding both electricity itself and its close relationship with the machine.⁹²⁰

Outside the use of the natural electricity found in torpedo fish, deployed during classical times to cure severe headaches, electricity really begins to be used in medicine during the mid-eighteenth century, when it is used to treat paralysis, epilepsy and neurological cases.⁹²¹ One such early case reported in France cites the use of electrical shocks to successfully treat a case of hysterical blindness. George Adams published his *Essay on Electricity* in 1784, where he describes many successful uses of electrotherapy (see fig.94), including "three cases of melancholy, two of which recovered after light shocks to the brain."⁹²² Closely linked to the use of electricity is that of magnetism, which like electricity, was to become a frequently encountered metaphor within surrealism, as for example in Breton and Soupault's *Les Champs magnétiques* (1919). We have already noted the spread of Mesmerism across Europe during the late eighteenth century, deploying so-called "animal magnetism" in order to cause the patient to fall into a mesmeric sleep. We already begin to see in the imagery surrounding this pseudo-therapy, a popular fantasy of erotic manipulation and sexual control attained via mechanical and electrical devices.

⁹¹⁹ Stephen Barber, *Artaud: The Screaming Body*, London: Creation Books, 1999, p.45.

⁹²⁰ Florence de Mèredieu, *Sur l'électrochoc: le cas Antonin Artaud*, Paris: Blusson, 1998, pp.88-91.

⁹²¹ John F. Fulton, "Origins of Electroshock Therapy", *Journal of the History of Medicine*, Vol.11, April 1956, pp.229-30.

⁹²² From Rowbottom and Susskind, *Electricity and Medicine*, cited in Robert Woof, Stephen Hebron and Claire Tomalin, *Hyenas in Petticoats: Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley*, op. cit.

More immediately relevant to the use of electricity in electroshock therapy is the work of Duchenne de Boulogne in his *Mécanisme de la physionomie humaine* of 1862. Duchenne, as we noted above, was using the localised application of electricity to stimulate the various facial muscles in order to analyse the operation of physiognomy - by exciting specific muscles, particular expressions and emotions could be simulated. Far closer to convulsive *horror* than to "convulsive beauty", in what appears the gratuitous torture of an inoffensive old man (fig.99), Duchenne's images perhaps hint at the reasons for electroshock falling outside the boundaries of what might decently be represented. Duchenne's concerns were as much *aesthetic* as scientific, and his images were lit, he says, either in the manner of Rembrandt or Ribera, depending on the mood required of the particular expression. The old man used in the images suffered a facial anaesthesia and hence his face could be treated as a blank canvas. Duchenne intended to create, he said, a "living anatomy of man", where by the term "anatomy" the sense of "dissection" is intended.⁹²³ It is interesting that he considered using a cadaver, but rejected the idea as he felt this would create a "hideous and repulsive" spectacle. But what is also quite extraordinary is that Duchenne accepts that electrical stimulation only ever produces a kind of *grimace* - again this suggestion of horror, the monstrous - and that one has to cover over half of the face to see the actual expression. What we have here is, in Lacanian terms, what Slavoj Žižek characterises as the *grimace of the Real* - a confrontation with some traumatic object which falls outside both the registers of the Symbolic and the Imaginary, and which here assumes the form of a confrontation with what we could call the "raw meat" of existence.⁹²⁴ Apart from his pioneering use of photography, which would be taken up in recording the phases of hysteria, Duchenne also claimed to have used electricity to cure hysterics, and again, we find electricity being widely used at the Salpêtrière under Charcot.

Georges Didi-Huberman argues that at the Salpêtrière, electricity becomes "*une panacée*", with its regular use of electrostatic baths, "Holtz-Carré" machines, and all manner of faradic and galvanic devices.⁹²⁵ Electrotherapy was first established at the Salpêtrière in 1875, by Dr. Vigouroux, who was treating patients with electricity *en masse*, averaging some 250-300 patients on each consultation (fig.115).⁹²⁶ Didi-Huberman characterises this as a kind of "*workshop*", as "a sort of little industry of bodies", dispensing charges which, he says, are the "forerunners of electroshock." In a photograph dating from around 1880, we find Blanche Wittmann, Charcot's favourite diva of hysteria, responding in typically theatrical fashion to a faradic current. She stands rigid, as though frozen in the

⁹²³ Duchenne (de Boulogne), *Mécanisme de la physionomie humaine*, op. cit., p.15.

⁹²⁴ Žižek, "Grimaces of the Real, or When the Phallus Appears", *October* no.58, Fall 1991, pp.45-68.

⁹²⁵ Didi-Huberman, *Invention de l'hystérie: Charcot et l'iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière*, op. cit., p.195.

⁹²⁶ *La Leçon de Charcot: Voyage dans une toile* (exh. cat.), op. cit., p.90.

tonic phase of an epileptic cycle, under the watchful gaze of the supervising doctor, who assumes a somewhat sinister aspect. We can therefore trace Breton's key surrealist concept of "convulsive beauty", as we saw when we considered the surrealists' celebration of hysteria, back through the eroticised convulsions of the hysteric, to its roots in the convulsions of the epileptic; but also to the connection with electricity - the sudden spark, the surge of the electrical current, like some erotic discharge - and the fantasmatic of the machine.

