

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

**Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600**

UMI[®]

Allegories of Nature, Culture, Gender:
Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp's Étant donnés...

Ernestine Daubner

A Thesis

in

The Humanities Doctoral Program

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
Concordia University

February 2000

© Ernestine Daubner, 2000



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file *Votre référence*

Our file *Notre référence*

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-47718-5

Canada

ABSTRACT

Allegories of Nature, Culture, Gender: Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp's Étant donnés...

Ernestine Daubner, Ph.D
Concordia University, 2000

This dissertation consists of three interrelated dialogues with Marcel Duchamp's provocative installation, Étant donnés: 1^o la chute d'eau, 2^o le gaz d'éclairage (1946-66). By conducting dialogues with this artist's "givens" from three different positions, I make evident the intersubjective or interactive nature of the art encounter: how the ideological and conceptual positions of the viewer or interlocutor serve to re-write or re-present that object. My first dialogue is from the position of a Duchampian scholar who "strips bare" the artist's philosophical (patatautological) position and dialogic imagination. This stripping reveals the artist as encoder of two allegorical modes. My position as a feminist historian of art and culture informs my other dialogues with Duchamp's allegories of nature, culture and gender. A collision between my givens and those of the artist, the second dialogue exhibits Duchamp's Étant donnés... as a series of specular games with Western epistemologies and histories that inscribe "woman" as the "other" of culture. In my third dialogue or "allegory of reading," I draw on the blindness and insights of Duchamp's gender games and disclose how they serve to perpetuate readymade givens and thus to undermine his patatautological position. At the same time this deconstructive dialogue is an intervention which brings to the fore an array of obscured histories of women as agents of culture as well as diverse feminist perspectives that create a slippage in the boundaries between female-nature and male-culture.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to several people who have made the writing of this dissertation possible, beginning with Professor Donald Andrus who, as Chair of the Art History Department of Concordia University, set the stage for this doctoral project by agreeing to my teaching a course on Marcel Duchamp. Without his ongoing support to me as a part-time faculty member in the department, this thesis would certainly never have been written. Many of the concepts, positions and ideas presented in the following pages were developed over the years as an Art History instructor. I wish also to express my gratitude, for financial support, to the Fonds pour la Formation de Chercheurs et l'Aide à la Recherche (FCAR) and to Concordia University for awarding me the External Award Holders Doctoral Scholarship.

An interdisciplinary dissertation of this kind would not have been possible without the unique scholarly experience offered by Concordia's Humanities Doctoral Program. I offer my warm thanks to the two Directors, Stanley French and Sherry Simon, who, during my tenure in the program, offered their assistance and guidance. I consider myself very fortunate to have had the opportunity to study with scholars from diverse disciplines whose expertise and perspectives have expanded my intellectual and academic horizons in significant ways. Thanks to the insights on literary theory which Professor Lazlo Géfin of the English Department shared with me, I constructed my conception of the complex allegorical modes of Marcel Duchamp. The theoretical approaches, especially dialogism, poststructuralism and deconstructionist theories,

which I developed with Professor Géfin's guidance continue to inform my scholarly pursuits in interactive strategies in contemporary art. For this, I am most grateful.

I wish to offer my deepest gratitude to Professor John Laffey from the History Department. Studying under his direction was a most enriching and rewarding experience as a scholar. The historical perspectives he provided on modernity and the critiques of Enlightenment culture have been crucial to this dissertation and will continue to have reverberations for me for some time. With the benefits attained from his vast knowledge of cultural history, I have been able to build a foundation for my future research area on the histories of women as technological subjects. I am sincerely touched by and appreciative of Professor Laffey's continuing support in my doctoral project.

Very special thanks also go to my Art History advisors who have offered their most generous assistance to me during the long gestation period of this dissertation. I am indeed grateful to have been advantaged by the advice and wisdom of the Duchampian scholar, art historian and philosopher, Olivier Asselin. His pertinent questions and astute remarks, even his polite resistance, always provided stimulating feedback that motivated me to reassess, to strengthen and to further develop my conceptual and political positions. Several of the trajectories I have followed in the complex maze which constitutes Marcel Duchamp's oeuvre were triggered by discreet and thought-provoking comments made in the course of our fruitful conversations.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to Catherine MacKenzie with whom it has been an honor and privilege to work. As Chair of the Art History Department, she

has kindly supported me in my academic pursuits as teacher and scholar, and for this, I am most appreciative. As my principal advisor in Art History, she has been truly generous and supportive. While her firm direction and high expectations demanded full scholarly commitment, her judicious silence allowed me to explore diverse avenues, permitting me to discover my positions with regard to representational and discursive practices as well as to find directions for future research. Her insightful feminist perspectives and keen intellect have been invaluable to me in this regard.

Thanks to the generosity and specialized assistance of my advisors and the financial and academic support of the Art History Department, the Humanities Doctoral Program and Concordia University Part-Time Faculty Association, I have been able to present aspects of my doctoral research in national and international conferences and congresses in Canada, the United States, Europe, Brazil and Mexico, and to publish in refereed journals and in a forthcoming book of collected essays. For providing me with the possibility of developing these intellectual and academic pursuits, I offer my sincere and heartfelt thanks.

CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	viii
PROLOGUE:	
Encountering <u>Étant donné</u> s... ..	1
INTRODUCTION:	
<u>Étant donné</u> s...: The Three Dialogues	11
DIALOGUE ONE: THE TWO ALLEGORIES	
<u>Étant donné</u> s...: Duchamp's Patatautological Game	79
DIALOGUE TWO: ALLEGORIES OF NATURE-CULTURE-GENDER	
<u>Étant donné</u> s...: Duchamp's Specular Inversions	193
DIALOGUE THREE: AN ALLEGORY OF READING	
<u>Étant donné</u> s...: Duchamp's Specular Perversions	273
EPILOGUE:	
Leaving the Dialogic Space	376
Bibliography	379
Illustrations	399

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Unless otherwise indicated, all illustrations are of works by Marcel Duchamp.

1. Door of Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau. 2° le gaz d'éclairage (Given: 1. The Waterfall. 2. The Illuminating Gas), 1946-66. Philadelphia Museum of Art. A mixed-media assemblage, approximately 242.5 cm. X 177.8 cm. X 124.5 cm. Wooden door encased in bricks, velvet, wood, leather stretched over an armature, twigs, aluminum, iron, glass, plexiglass, linoleum, cotton, electric lamps, a gas lamp (Bec Auer type), motor, etc.
2. In Advance of the Broken Arm. 1915. Readymade. Wood and galvanized iron snow shovel. Original lost. Several replicas.
3. Fountain. 1917. Readymade. Porcelain urinal with the inscription in black paint: "R. Mutt 1917." Original lost. Several replicas.
4. L.H.O.O.Q. 1919. Rectified Readymade. Pencil on a reproduction.
5. The Nude Descending the Staircase (No. 2) 1912. Oil on canvas.
6. The Large Glass. Also entitled La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires même (The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors Even) 1915-23. Oil, varnish, lead foil, lead wire, and dust on two glass panels (cracked), each mounted between two glass panels, with five glass strips, aluminum foil and a wood and steel frame, 109-1/4 x 69-1/4 in.
7. To be Looked At (From the Other Side of the Glass) With One Eye. Close To. For Almost an Hour. 1918. Mixed media on glass: oil paint, silver leaf, lead wire, and magnifying lens on glass (cracked), mounted between two panes of glass in a standing metal frame.
8. Rotary Demisphere (Precision Optics). 1925 Motorized construction: painted wood demisphere, fitten on black velet disk, copper collar with plexiglass dome, motor, pully and metal stand. Engraved on front edge of the coper disk: "rose slavy et moi esquivons les ecchymoses des esquimaux aux mots exquis"
9. Disks Bearing Spirals, 1923. Ink and pencil on 7 white paper disks, irregularly cut diamaters, each mounted on a blue paper disk, mounted on paper board.
10. The interior scene of Étant donnés...

11. Diagram of the construction, Étant donnés...
12. The Bride of 1912. Oil on canvas.
13. Selected Details after Courbet, 1968. Etching.
14. Gustave Courbet. La Femme aux bas blancs. Oil on canvas. c. 1861.
15. Selected Details after Rodin, 1968. Etching
16. Auguste Rodin. The Kiss. Sculpture.
17. Selected Details after Ingres I, 1968. Etching.
18. Selected Details after Ingres II, 1968. Etching.
19. J.A.D. Ingres. The Turkish Bath. c. 1860 Oil on canvas.
20. J.A.D. Ingres. Oedipus and the Sphinx. 1808. Oil on canvas.
21. Gustave Courbet. Origin of the World. 1866. Oil on canvas.
22. Albrecht Dürer. Drawing of The Artist's Model. 1525. Woodcut.
23. Leonardo da Vinci. The External Genitalia and Vagina, with Diagrams of the Anal Sphincter. drawing from notebook. c. 1508-9.
24. Man Ray. Rrose Sélavy. 1921. Photograph of Marcel Duchamp as Rrose Sélavy.
25. Box in a Valise (Boîte-en-valise). Several versions of this work date from 1941 to 1949. Miniature reproductions in leather valise.
26. Tu m', 1918. Oil and pencil on canvas with bottle brush, three safety pins, a bolt and shadows of bicycle wheel.
27. Air de Paris, 1919. 50 cc. of Paris Air in a sealed glass ampoule.
28. Draft Pistons, 1914. Air blown through open window determined the shape of three irregular transparent squares on the painted cloud in the Bride's Domain of The Large Glass.
29. Glider Containing a Water Mill in Neighboring Metals, 1913-15. Oil and lead wire on glass. mounted between 2 glass plates.

30. Handmade Stereopticon Slide (Hand Stereoscopy), 1918-19. Rectified readymade: pencil over photographic stereopticon slide.
31. Belle Haleine, Eau de Voilette, 1921. Assisted Readymade: a perfume bottle and box with labels depicting Marcel Duchamp as Belle Haleine.
32. Eau et Gaz à tous les étages (Water and Gas on Every Floor), 1958. Imitated Readymade: white lettering on blue enamel plate.
33. Hanging Gas Lamp (Bec Auer), 1903-4. Charcoal on paper.
34. Twelve Hundred Coal Bas Suspended from the Ceiling Over a Stove, 1938. Installation
35. Poster for the exhibition, Editions de et sur Marcel Duchamp, 1967
36. Dust Breeding, 1920. Photograph by Man Ray records several months' accumulation of dust on the lower section of The Large Glass.
37. Female Fig Leaf, 1950. Sculpture made of galvanized plaster. Incised inscription on the bottom: Feuille de Vigne Femelle/MD/1950.
38. The, 1915. Manuscript ink on paper.
39. Rendez-vous du Dimanche 6 février 1916 (Rendez-vous of Sunday, February 6, 1916), 1916. Typewritten text on four postcards, taped together.
40. With Hidden Noise, 1916. Assisted Readymade. A ball of twine between 2 brass plates, joined by 4 long screws, containing a small unknown object added by Walter Arensberg.
41. Why not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?, 1921 Assisted Readymade. Painted metal bird cage, marble cubes, thermometer, and cuttlebone.
42. Fresh Widow 1920. Miniature French window, painted wood frame and eight panes of glass covered with black leather. Inscribed across sill, applied in black paper-tape letters: FRESH WIDOW COPYRIGHT ROSE SELAVY 1920.
43. The Bicycle Wheel, 1913. Readymade. Bicycle wheel mounted on painted wooden stool. Original lost. Several replicas.
44. The Knife Grinder, 1904-5. Pencil and india ink drawing.

45. Woman Hack Driver, 1907. Brush and ink, pencil and splatter on paper.
46. Sundays, 1909. Conté pencil, brush and 'splatter' on paper.
47. Coffee Mill, 1911 (oil on cardboard)
48. 2 Persons and a Car (study), 1912. Charcoal on paper.
49. Chocolate Grinder, no. 1. 1913. Oil on canvas.
50. Bachelor Apparatus, 1. Plan and 2. Elevation, 1913. Red, blue, black ink and pencil on paper. cut into 2 pieces and later rejoined.
51. Boxing Match, 1913. Pencil and crayon on paper.
52. Perspective drawing for the Water Mill Wheel, 1913. Pencil.
53. To Have the Apprentice in the Sun, 1914. India ink and pencil on music paper.
54. Study for "The Chocolate Grinder, No. 2." 1914. Oil, colored pencils and ink on irregular canvas fragment.
55. Chocolate Grinder, no. 2, 1914. Oil and thread on canvas.
56. Cover: for Blind Man no. 2, New York, 1917. Chocolate grinder.
57. Sieves, 1914. Colored pencil, pencil and ink on paper.
58. Bottlerack, 1914. Readymade: galvanized iron bottle dryer. Original lost. Several replicas.
59. Rotary Glass Plates (Precision Optics) 1920. Motorized construction: five painted glass plates, wood and metal braces, turning on a metal axis, electrically operated.
60. Frames from an incompleated stereoscopic film, 1920: film with holder.
61. Oculist Witnesses, 1920. Pencil on reverse of carbon paper.
62. Photograph of Teeny Duchamp in front of the door which was used in the installation, Étant donnés..., in its original setting in Cadaqués.

63. Disks Inscribed With Puns, 1926 (white letters pasted on eight black cardboard disks. 8 of the 9 disks used (one has been lost) in Duchamp's film Anémic Cinéma of 1926 where they alternated with 10 disks with optical patterns.
64. Rotoreliefs (Optical Disks), 1935 (set of 6 cardboard disks, printed by offset lithography on both sides.
65. Door, 11 rue Larrey, 1927. Construction: Wooden door made by a carpenter following Duchamp's specifications..
66. Door for Gradiva, 1937. Plexiglas construction. Replica of 1968 after destroyed original.
67. The Brawl at Austerlitz, 1921. Miniature window: oil on wood and glass. Inscribed below on one side, in white paint: "Marcel Duchamp;" inscribed below on other side: "Rose Sélavy/Paris 1921."
68. Photograph of the interior view of the door, included in the Manual of Instructions.
69. Two Nudes on a Ladder, 1907-8. Pencil on Paper.
70. Two Standing Nudes, 1907. Ink on Paper.
71. Nude with Black Stockings, 1910. Oil on Canvas.
72. Two Nudes, 1910. Oil on Canvas.
73. Standing Nude, 1910. Gouache on Cardboard.
74. Red Nude, 1910. Oil on Canvas
75. Nude on Nude, 1910-11. Oil on Board.
76. Study of Kneeling Nude, 1910. India Ink and Pencil on Paper.
77. Red Woman in a Painting 1910-11. Pencil on Paper.
78. Standing Nude, 1911. India Ink and Charcoal on Paper.
79. Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 1, 1911, Oil on Cardboard.
80. Two Nudes: One Strong and One Swift, 1912. Pencil on Paper.

81. Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 3, 1916. Watercolor, Ink, Pencil and Pastel over Photographic Base.
82. Rose Sélavy on the rue Surréaliste, Mannequin from the "Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme" at the Galerie Beaux-arts, Paris, January 1938.
83. Lazy Hardware, 1945. Mannequin in window display at Gotham Book Mart, New York. for André Breton's Arcane 17.
84. A la manière de Delvaux (In the Manner of Delvaux), 1942. Collage and tinfoil and photograph on cardboard.
85. Plaster Model for Prière de Toucher, 1947. A plaster breast mounted on velvet in a wood and glass box.
86. Prière de Toucher (Please Touch), 1947. Rubber breasts mounted on a velvet-covered cardboard.
87. The Virgin, No. 1, 1912. Drawing.
88. The Virgin, No. 2, 1912. Watercolor
89. The Passage from the Virgin to Bride, 1912. Oil on canvas.
90. The Bride Stripped Bare by the Bachelors, 1912. Drawing
91. The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even, 1913 (pencil on tracing cloth).
92. Paradise, 1910-11. Oil on Canvas.
93. The Bush, 1910-11. Oil on Canvas.
94. Baptism, 1911. Oil on Canvas.
95. Draft of The Japanese Apple Tree, 1911. Oil on Canvas.
96. Young Man and Girl in Spring, 1911. Oil on Canvas.
97. L.H.O.O.Q. Shaved, 1965. Readymade: Playing Card Mounted on Folded Paper. Inscribed lower right, in ink "rasée/L.H.O.O.Q. Marcel Duchamp."
98. The King and Queen Traversed by Swift Nudes, 1912. Pencil on Paper

99. The King and Queen Traversed by Swift Nudes at High Speed, 1912. (Watercolor and Gouache on Paper.
100. The King and Queen Surrounded by Swift Nudes, 1912. Oil on Canvas.
101. Photograph of Marcel Duchamp and Brogna Perlmutter posing as Adam and Eve in a performance presented in Picabia's Ciné Sketch, c. December 1924, during the short run of the ballet "Rélâche."
102. Selected Details After Cranach and 'Relâche', 1967. Etching.
103. The Bec Auer, 1968. Etching.
104. Étant donnés...: Maria, la chute d'eau et le gaz d'éclairage (Given: Maria, the Waterfall, and the Lighting Gas), 1947. Drawing. First study for the installation.
105. Étant donnés le gaz d'éclairage et la chute d'eau (Given the Illuminating Gas and the Waterfall), 1948-49. Relief sculpture. Painted leather over plaster relief, mounted on velvet. Inscribed on reverse: "Cette dame appartient à Maria Martins/avec toutes mes affections/Marcel Duchamp 1948-49."
106. Photograph of the female figure in Étant donnés... as a brunette, included in the Manual of Instructions.
107. Drawings of Sebastien Le Clerc which illustrate the kind of visual distortions occasioned by the transformation from a binocular to a monocular view
108. Photograph of Duchamp with shaved head.
109. Tifs, 1948. Pencil drawing with hair.
110. Paysage Fautif (Wayward Landscape), 1946. Seminal fluid on Astralon, backed with black satin. Included in the twelfth Boîte-en-valise (Box in a Valise) given to Maria Martins.
111. Objet-Dard (Dart-Object), 1951. Sculpture: galvanized plaster.
112. Comb, 1916. Readymade: steel dog comb. Original extant. Several Replicas. Inscribed along the edge in white: "3 ou 4 GOUTTES DE HAUTEUR N'ONT RIEN A FAIRE AVEC LA SAUVAGERIE."
113. Cols alités (Bedridden Hills), 1959. Pen and pencil on paper reproducing The Large Glass and hills of Étant donnés...

114. Photograph of the armature of the female figure in Étant donnés..., included in the Manual of Instructions.
115. Three Standard Stoppages, 1913-14. Assemblage: three threads glued to three painted canvas strips, each mounted on a glass panel; three wood slats shaped along one edge to match the curves of the threads. The whole is fitted in a wooden box. Printed in gold letters on leather labels, glued at the end of each canvas strip: 3 STOPPAGES ETALONS/1913-14.
116. Title page from Manual of Instruction and title on female figure.
117. Landscape at Blainville, 1902. Oil on canvas.
118. Laundry Barge, 1910. Oil on cardboard
119. Landscape, 1911. Oil on canvas.
120. Pharmacy, 1914, Rectified Readymade: Gouache red and green marks added on a commercial print.
121. Moonlight on the Bay at Basswood, August 1953. Ink, pencil, crayon, talcum powder and chocolate on blue blotting paper.
122. Two photographs of landscape, enlarged for the tableau in Étant donnés..., included in the Manual of Instructions.
123. Two altered photographs of landscape, employed for the tableau in Étant donnés..., included in the Manual of Instructions.
124. Photograph of the motorized apparatus which creates the illusion of the flowing waterfall. Included in the Manual of Instructions.
125. Torture Morte, 1959. Painted plaster of a foot with flies, on paper mounted on wood.
126. Sculpture Morte, 1959. Marzipan relief sculpture of vegetables and insects on paper, mounted on masonite).
127. Trébuchet (Trap), 1917. Readymade: coat rack, wood and metal. Original lost. Several replicas.
128. Photograph of the checkered linoleum floor plan of Étant donnés..., included in the Manual of Instructions.

129. Illustration of Albertian perspective by William M. Ivins, Jr: image of two chambers.
130. Cardboard model of Étant donnés... which was inserted into the Manual of Instruction.
131. Photograph of the numbered bricks for interior faced with opening, included in the Manual of Instructions.
132. Photograph of interior installation seen from rear, included in the Manual of Instruction.
133. Photograph of cotton baton stuck through openings in the landscape. Included in the Manual of Instructions. 133a. Photograph of lighting installation.
134. Louis-Ernest Barrias. Nature Unveiling Herself before Science. 1899. Sculpture made for the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers in France and subsequently placed in the medical faculty in Paris.
135. Figures of recumbent dolls used for medical studies.
136. Orlan. L'Origine de la Guerre, 1989. Computer-manipulated photograph.
137. Carolee Schneemann. Interior Scroll. 1975 1977. Photograph of performance.
138. Cindy Sherman. Untitled #216, 1989. Color photograph of artist.

PROLOGUE

Although Marcel Duchamp's secretly constructed installation, Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage, commonly called Étant donnés...,¹ was completed in 1966, it has only come into being, so to speak, in the last decade or so. Such a delay in recognition (at least by a larger public) of what is indisputably a major Duchampian work was no doubt the result of strategic moves on the part of the artist. Prior to his death in 1968, Duchamp left directives for what would be the posthumous reconstruction of Étant donnés... in the Philadelphia Museum of Art in the summer of 1969.² At the same time,

¹ The English title is Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas (1946-66). Only a French title was provided by the artist in his notes. A detailed description of this mixed-media assemblage will follow.

² Duchamp sporadically worked on this installation, in two different studios in New York, during the period 1946 to 1966, when all believed that he had given up art to play chess. This was a secretly-constructed work known only to a very few people such as his wife, Teeny Duchamp, who assisted him in its final stages. Before his death, the artist disclosed its existence to William Copley who, at Duchamp's request, made arrangements with the Philadelphia Museum for its eventual reconstruction in a room next to the Arensberg Collection. Duchamp's friends and patrons, Walter and Louise Arensberg, amassed most of the artist's works over the years along with the works of other early 20th century artists. See Philadelphia Museum, The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1954). Thanks to their bequest, this museum contains the largest collection of Duchamp's works, including his other major work, The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even (also called The Large Glass), 1915-23 (fig. 6). The reconstruction of Étant donnés... was made possible by the Cassandra Foundation (an Illinois nonprofit corporation) who purchased it and donated it to the museum. Shortly after Duchamp's death in 1968, Duchamp's secret installation was quietly reassembled in an alcove off the Duchamp Room at the Philadelphia Museum where, according to the Museum Director, "Duchamp had specifically wished it to be." Anne d'Harnoncourt and Walter Hopps, "Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections On a New Work by Marcel Duchamp" Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin, Vol LXIV, Nos. 299-300 (April-September 1969) 4-58. It was reconstructed according to instructions left by the artist in a handwritten manual with photographs which provide the only information the artist left about the work. For a

he stipulated that this work receive no press and that no photographs be permitted of the interior tableau for a period of fifteen years.³ This strange demand enveloped the work in an aura of invisibility and presented viewers with the possibility of simply stumbling upon it.

Coming across Étant donnés... in the museum without the prior benefit (or drawback) of a descriptive text and photographic documentation is, in effect, an unsettling experience, one expressly orchestrated by the artist. The following narrative recounts such an encounter with Étant donnés... and serves as prologue to this dissertation.⁴

facsimile of this manual. see Marcel Duchamp. "Approximation démontable." Manual of Instructions for Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1987. I will subsequently refer to these notes as the Manual of Instructions.

³ Article 5. of the agreement between The Cassandra Foundation and the Philadelphia Museum of Art states: "For a period of 15 years from this date, Museum will not permit any copy of reproduction of "Étant donnés" to be made, by photography or otherwise, excepting only pictures of the door behind which said object of art is being installed." For a copy of the agreement between the Cassandra Foundation and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, see Mason Klein, "Toward a Phenomenology of the Self: Marcel Duchamp's Étant donnés" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1994), 245-247. The artist left no clues as to the reasons for the photography ban. That photographs were permitted of the door itself suggests a carnival show door behind which certain secrets lie. I thank Catherine MacKenzie for pointing this aspect of the door out to me. This carnivalesque aspect coincides with my Bakhtinian reading of Duchamp's work as one which contains diverse, heterogeneous languages, relating to both high and low culture. Although there may be an allusion to the carnival, there was no circus crier outside. In fact, Duchamp rejected publicity altogether. Regarding this, Calvin Tomkins notes: "There was no formal opening, no private ceremony, not even a press release to announce the event. Duchamp had wanted the new installation to take its place quietly with the rest of his things in the Arensberg collection, and the museum's staff, guided by Teeny, did all they could to honor his wish." Calvin Tomkins, Duchamp: A Biography (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1996), 452, 460.

⁴ Although my own encounter with Étant donnés... was initially through the reproduced image and through descriptive texts, I choose here to write an account based on my subsequent experience of this work *in situ*. By constructing a partially fictional narrative about my first encounter, I am able to set out, in a more effective way, the problematics which I will be addressing in this dissertation.

Encountering "Étant donnés..."⁵

Walking through the Duchamp gallery in the Philadelphia Museum of Art,⁶ I notice another smaller room at the far end. It is unremarkable, empty except for a stuccoed wall with a door at the far end not immediately seen from the entrance. The door is wooden, weathered by time, like a dilapidated old barn door. It is set in an arched frame of recycled bricks (fig. 1). Such a quaint object strikes me as totally out of place here. It does not conform to my idea of the Duchampian oeuvre.⁷ I read the label on the wall, noting the odd cryptic title, Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage.

Approaching the door, I notice that it is sealed shut. Then observing a patina around two apertures in the wooden planks at eye level, I realize that I am meant to look through these openings -- and so I do. Instantly, in reflex action, I look away. Quickly glancing behind me, I am relieved to see that no one else is present in the room. No one

⁵ This narrative of my first "surprise" encounter with Étant donnés... commences in a manner similar to several Duchampian scholars. See, for example, John Golding, Marcel Duchamp: The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (London: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 1973), 95; Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), 559-560; Amelia Jones, "Re-placing Duchamp's Eroticism: 'Seeing' Étant donnés from a Feminist Perspective," in her Postmodernism and the En-gendering of Marcel Duchamp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 191-204. By recounting, once again, such a viewing experience of Étant donnés... in situ, I wish to underscore the visual impact this work has had on the viewer, at least before the lift of the photography ban.

⁶ This is a gallery behind the Arensberg Collection where most of Duchamp's works are exhibited.

⁷ Duchamp is most well-known for iconoclastic readymades such as the snow shovel entitled, In Advance of the Broken Arm, 1915 (fig. 2); the urinal entitled Fountain, 1917 (fig. 3) which he signed R. Mutt; the reproduction of Leonardo's Mona Lisa, upon which he drew a moustache and a goatee, entitling this readymade L.H.O.O.Q., 1919 (fig. 4) which reads phonetically as: "elle a chaud au cul" (She has a hot ass). This artist is also renowned for paintings such as The Nude Descending the Staircase, 1912 (fig. 5) and his major work, The Large Glass, 1915-23 (fig. 6) which stands as a cryptic and highly conceptualized work.

has seen me staring through these peepholes.⁸ It is at this exact moment that I begin to sense Duchamp's presence here. He appears to be quietly laughing, amused that someone, once again, has been caught and entrapped by the "look."⁹

Despite my discomfort, I am, nonetheless, drawn again to the scene behind this sealed door. Verifying that I am indeed alone in this small chamber, I take another longer look through the peepholes. In this way, for a few moments, I comply with the artist's game as I gaze at what I would describe as a near-pornographic scene.

I stare down upon a naked female figure lying, altogether motionless, on a bed of dried twigs (fig. 10). I become increasingly disconcerted as I cannot help but

⁸ Such a self-conscious reaction to Étant donnés... has been commented upon by a few authors. See, for example, Rosalind Krauss, "Where's Poppa?" The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, ed. Thierry de Duve (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1991), 433-462; and Amelia Jones, "Re-placing Duchamp's Eroticism: 'Seeing' Étant donnés from a Feminist Perspective," in her Postmodernism and the En-gendering of Marcel Duchamp, 191-204.

⁹ As a self-acclaimed anti-retinal artist, Duchamp stated: "painting should not be exclusively retinal or visual: it should have to do with the gray matter, with our urge for understanding...." See Marcel Duchamp, "Regions Which Are Not Ruled by Time and Space..." in The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: De Capo Press, 1973), 135-6. Despite his anti-retinal stance, several of his works deal with the "look" in an ironic way: the Oculist Witnesses in The Large Glass (fig.6), as I shall be discussing, gaze at the bride as an object of their desire but are forever frustrated in their goal to transcend to her domain: To be Looked At (From the Other Side of the Glass) With One Eye, Close To, For Almost an Hour, 1918 (fig. 7) elicits (and frustrates as the title itself indicates) the "look" of the viewer. Other works like Rotary Demisphere of 1925 (fig. 8) or the Disks Bearing Spirals, 1923 (fig.9) which served in the short film Anémic Cinéma, though resolutely retinal, do not conform to a modernist aesthetic. Rather they create a virtual third dimension that produce an oscillating action of advancing and receding forms which allude to erotic or copulatory movement. Regarding this interpretation of these optical disks, see Lawrence D. Steefel, Jr., "The Position of La Mariée Mise à Nu par Ses Célibataires, Même (1915-23) in the Stylistic and Iconographic Development of the Art of Marcel Duchamp." Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1960, 312 and Rosalind Krauss, "Where's Poppa?" in The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, 454. Krauss' essay provides the most comprehensive study of Duchamp's "retinal" works. In Étant donnés, the notion of the "look" takes on a whole new dimension as the viewer is transposed into a voyeur.

acknowledge, in astonishment, that she has spread her legs wide exclusively for my eyes, exposing her genitalia for my voyeuristic gaze.

Regaining my composure, I notice other curious elements. I remark that the reclining naked figure is holding high a phallic-shaped gas lamp which is as much the focal point of the scene as the female vulva. I also note that the restricted perspective of the peepholes deprives me of a view of her face. Only a few blond locks of hair are apparent. This headless, enigmatic figure, exhibiting only one breast, I further note, is not situated directly behind the door. Rather, there is a dark space between the door and a punctured brick wall beyond. This somber chamber creates a distinct gulf between me and the figure (fig. 11). Moreover, it is only because of the asymmetrical opening in the brick facade of this dark chamber that one is able to see the brightly lit space housing this strange figure.

I remark how the female body lies unnaturally immobile, like a corpse within a coffin. Her deathlike demeanor contrasts curiously with the lush pastoral scene behind her. In the distant landscape, a waterfall flows, bringing to mind the title of this work. I recall that Duchamp inscribed a waterfall and an illuminating gas (light) as the "given,"¹⁰ and muse about possible meanings.

The distance required for quiet reflection and reasoned interpretation, however, is disrupted by my sense of unease. Although there are myriads of representations of sexualized female figures in "high art" productions that have been objectified and "enframed," this particular scene disturbs me. Rather than serenely contemplating an

¹⁰ To reiterate, the English title is Given: 1. The Waterfall. 2. The Illuminating Gas.

aesthetic object, I find myself looking at myself looking and remark how much I feel personally implicated in this work.

I am troubled that this illuminated female figure lying in a pastoral setting is hidden away in this manner. I find it perturbing to see her forever contained in this enclosure, imprisoned in a cage or coffin. It is as if something vital has been held in check, restrained, suppressed and deadened, as if something quite significant has been reduced to a cheap peepshow.

This uncomfortable position at the peepholes, I realize, doubly implicates me. Not only am I positioned as an unwilling voyeur, but I also find myself reluctantly forced to identify with what I recognize as a reductive and blatantly sexist representation of the female figure.¹¹ As Mary Ann Doane so aptly notes regarding images of women in culture: "For the female spectator there is a certain over-presence of the image - she is the image."¹²

The adverse identification with this particular image of femininity, in effect, disrupts not only my contemplative gaze but also confuses my position as voyeur. It

¹¹ I do not wish to imply that my reaction is universal in nature and that a viewer (male or female) could not approach this work with total indifference. Indeed, recent reception of Étant donnés..., which I shall be commenting upon below, has neutralized the impact of a work which, I argue, was intentionally designed to shock the viewer. Furthermore, in light of more recent art practices, Étant donnés... has lost its potency. I think, for example, about Annie Sprinkle's porn-performances (which I shall be examining later) that literally make her genitalia the object not only of the viewer's look but of her own pleasure as she masturbates in front of a live audience. What concerns me with Étant donnés... is how Duchamp transforms the viewer into an embodied voyeur and the implications of that transformation.