Electroshock Therapy and the Rodez Drawings

Mort sous l'électro-choc comme sur la croix je pouvais me
révolter sans danger.
Artaud, *Cahiers*.⁹²⁷

What is immediately striking about electroshock is the lack of visual representation - the most we find in the medical literature are schematic drawings and electrical diagrams.⁹²⁸ Disturbingly close to other such uses of electricity like that of the electric chair used in executions in America, or to Duchenne's tormented old man, and lacking the erotic appeal of Charcot's model of hysteria, electroshock therapy has tended to evade visualization. As Mèredieu has shown, electroshock was first developed in Italy in 1938, and emerged out of research into various forms of "shock" or convulsotherapies during the thirties. Shocks - usually by suddenly plunging the patient in water - had been used since the Middle Ages, and came to be extended by the use of chemical injections and electrical shocks. Epilepsy provided the model for such therapies, with its sudden crises, total shock to the system, and loss of consciousness, followed by a period of respite. Insulin was injected during the 1920s to induce coma, another severe shock to the system, and in the thirties, cardiazol was injected, slowing down the heart rate and inducing convulsions and then coma. The aim then was to induce a crisis, exhaust the system and thereby gain a period of remission or cure.

It had been known since the beginning of the twentieth century that electricity could be used to induce convulsions in dogs, as found in the work of Leduc (1902) and Batelli (1903), and researchers turned to electricity to avoid the harmful effects of cardiazol. The breakthrough came with Ugo Cerletti's work in Rome during the late thirties, after he observed pigs being electrically stunned at the abattoir, prior to being slaughtered, going into convulsion without any apparent harm. Cerletti

⁹²⁷ Artaud, *Cahiers du retour à Paris*, OCXXII, p.366.

⁹²⁸ See, for example, G.W.T.H. Fleming *et al*, "Electric-Convulsion Therapy of Schizophrenia", *The Lancet*, 30 December 1939, pp.1353-1355.

began applying large electrical currents to human subjects during 1938, which, as expected, produced an epileptic-type fit and loss of consciousness. In medical terms, then, electroshock is a convulsotherapy, in the direct tradition of insulin and cardiazol injections; but iconographically, and in terms of the popular "fantasmatic", it also falls within the tradition of the machine and of electrical experimentation.

Despite the onset of war the following year, electroshock experiments continued to be pursued with some enthusiasm, spreading to Germany, Japan, England and the United States. We can see from an American advertisement dating from 1953 for *Glissando Treatment* (fig.161), how electroshock was being marketed in those early years - a promise here of less violent convulsions, and reduced risk of fracture. In France, during the war, with the occupying Germans banning the use of insulin on psychiatric patients, researchers naturally turned to electricity to induce fits. As Mèredieu rightly observes, this enthusiasm is attributable, not simply to the treatment's apparent effectiveness with very difficult cases, but also to the whole fantasmatic surrounding the machine, to the idea of patient and machine forming a single unit, and of the association of electricity with the most advanced technologies. But what is also clear in an English research paper by Kino and Thorpe⁹²⁹ dating from 1946, is the financial saving expected - about £40 per patient - due to shorter hospital stays, along with the benefit of immediate calming of excited patients. What's also surprising is the scale of the research in a little-understood technique - some 500 "selected psychotics" in Kino and Thorpe's study - and their persistence given the low success rate with schizophrenics - only a 24% recovery rate is claimed, with the long-term effects simply unknown. Mèredieu speaks of a "Taylorisation" of psychiatry with electroshock, with patients simply reduced to statistics, and where the over-riding concerns become speed, efficiency and profitability.⁹³⁰

Artaud's electroshock treatment began on 20 June 1943 and extended over some fifty-one shocks. His notebooks from the period at Rodez indicate his familiarity with the process, as well as with the injection of insulin, which he refers to as "ce poison monstrueux",⁹³¹ though there is no surviving evidence of his being treated with either insulin or cardiazol injections. Given that the equipment had been delivered only the previous month, Artaud must be considered very much a guinea-pig, a fact confirmed by his suffering a fracture to his vertebrae during only his third treatment. Such fractures were not uncommon before means were developed of relaxing the muscles or reducing the intensity of the convulsions; and when he was sufficiently recovered, the shocks continued, finally ending in

⁹²⁹ F.F. Kino and F.T. Thorpe, "Electrical Convulsion Therapy in 500 Selected Psychotics", *The Journal of Mental Science (The British Journal of Psychiatry)*. Vol.92, No.386, January 1946.

⁹³⁰ Mèredieu, op. cit. p.67.

⁹³¹ Artaud, *OCXXI*, p.261.