¹² Mary Ann Doane deals most particularly with representations of women in popular films. Cited in Jackie Stacey, "Desperately Seeking Difference," The Female Gaze, ed. Lorraine Gamman and Margaret Marshment (Seattle: The Real Comet Press, 1989), 118.

"negate[s] the very distance or gap specified...as the essential precondition for voyeurism."¹³ Though assuming the role of the voyeur, safely situated on the outside looking in, I also identify with the figure inside. Seeing myself, in a sense, both outside and inside, and compelled to observe and negotiate my position at the peepholes, I realize with what ruse Marcel Duchamp has drawn me within the parameters of Étant donnés...

Given the generally-acknowledged cerebral nature of this artist, and given his habit of seeking to confuse or confound the viewer, I can only assume that this peepshow, this whole set-up, has been strategically planned, that this blatantly sexist (and enigmatic) representation has been used as a ploy to entrap the viewer. Duchamp, I understand, has set me up as a voyeur and my self-conscious, uneasy reaction to the scene behind the door is a means to lure me into his ocular trap. Finding myself in this compromising position, I am obliged to respond to Duchamp's provocation.

Once my visceral reaction to Étant donnés... is suspended, I recognize that this scene behind the door announces something of grave importance. I comprehend that this female figure is more than simply a display of the fetishized female and of voyeurism. The aged weather-worn door is a clue. It already announces something ancient: as if disclosing that an age-old "given" lies beyond.

I recognize how this figure can represent the generic "woman" as she has been inscribed into our cultural constructs. Indeed, this enclosure (a seemingly hermetic chamber) operates like the framing device that contains the category, "woman," the frame which defines, by a restrictive name or concept, heterogeneous female identities

¹³ [ibid., 119.

and histories. Associated with the illuminating light, the waterfall and the natural setting, this female figure lies here as the personification of "woman" as body, as nature.

Despite this realization, other questions continue to persist. Why did Duchamp orchestrate such a peepshow? Why must he entrap the viewer in this way? Why must he transform me, however briefly, into an unwilling voyeur? If this installation, Étant donnés..., is about givens, about inscriptions of woman, it is then most evidently also about looking, about vision. And I realize that it is precisely because of my uneasy stare, because of my consciously voyeuristic gaze, that Duchamp prevents me from reading this work with rational detachment. Any cerebral activity on my part is subverted by the power of this female figure. And here lies the crux of the matter. At least this is the way I presently see it, now that I am released from its initial impact.

From a more distanced vantage point, I can see that Étant donnés... is not what it first appears to be. I begin to discern its twofold quality: how it appears to be one thing and its contrary at the same time. In fact, the more I think about it, the more I come to see the reclining female figure as an inversion of that other "given," the quintessential "rational" man - the generic man.

Now, if I distance myself even more, I can imagine myself standing behind Duchamp himself as he looks through the peepholes. From this perspective, I see him gazing at his own specular inversion, as if he were looking at his own inverted reflection in a mirror. In fact, from my vantage point as the second viewer standing behind the artist, I perceive the female figure in Étant donnés... to be a representation of Duchamp

himself as his radical "other: "she is "the masculine sex encore (and en corps) parading in the mode of otherness."¹⁴

Visualizing Duchamp looking through the peepholes at his own inverted self-reflection, I identify the female figure as Rrose Sélavy¹⁵ (fig. 24), Duchamp's alter ego. Such a recognition prompts me to take into account how, in Étant donnés..., Duchamp/Rrose partake in a much larger specular game played out with readymade ideas, with epistemological constructs that have attained the status of normative or naturalized givens.¹⁶ In effect, the signs that inhabit Étant donnés..., I now recognize, repeat or replay many gendered inscriptions about nature and culture.

Furthermore, by so flagrantly framing me as a voyeur, by so provocatively confronting me with this contentious scene, Duchamp has prompted me to stop, to react

¹⁴ Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (New York: Routledge, 1990), 12. Butler here discusses Luce Irigaray's critique of the discursive construction of the body as a female principle.

¹⁵ Duchamp adopted the female persona of Rose Sélavy around 1920. The extra "R" was first added in Duchamp's signature on Francis Picabia's L'oeil cacodylate in 1921. Regarding this signature, he stated, "I think I put 'Pi Ou'habilla Rrose Sélavy' – the word "arrose" demands two R's, so I was attracted to the second R." Liking the word play "arrose" (to water, to celebrate) and "éros" (Eros), he kept the extra letter. Regarding the birth of Rrose, Duchamp also said: "In effect, I wanted to change my identity, and the first idea that came to me was to take a Jewish name. I was Catholic, and it was a change to go from one religion to another! I didn't find a Jewish name that I especially liked, or that tempted me, and suddenly I had an idea: why not change sex? It was much simpler." He chose "Rose" because of its banality. Pierre Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp (New York: The Viking Press, 1971), 64-5. As we shall see, Rrose becomes the "author" of several of his works and gestures.

¹⁶ Because I am dealing with the relationship between Duchamp and Rrose metaphorically, I do not adhere to the interpretation of authors such as Dickran Tashjian who argues: "The Rose presented to the world is neither Duchamp's double nor his alter ego, despite his intentions, because the information necessary to connect Rose to Duchamp was not available. He had disappeared into Rose." See his, "'Vous pour Moi?': Marcel Duchamp and Transgender Coupling" Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation, ed. Whitney Chadwick (Cambridge, Mass. 1998): 43.

and, most significantly, to interact with the signs he set out in Étant donnéés...

Confronting his last work *in situ* is to conduct a personal and engaged dialogue with Duchamp himself, as my imaginary interlocutor. The solicitation of a such a dialogue, of such an intersubjective exchange, sets Étant donnéés... apart from any of his prior works.

At least this is the way I have come to understand it.

INTRODUCTION

"Étant donnés...": The Three Dialogues

The shock value¹ of Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage lies in the manner in which it tends to implicate and to challenge the viewer personally. As an explicitly provocative representation that engages the unsuspecting viewer in the act of voyeurism, one could say that Étant donnés... presents itself as a kind of ambush or entrapment by the artist.

Placed in the role of a voyeur in the context of a museum, the viewer becomes fearful that he/she is being watched by a putative second viewer behind. Rosalind Krauss

¹ Again, I do not imply that this work has a shock value for all viewers, especially in light of subsequent artworks and recent reception of Étant donnés... For example, Duchamp's work has recently become a kind of model for interactive, "fun" type of work. See for example, the website Fresh Widow 3000, "a simulation as seen in the Philadelphia Museum of Art," at <http://www.val.net/~tim/etant-donnes.html>. This website, which provides hyperlinks to sites such as "comix," a series of unrelated, amateur sexist comic strips, does not acknowledge the visual impact I, as well as other scholars, have described. The "shock" value which I see inscribed into Étant donnés... has even been evacuated by government agencies such as l'Association Française d'Action Artistique, which looks upon it kindly enough to name a cultural exchange program, Fonds Étant donnés, after Duchamp's work. See their website http://www.afa.asso.fr/18_12_2.htm. I thank Catherine MacKenzie for bringing my attention to these websites. The "shock value" I see in Étant donnés... is based on my contention that the artist constructed his last work to stun not only the casual viewer but the Duchampian scholar as well. One must remember that this work was constructed between 1946 and 1966 when such overtly exhibitionist representations would have been taboo. Duchamp's window installation, entitled Lazy Hardware (fig. 83) can serve as an example of such reactions. Made in New York in 1945 for the occasion of the publication of André Breton's book, Arcane 17, this "window work" was exhibited at Brentano's bookstore on Fifth Avenue. Displaying a nude mannequin with a scanty apron and a painting of a bare female breast by Matta, this window installation brought protests by the Society for the Suppression of Vice and the League of Women. Brentano requested it be removed and the window display was subsequently reinstalled in the window of the Gotham Book Mart, despite continuing protests, where it remained one week. Regarding this incident, see Calvin Tomkins, Duchamp: A Biography (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1996). Today's reception of Étant donnés..., as I see it, lies diametrically opposed to the viewer reaction intended by Duchamp.

has compared the viewer's self-consciousness to the experience of the voyeur in Jean-Paul Sartre's Being and Nothingness² who, in the act of peeking through the keyhole, finds himself being looked at by a second viewer behind him. This self-conscious reaction is, Krauss explains, one of embodiment: "to be discovered at the keyhole is...to be discovered as a body."³

Where the tradition of aesthetics posits a disembodied viewer,⁴ Duchamp ostensibly subverts this convention. Setting up the unwitting viewer in the position of a voyeur, he transforms him/her into a self-conscious body. In this way, Duchamp forces the viewer, as a mediated subject, to consider his/her position in front of the peepholes, making the encounter a decidedly personal and subjective experience -- not only for the casual museum goer but for the Duchampian scholar as well.⁵

² Jean-Paul Sartre. Being and Nothingness. trans. Hazel E Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966).

³ See her "Where's Poppa?" in The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, ed. Thierry de Duve, 436. In her essay, Dalia Judovitz also examines Étant donné, noting that Duchamp's conspicuous "view" in the context of a museum accentuates and calls into question the role of the viewer. She states that, "sexual (con)notation of the work is undone by its (con)textual character..." See Dalia Judovitz, "Rendezvous with Marcel Duchamp: Given" in Marcel Duchamp. Artist of the Century, ed. Rudolf E. Kuenzli and Francis M. Naumann (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, 1989), 184-203.

⁴ For a critical examination of this tradition, see Norman Bryson, Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

⁵ This subjective experience was initially noted in the first document on this work published by the museum. In their essay, Anne d'Harmoncourt and Walter Hopps write: "If the visitor accepts the invitation and strolls up to peer through the holes, the first shock of encounter with the scene behind the door will always be a private and essentially indescribable experience. What one actually sees can be reduced to words, but the initial impact is one of the most crucial aspects of the work, and one which cannot be rendered second hand." See their "Étant donné: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections On a New Work by Marcel Duchamp" Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin LXIV, 299-300 (April-September 1969): 8. It should be noted that this first essay on Étant donné... by the Museum "set up" subsequent reception: first, the surprise

At the peepholes of Étant donnés..., the scholar is obliged to negotiate his/her own position as a Peeping Tom. Indeed, one could say that the personal engagement of the viewer with Duchamp's provocation becomes more pronounced when the viewer elects to stop and take a second look. It is as if, by deciding to read the signs, the viewer agrees to partake in and to become complicitous with Duchamp's sexist game -- never certain how much the game implicates him/her. If one examines the early writings by some Duchampian scholars concerning their experience of Étant donnés...⁶, one can readily note the engaged, personal tone.

In this regard, I would like to cite three renowned Duchampian scholars whose words reveal an actively subjective encounter with the work. As if in complicity with the artist, their words also assume a resolutely "masculinist" position.⁷ For John Golding, for example, the first experience of Étant donnés... was a quasi-religious revelation:

At the end of a narrow, underlit room, little more than a corridor, stands an ancient weather-worn door of wood, arched and encased in a surround of bricks. One senses at once that the door cannot be opened but one is drawn towards it as if by a magnet, and as one comes closer one becomes aware of two small holes, at eye level, drilled through the wood. Beyond the door lies an extraordinary sight.⁸

encounter and, secondly, its status as a compilation of prior works.

⁶ My examples here deal with Duchampian scholars who experienced this work *in situ* prior to the lifting of the photography ban in 1984.

⁷ Their brief comments provide some indication as to the kind of descriptive text that was available before one was able to see a reproduction of the work.

⁸ John Golding, Marcel Duchamp: The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even . 95. Golding's writing on Étant donnés..., only a few pages in length, explicitly notes the difference in "experience" with The Large Glass: "The immediate sensations evoked by the two works...are diametrically opposed. The Large Glass is mysterious, hieratic, and despite the fact that the cracks have 'brought it back into the world', ultimately its remoteness places it on the other side of our

This "extraordinary sight" is explicitly described by Arturo Schwarz⁹ who identifies the naked figure as the Bride from Duchamp's The Large Glass (fig. 6)¹⁰:

The Bride is spread on a bed of dead twigs and fallen leaves. Her legs are provocatively open, offering with exhibitionist gusto the sight of her hairless sex. Her left hand is raised and holds a glowing gas lamp, as if to better illuminate her cunt. Her head cannot be seen – the anonymity of the Bride must be preserved. A wave of blond hair partially covers her left shoulder. The whole scene is bathed in a brilliant light which has a peculiar quality that escapes definition.¹¹

Nobel laureate poet, Octavio Paz, who also views the female figure as the incarnation of the "naked Bride," interprets the scene that "escapes definition" as a "representation of an erotic ritual" and admits the dilemma that this figure poses for the male viewer: "The

experience of the material world. It is the door, the window, the looking-glass through which we glimpse a ritual that involves us obsessively but from which we are forever distanced by virtue of the hermeticism of its imagery and by the fact that at best our understanding of it can only be partial. Étant donnés... is mystifying precisely because of its at least partial explicitness." Ibid.

⁹ Arturo Schwarz is not only a Duchampian scholar and collector of his works but was also a friend of the artist. He published a number of books and exhibition catalogues on this artist. The major ones, prior to the revelation of Duchamp's secretly-constructed work, are Marcel Duchamp (1966) and The Large Glass and Related Works (1967). Notes and Projects for the "Large Glass".

¹⁰ Duchamp's notes collected in The Green Box disclose that The Large Glass is divided into two gendered portions: the upper, "The Bride's Domain;" and the lower, the "Bachelor Machine."

¹¹ Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, 559-560. This is a catalogue raisonné with over 750 illustrations. Although only a photograph of the door of Étant donnés... is provided because of the ban, Schwarz includes thorough descriptive information about Étant donnés. In his analysis, he follows the example of Anne d'Harnoncourt and Walter Hopps who wrote the first words about Étant donnés... and who, one could say, set out the trajectory for subsequent interpretations by pointing out how the constituent elements of this last work relate to prior ones. See their "Reflections on a New Work by Marcel Duchamp" Bulletin: Philadelphia Museum of Art 64 (April-June 1969 and July-September 1969): 6-58.

viewer draws back from the door feeling that mixture of joy and guilt of one who has unearthed a secret. But what is the secret? What, in fact, has he seen?"¹²

If the scene behind the closed doors elicited such subjective confessions of "guilt," bewonderment and joy for these particular scholars, it did not do so for all. For example, Jean Suquet,¹³ a Duchamp specialist, was not drawn to the scene behind the closed door "as if by a magnet" and certainly exhibits no "joy." Rather, this eminent Duchampian scholar recoils at the artist's last gesture, brusquely proclaiming Étant donnés... to be "une cochonnerie."¹⁴ Even one of Duchamp's closest friends, Robert Lebel, who published the first comprehensive monograph¹⁵ on the artist, found Étant

¹² Octavio Paz, Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare, trans. Rachel Phillips (New York: Viking Press, 1978), 145, 96; the same text appears in his "* Water Writes Always in * Plural" in Marcel Duchamp, ed. Anne d'Hamoncourt and Kynaston McShine (New York: The Museum of Modern Art and Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1973; reprint, 1989); Writing the most poetic analysis, Paz makes a comparison between Étant donnés... and prior works, most particularly the Large Glass.

¹³ Jean Suquet, a French poet, photographer and Duchampian scholar who, like those cited above, provided a means to decipher Duchamp's oeuvre. Suquet, in fact, devoted more than fifty years to the study of the iconography of The Large Glass (fig.6). See his Miroir de la mariée: Essai (Paris: Flammarion, 1974).

¹⁴ He used this term during the discussion period after his presentation of a paper that dealt with the operation of the machine iconography in The Large Glass (fig. 6). After the various paintings The Bride of 1912 (fig. 12), he said: "...everything is thrown out of gear, begins to break down and continues to break down until this "cochonnerie" which is Étant donnés." He later qualified these descriptive words by saying: "...I'm going to justify the word "cochonnerie" that I just used...Quite simply, the headless doll in Philadelphia is bagged in a pig's skin. That's it. I've justified my statement. It's a visceral affair for me to make the machine run. If it doesn't run, I don't know about it." See the discussion following Jean Suquet, "Possible" in The Definitely Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, ed. Thierry de Duve (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991) 113-131. Other than these comments, he remained silent about Étant donnés...

¹⁵ Like Arturo Schwarz, Robert Lebel's writings on the artist became the basis for the reception of Duchamp as an avant-garde and elusive artist. His monograph, containing a catalogue raisonné as well as anecdotal information on the early part of Duchamp's career, was the first book, and a major one, on this artist. It consolidated, one could say, Duchamp's reputation

donnés... "repellent"¹⁶. If the engaged and personal comments by Golding, Schwarz and Paz reveal what can be interpreted as a kind of complicity with Duchamp's givens, Lebel's and Suquet's comments underscore a reverse reaction. In effect, the utterance by Suquet in 1987 (which broke his silence about Étant donné...) illustrates how, for some scholars, Duchamp's provocation is personally offensive.

Such negative reactions bring to the fore the fundamental problems that this work poses for many scholars. To begin with, by transforming them into common voyeurs, Duchamp places them in compromising positions, playing, as it were, a trick or joke on them – many of whom the artist knew personally. The artist, for example, corresponded with Jean Suquet, even congratulating him, in 1949, on his analysis of The Large Glass, telling him that it

filled me with joy... Your patient work permitted me to revive a long period of years in the course of which were written the notes of the green box at the same time that the glass took form; I confess to you that, having not reread these notes for a very long time, I had completely lost any memory of their numerous points, not illustrated on the glass, that enchanted me again.¹⁷

The undignified position at the peepholes diminishes, to say the least, their revered role as respected Duchampian specialists. More significantly, however, Étant donné...

up to that date. See Robert Lebel, Sur Marcel Duchamp. Paris: Trianon Press, 1959. He wrote only one article referring to Étant donné.... See his "Le 'Chef d'oeuvre inconnu' de Marcel Duchamp." L'Oeil Paris 167 (March 1970): 8-13.

¹⁶ Cited in Calvin Tomkins, Duchamp. A Biography (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996), 455.

¹⁷ Cited in Amelia Jones, Postmodernism and the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp, 112-113.

compromises their scholarship by making explicit what previously lay obscured by the more hermetic signs of Duchamp's previous works, thus calling into question the authority of their prior interpretations. Let me explain.

As Schwarz and Paz reveal in their identification of the naked figure as the Bride in The Large Glass, the Duchampian scholar readily recognizes the signs that inhabit Étant donnés...¹⁸ They are quite familiar signs and recall past works. There are, in fact, no "original" signs inscribed in Étant donnés...: they are all repetitions or variations of signs already inscribed into Duchamp's prior works. This realization creates a dilemma for the scholar who can come to realize that their prior interpretations are either compromised or inadvertently complicitous with Duchamp's contentious scene.

In other words, as a representation that reinscribes, in an explicit way, Duchamp's prior signs, Étant donnés... draws the scholar's former interpretations into an embarrassing affiliation with the "cochonnerie" and, by so doing, challenges their scholarly readings. This fact was immediately underscored by the institution that agreed to exhibit this work. In the Bulletin that announced the "new" work by Marcel Duchamp, the director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art noted:

Rarely can a Museum say that a single new acquisition has a potential for radically affecting the broader understanding of a given period...Once again, with this new work [Duchamp] has challenged his contemporaries.

¹⁸ Though described as an "extraordinary sight," as a "cochonnerie" causing "joy and guilt," this representation is, in effect, quite ordinary and commonplace, reiterating the myriad of inscriptions of "woman" as body and as nature found in popular and high culture. However, the signs in Étant donnés are familiar in another, more significant way, as I shall illustrate.

All of the thinking about Duchamp to date must now be sharply reconsidered with the appearance of this work....¹⁹

The advent of this last work placed many scholars in the uncomfortable position of revisiting their prior readings.²⁰ This could be a challenging scholarly prospect or, in this case, apparently a quite unsavory task. By responding, they must, in effect, become further entangled in Duchamp's game. Many Duchampian scholars, who might have willingly jumped at the opportunity of writing about a new, secretly constructed work, have opted not to comply, in public, any further with the artist. As a result, relatively few words have been written about the major last work of this very celebrated avant-garde artist. This said, the silence that surrounds this work is not indicative of any indifference to Duchamp's work or provocation -- rather I would suggest that silence is, in effect, a consequence.

What is significant, as I see it, is that by so entrapping the viewer-scholar in such a conspicuous way, as voyeur, Duchamp at the same time makes his own presence felt. For the scholar (as for the casual viewer, for that matter), encountering Étant donnés... is

¹⁹ Evan H. Turner. "Introduction." Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections On a New Work by Marcel Duchamp Bulletin: Philadelphia Museum of Art 6 (April-September 1969): 4, 5. One can arguably say that such comments about the acquisition of a new work are typical ones for an institution and that these words effectively "set up" a certain kind of response or reception.

²⁰ This was certainly the case for me. Prior to my encounter with Étant donnés... I viewed Marcel Duchamp as an ally who, like many feminists, dismantled metanarratives and constructed truths. Indeed, his irony of indifference, as I saw it, inverted or reversed the negative and positive, the inside and outside of a variety of positions, of a number of aesthetic, epistemological and gendered stances, without ever positing a new totalizing view. In Étant donnés..., as this dissertation illustrates, Duchamp completely reverses these strategies and, by so doing, exhibits a "position" which I most definitively oppose. It is this reversal, so explicitly stated (at least in my eyes) in Étant donnés..., that had the greatest impact upon me.

unequivocally confronting the artist himself as subject -- as an individual who has provoked or engaged them. If Duchamp's solicitation can and has resulted in a calculated silence, it can also initiate an interchange or altercation. Such an interchange is, as we have seen in the case of Golding, Schwarz and Paz, different from the act of hermeneutics where the artist remains, for the most part, an invisible figure. At least initially, the disengaged scholarly position is compromised.

What I am suggesting here is that Duchamp, by so provoking the viewer (even the scholar) on a personal level, as subject, has positioned himself and the viewer within the frame of Étant donnés...: and that it is precisely the confrontation between the artist and the viewer that constitutes the "meaning" or "intention" of this work.

In constructing Étant donnés... in this provocative way, Duchamp has effectively created the conditions for a dialogue between the artist and the viewer. This is not a dialogue in the narrative sense. Rather the dialogue that ensues from the encounter with Étant donnés... is more like a collision between two subject positions, between Duchamp's Givens (quite explicitly presented) and those of the viewer.²¹ Whether assuming a scholarly or personal tone, the viewer's subjectivity is always somewhere at play. Confronting Étant donnés... is interacting with the "givens" set out by the artist who, it seems, is always looming in the shadows.

²¹ Even the descriptive comments made by John Golding, Arturo Schwarz and Octavio Paz illustrate their personal engagement or reaction to the scene that is not so much a distanced act of hermeneutics than an exposure of their subject position in front of Duchamp's last statement.

This dissertation is testimony to the fact that I have stopped to confront Duchamp's provocation and have elected to engage in a dialogue with Étant donnés.... What follows here, then, is a collision between my own set of givens and the artist's. At the outset, I admit that my initial reaction to Duchamp's "loaded" representation was more in line with Suquet's than with the complicitous words of Golding, Schwarz and Paz. As a woman and a feminist, I first read Duchamp's set of signs as his last joke and as a jest that was a blatant affront to women. Even though I first came across this work in an exhibition catalogue in the late 1980s, and only later experienced it *in situ*, I was stunned by it. I initially read it as a tawdry, witless work that countered my preconceived idea of this artist. My conception of Marcel Duchamp was that of the iconoclast, as the avant-garde artist who made it a point of disturbing aesthetic standards, but one who did so as a highly intellectual or "cerebral" artist.²² My interest in and intrigue with this work grew when I discovered that this was, in fact, a major installation which had been shrouded in secrecy and silence.

In granting the artist a certain license, I was able to concede that Étant donnés... operated, on one level, as a kind of pastiche of moments in art history,²³ and generally of

²² This notion was created by the artist himself. For example, in his dialogue with James Sweeney, he stated: "...painting should not be exclusively retinal or visual: it should have to do with the gray matter, with our urge for understanding." Marcel Duchamp, "Regions which are not ruled by time and space..." in The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 136.

²³ Duchamp made it quite explicit that he was citing canonical works from the history of art in engravings produced in 1967-1968, many of which, in hindsight, also serve as "previews" of the imagery in Étant donnés. Duchamp's Selected Details after Courbet, 1968 (fig. 13) after Courbet's La Femme aux bas blancs, c. 1861 (fig. 14) is a case in point. Other examples are engravings, Selected Details after Rodin, 1968 (fig. 15) a more sexually explicit version of Auguste Rodin's The Kiss, (fig. 16) and Selected Details after Ingres I, (fig. 17) and Selected

the traditions in western art and popular culture which represented "woman" as an object of the male gaze.²⁴ On another level, I could read his provocation as a parody of the viewing experience in the museum²⁵ and of the ocularcentric bias in modern society. As it has turned out, my confrontation and dialogue with Duchamp have led me to unanticipated places and have provided me with unforeseen insights into the nature of our signifying processes and the nature of the dialogue, into certain epistemological, cultural and gendered constructs and into the politics of representation. As I presently see it, Duchamp's blatantly gendered representation is certainly a statement about givens,

Details after Ingres II, both of 1968 (fig. 18), a conflation of Dominique Ingres's paintings The Turkish Bath, c. 1860 (fig. 19) and Oedipus and the Sphinx, 1808 (fig. 20). Jean Clair has observed other references to art history: to Gustave Courbet's Origin of the World, 1860 (fig. 21) and to Albrecht Dürer's The Artist's Model, 1525 (fig). See Jean Clair, "Marcel Duchamp et la tradition des spectateurs," and "Sexe et Topologie" in Marcel Duchamp: abécédaire: approches critiques, ed. Jean Clair (Paris, 1977), 52-59, 124-159. Given Duchamp's interest in Leonardo da Vinci, I would also add to this list (whether he was aware of it is unknown), the Renaissance artist's drawing, The External Genitalia and Vagina, with Diagrams of the Anal Sphincter, c. 1508-9 (fig. 23) found in his notes. Leonardo da Vinci Anatomical Drawings from the Royal Collection (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1977), 73, 17A. Original edition The Leonardo da Vinci Quincentary Exhibition, (Burlington House, 1952).

²⁴ Woman, as object of the gaze, was theorized by Laura Mulvey, in her influential essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Visual and Other Pleasures, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 14-28. "Where the male viewer finds scopophilic pleasure in looking," the female position, according to Mulvey, is one of "to be looked-at-ness." Although this monolithic dichotomy between male and female positions has been problematized (even by Mulvey herself in subsequent writings), Étant donné(s)... can stand as a quintessential example of Mulvey's model. See also her "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' Inspired by Duel in the Sun," Framework, nos. 15/16/17, 1981, pp. 12-15.

²⁵ Among other significant insights, Dalia Judovitz examines Étant donné(s)... in the context of the museum and the relation of art to discursive practices. This work is, for Judovitz, an example of the kind of "tautological logic" of the institution, the logic which makes "of the museum [...] a cemetery of authority." Étant donné(s) functions, she remarks, like a pastiche of art discourses and of visibility. As Judovitz states, the very act of looking, of viewing works of art "involves a construct...of various modalities that combine the image and its discursive frames of reference." See her "Rendezvous with Marcel Duchamp: Given" in Marcel Duchamp, Artist of the Century, 184-8.

about inscriptions of woman as body and as nature and of man as an agent of culture that culminated in the project of modernity. But it is also more than this.

Although several scholars have acknowledged that Étant donnés... is a summation or compilation of Duchamp's prior works,²⁶ from my point of view, his project of reinscribing already-made signs constitutes a key element in the artist's continuous philosophical investigations into our signifying processes. As a coherent, cohesive representation that provocatively addresses the viewer, Étant donnés... operates, as I shall be illustrating, dialogically with his prior works.

In this regard, I rely on Mikhail Bakhtin's theories of dialogism. Like a monologic utterance (or provocative statement) by the artist, Étant donnés... compresses and obscures an array of heterogenous, multilayered, polysemic and elusive signs already inscribed in his pre-Étant donnés... works. Like a centripetal force, such a compression centers a whole network of "centrifugal" and heterogeneous signs (dispersed in time and space) into a unitary statement or representation. This kind of compression of disparate signs/languages/ideas constitutes any formulation of an idea or utterance, according to Bakhtin. As he states, the heteroglot and "centrifugal" nature of words or language is and must, in fact, be ignored by the "monologic utterance of an individual." Only in this way

²⁶ As mentioned in Footnote 11, the first essay published by the Philadelphia Museum of Art already makes this clear. See also Arturo Schwarz who has provided a number of examples of the way that Étant donnés... recalls prior works, in his book, The Complete Works Of Marcel Duchamp.

can one assume "a simple and unmediated relation of speaker to his unitary and singular 'own' language."²⁷

In constructing Étant donné... as such a monologic utterance, as a coherent representation that blatantly engages a viewer, Duchamp, I contend, effectively set up the conditions for a dialogue between himself and an array of potential interlocutors. In my own intersubjective dialogue with Étant donné..., I aim to expose the anatomy of this dialogic process and, at the same time, "strip bare" the artist as writer, philosopher and as his infamous female alter ego, Rose Sélavy (fig. 24) who, as I now see it, inhabits this hermetic enclosure.

This said, I do not want to underestimate the impact and significance of the scene Duchamp chose as his subject matter nor its relation to certain Western cultural constructs since it is here that I decipher blind spots in Duchamp's last magnum opus. In fact, despite his many references to and representations of "woman" in prior works and even in spite of his undermining or inverting traditional hierarchical gender categories in many instances, Duchamp remains resolutely blind to issues of female identity, gender differences and to the question of women as active subjects in (pre)modern culture.

As several feminist writers, most particularly of the last twenty years, have illustrated, representations of the monolithic "woman" serve to evacuate or erase

²⁷ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 269. The relationship between Bakhtin's theories of dialogism will be illustrated in my first dialogue where I explain how Duchamp's project to construct Étant donné... discloses a dialogic imagination.

women's histories and experiences.²⁸ Janet Wolff points out, for example, that studying gender and representation is "not simply a question of exposing a narrow range of stereotypes, but more a recognition of the way in which the very category of "woman" is constructed in representation."²⁹ This is the task which underlies my dialogues with and intervention into Duchamp's Étant donnés....

Although sexual identities, as many theorists have discussed,³⁰ are unstable and produced in culture, gender identity is created through discursive and representational practices that serve, as Judith Butler argues, to reiterate gender norms and to perpetuate the identity it is supposed to represent.³¹ If from certain perspectives, Duchamp's Étant donnés... can be seen to invert given gender categories in insightful ways, I will argue that his final gendered game serves effectively to reaffirm them. In fact, his representation of "woman" emphatically underscores how cultural inscriptions come to define gender as normative.

²⁸ I shall be commenting on such writings in the course of this dissertation.

²⁹ Janet Wolff. Feminist Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture (Berkeley. Los Angeles: University of California Press). 68-69.

³⁰ Two classic examples are, Theresa de Lauretis, Technologies of Gender (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987); Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (New York: Routledge, 1990).

³¹ I personally espouse poststructuralist theories of representation and the subject which as Lisa Tickner writes: "assumes that sexual identities are neither given nor secure but [are] the unstable and provisional outcome of a whole process of differentiation. This process is both conscious and unconscious and it is constantly in play, both in the individual subject and across the various cultural practices (including art and writing-about-art) through which meanings and identities are produced." See her "Feminism, Art History, and Sexual Difference," Genders 3 (Fall 1988): 99.

In this dissertation, I elected to construct my own representation of the "person behind the door"³² by dialoguing with Duchamp's Étant donnés... from three different positions: first, as a Duchampian scholar; then as the viewer-voyeur; and finally as the second viewer looking at Duchamp himself gazing through the peepholes. By taking these different positions, I fashion three interrelated dialogues on a convergence of Duchamp's givens and my own.