December 1944. Artaud wrote to Dr. Jacques Latrémolière, Ferdière's assistant at Rodez, in January 1945, describing with great acuity the effects of that treatment upon him:

L'électro-choc, M. Latrémolière, me désespère, il m'enlève la mémoire, il engourdit ma pensée et mon cœur, il fait de moi un absent qui se connaît absent et se voit pendant des semaines à la poursuite de son être, comme un mort à côté d'un vivant qui n'est plus lui, qui exige sa venue et chez qui il ne peut plus entrer.⁹³²

Artaud had made similarly lucid yet emotive appeals throughout his treatment, but had been persistently ignored. What's also interesting here, is this sense of the doubling of the subject, of being outside the body, observing one's self.

Artaud had been encouraged to draw by Ferdière as a form of art-therapy, with the help of the artist Frédéric Delanglade, who Ferdière was sheltering at Rodez, and began making drawings during 1944.⁹³³ If we look at some of the large drawings which he began to produce at the same time as his letter to Latrémolière, what's immediately striking is the extreme fragmentation of the body, with body parts - faces, penises, breasts, limbs - scattered across the entire surface of the paper. As the title of *L'être et ses foetus ...*, (ca. January 1945) suggests, there's also an emphasis upon reproduction, sexual organs, on processes of emergence and birth. But what is the status of these drawings as *images* and as forms of "expression"; and if we accept for a moment that electroshock is somehow "outside representation", what is their relationship with the actual experience of electroshock? Artaud refers to this series of works as "written drawings" - drawings, he says, with "phrases inserted within the forms in order to hurry them along".⁹³⁴ These phrases often assume the form of glossolalia, a private and at times arcane language, further tying the images to Artaud's own body. In April of 1946 he wrote:

Mes dessins ne sont pas des dessins mais des documents,
il faut les regarder et comprendre ce qu'il y a dedans, ...⁹³⁵

And he further insists that they can't be understood simply "du point de vue artistique ou véridique," that he *despairs* of pure drawing. Instead, for Artaud the process is intensely *physical*, made he says, "non avec la main seulement, mais avec le raclement du souffle de ma trachée-artère, et des dents de ma mastication." For Artaud, "notre vision oculaire actuelle est *déformée*, réprimée, opprimée ..." And he characterises the actual markings on the page - the "lines and points" - as "*des lignes interstitielles*":

⁹³² Artaud, letter to Dr. Jacques Latrémolière, 6 January 1945, in *OCXI*, p.13.

⁹³³ The few surviving drawings from 1944 seem to have been smaller, non-figurative works, comprising symbols, numbers, and geometric forms.

⁹³⁴ Artaud: "dessins écrit, avec des phrases qui s'encartent dans les formes afin de les précipiter", letter to Jean Paulhan, 10 January 1945, *OC XI*, p.20.

⁹³⁵ Artaud, "Mes dessins ne sont pas des dessins ...", in *OCXXI*, p.266.

Interstitielles elles le sont, étant comme en suspens dans le mouvement qu'elles accompagnent,
mouvement qui bouscoule le souffle ...⁹³⁶

The term "interstitial" is extremely precise, referring not only to the notion of a small crevice between things, but also intending the *anatomical* use of the term, as the spaces between organs and tissues - an intensely *bodily* conception of drawing. So that, Artaud adds, some primal emotion ("émotion première") is ingrained within the work, which the viewer must "surajouter ... sous peine de n'être plus lui-même qu'un analphabète incompetent."⁹³⁷ We have a vivid description of Artaud at work on a portrait during 1946, from Jean Dequeker, one of Ferdière's assistants:

Sur une grande feuille de papier blanc ... Je l'ai vu créer son double, comme dans un creuset, au prix d'une torture et d'une cruauté sans nom. Il travaillait avec rage, cassait crayons sur crayons, souffrait les affres internes de son propre exorcisme.
[...]

De la rage créatrice avec laquelle il a fait sauter tous les verrous de la réalité et tous les loquets du surréel, je l'ai vu crever aveuglément les yeux de son image.⁹³⁸

Intensely physical, then, drawing becomes itself a ritual act, one where the surface - what Artaud calls the *subjectile* - is pierced, assaulted.

Jacques Derrida, in his 1986 essay "To Unsense the Subjectile", takes up Artaud's use of this term "subjectile" as the key to interpreting the visual works and to coming to some understanding of their ontology. *Subjectile*, for Derrida, is a paradoxical term, which, he says, "can take the place of the subject or the object - being neither one nor the other."⁹³⁹ He links the word to related terms such as "subjective" and "projectile", and uses it in particular to refer to "the paper or the canvas ... and the trajectory of what is thrown upon it ..." - what traverses and perforates it, "passing through to the other side." For Derrida, Artaud overturns all the conventional boundaries of art, citing in particular his rethinking of the concept of "expression" - a concept which Derrida judges "threadbare".⁹⁴⁰ For Artaud, he argues, expression is no longer simply a translation of something "inside" the artist onto a surface, as a kind of projection; it is rather a manifestation of *forces*, of violence: "Cruelty", he argues, "is always unleashed upon a subjectile." And for Derrida, this violence is unleashed by Artaud against God, whom he believes to have expropriated his body. So that the struggle with the subjectile becomes one of reappropriating the body, of being reborn; the subjectile is "a place of combat", of death and rebirth. The assault upon the subjectile as surface is most apparent in the case of the

⁹³⁶ Artaud, *ibid.* p.267.