These dialogues do not represent a confrontation between two fixed, stable positions. Instead the words set down in the three dialogues are a record of a process of writing and rewriting as I assume the different positions. They are an outgrowth of my negotiations with Duchamp's givens and of the words and ideas of a variety of scholars and thinkers from diverse disciplines. This dissertation, thus, represents a process of changing positions that evolved beyond my initial reaction to and reading of Étant donnés.... Trinh T. Minha's words most eloquently describe this process of writing and of shifting positions:

Never original, 'me' grows indefinitely on ready-mades, which are themselves explainable only through other ready-mades.... Writing as an inconsequential process of sameness/otherness is ceaselessly re-breaking and re-weaving patterns of ready-mades. The written bears the written to infinity."³³

³² This expression, "person behind a door" refers to a Chinese ideogram for "woman." I thank Catherine MacKenzie for informing me of this. Although I examine only Western cultural inscriptions in this thesis, this Chinese ideogram perfectly encapsulates how Étant donnés... also by means of certain signs, contains "woman" behind a door. To the best of my knowledge, Duchamp never displayed any concern for Chinese culture. To say that he was even aware of this ideogram would be pure conjecture on my part.

³³ Trinh T. Minh-ha, Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989) 36. Cited in Amelia Jones, Postmodernism and

The three dialogues which constitute this dissertation demonstrate how my different positions as interlocutor provide diverse contexts for the ready-made signs that inhabit Étant donnés.... Rewoven into differing patterns, these signs, therefore, do not remain fixed and stable as they first seemed. Rather they become fluid and elastic as they produce changing meanings.

By recontextualizing them, by dialoguing with Duchamp's signs from different positions, it becomes most evident that meaning does not lie in the signs themselves but in the dialogic process.³⁴ Mikhail Bakhtin's words are apt in this regard:

no living word [or sign] relates to its object in a singular way: between the word [or sign] and its object, between the word and the speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of other, alien words about the same object, the same theme, and this is an environment that it is often difficult to penetrate.³⁵

Bakhtin's theory of dialogism elucidates how the context of a sign has primacy over the inherent character of that sign: how multiple readings, diverse meanings, heterogenous voices can be engendered from a single word or sign.³⁶ In effect, it is as if any given

the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp, 134-5. In her study of the reception of Duchamp as the father of "postmodernism," Jones also discusses the intersubjective relationship between the viewer and the artist's work: she comments on "the reciprocity of identity as constituted through language and always in relation to another." She is concerned with "the activation of the process by which subjectivity is constituted in the artistic exchange." My own interactive dialogues with Duchamp's Étant donnés..., based on Bakhtinian theory, bears a resemblance to Jones's notion of intersubjectivity.

³⁴ Bakhtin's concept of dialogism informs my conception of Duchamp's work and constitutes the theoretical framework for this thesis.

³⁵ [Words in brackets are mine]. Mikhail M. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, 276.

³⁶ For an excellent and lucid analysis of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, see the Introduction by Michael Holquist in Ibid., xv-xxxiii.

word or language were composed of different alien words or tongues, as if any given word or language were heteroglot. Bakhtin's term, heteroglossia (hetero = different/other, glossia = tongues) provides an effective image of the power of a word, sign or language. Rather than a single one-to-one meaning between word and thing, a word or sign can trigger multiple, diverse and heterogeneous meanings.

The diverse and potentially conflicting meanings that can ensue from my own three dialogues are a further testimony to the heteroglossia inherent in the dialogic process. This is not so much the realization of the art object itself as inherently polysemic nor that a hermeneutical act can create an infinite range of possible interpretations. Rather than an interpretation or reading, the dialogical process is an operation which (re)presents the art object by merging the ideas, ideologies and varying positions or voices of the viewers/interlocutors with the artist's givens. Indeed, right from the outset, I admit that, in the pages that follow, I create my own representation founded on the collision between my givens and those of Duchamp.

These three dialogues eclipse, for the most part, Duchamp's stature as an anti-institutional avant-garde artist.³⁷ This is because his last work, Étant donnés..., addresses other problems that concern me more: the formulation and construction of normative meanings relating to dualistic gendered inscriptions of nature and culture, and the intersubjective nature of the dialogue.

³⁷ The conception of Duchamp as an anti-institutional artist is an overriding one, particularly in the United States. On this subject, see in particular, Amelia Jones, Postmodernism and the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp; and Dalia Judovitz's insightful essay on Étant donnés and the relation of an artwork to the museum and to discursive practices: "Rendez-vous with Marcel Duchamp: Given" in Marcel Duchamp: Artist of the Century, 184-202.

Because the three dialogues which constitute this dissertation construct specific and differing contexts for the signs, they offer perspectives that extend beyond current scholarship on Marcel Duchamp and his oeuvre: and most notably on the philosophical position that prompted him to construct his secret work, Étant donnés.... My three dialogues also provide unique vantage points on how Duchamp's oeuvre relates to the gendering of western epistemologies and histories and to the manner in which ideas, ideologies, and identities are constructed.

In order to contextualize my three dialogues within the field of Duchampian studies, I would like to set out, in a summary way and without precise references to artworks, how this thesis relates to and expands upon current scholarship. Because the writing on this artist is extensive, this cannot be a comprehensive overview of Duchampian scholarship and, for this reason, there have been many insightful studies I have bypassed. For the sake of brevity and clarity, certain references will only be cited, where appropriate, in the body of this dissertation. I begin with a preamble that sets out the theoretical foundation for the three dialogues and their relationships to Duchampian scholarship.

A Preamble to the Three Dialogues

Although Duchamp's various works can and have been read as isolated, and often iconoclastic, creations and even though one can interpret them individually from a variety of perspectives, I suggest that one can gain new insights into Étant donnés... by

examining its dialogic relation to the pre-Étant donnés works, words and gestures. By so doing, one can come to recognize that Duchamp's final work is much more than a provocative representation. Indeed, I have come to understand that by constructing Étant donnés..., Duchamp engaged in a much larger project relating to our signifying processes and to the manner in which we construct ideas, ideologies. My intention is to examine this project.

I do not wish to suggest that the interrelatedness of Duchamp's various works has gone unnoticed. On the contrary, any serious encounter with the works of Marcel Duchamp has inevitably resulted in a recognition of this fact. As Richard Hamilton stated, Duchamp's works must be considered "as a whole: as an entity so infinitely complex that his work resists attempts to transmit adequate experience of it."³⁸ Like interconnecting signs, the various works, words and gestures operate in concert with each other, seeming to announce or point to certain potential meanings without ever definitively defining them. In his study of the readymade in Résonances du Readymade, Thierry de Duve persuasively argues that Duchamp's readymades eclipse the notion of the traditional art object precisely because of their enunciative function:

les readymades de Duchamp ont donné lieu à de multiples interprétations qui dévident la pelote de leurs significations possibles, tirent un fil à elles, défont les noeuds, croisent le texte, bref, projettent ou décodent ces choses dans divers paradigmes, tantôt esthétiques ou historiques, tantôt

³⁸ Richard Hamilton. "Duchamp." Art International (Lugano), vol. 7, no. 10 (January 1964): 28.

psychologiques ou sociologiques, tantôt sémiotiques ou idéologiques...
toutes sont légitimes.³⁹

Although my concern here is not, like de Duve's, the manner in which Duchamp (re)defines art, his study does cast a light on my project: that is, how Duchamp's often outrageous works have an "enunciative function;" how they function as signs within a larger context.

In this thesis, I extend such an enunciative function to all of Duchamp's pre-Étant donnés... works, including his titles, word plays and gestures. When read as constituent parts of an ensemble, even the artist's most iconoclastic readymades or gestures operate much like words in a sentence, as single signs in a complex sign system. The reader can never find therein a totalizing unity, or a definitive meaning. In effect, attempting to find a stable meaning in Duchamp's network of signs is a futile affair. As Rudolf Kuenzli has noted: "The frustration, exasperation and puzzlement of Duchamp interpreters seem to be due largely to their persistent but hopeless attempt to find something which does not exist: a consistent meaning in a work by Duchamp."⁴⁰

In her recent book, Unpacking Duchamp, Dalia Judovitz speaks of this sign system as a "portable museum," as an entity which

restages the viewer's experience of Duchamp's works, no longer as singular or autonomous objects isolated in the museum but as an organic corpus. This portable museum of works in miniaturized facsimile

³⁹ Thierry de Duve. Resonance du readymade: Duchamp entre avant-garde et tradition (Paris: Editions Jacqueline Chambon, 1989), 13-14.

⁴⁰ Rudolf E. Kuenzli. "Introduction." in Marcel Duchamp: Artist of the Century, ed. Rudolf Kuenzli and Francis Naumann (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989), 5.

suggests that the meaning of represented objects can only be addressed as a context of embedded gestures.⁴¹

In this regard, The Box in a Valise (fig. 25)⁴² is "paradigmatic [and crucial to] an understanding of his works." To "unpack" The Box in a Valise, she notes, "involves both a physical and conceptual intervention" which provides a new kind of experience for the viewer, "a system where reference or meaning is generated through cross-reference." As a result, the autonomy of the individual works is undermined since "[t]he plasticity of Duchamp's intervention...lies not in the objects but in their strategic syntax and poetic associations."⁴³ Judovitz's description, as I see it, aptly defines only the ensemble of Duchamp's pre-Étant donnés... works, words and gestures. From my perspective, Étant donnés... stands as a completely different order of signs. So as to relate the dialogical relationship between what I construe as very different signs system, I wish first to draw upon other scholarly perspectives that relate to my project.

Because of the complexity and ambiguity of the series of cross-references, Duchamp's oeuvre has intrigued scholars and has incited them to attempt to decode it, to find a key to an underlying definitive pattern or design. Many have noted how this artist's various works, words and gestures are often contradictory and conflictual,

⁴¹ Dalia Judovitz, Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 4.

⁴² There are several versions of this work, also called Boîte-en-valise, dating from 1941 to 1968. Much like Étant donnés, this is a compilation of prior works. It consists of miniature replications and reproductions of the principle works up to 1941 presented in a portable valise. The main difference with Étant donnés is that the valises do not provide coherent representations that provoke the viewer on a personal level.

⁴³ Dalia Judovitz, Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit, 4, 5.

conceiving of them as a kind of oppositional game, like a game of chess. This notion was reinforced by the fact that Duchamp was a master chess player who even wrote a book on a rare end game,⁴⁴ entitled, Opposition and Sister Squares are Reconciled.⁴⁵

Early scholars (and friends of the artist) such as Robert Lebel and Arturo Schwarz believed there was an underlying pattern at play in Duchamp's works. For Robert Lebel, chess presented a poetic model for the dichotomy between word and object:

[...] his puns were so closely connected with his plastic works that it was difficult to decide whether the words explained the works or the works elucidated the words: whether, taken together, they turned into a subversive chess game, a kind of engineering, or enigmatic poetry.⁴⁶

For his part, Schwarz noted that "chess may be seen as the metaphorical secular model for the sacred games of the esoteric tradition."⁴⁷ These correlations between his art and the game of chess were reinforced by some of the artist's own comments. For example, when Walter Arensberg, one of Duchamp's patrons, remarked about the manner in which his works resembled successive moves in a game of chess, Duchamp replied: "Your

⁴⁴ An end game refers to the final stages of a chess game when there has been a serious reduction of the pieces and when the two opponents are attempting to checkmate each other.

⁴⁵ Marcel Duchamp and V. Halberstadt. L'Opposition et les cases conjuguées sont réconciliées / Opposition and Sister Squares Reconciled (Paris and Brussels: Edition de l'Echiquier, 1932). This was a limited edition with text in French, English and German. A portion of this book was published in Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution (Paris), 2 (October 1930): 18-19; and in Marchand du Sel. Ecrits de Marcel Duchamp, ed. Michel Sanouillet (Paris: Le Terrain Vague, 1958).

⁴⁶ Robert Lebel. "Marcel Duchamp and André Breton" in Marcel Duchamp, ed. Anne d'Hamoncourt and Kynaston McShine (New York: The Museum of Modern Art and Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1989), 136.

⁴⁷ Arturo Schwarz. The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), 560.

comparison between the chronological order of the paintings and a game of chess is absolutely right ...But when will I administer checkmate - or will I be mated?"⁴⁸

In hindsight, such suggestive comments seem to allude to his last work as a kind of checkmate. It also seems to foreshadow the situation described in his book on chess, Opposition and Sister Squares are Reconciled, in which a player, seemingly disinterested in the game carefully administers his final move⁴⁹ since Duchamp removed himself from the art scene in a quasi-act of disinterest, "to go underground"⁵⁰ to work on Étant donnés...

⁴⁸ Letter from Marcel Duchamp to Louise and Walter Arensberg, July 22, 1951. Cited in Kynaston McShine "La Vie en Rose" in Marcel Duchamp, ed. Anne d'Harmoncourt and Kynaston McShine (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, Philadelphia: Musuem of Art, 1973), 132.

⁴⁹ Henri-Pierre Roché describes the end game problem in chess set out by Duchamp and Halberstadt in their Opposition and Sister Squares are Reconciled this way: "There comes a time toward the end of the game when there is almost nothing left on the board, and when the outcome depends on the fact that the king can or cannot occupy a certain square opposite to, and at a given distance from, the opposing king. Only sometimes the king has a choice between two moves and may act in such a way as to suggest he has completely lost interest in winning the game. Then the other king, if he too is a true sovereign, can give the appearance of being even less interested, and so on. Thus the two monarchs can waltz carelessly one by one across the board as though they weren't at all engaged in mortal combat. However, there are rules governing each step they take and the slightest mistake is instantly fatal. One must provoke the other to commit that blunder and keep his own head at all times. These are the rules that Duchamp brought to light (the free and forbidden squares) to amplify this haughty junket of the kings." Regarding this, Duchamp himself remarked: "But the end games in which it works would interest no chess player. That's the funny part. There are only three or four people in the world who have tried to do the same research as Halberstadt, who wrote the book with me, and myself. Even the chess champions don't read the book, since the problem it poses really only comes up once in a lifetime. They're end-game problems of possible games but so rare as to be nearly utopian." See Marcel Duchamp, ed. by Anne d'Harmoncourt and Kynaston McShine (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, Philadelphia: Musuem of Art, 1973), 302.

⁵⁰ Duchamp participated in a panel on March 20, 1961 in which he made the prophetic statement, "the great artist of tomorrow will go underground." *Ibid.*, 28.

Duchamp's book also relates, as the title indicates, to the notion of opposition and reconciliation, offering scholars still another dimension to Duchamp's stratagem. Francis Naumann, Hubert Damisch and Jean-François Lyotard, for example, have pursued this avenue. Francis Naumann's essay, "Marcel Duchamp: A Reconciliation of Opposites" offers interesting observations regarding the oppositional nature of Duchamp's recurring signs and touches on a key theoretical problem in the Duchampian oeuvre, that is, how the numerous signs tend to construct polarities, contradictions, oppositions. As Naumann writes, "whether conscious or unconscious, by the early 1920s, [Duchamp] had already established the major tenets of this working method, exploring and reexploring themes of opposition that would prevail in his work for the rest of his life."⁵¹ Naumann's study of the Duchampian stratagem is based on the notion of reconciliation of opposites. He draws parallels between Duchamp's stratagem of opposition and reconciliation to Hegelian dialectics, giving several examples of how the dialectic functions in Duchamp's work. Regarding the readymade, he writes,

in strictly Hegelian terms, a work of art could be seen to represent the thesis: an object that is not a work of art, its opposite or antithesis: while the readymade succinctly combines these ideas in a single artifact, bringing about their reconciliation or synthesis.⁵²

While Naumann adopts an Hegelian model of dialectics to decode Duchamp's stratagem, Damisch and Lyotard examine Duchamp's oppositional games and use of the words.

⁵¹ Francis M. Naumann. "Marcel Duchamp: A Reconciliation of Opposites" in Marcel Duchamp. Artist of the Century, ed Rudolf E. Kuenzli and Francis M. Naumann (Cambridge, Mass. and London, Eng.: The MIT Press, 1989), 20-40. Also published in The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp ed Thierry de Duve (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991), 21.

⁵² Ibid., 33.

"opposition and reconciliation" from a different perspective. As Francophone scholars writing in the 1970s, their perception of Duchamp's games were based on contemporary French thought, notably on linguistics and poststructuralist theory.

In his study, Damisch refers to Duchamp's passion for chess. Though the artist makes use of the chess motif in certain works, Damisch argues that it is his art, in general, that is a cosa mentale, an epistemological model which permits Duchamp and the viewer the possibility of perpetual intellectual movement.⁵³ Damisch relates this correlation of the cerebral function in art and chess to linguistics and to the question of opposition:

Le joueur d'échecs a l'intention d'opérer le déplacement et d'exercer une action sur le système: tandis que la langue ne prémédite rien, c'est spontanément et fortuitement que ses pièces à elle se déplacent - ou plutôt se modifient [...] Pour que la partie d'échecs ressemblât en tout point au jeu de la langue, il faudrait supposer un joueur inconscient ou inintelligent.⁵⁴

Duchamp found a system, says Damisch, that eliminated the need for an antithesis. In this regard, he takes a position that is different from Naumann's notion of a Hegelian reconciliation of opposites. Instead, Damisch expands upon the signification of the artist's term "reconciliation" which he says, permits an opposition that establishes itself as an intangible equilibrium. Even though the game of chess presents an oppositional system, it is a kind of activity, argues Damisch, that never repeats exactly. Never

⁵³ "Aux échecs, en tant qu'ils fournissent la pensée d'un modèle qu'on doit dire épistémologique, eu égard aux effets qu'il transmet dans le champ théorique." Hubert Damisch. "La Défense Duchamp." in Marcel Duchamp: Tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition (Paris: UGÉ, 1979), 73, 77.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 94-5.

reflecting perfectly like a mirror, it is always in the process of disintegrating strict oppositions.

Jean François Lyotard has a similar perspective in Les transformateurs Duchamp.⁵⁵ Duchamp's "chess game," says Lyotard, is one that he does not set out to win. Chess is like an anamorphic game which functions as a means to dissimulate, blur and annihilate the possibility of any linear or sequential strategy on the part of the adversary. Duchamp's game is one of disintegration.

Both Lyotard and Damisch thus see in Duchamp's chess model an oppositional strategy which serves to decenter and to dissimulate. The decentering or disintegration process they describe deals mainly with the manner in which Duchamp's stratagem applies to a limited number of specific works. There are other scholars who expand Duchamp's game of disintegration to the entire oeuvre viewed as an ensemble.

André Gervais, for example, has written a remarkable study of the interrelatedness of Duchamp's works, words and gestures,⁵⁶ including a meticulous examination of the artist's bilingual word games. He offers countless and complex examples of the interplay of word, text and object. Gervais explores a myriad of cross-references, humorous verbal-visual puns and other metaphorical and semantic eccentricities. He indulges in their playful and astonishing interrelatedness. Bringing together signs from various well-known and previously obscure texts (notes, words,

⁵⁵ Jean-François Lyotard. Les transformateurs Duchamp (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1977).

⁵⁶ See for example, André Gervais, "Sign ED sign MD Autographique Portrait of Anartist en Rymes" in Marcel Duchamp: tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition?, 297-339; and La raie alitée d'effets: Apropos of Marcel Duchamp (Montréal: Editions Hurtubise HMH, 1984).

correspondence, etc.) into new juxtapositions, he does not strive to construct any specific or fixed readings. Rather he makes visible how the various words, gestures and objects interrelate, and how together they operate as a complex sign system in which signs can come to dialogue and argue with each other.

The studies of scholars like Gervais demonstrate that reading Duchamp's sign system can be akin to indulging in open-ended semiotic game. Moreover, if one takes into account the number of diverse, even contradictory, readings offered by a variety of writers, poets, and scholars, it becomes increasingly evident that Duchamp has indeed encoded a very complex and intricate sign system which prompts the viewer-reader to isolate and bring together certain signs in varying juxtapositions.

In terms of the contradictory and oppositional elements in Duchamp's complex system of signs, I have come to view Duchamp's oeuvre from a perspective somewhat different from the writers mentioned above. To begin with, I differ with Francis Naumann in his choice of an analytic model, the dialectic, and most particularly with his notion of reconciliation since this proposes a kind of closure or finality. I would argue that Duchamp travesties traditional dialectics. He subverts, for example, the dialectics already set out by Aristotle, Plato and Medieval philosophers since his goal, most ostensibly, is not to attain knowledge. The opposing elements found in Duchamp's various works, words and gestures, as we shall see, continuously undermine and erase one another and, therefore, defy all certainty of knowledge. Nor can there be any

resolution by a method of question and answer since, as Duchamp himself has stated, "[t]here is no solution because there is no problem."⁵⁷

Duchamp's oppositional tactics, as Damisch, Lyotard and Gervais have demonstrated, cannot be equated with Hegelian dialectics either. As these authors demonstrate, meaning in the Duchampian text is always fluid, tentative, ephemeral. Meanings can always be erased by an oppositional element. Since there is never any closure, never any totalizing meaning, one cannot speak of reconciliation in the Hegelian sense.

I began my own study by regarding Duchamp's oppositional games as a "dialectic of irony." That is to say, I viewed this artist's oeuvre as an appearance of a dialectic, ironically presenting oppositional elements while, at the same time, denying them the possibility of reconciliation. I have now reconsidered this model in favor of "dialogism."⁵⁸ By using the dialogic model, I am better able to take into account the multifaceted nature of Duchamp's open-ended sign system, and most particularly its relation to Étant donné...

Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism elucidates how the context of a sign has primacy over the inherent character of that sign: how multiple readings, diverse

⁵⁷ Cited in Arturo Schwarz, Marcel Duchamp: Notes and Projects for the Large Glass (New York: Abrams, 1969), 28-9.

⁵⁸ The conceptions of dialogism of Mikhail Bakhtin and Paul de Man's study of Bakhtinian theories have been crucial to the theoretical framework of this thesis. See, Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination; and Paul de Man, "Dialogue and Dialogism" in The Resistance to Theory (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). My gratitude to Professor Lazlo Géfin for directing me to both of these authors.

meanings, heterogenous voices can be engendered from a single word or sign. In continually assigning signs different contexts, Duchamp deprives them of the possibility of assuming a totalizing meaning or of reconciling with another in a new unitary synthesis. My reading of Duchamp's sign systems also relies on Paul de Man's words on dialogism, which, he says, operates

[a]s a principle of radical otherness....As a principle of exotopy: far from aspiring to the telos of a synthesis or a resolution, as could be said to be the case in dialectical systems, the function of dialogism is to sustain and think through the radical exteriority or heterogeneity of one voice with regard to any other...."⁵⁹

In effect, throughout his oeuvre, Duchamp constructs such instances of "radical otherness" by setting out a series of recurring signs constituted in a variety of conflicting or oppositional contexts.

Duchamp commented in an interview with Pierre Cabanne in 1966 about his use of the word "reconciliation" in the title of his book on chess. He stated: "C'est parce que j'ai trouvé un système qui supprimait l'antithèse que j'ai ajouté "réconciliées."⁶⁰

Reconciliation, for Duchamp, means a suppression of the notion of a synthesis of antithetical notions, and not the suppression of conflicting or oppositional forces. As I shall be illustrating in my own dialogues, Duchamp's dialogic enterprise consists of a series of specular inversions where signs both mirror and invert not only each other but cultural constructs.

⁵⁹ Paul de Man. "Dialogue and Dialogism" in The Resistance to Theory, 108, 109.

⁶⁰ Cited in Hubert Damisch. "La Défense Duchamp" in Marcel Duchamp: Tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition? ed. Jean Clair (Paris: UGÉ, 1979), 92.

Duchamp's dialogic imagination, I illustrate, is closely allied to his own particular concept of the "tautology." Duchamp explicitly states that all cultural constructs (including metaphysics and the belief in God)⁶¹ are simply repetitions of readymade givens. In a letter to Jehan Mayoux, he calls himself a "patatautologist."⁶² This neologism, I believe, encapsulates Duchamp's project of "playing a game" with readymade givens. By means of a series of dialogical moves, Duchamp reflects and deflects, repeats and defeats the totalizing truth statements inscribed into these readymade givens.

The dialogic model I have adopted to assess Duchamp's system of signs is closer to the one presented by Damisch, Lyotard and Gervais since they illustrate that Duchamp deflects the notion of reconciliation and of a definitive teleological meaning or design. My dialogical model, however, differs from theirs in a significant way in that I attribute to Étant donnés... a status completely different from his prior system of signs. I contend that only Duchamp's pre-Étant donnés works, words and gestures operate synchronically

⁶¹ Duchamp refers particularly to Western cultural constructs: "Toutes ces balivernes, existence de Dieu, athéisme, déterminisme, libre arbitre, sociétés, mort, etc., sont les pièces d'un jeu d'échecs appelé langage et ne sont amusantes que si on ne se préoccupe pas de 'gagner ou de perdre cette partie d'échecs'." Unpublished letter to Jehan Mayoux dated the 8th of March, 1956. I thank André Gervais for graciously providing me with a copy of the letter.

⁶² "...je propose le mot Patatautologies qui, après répétition fréquente, créera le concept de ce que j'essaie d'exprimer par ce moyen exécration: le sujet, le verbe, le complément...etc." Ibid. My interest in Duchamp's patatautological stance was triggered by Jean Clair in his essay, "Marcel Duchamp et la tradition des perspectiveurs." Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques, ed. Jean Clair (Paris, 1977), 124-59. In a footnote, he makes mention of the letter the artist sent to Jehan Mayoux confessing his "patatautological" position. The prefix "pata" is, no doubt, borrowed from Alfred Jarry's own neologism, "pataphysics," as pointed out by André Gervais in his essay, "Connections: Of Art and Arrhe." in The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, 409. I shall be discussing the interrelationship between Jarry's "pataphysics" and "patatautology" in my first dialogue.

as an open-ended sign system. In contrast to this “centrifugal” sign system, Étant donnés..., I argue, operates as a unified set of signs which compresses or centers the pre-inscribed signs into a coherent and cohesive representation. In contrast to the complex “centrifugal” network of interweaving signs constituting the earlier works, words and gestures, Étant donnés... is, I illustrate, a “centripetal” sign system, different in structure, in author-function and in the viewer-reader experience. In this respect, Étant donnés... stands alone as a sign system of a completely different order. Before elaborating on the dialogical relationship between the two sign systems and the philosophical (or patatautological) premise which I see underlying Duchamp’s project of encoding them, I would first like to outline the manner in which other scholars have situated Étant donnés... within the Duchampian oeuvre.

In the 1969 summer-fall issue of the Philadelphia Museum of Art’s Bulletin, the first published document dealing with Étant donnés..., the director, Evan H. Turner immediately made clear that Duchamp’s last work interconnects with his prior works. In the preface, he notes that it is only proper

as wished by the artist, that Étant donnés... be installed in a gallery adjacent to his other works. Thus, the viewer will be able to appreciate more fully the new dimension it adds to the recognition of the artist’s total achievement even as he [sic] will discover that in so many ways it reexplores the very themes dominating The Large Glass... [T]here can be no question that this is a major work [and] one which was inextricably interlocked with the thoughts and visual conceptions which made up his past (and his present) as an artist. It will throw a new light on earlier

objects, remarks, and notations, while they in turn will prove to illuminate it.⁶³

In his book, Les transformateurs Duchamp,⁶⁴ Jean-François Lyotard also made connections between Étant donné... and The Large Glass. Published in 1977, this was the first book on Étant donné..., almost a decade after its public appearance. Still limited by the photography ban, Lyotard nonetheless provided diagrams and behind-the-scene information of the construction of Étant donné...⁶⁵ making the artwork visually more accessible to a reader.⁶⁶ He describes how the signs in The Large Glass are transformed into the virtual elements in Étant donné..., how they reflect similarities and differences, or as he notes, "and/or" connections or "incongruences." The seeming oppositions, as already noted, are seen by Lyotard as a kind of anamorphic specular system that assimilates oppositions and dissimulates the "dissoi logoi" into what he calls a "logique dischronique."⁶⁷ Lyotard makes some insightful observations regarding

⁶³ Evan H. Turner, "Introduction," Étant donné: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections On a New Work by Marcel Duchamp," Bulletin: Philadelphia Museum of Art: 4-5, 7.

⁶⁴ Jean-François Lyotard, Les transformateurs Duchamp.

⁶⁵ Only after the ban on photographing this work was lifted, that is, a decade after the publishing of Lyotard's book, did the Philadelphia Museum of Art make more precise information available. In 1987, the Museum published a facsimile of Duchamp's instruction booklet with the artist's own diagrams and photographs of the interior installation. See, Marcel Duchamp, "Approximation démontable," Manual of Instructions for Étant donné: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1987).

⁶⁶ Even though Lyotard's study can be construed as a "detached" theoretical study of Étant donné..., his language is personalized and is often structured like a dialogue with Duchamp. In this regard, the following comments by Lyotard speak for themselves: "Je ne puis y voir rien d'autre qu'un con.... Con celui qui voit." Jean François Lyotard, Les transformateurs Duchamp, 16, 138.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 48-9.

these two works, some of which I will be commenting upon later. Nevertheless, contrary to his study of the relationship between Étant donnés... and The Large Glass, I focus on Étant donnés... as one set of signs and all of Duchamp's pre-Étant donnés... sign system as another.

Other scholars have extended their comparative analyses beyond The Large Glass. Anne d'Harmoncourt and Walter Hopps, who announced the advent of Duchamp's new work in the Philadelphia Museum Bulletin,⁶⁸ one could say, set out the trajectory for subsequent interpretations by pointing out how constituent elements of Étant donnés... relate to prior works. Arturo Schwarz, in his The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp⁶⁹ follows their example. Published just one year after the reconstruction of Étant donnés..., it is a catalogue raisonné with over 750 illustrations that provides clear descriptions of different elements in Étant donnés....⁷⁰ We have already seen that Schwarz acknowledged that the female figure in Étant donnés... related to Duchamp's Bride in The Large Glass. He, in fact, associates the last work not only to this work but

⁶⁸ See their "Reflections on a New Work by Marcel Duchamp" Bulletin: Philadelphia Museum of Art 64: 6-58.

⁶⁹ Arturo Schwarz. The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp. This first 1969 edition was taken out of circulation because it revealed the existence of Étant donnés.... I thank André Gervais for informing me of this. Subsequent expanded editions were published in 1970 and 1997.

⁷⁰ Although this catalogue includes thorough descriptive information about Étant donnés..., only a photograph of the door is provided because of the ongoing ban.

to a whole array of prior works. For example, the door of Étant donné... links to the Door: 11, rue Larrey, 1927 (fig. 36), and to the Door for Gradiva, 1937 (fig. 37).⁷¹

Similarly, in his essay, "*Water Writes Always in * Plural,"⁷² Octavio Paz relates elements in Étant donné... to a number of earlier works and to various word games. He notes that the title of Duchamp's last work derives from the notes in the Green Box. Since Duchamp presents these notes as an integral part of The Large Glass, Paz, like many scholars, recognizes the interconnectedness between Étant donné... and the "imagery and themes of this assemblage and those of The Large Glass."

Paz's thoughts about Duchamp's sign system also relate quite readily to the oppositional element in the artist's work and to the significance of the context in which the signs are read. He states that he prefers to regard the various elements in the works as signs rather than symbols because

signs are less ambitious and more agile...signs change their meaning and gender according to the context in which they are placed. They mean nothing by themselves: they are elements in a relationship. The laws that govern phonology and syntax are perfectly applicable in this sphere.⁷³

⁷¹ Other examples are: the nude figure echoes a "life-size version of the small relief" of the same name, 1948-9 (fig. 78); the waterfall relates to the waterfall in The Large Glass, 1915-23 (fig. 6); the landscape is linked to prior landscapes such as Moonlight on the Bay at Basswood, 1953 (fig. 95) and Cols alités, 1959 (fig. 87). For further correlations, see Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp.

⁷² Octavio Paz, "* Water Writes Always in * Plural" in Marcel Duchamp, ed. Anne d'Hamoncourt and Kynaston McShine; also in Octavio Paz, Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare, trans. Rachel Phillips (New York: Viking Press, 1978).