⁹³⁷ Artaud, *ibid.*

⁹³⁸ Dr. Jean Dequeker, in *La Tour de Feu*, no. 63-64, December 1959, reproduced in *Antonin Artaud: Œuvres sur papier* (exh. cat.), Marseille: Musée Cantini, 1995, p158.

⁹³⁹ Jacques Derrida, "To Unsense the Subjectile", in Jacques Derrida and Paul Thévenin, *The Secret Art of Antonin Artaud*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1998, p.61.

⁹⁴⁰ Derrida, *ibid.* p.102.

spells, with their burns and piercings, while the attack upon God is particularly clear in an image such as Artaud's *La maladresse sexuelle de dieu* (ca. February 1946) (fig. 162). In his own commentary on this drawing, Artaud writes that he *intentionally* botches the work, "jeté sur la page comme un mépris des formes et des traits, afin de mépriser l'idée prise et d'arriver à la faire tomber."⁴¹ The clumsiness of the drawing, he says, is to counter that of God. And Artaud refers to himself as having been rendered "electric" by his work, while he compares God, by contrast, to a mere battery, which again points to the importance of the electrical fantasmatic within his work.

Following the analysis of Paule Thévenin (Artaud's executor and long-term guardian of his work), the drawings are usually posed in terms of the attempt by Artaud to reconstruct his shattered body; Thévenin characterises them as "battefields" in which Artaud struggles to reconstitute the self.⁴² And she cites Artaud: "the mutilated body is that stomach of misery which always searches to reassemble itself." Thévenin stresses Artaud's lucidity, citing a letter to Ferdière in which he insists: "Il ne m'a jamais échappé un geste *inconscient* pendant mes 9 ans d'internement" and that his sole loss of consciousness was that incurred during electroshock comas.⁴³ We can therefore see that, for Artaud, electroshock constituted an intolerable gap - a tear in experience - that he must fill out in his drawings and writings. In another essay, "The Search for a Lost World", Thévenin points out that the drawings *precede* the sudden torrent of writings from Artaud commencing in February 1945 - that he had to proceed first via the image. She argues, too, that while in Mexico Artaud had observed sorcerers "representing the unrepresentable, expressing the inexpressible" and that this is precisely what he too would attempt in his work at Rodez.⁴⁴ For Thévenin, this refers to the mysterious signs and images which Artaud observed in the Mexican landscape and on the bodies of those participating in the peyote ceremony - signs which resolved themselves into letters of the alphabet, and which Artaud believed corresponded to the "final and highest realities." While concurring with Thévenin's analysis, I would want to add that, figuring prominently amongst what is "unrepresentable" in the drawings, is the experience of electroshock, and correspondingly, among the "highest realities" must figure the experience of death.

⁴¹ Artaud, *OCXX*, pp.170-173.

⁴² Paule Thévenin, "Un insurgé de l'art", in *Antonin Artaud: Dessins* (exh. cat.), Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1987.

⁴³ Artaud, letter to Ferdière, 28 February 1946, cited in Thévenin "Un Insurgé de l'art", *ibid.* p.11.

⁴⁴ Paule Thévenin, "The Search for a Lost World", in Jacques Derrida and Paule Thévenin, *The Secret Art of Antonin Artaud*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1998, p.22.

Artaud, Electricity, Machines

Assez avec les machines électriques,
des coups cruels, ça suffira,
il y a tout dans la cruauté épaisseur.
Artaud, *Cahiers de Rodez*.⁹⁴⁵

In a late text from his period at Rodez, Artaud writes:

Journeaux, radio, téléfériques, photophores, électroscopes. - Arbitraire en un seul mot. - Robots, machines électriques, tous avenants d'une merveille simple venus d'une crime multiple et toujours répété sur mon corps, [...] qui l'a appelée électrique la volonté personnelle de douleur.⁹⁴⁶

If we can see in Artaud a turning away from modernity, and toward non-Western cultures, arcane knowledge, etc., both he and his works are nonetheless immersed in modernity, the machinic and electrical. Mèredieu tells us that Artaud would have been familiar with electrotherapy devices from childhood, his father having actually bought one to treat his son at home, following his contracting meningitis. The device, as depicted for example in a photograph dating from 1910 (fig.163) would have applied static electricity to the body, giving the patient a kind of "electrostatic bath".⁹⁴⁷ Artaud's mother, convinced of electricity's effectiveness, demanded its use on her son in 1942, while he was incarcerated at Ville-Evrard, at a time when the use of electroshock would have been at an even more primitive level.

We know too that, during his career as an actor, Artaud actually appeared in Karel Capek's play *RUR* - Rossum's Universal Robots, in 1922 (fig.164). Capek had coined the term "robot" in 1917, and in his play, robots are sold all over the world as a form of cheap labour, eventually taking over and destroying humanity. Interestingly, we're told in the play that the robots also suffer a kind of breakdown:

Something like epilepsy you know. We call it robot's cramp. They'll suddenly sling down everything they're holding, stand still, gnash their teeth - and then they have to go to the stamping mill.⁹⁴⁸

As a member of the surrealist group, Artaud would also undoubtedly have been aware of the work of Raymond Roussel. His novel *Impressions d'Afrique* was adapted for the Paris stage in 1912, when it was seen by Picabia, Duchamp and Apollinaire, making Roussel a cult figure amongst the avant-garde. In one famous scene (fig.165), Djizmé is executed by electrocution, by being fitted to a bed-like

⁹⁴⁵ Artaud, *Cahiers de Rodez: April - 25 May, 1946*, OCXXI, p.189.

⁹⁴⁶ Artaud, OCXXI, p.271, cited in Mèredieu, op. cit. p.89.

⁹⁴⁷ Mèredieu, op. cit. pp.95-6.

⁹⁴⁸ Karel Capek, *RUR*, cited in Peter Wollen, *Raiding the Icebox*, op. cit. p.42.

device with a lightning conductor, which is connected to the helmet which she wears. The lightning motif, like electricity, was co-opted by surrealism and used on the cover of *La Révolution surréaliste* (15 December 1929) in relation to the theme of love. Such imagery is therefore constitutive of this shared fantasmatic of the mechanico-electrical, and of the conflation of body and machine, in a tradition stretching from Shelley's *Frankenstein*, to Lang's *Metropolis*, and we find its influence - albeit refracted through his own personal iconography - in the drawings of Artaud.

In a drawing from January 1946, *La Machine de l'être*, or *Dessin à regarder de travers* (fig.166), Artaud intimately links the machine to the themes of being and creation. In his own commentary upon this work, Artaud writes:

Ce dessin est une tentative grave pour donner la vie et l'existence à ce qui jusqu'à aujourd'hui n'a jamais été reçu dans l'art, le gâchage du subjectile, la maladresse pitieuse des formes qui s'effondrent autour d'une idée ... La page est salie et manquée, le papier froissé, les personnages dessinés par la conscience d'un enfant.⁹⁴⁹

He describes the main, somewhat robotic figure as "arcane man", emerging from the earth, suffering from the war, signalled by the cannons at his side, and "Bleu d'horreur avec un carcan sur la tête."⁹⁵⁰

The image is about creation and birth: about the struggle with the subjectile to create the work; and the creation of man, without the intervention of God. To the right of this autochthonous figure, we see a curious machinic assemblage, a heterogeneous mixture of mechanical, symbolic and bodily components, which draws upon the fantasmatic surrounding the machine - but also coffin-like, perhaps linking the machine to the theme of death.

There are some strong parallels with a drawing by Bruno Bettelheim's autistic patient Joey, from his 1967 study *The Empty Fortress*. The image (fig.167) depicts one of the machines which the child believed ran him by remote control, with its "Transmission of Blinderator" (sic), which prevented him from seeing and understanding, and the oil seal which prevented his being disembowelled. Joey also created a series of elaborate machines, which mediated all his daily activities and contacts, including eating, sleeping and defecating. The machines also provided him with defence, but as he needed periodic release from them, would suffer catastrophic "explosions", leaving him with no body at all, inhabiting a "world of mire".⁹⁵¹ Artaud referred to himself as "autistic", in terms of his obsessive self-absorption, and his written drawings perhaps play a similar role in terms of bodily metaphor and self-reconstruction.

⁹⁴⁹ Artaud from *OC XIX*, p.259; cited in Derrida "To Unsense the Subjectile", op. cit. p.122.

⁹⁵⁰ Artaud, *ibid.* p.260.

⁹⁵¹ See Hal Foster, "Armour Fou" in Stephen Melville and Bill Readings (eds.), *Vision and Textuality*, London: Macmillan, 1995, pp.226-7.

In analysing Artaud's drawings I find it useful to draw again on some concepts taken from the work of Deleuze and Guattari, found mainly in their *Anti-Oedipus*, concepts in part inspired by Artaud's life and work. Deleuze is best known as a philosopher of *difference*, whose thought is based upon concepts of multiplicity and creation, where *desire* is made the driving force of society and culture. The best guide to social desire, for Deleuze and Guattari, is the id of the schizophrenic, and they proposed replacing psychoanalysis with what they term *schizo-analysis*, a kind of political analysis of desire which brings together Marx and Freud. Desire is a highly *affirmative* mode of acting, relating and existing, and serves to affirm difference - what they call "desiring production." Deleuze and Guattari, as we saw in relation to the work of Picabia, populate their social unconscious with machines whose primary function is the production of desire: "everything", they say, "is a machine," and all is production.⁹⁵² The old distinction between machine and organism now becomes redundant, a reconceptualization which seems also to apply in Artaud's written drawings, as in *La Machine de l'être*, or again as in *L'exécration du Père-Mère* (April 1946). Jacques Prevel, poet and friend of Artaud, considered the latter (fig.168) one of Artaud's "principal drawings", describing it in terms of: "two spread legs with a sex, and the gushing out of sperm represented by a formless being."⁹⁵³ The image can be seen to combine both the male and the female principles and poses both sexuality and procreation in terms of extreme violence. Agnès de la Beaumelle characterises the image in terms of "la cruauté de la naissance vécue comme une déjection de déchets et déjà une instance de mort ..."⁹⁵⁴ For Mèredieu, electroshock constitutes the twin poles of the "Père-Mère", and "amène la reviviscence non seulement du trauma de la naissance mais de cet autre trauma antérieur que fut la procréation ou le passage dans l'être."⁹⁵⁵ In the *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari argue that: "Desire constantly couples continuous flows and partial objects that are by nature fragmentary and fragmented."⁹⁵⁶ So that we could say that, here in the work of Artaud, organic and inorganic forms become similarly interwoven, constituting assemblages, endless chains of desiring production; interminable cycles of generation, death, and rebirth. Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the unconscious as a *factory* rather than a stage, as a site of desiring-production, rather than, as with psychoanalysis, a stage for fantasies and desires, is very much in accordance with Artaud's intensely corporeal conception of the subject, and with his interweaving of organic and machinic elements. Finally, this "exécration" of the father-mother also recalls the central theme of the *Anti-Oedipus* - that of the rejection of the Oedipal family structure as repressive of desire, as containing desire within the boundaries of the nuclear