⁷³ Octavio Paz, "* Water Writes Always in * Plural" in Marcel Duchamp, 150.

In this regard, Paz's comments can be thought of coinciding with the notion of dialogism (how context determines meaning) that I rely upon in my thesis.

As we can see, then, right from the outset, the interrelationship between Étant donnés... and Duchamp's prior works was acknowledged. Various scholars have offered rich interconnections between the signs in Étant donnés... and certain of his earlier works, many of which I shall refer to in this thesis. Nevertheless, my interest in the dialogical interrelationship between Duchamp's last work and the earlier ones is based on a different footing.

I contend that Étant donnés... and his prior works function like two different (yet interrelated) sign systems which, to use de Man's words again, operate according to "a principle of radical otherness," not only in their respective structures, but also in terms of the viewer experience and the author-function. Étant donnés... is also dialogical in that, as a coherent, cohesive representation engendered from a complex array of heterogeneous signs, it operates like a monologic statement or utterance. Formulated by means of a centripetal force upon the heterogeneous, heteroglot and "centrifugal" sign system, Étant donnés... mimics the manner in which statements (as tautological repetitions) are articulated and how such monologic utterances are subsequently dialogized. Duchamp engages a dialogue precisely by provoking the viewer.

By basing myself on Duchamp's writings and on the theories of Walter Benjamin and Paul de Man, as well as those of Mikhail Bakhtin, I have come to consider these two centrifugal and centripetal sign systems as different allegorical modes: the first allegory, constituting his pre-Étant donnés... works, words and gestures; the second, Étant

donnés... itself. Both allegories, which contrast in structure, in the viewer experience, and in the author-function, are an integral part of what I call Duchamp's "patatautological enterprise." Let me underline that neither of these allegories conforms to the traditional definition of the genre as "a narrative in which the agents and action, and sometimes the setting as well, are contrived not only to make sense in themselves, but also to signify a second, correlated order of persons, things, concepts, or events."⁷⁴

I contend that Duchamp's pre-Étant donné... oeuvre, as an open-ended sign system, relates quite readily to the notion of the modern allegory theorized by authors like Walter Benjamin and Paul de Man. De Man equates the modern allegory to the writings of the nineteenth century French writer, Stéphane Mallarmé. The Mallarméan allegory, says de Man, is "repetitive of a potential confusion between figural and referential statement" and thus negates the monadic totality of a fixed referential object. Contrary to historical narrative, the Mallarméan allegory is a text which, he states, is not "revelatory of a teleological meaning."⁷⁵

This sort of mode of writing, de Man states, also "recalls Walter Benjamin's notion of allegory and the disappearance of the object [where] the assumed correspondence between meaning and object is put into question."⁷⁶ Without any

⁷⁴ Definition given in M.H. Abrams. A Glossary of Literary Terms. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971).

⁷⁵ Paul de Man. Allegories of Reading (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979). 116.

⁷⁶ Paul de Man. Blindness and Insight. Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971). 174.

totalizing unity, the modern allegory is perceived by Benjamin as a void, "that signifies precisely the non-being of what it represents."⁷⁷

In contrast to the traditional allegory which posits an intentional (albeit complex) meaning by means of a symbolic language, the modern allegory dismantles the close correlation between symbol and referential object, thus defying the possibility of deciphering a predetermined or stable meaning. Ephemerality, fluidity, dissolution, fragmentation are all words that can describe the modern allegory. As Walter Benjamin himself wrote, "an appreciation of the transience of things...is one of the strongest impulses in allegory."⁷⁸

Such a concept of the allegory can readily correspond to Duchamp's open-ended sign system. Scattered into an array of signs that span many decades and that are dispersed in place (in museums, texts as images and notes), Duchamp's network of interweaving signs contains a multitude of cross-references and metaphorical play that, like the modern allegory, also allows for "the metamorphosis of one object into a number of other symbolic referents."⁷⁹ The signs seem continuously to shift and transform themselves and to link together, in the minds of the reader-viewers, into ever-

⁷⁷ Cited in *Ibid.*, 35.

⁷⁸ Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (London: New Left Books, 1977), 223.

⁷⁹ Paul de Man writing on Mallarmé's allegorical mode. See his *Blindness and Insight*, 179.

changing contexts and relationships. As a result, Duchamp's allegorical text is indicative of the "transience of things."⁸⁰

Such recurring, self-reflexive signs engage the viewer-reader, one could say, in a semiotic game of "jouissance."⁸¹ In this way, the open-ended sign system has the power to trigger multiple and heterogeneous readings. Although such heteroglossia can admittedly be attributed to any work of art (including Étant donnés... itself), Duchamp's pre-Étant donnés allegory displays itself as an "open" sign system -- and as one that flagrantly exhibits and exposes its heteroglot nature. Indeed, most artworks, like Étant donnés..., hide this heteroglot quality by assuming a one-on-one relation between sign and referent.⁸²

Drawing parallels between Duchamp's open-ended sign system and the modern allegory permits me to give this artist's elusive sign system a name, a category, opening up a way for me to discuss it in a tangible way. It also helps in contextualizing Duchamp's pre-Étant donnés... oeuvre within an historical framework. In effect, the disintegration of metanarratives and metaphysical truth systems, the recognition of the transience and fragmentation of things and the breakdown of linear thinking can be recognized as a tendency in the thoughts of a number of thinkers, writers, and artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, some of whom I shall be referring to in my second

⁸⁰ Walter Benjamin. German Tragic Drama. 223.

⁸¹ "Jouissance" is a term used by Roland Barthes to describe the pleasurable experience of the reader who delights in the open-ended texture of words, in the ever-moving signs in language. See Roland Barthes. Le plaisir du texte (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1973).

⁸² I will be expanding on this below.

dialogue. Indeed, poststructuralist thought and dialogism, even Duchamp's "patatautological" position, one could say, are most evidently outgrowths of, or at least coincide with, what one can consider to be the modern "allegorical" mode. For this reason, I do not wish to make too close a connection between Duchamp the artist and Mallarmé the writer. Rather, I focus here on the general concept of the modern allegory as a means to discuss Duchamp's open-ended sign system.

Although Duchamp never made any explicit connection between the allegory and the Mallarméan mode of writing, he did allude to both of them. In his writings, he employed the word "allegory" on a number of occasions, even alluding to Étant donné: 1^o la chute d'eau. 2^o le gaz d'éclairage as an "allegorical appearance."⁸³ Furthermore he made it quite explicit that art should follow the direction of Stéphane Mallarmé.⁸⁴ Consequently, Duchampian scholars have commented about this connection, most in a cursory way.

For example, Lawrence Steefel noted that Duchamp's impersonality, his notion of "beauty of indifference" and his poetics were basically Mallarméan with "a strong dose of irony."⁸⁵ Octavio Paz also draws analogies between Mallarmé and Duchamp by briefly comparing various motifs in the writer's Igitur and Duchamp's 1912 painting, Nude

⁸³ Notes in "The Green Box," in Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 27.

⁸⁴ "Mallarmé was a great figure. This is the direction in which art should turn: to an intellectual expression rather than to an animal expression. I am sick of the expression "bête comme un peintre - stupid as a painter." Marcel Duchamp. "The Great Trouble with Art in this Century" in *Ibid.*, 126.

⁸⁵ Lawrence Steefel. "Marcel Duchamp and the Machine" in Marcel Duchamp, ed. Anne d'Harnoncourt & Kynaston McShine (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1989), 70-1.

Descending the Staircase (fig. 5).⁸⁶ Chris Hassold's unpublished doctoral dissertation is the most extensive study on the relationship between Duchamp and Mallarmé in terms of their shared world views and in similarities and differences in their use of symbolism. His study is based on a comparison of Mallarmé's Coup de des and Duchamp's, The Large Glass.⁸⁷

I am concerned with the modern allegorical mode of writing as a concept, and thus my interest does not lie in such comparative studies. Of particular interest to me is that the modern allegorical mode can come to characterize Duchamp's pre-Étant donnés... works, read as an open-ended, centrifugal sign system. Although authors have consistently strung together series of recurring motifs or signs from the whole pre-Étant donnés... oeuvre, to construct a meaning and have admitted to the impossibility of finding definitive meaning, scholars have not considered Duchamp's body of works as a modern allegory. Authors have nonetheless employed the word "allegory" to describe specific works, and usually in reference to The Large Glass.

For the most part, they associate the term, in the traditional sense, to a clear correlation between sign and referent. Jean Suquet, for example, describes the stripping

⁸⁶ Octavio Paz, " * Water Writes Always in * Plural" in *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Only fleetingly mentioning Étant donnés... and focusing on the relation between Mallarmé's Coup de des and Duchamp's, The Large Glass, Hassold takes into account their shared perceptions of art, the role of the author-artist, the role of the viewer-reader. He discusses mutual themes such as transformation, sterility, Eros and also compares how both Mallarmé and Duchamp have similar attitudes towards humor and irony and how these elements make it impossible to find definite meaning in their respective works. See Hassold, "The Possibilities of Chance: A Comparative Study of Stéphane Mallarmé and Marcel Duchamp" (PhD Dissertation, The Florida State University College of Arts and Science, 1972).

of the bride in The Large Glass as an admirable allegory of "mechanical movement, [of] an 'allegorical appearance' of the instant preceding the explosion."⁸⁸ Arturo Schwarz refers to the "the waterfall and the illuminating gas [as] the "allegorical reproduction" or the "allegorical appearance" of the bride and the bachelor."⁸⁹

Only Thierry de Duve noted, recently, that the allegory may raise "a very interesting problem for scholars to see what concept of the allegory Duchamp would rely on." He adds, "my blind guess is that he would simply use the word in the way most people use it, that is, without knowing exactly what it means."⁹⁰ Such a loose conception of the meaning of the word "allegory" may indeed have served Duchamp very well, given this artist's interest in the slippery nature of words and signs. Nonetheless, for the purpose of clarity, it is useful for me to characterize Duchamp's open-ended sign system as a modern allegory in the manner defined by Benjamin and de Man so that I may be able to distinguish it from Duchamp's other allegory, from his "allegorical appearance." Étant donnés...

As I see it, this "allegorical appearance," though engendered from the signs inscribed into the centrifugal and open-ended allegory, contrasts with it structurally as well as in the viewer experience and in the author-function. Before explicating the

⁸⁸ Jean Suquet, "Possible" in The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, 108, 93-101.

⁸⁹ Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, 558.

⁹⁰ Statement made in the discussion of his paper, "Given the Richard Mutt Case," in The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, 237-238.

distinctions I see in the two allegorical modes, it is appropriate to expand on some observations on Étant donné... made by Olivier Asselin.

Asselin has made some interesting comments about the relation of Duchamp's final work to the traditional "allegory."⁹¹ Much like Duchamp's works, Tu m' of 1918 (fig. 26) and Boîte-en-Valise (fig. 25), Duchamp's last work, Asselin says, operates like a little museum which incorporates within its framework numerous references to a number of his own works as well as to the history of art.⁹² This particular "little museum" relates quite readily to the allegory. Étant donné..., he writes,

peut ainsi sembler une oeuvre classique, néoclassique même: non seulement elle est l'imitation du corps humain et, mieux, d'un récit (et plus précisément d'un moment dans un récit), mais elle imite les anciens, les 'grandes' oeuvres de la tradition. De plus, elle a une dimension mythologique et participe sans doute de l'allégorie et de la personnification, ces figures, privilégiées dans le classicisme, qui représentent une idée ou plusieurs idées abstraites et générales par un ensemble ou une série d'objets concrets et particuliers, par une personne dotée d'attributs (très souvent une femme, portant flambeau par exemple).⁹³

Duchamp's representation is not a contemplative one, Asselin notes. Rather, like the traditional allegory, it lends itself to be unveiled or deciphered, as if it had some hidden meaning. Though evoking numerous readings, as Asselin also emphasizes, Étant

⁹¹ Olivier Asselin. "Le mystère de la chambre jaune. Quelques notes sur la dernière oeuvre de Marcel Duchamp." La recherche photographique (Dossier "Fait divers") 16 (Printemps, 1994): 36-45.

⁹² Dalia Judovitz also describes how Duchamp has constructed this work as a pastiche of art historical practice. See her "Rendezvous with Marcel Duchamp: Given" in Marcel Duchamp: Artist of the Century, 184-202; see also her more recent study of Duchamp's "portable museum," Boîte-en-Valise, translated as The Box in a Valise, in Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit.

⁹³ Olivier Asselin "Le mystère de la chambre jaune." 35.

donnés... remains enigmatic, never revealing itself: "...elle se laisse dévoiler sans jamais être nue." It is also ultimately undecipherable, with no definitive meaning. Further, its vulgarity, says Asselin, parodies the grand painting styles and the traditionally "noble" genre, the allegory.

I agree that its vulgarity ruptures with traditional allegorical modes and that because Étant donné... does not comprise a shared symbolic canon, it emanates an aura of undecipherability.⁹⁴ What concerns me in my particular study, however, is how Étant donné... is a legible text, or as Asselin states, "un moment dans un récit." As already stated, I view Étant donné... as the artist's own monologic statement precisely because it appears to possess a single one-on-one relation between sign and referent, because it is so legible and decipherable. As in any declarative sentence pronounced by an interlocutor, Duchamp's "statement" also assumes, to use Mikhail Bakhtin's words, "a simple and unmediated relation of speaker to his unitary and singular 'own' language."⁹⁵

In this particular respect, Étant donné..., I contend, contrasts with other individual works like The Large Glass or Boîte-en-Valise, which similarly operate as compilations or reconfigurations of pre-inscribed signs bound within a closed parameter. Because these are either a variety of heterogeneous works or abstract, fragmented, or

⁹⁴ That Étant donné... is ultimately undecipherable implies that it has no final or definitive meaning. In as much as all signs are elastic, this arguably is the condition of all signs systems. I refer back to Bakhtin's notion that "...no living word [or sign] relates to its object in a singular way: between the word [or sign] and its object, between the word and the speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of other, alien words about the same object, the same theme, and this is an environment that it is often difficult to penetrate." [Words in brackets are mine] Mikhail M. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, 276.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 269.

cryptic signs, they do not pose, like Étant donnés..., as a legible text with a predetermined meaning set out by the artist. They do not present themselves as a coherent or cohesive statement of the artist.

What is most significant from my perspective is how the apparent legibility of the signs in Étant donnés... contrasts with the heterogeneous, "centrifugal" signs inscribed into the open-ended "modern" allegory. Dispersed in a number of disparate works, words and gestures and spanning a number of years, Duchamp's open-ended "modern" allegory does not possess the direct immediacy nor the illusion of a "simple and unmediated relation of speaker to his own unitary and singular 'own' language." Instead, and as we have already seen, the diverse works, words and gestures constitute a complex network of interweaving signs that suppress coherence and that defy the possibility of inferring a stable referential object with a unitary meaning.

Operating like a "centrifugal," heteroglot language, the pre-Étant donnés... open-ended sign system, as a modern allegory, frustrates any attempt to discern a legible, coherent text. The reader-viewer must, in fact, go to some length, to isolate certain signs inscribed into a disparate array of works, to string them together, and to organize them in a certain order so as to construct a certain ephemeral meaning. Indeed, for the reader to obtain a unified (albeit ephemeral) and coherent meaning, he/she must apply a centripetal force upon these heteroglot signs. That is to say, the viewer-reader must center them, must contain and frame them. Only then do they become legible and coherent. Only then do they convey meaning.

In contrast to the "modern" allegorical mode, Étant donné... presents itself as a "closed" allegory, precisely because it appears to declare a legible or coherent statement with a predetermined meaning inscribed by the artist. It is as if Duchamp himself had already exerted his own "centripetal" force upon the heteroglot signs from the "centrifugal" open-ended modern allegory in order to obtain a coherent, cohesive representation. As Mikhail Bakhtin explains, by its very nature, a unitary language must obscure or veil the heteroglossia that inhabits all words:

[The unitary language] opposes the realities of heteroglossia. But at the same time the (sophisticated) ideal (or primitive delusion) of a single, holistic language makes the actuality of its presence felt as a force resisting an absolute heteroglot state: it posits definite boundaries for limiting the potential chaos of variety, thus guaranteeing a more or less maximal mutual understanding....⁹⁶

I do not wish to imply that, by creating Étant donné... as such a closed, unitary language, Duchamp simply wanted to "express" his own point of view, his own position. One could understandably make the claim that many works of art operate as the expression or "utterance" of the artist, even in the case of some of Duchamp's own individual works.⁹⁷ Rather, I wish to suggest that, if one examines Étant donné... as a key component of the artist's patatautological enterprise, then one can consider this "allegorical appearance" as a legible text or as a closed unitary statement which has, as

⁹⁶ Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, 270.