⁹⁵² Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. pp.2-3.

⁹⁵³ Jacques Prevel, *En compagnie d'Antonin Artaud*, cited in *Antonin Artaud: Oeuvres sur papier*, op. cit. p.150.

⁹⁵⁴ Agnès de la Beaumelle, *ibid.* p.150.

⁹⁵⁵ Mèredieu, op. cit. p.172.

⁹⁵⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, cited in John Marks *Gilles Deleuze: Vitalism and Multiplicity*, op. cit. p.98.

family.

Returning to the issue of the actual status of these drawings, Artaud himself characterises them in terms of “une machine qui a souffle” - again a rather Deleuzian conception - and as “la recherche d'un monde perdu”, where “l'image sur le papier n'est plus même lui qu'un décalque, une sorte de copie amoindrie.”⁹⁵⁷ Again this insistence upon the drawings' connectedness with the body, with the bodily *ritual* of their production - the chanting, the breath, the stabbing pencils, the beating of a rhythm - and of their living existence only as part of a broader, organic assemblage; that they are in fact *living machines*.

As Ronald Bogue observes, Deleuze and Guattari base their model of experience upon that of psychotics, who “often experience various parts of their bodies as separate entities, and sometimes as invading, persecuting machines”; or again, who inhabit a body without organs, or have shifting, multiple personalities.⁹⁵⁸ In Artaud's *L'homme et sa douleur* (April 1946) (fig.169), the principal figure is largely stripped of flesh and bodily organs, and points us to a theme in Artaud's work which is developed into a key concept in the writings of Deleuze and Guattari - that of the “body without organs”. They argue that “Desiring machines work only when they break down, and by continually breaking down.”⁹⁵⁹ The body, they say, “suffers from being organized in this way”, and thus at its very heart is a state of “absolutely rigid stasis”: “No mouth. No tongue. No teeth. No larynx. No oesophagus. No belly. No anus.” This, they say, is the “full body without organs”, discovered by Artaud when he found himself without shape or form - “the unproductive, the sterile, the unengendered, the unconsumable”. It is, they argue, the *death instinct*. And its function is to prevent an endless, machinic repetition of *the same*; it halts production, stops repetition and stimulates *difference*.

For Artaud, the concept of the “body without organs” similarly aims at restoring to man his freedom. In a late text, “Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu” (1947), he argues that “L'homme est malade parce qu'il est mal construit” and that we must therefore “refaire son anatomie”; he must be stripped bare, scraped of God, “et avec dieu ses organes.” Artaud adds that “il n'y a rien de plus inutile qu'un organe”, and concludes:

Lorsque vous lui aurez fait un corps sans organes,
alors vous l'aurez délivré de tous ses automatismes

⁹⁵⁷ Artaud, “Dix ans que le langage est parti ...”, *Luna-Park*, no.5, October 1979; reproduced in *Antonin Artaud: Œuvres sur papier*, op. cit. p.56.

⁹⁵⁸ Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari*, op. cit. p.91.

⁹⁵⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. p.8.

et rendu à sa véritable liberté.⁹⁶⁰

Right from the outset Artaud's writing had been intensely physical, corporeal; as early as 1925 he wrote that: "Rien ne me touche, ne m'intéresse que ce qui s'adresse *directement* à ma chair."⁹⁶¹

Alongside this there is the recurring refrain of separation from self: right from the time of his correspondence with Jacques Rivière, Artaud writes of "toute la distance qui me sépare de moi."⁹⁶² Writing of his opium addiction around 1934-5, Artaud says that "Le corps est là mais comme vide de lui-même et les organes" - where "rien ne manque et où tout n'est plus là."⁹⁶³ And he returns to this sense of an inner void in his apocalyptic text of 1937, *Les Nouvelles Révélations de l'Etre*, where he writes of his separation from the world and of his sense of "the Void" - "La Vide qui était déjà en moi."⁹⁶⁴

This stripping, purification of the body, culminates in a related image, *La Mort et l'homme*, (ca. April 1946) (fig.170). Man here is stripped to a stick-like skeletal form, with a death's head, described by Artaud as: "Quelque chose comme un tic tac d'horlogerie réduit à son insecte simple."⁹⁶⁵ His flying zig-zag form suggests electricity or a lightning bolt, like the sudden eruption of death in life. In his commentaries on this drawing Artaud says that death steals the lungs - the box-like forms which signify the lungs, breath, life. What, Artaud asks, is man?:

Un bâton qui marche avec un peu de chair, sur lui,
une règle entre les trous du nez et qui, cette chair, la perdra par la mort.⁹⁶⁶

The stick-like form in the foreground is a metronome, again a machine, both animation and life, the rhythm of the breath, the heartbeat; but it's also a *memento mori*, a reminder - like an hourglass - of life running its course. Artaud's image also suggests the idea of a switch: the flipping back and forth of the metronome, the two hands making contact, the figure lifted off the ground as though electrocuted. This in fact accurately expresses the effects of electroshock, which, according to Marcel Lapipe and Jacques Rondepierre operates in the manner of a switch, which they liken to "la détente d'un piège ou d'un arme à feu": "ou bien le ressort se déclenche, ou bien il ne se déclenche pas, il n'y a pas de solution intermédiaire ..."⁹⁶⁷ It is interesting in this regard that metronomes were also used in electrical experiments (c.f. Leduc - *Rhythmic variation of electrical current*, fig.171), recalling the on/off character of the operation of the electrical charge. And again, in Artaud's drawing, we have a machinic

assemblage - an amalgam of the mechanical and the organic.

⁹⁶⁰ Artaud, "Pour en finir avec le Jugement de Dieu", *OCXII*, p.104.

⁹⁶¹ Artaud, "Fragments d'un Journal d'Enfer", *OCI*, p.139.

⁹⁶² Artaud, letter to Jacques Rivière, 29 January 1924, *OCI*, p.34.

⁹⁶³ Artaud, "Appel à la Jeunesse: Intoxication - Désintoxication", *OCVIII*, p.25.

⁹⁶⁴ Artaud, *Les Nouvelles Révélations de l'Etre*, op. cit. p.150.

⁹⁶⁵ Artaud, "La Mort et l'homme", in Artaud, *OCXXI*, p.232.

⁹⁶⁶ Artaud, "La Mort et l'homme", in Artaud, *OCXXI*, p.157.

⁹⁶⁷ Marcel Lapipe and Jacques Rondepierre, *Contribution à l'étude physique, physiologique et clinique de l'électro-choc*, (2nd edition), Paris and Montpellier: Librairie Maloine, 1947, p.66.

In another image, *La bouillabaisse de formes dans la tour de babel* (February 1946) (pl.6), we also find, according to Mèredieu, the actual depiction of an electroshock device, in the box-like shape to the left, with dials on its front and with wires suggestive of bolts of electricity emerging from it. The machine also has a curious bird-like face emerging from the top of it, again serving to animate the mechanical. At the centre of the image there are two opposed box-like forms, reminiscent of some kind of apparatus, surrounded by a blue, cylindrical "aura", linked up to vivid red lines suggestive of electrical circuits. We need to read this image in tandem with another, equally suggestive of the operation of electroshock, but which now also features the suffering body itself: *Le Totem*, (ca. December 1945-February 1946) (pl.7). Like hysteria, electroshock was modelled on the various phases of the epileptic attack, and the various stages of the treatment and its physiological impact upon the body are described in some detail by Lapipe and Rondepierre, who began experimenting with electroshock in 1940 at Ville-Evrard, while Artaud was still at that institution.⁹⁸⁸ With epilepsy, after an initial premonitory stage, when the patient sensed the onset of an attack, there followed first the "tonic" stage, when the body becomes rigid; then the "clonic" phase of convulsions; and finally the "stertorous" phase of unconsciousness. With electroshock, the electric current first causes a tensing of the muscles, followed by extreme rigidity. Arms and legs may be bent or raised, and the mouth open wide. It is this tonic phase which seems to be suggested here in *Le Totem*. Box-like devices seem to be wired to the head, and as in the previous image, the vivid red colouring along the wires is suggestive of the application of the electric current. Lapipe and Rondepierre assert that if the patient is immediately thrown into crisis by the electrical charge, he rarely cries out; but where this does not occur immediately:

il est, au contraire, fréquent au cours des accès dits retardés; il est extrêmement sonore, aigu et s'épanouit, souvent, en un hurlement prolongé, comme exprimant une terreur effroyable ...⁹⁸⁹

That the body in Artaud's image is in pain is suggested by the large nail driven into the torso, and also by the red patch on the back, either of which may refer to the damaged vertebrae, depending on which direction the body is taken to be facing. Artaud firmly believed he had been stabbed in the back by a pimp, in Marseille, when he was nineteen. So we can be sure that this totem, this figure of suffering, is Artaud himself. And that what is represented is the moment of electroshock - the tensed figure cast into the void.

It is useful to contrast Artaud's image with an early portrait by Duchamp - that of Dr. Dumouchel, dating from 1910 (pl.8). Dumouchel is standing, hand extended and tensed, surrounded by a

⁹⁸⁸ Lapipe and Rondepierre, *ibid.* pp.64-66.

⁹⁸⁹ Lapipe and Rondepierre, *ibid.* p.66.

dazzling halo of crimson light, itself tinged with a pink aura at the most intense point, around the hand. According to Linda Dalrymple Henderson, "such bodily projections were a standard element of the practice of Magnetism", a form of hypnosis.⁹⁷⁰ But whereas with Duchamp's figure, the emanation suggests an aura of mystery, with Artaud's, the tone is one of suffering, of a figure rigid with shock.

Artaud, Electroshock and Death

Passer un homme à l'électro-choc ou à l'insuline c'est le tuer.
Artaud, "Dossier d'Artaud le Môme".⁹⁷¹

In late photographs of Artaud taken by Georges Pastier in 1947, the year before Artaud's death, we can gauge the impact upon him of incarceration - prematurely aged, his teeth lost during electroshock and the architecture of his face collapsed, the toll of wartime deprivation. What can we conclude then of Artaud's response to the experience of electroshock? He treats the issue in some detail in an essay "Alienation et magie noire" found in *Artaud le Môme* (1947). Artaud refers there to electroshock as "cette thérapeutique de la mort lente" and clearly conceives of it as a kind of evil magic practiced by doctors. He writes that:

Ceux qui vivent, vivent des morts.
Et il faut aussi que la mort vive;
et il n'y a rien comme un asile d'aliénés pour couvrir doucement la mort, et tenir en
couveuse des morts.⁹⁷²

And he asserts that:

la médecine moderne, complice en cela de la plus sinistre et crapuleuse magie,
passe ses morts à l'électro-choc ou à l'insulinothérapie afin de bien chaque jour
vider ses haras d'hommes de leur moi ...⁹⁷³

The body, emptied, is thus open to a state which Artaud, in a term taken from the Tibetan "Book of the Dead" (*BardoThödol*), calls "Bardo" - a state of living "aux exigences du non-moi." Bardo, he says, is "l'affre de mort dans lequel le moi tombe en flaque":

et il y a dans l'électro-choc un état flaque
par lequel passe tout traumatisé;
et qui lui donne, non plus à cet instant de connaître,
mais d'affreusement et désespérément méconnaître ce qu'il
fut, quand il était soi, quoi, loi, moi, roi, toi, et ÇA.⁹⁷⁴

For Artaud, then, electroshock meant death - an annihilation of the self from which it is never possible

to fully recover. And as noted earlier, Artaud insists that on one occasion, he "died at Rodez under

⁹⁷⁰ Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *Duchamp in Context*, op. cit. p.3.

⁹⁷¹ Artaud, "Dossier d'Artaud le Môme", *OCCII*, p.219.

⁹⁷² Artaud, "Alienation et magie noire", in *Artaud le Môme*; *OCCII*, p.57.

⁹⁷³ Artaud, *ibid.* p.58.

⁹⁷⁴ Artaud, *ibid.* p.58.

electroshock. ... Legally and medically died.” After over an hour without returning to consciousness, the attendant, Artaud says, called Ferdière, who declared him dead and called for the corpse to be taken to the morgue, but that he suddenly gave a shudder and awoke. Artaud writes elsewhere that Ferdière “s’arrachait les cheveux de me voir mort.”⁹⁷⁵ But Artaud also asserts that he had himself observed all of this, “but not from this side of the world but from the other ... floating in the air”, under the ceiling of “the cell where the shock took place”; and he talks of 10,000 beings at the bedside of the dying man, unwilling to let him return to life, particularly desperate to retain his body. Artaud refers to this experience in terms of “the *void*”:

And I know not what suspension of the void invaded me with its groping blind spots
but I was that void,
and in suspension⁹⁷⁶

To conclude then, electroshock is therefore the equivalent of *death*, and death is itself the void, a gaping hole in experience which Artaud tries to cover over via the device of doubling his self and reporting back from that “other side of the world.” So that we can see the written drawings too as part of this effort, not only to reconstruct the dismembered subject, but also to fill in that traumatic tear in experience.

⁹⁷⁵ Artaud, “Cahiers de Rodez, May- June 1945”, *OCXVI*, p.107 and p.352 n.28.

⁹⁷⁶ Artaud, “Electroshock”, *Artaud Anthology*, op. cit., p.185.

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I have tried to keep the bibliography quite focussed, restricting it either to items explicitly cited in the text, or works which I felt directly influenced the thesis. I have thus excluded more general works on dada, surrealism, on Paris, early modernism, specific artists and writers, etc. which may have influenced my thinking, but which are not directly relevant to the argument.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the text:

Breton, *OCI* and *OCII* refer to:

Breton, André, *Œuvres complètes*, Volume I, edited by Marguerite Bonnet, Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1988.

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