⁹⁷ His readymades, for example, can be understood and have been viewed as iconoclastic gestures directly aimed at the art establishment, thus as a statement or "utterance" by the artist. By reading even the iconoclastic readymade as a constituent sign within his heteroglot allegory, it operates as an open-ended sign. In a different context, any predetermined meaning assigned to the readymade dissolves. We shall see instances of this in my first dialogue.

its function, the ability to engage the viewer-voyeur in a dialogue. This dialogue, let me reiterate, is different from the semiotic and monologic game played out by the reader-viewer of the open-ended allegory.

Étant donnés..., I emphasize, only "appears" to be a legible text, a coherent representation, a monologic statement with a predetermined meaning. As I have stated above, no sign, no statement is ever really definitively closed – once it is dialogized. It is for this very reason, I contend, that the interaction of an interlocutor is imperative. Transformed into a voyeur and confronting a constellation of provocative signs, the viewer, as we have seen, can be either repelled by Étant donnés... or compelled, in one way or another, to interact with Duchamp's provocation. In this sense, and as I have already noted, Étant donnés... can be considered a "closed" circuit in which the viewer, as a mediated subject, is an integral part.

Although the ensuing negotiation with the signs in Étant donnés... may describe any act of hermeneutics (for example, reading The Large Glass), the viewer experience differs in a significant way. The dialogue that ensues with the interlocutor (and which we will see in my own dialogues) serves to "open up" this closed sign system, in this way, losing a one-on-one meaning. In effect, when the interlocutor interacts with Duchamp's signs, he/she makes them move beyond the "closed" framework of Étant donnés... and makes them exhibit layers of meanings. Each dialogue reweaves the signs into differing patterns, and in a sense, re-presents it. As such, the signs that inhabit Étant donnés... do not remain fixed and stable as they first "appear." Even signs in a "closed allegorical appearance" become fluid and elastic, capable of producing ever-changing meaning.

If the interlocutor "opens up" the "closed" Étant donnés... during the dialogic process, there is a completely different dynamic operating for the reader of his open-ended allegory. As we have seen, in order to construct a "closed" picture or stable (albeit ephemeral) meaning, the reader of the open-ended allegory must isolate, compress and contain within a frame his/her own making an array of "centrifugal" disparate, moving signs. Because there is never any allusion to any a priori meaning in his open-ended allegory, the reader is "invited" to invent it, or to engage in his or her own monologic "creative act,"⁹⁸ to create his/her own "closed" picture. Where the viewer-reader experience of the open-ended allegory can be characterized as a dynamics which moves from "open to closed," the interlocutor's dialogue with the "allegorical appearance." Étant donnés..., moves from "closed to open." The dialogical relationship⁹⁹ between the viewer-reader (of the open allegory) and the voyeur-interlocutor (Étant donnés...) is a significant element, as I illustrate, in Duchamp's patatautological enterprise.

Once dialogized by an interlocutor, the signs move beyond the frame and become open-ended, "freed" so to speak. By constructing Étant donnés... as a sensational statement, as a "closed" allegory, Duchamp has, thus, effectively created the conditions for an open-ended dialogue between the artist and the viewer. And as in any dialogue,

⁹⁸ Duchamp, in his famous speech, "The Creative Act," explicitly states that it is the spectator who participates in making the work of art. His talk was given in Houston at the meeting of the American Federation of the Arts, April 1957. Published in The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 138-140.

⁹⁹ I refer again to Paul de Man's definition: "...the function of dialogism is to sustain and think through the radical exteriority or heterogeneity of one voice with regard to any other." Paul de Man, "Dialogue and Dialogism" in The Resistance to Theory, 108, 109.

the givens or conditions for the dialogue are inevitably set out by the person who initiates it. here the author, Duchamp.

Indeed, Étant donnés... as a monologic statement by the artist, also operates dialogically with the "centrifugal" open-ended allegory in terms of the author-function. What I am suggesting here is that Duchamp has framed and enclosed a legible and closed picture which, like a monologic utterance or a truth statement, is fixed by an intentional author.¹⁰⁰ The strong authorial presence in Étant donnés... contrasts with his role as encoder of signs or absent writer of his "centrifugal" open-ended allegory¹⁰¹.

To call Duchamp a writer is not as incongruous as it might appear. Duchamp made it quite clear that he chose the writer as a model and went so far as to make the writer, Raymond Roussel, "responsible" for his other major work, The Large Glass.¹⁰² As we have already seen, a number of authors have commented on Duchamp's role as a writer: besides scholars like Hassold, Paz and Steefel. Robert Lebel and Michel Sanouillet have commented on Duchamp's fascination with such writers as Jules Laforgue, Raymond Roussel and Stéphane Mallarmé as well as with his assumed role as

¹⁰⁰ Unlike, for example, the enigmatic, cryptic The Large Glass which never assumes to be a coherent statement by the artist.

¹⁰¹ As a "writer," Duchamp was not in any way concerned with the revival of a Renaissance notion of ut pictura poesis, of raising the status of the visual arts to that of writing. Rather as a writer or encoder of signs he constructed a body of work that transcended the pictorial or purely "retinal" project of the modernist painter: it was an "intellectual expression rather than an animal expression." See Marcel Duchamp's comments on this in his interview with John Sweeney published as, "The Great Trouble with Art in this Century" in The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 123-6.

¹⁰² Ibid., 126. Duchamp even illustrated several of Jules Laforgue's poems in 1911.

writer.¹⁰³ My interest in Duchamp, as writer, relates to the manner in which he assumes different authorial roles in his "open" and "closed" allegories.

In this respect, the concept of the romantic genius becomes relevant. As Hans-Georg Gadamer argued, this heroic figure initially tolled the death knell for the traditional allegory and its dogmatic function.¹⁰⁴ The rehabilitation of the "modern" allegory in the nineteenth century, undermining the voice of the romantic genius, was introduced by Charles Baudelaire so as "to render perceptible the reification and depersonalization of the experience of the world..."¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, the Baudelairean allegory still retained a certain subject-centeredness and, according to Paul de Man, it was Stéphane Mallarmé who opted for the "impersonality of an allegorical...diction entirely freed from a subject."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Robert Lebel. Sur Marcel Duchamp. Paris: Trianon. 1959; English translation under the title Marcel Duchamp. New York: Grove Press. 1959, p. 7, 12, 26, 41. Michel Sanouillet. "Marcel Duchamp and the French Intellectual Tradition" in Marcel Duchamp, 48.

¹⁰⁴ "The traditional allegory rests on firm traditions and has always a fixed, stateable meaning which does not resist rational comprehension through the concept - on the contrary, the concept and concern of allegory is closely bound up with dogmatics: with the rationalization of the mythical (as in the Greek age of Enlightenment) or with the Christian interpretation of scripture in terms of the unity of a doctrine...and finally with the reconciliation of the Christian tradition and Classical culture, which is the basis of the culture and literature of modern Europe and the last universal form of which was the Baroque. With the rupture of the tradition, allegory too was finished. For the moment art freed itself from all dogmatic bonds and could be defined by the unconscious production of genius, allegory inevitably became aesthetically questionable." Hans-Georg Gadamer. Truth and Method. (London: Sheed & Ward, 1975), 71.

¹⁰⁵ Hans Robert Jauss. Toward an Aesthetic of Reception, trans. Timothy Bakhtin; introd. Paul de Man (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982, 1989), 182.

¹⁰⁶ Paul de Man. Blindness and Insight, 175-6.

Duchamp's open-ended "modern" allegory, one could say, is such a Mallarméan diction without an authorial subject: it is effectively a network of signs that appears subjectless. Moreover, as we shall see in more detail, Duchamp explicitly assumed the role of the impersonal writer who, like a medium, removes himself, as subject, from the writing process.¹⁰⁷ In effect, when reading Duchamp's open-ended allegory or when playing a semiotic game with the recurring and interweaving signs, one does not encounter Duchamp, the subject, the romantic genius, intent on "expressing" his voice. The elusiveness of the authorial voice is reinforced by his adoption of multiple personae, including his adoption of the alter ego, Rose Sélavy, further distancing the notion of the voice of an omnipotent genius.

If Duchamp removed himself as subject from the open-ended allegory, this is not the case in one's encounter with Étant donné.... In front of the peepholes of Étant donné..., the viewer-voyeur senses the artist's taunting presence. By framing such an explicit and contentious representation, Duchamp assumes to be making a monologic statement to which one is enlisted to respond. Étant donné..., as an "allegorical appearance," I contend, rehabilitates the intentional author. No longer invisible, Duchamp has effectively placed himself, as subject, within the framework of the "closed" Étant donné.... Moreover, this, his last statement, operates, I illustrate, like the artist's personal memoir, like a last testimony.

¹⁰⁷ He specifies this in his well-known speech, "The Creative Act," published in The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 138.

To gain insights into this dichotomous relation between the impersonal "writer" (of the open-ended "modern" allegory) and the intentional "author" of the closed "allegorical appearance," I rely upon Roland Barthes' writing on authorship.¹⁰⁸ For Roland Barthes, the term "author" signifies the traditional "romantic" concept of the omnipotent genius, a transcendental figure who is the omniscient form-giver and who has the power not only to unveil an absolute truth but to reify it in his/her work. The author, therefore, precedes the text and, in a sense, gives birth to it. This is the role, I argue, that Duchamp assumes by articulating his monologic statement, Étant donné...

In contrast, the "writer" or "modern scriptor" does not precede the text but evolves with it. The text is not a representation of an original model and the writer does not lie omnipotently outside the text. Nor is the text a formulation of a preconceived idea with an a priori meaning or, for that matter, a truth declaration. If the writer does not lie outside the text, nor does she/he lie within it. The text is in no way a recording of a subjective voice. If the writer does not have a total possession of language or of the signs at her/his disposal, the writer is like a medium. This mediumistic role of the silent writer, I shall illustrate, describes Duchamp's act of encoding his open-ended allegory.

In this preamble, however, I simply want to repeat that Étant donné... stands in dialogical opposition to the open-ended allegory, not only in its status as a "closed" structure and its opposing viewer-experience, but also in the author-function. Two scholars, Amelia Jones and Mason Klein, comment on Duchamp's authorial role in their

¹⁰⁸ I rely most particularly on Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author" in Image Music Text, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 142-149.

recent studies. Amelia Jones, in 1994, is the first woman to publish a full-length book on this artist, entitled Postmodernism and the En-gendering of Marcel Duchamp.¹⁰⁹ Although her study deals primarily with the American reception of this artist as the "father" of postmodernism, our studies intersect in the area of the author-function.

Jones examines how Duchamp has earned his role of father figure primarily because of his anti-institutional stance. This paternal role is paradoxical, she argues, since American anti-institutional postmodernism has been constructed as an anti-masculinist movement, as open, fluid and "feminine" in opposition to the perception of American modernism as authoritative, monolithic and "masculine." She illustrates that despite the postmodern negation of monolithic discourse and stable meaning, art discourse continues to reify meaning and continues to "deify the making subject (that author who is supposed to be 'dead' in postmodernism)."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ I would add that the current reception of Duchamp continues in this vein, now perceived by artists such as David Rokeby to be a kind of father figure for interactive art. See his, "Transforming Mirrors: Subjectivity and Control in Interactive Media" in Critical Issues in Electronic Media, ed. by Simon Penny (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995). In terms of Duchamp's work as being a model for interactive art, see also my essay, "Interactive Strategies and Dialogical Allegories: Encountering David Rokeby's Transforming Mirrors Through Marcel Duchamp's Open Windows and Closed Doors." at <http://www.interlog.com/~drokeby/>. As this thesis makes evident, by engaging the viewer in an interactive encounter, Duchamp's work creates a collision between the artist's givens and the interlocutor's, making evident the significance of a viewer, reader, interlocutor in the "representation" of an artwork. Such a collision I would argue does not resituate Duchamp as a heroic father figure. See also the website referred to in Footnote 1, Fresh Widow 3000, which refers to a mat in front of the door of Étant donnés... which, when stepped on by the voyeur, activates the lights, motor, etc and so initiates the viewer's encounter. This mat, not designed by Duchamp but by the Museum as a power-saving device, was replaced a number of years ago by a laser sensory device that activates the lights when someone walks in the room.

¹¹⁰ Amelia Jones, Postmodernism and the En-gendering of Marcel Duchamp, xv.

Jones admits that "Duchampian discourses (both those by and those about Duchamp) [are] structured by 'internal rules' that suggest never fixed or final, yet broadly determined possibilities of meaning."¹¹¹ It is this kind of interaction which, she says, "inhibits even this provisional fixing of Duchamp's authority."¹¹² Through his ambiguously gendered impersonations,¹¹³ Duchamp further undermines his received role as the "authoritative origin of postmodernism." Despite the fact that he is a "plural" subject, the construction of the name, Duchamp, takes place in the process of interpretation -- in his reception.

Jones extends this exploration of Duchamp's authorial play to a feminist analysis of Rose Sélavy. His adoption of the female persona, she notes, disrupts the paternal role given him. Though Rose Sélavy functions as a "destabilization" of the paternal role, this persona, notes Jones, is nonetheless legitimized by her masculine author. The feminine persona functions both as Duchamp and as Rose, destabilizing the authorial 'I' at the same time as it reasserts the voice of the author. The name Duchamp is simply an effect, like a sign, that destabilizes the authorial 'I'; yet at the same time, Duchamp "remains an active agent of his own authorial identities."¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Ibid., 114.

¹¹² Ibid., 138.

¹¹³ "Duchamp's authorial voice is inhibited by simultaneously posing himself as author (through titles, texts, signature) and by his 'coy removal as explanatory sujet de l'énonciation'." Ibid.

¹¹⁴ In this regard, Dalia Judovitz also argues that Duchamp's multiple personae, particularly his "evocation of Rose Sélavy...de-essentializes the creative [and] undermines the notion of authorship..." See her Unpacking Duchamp, 7.

Although evidently sharing some common ground with Jones, I also find myself opposed to her assessment of the author-function. Her discussion of the loss of Duchamp's authorial voice, his role as a plural subject, coincides with my conception of Duchamp as the "impersonal writer" of the subjectless, open-ended or "modern allegory." Where I disagree with Jones is in her assessment of the author-function in Étant donnés.... In contrast to her perception of Duchamp's presence as an active agent whose constructed plural identities function as a point of negotiation for the viewer, she argues that Duchamp's last major piece can be seen as obscuring his authority, because the artist "has exaggerated, to the point of absurdity, the power structures built into the traditional viewing situations of western aesthetics," thus permitting his own persona to recede as "the mastering viewer take[s] his place."¹¹⁵

As I have already aimed to illustrate in my prologue, Étant donnés... emanates an authorial presence, one that provokes the viewer. By such a provocation, Duchamp exhibits a strong subjective voice, an authorial presence. I will furthermore illustrate in my first dialogue that Étant donnés... has been written not only by an intentional author but also as Duchamp's subjective, and very personal memoir.

The differences between Jones' perspective on authorship and my own, I would propose, lie in our different theoretical approaches. Jones' poststructuralist reading is a Foucauldian one which remains embedded in an anti-institutional framework, dealing with the discursive construction of the "name of the author." In contrast, I focus on the

¹¹⁵ Amelia Jones. Postmodernism and the En-gendering of Marcel Duchamp. 200.

location of the writer within the oeuvre, on the voice in the text. My approach is founded on the poststructuralist theories of Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, even on the literary theories of Paul de Man and Mikhail Bakhtin. Indeed, our diverse readings of Duchamp's role as author-writer would confirm Bakhtin's notion that meaning is contingent upon context.

In terms of the author-function, the observations of Mason Klein are also of interest, especially since his study focuses on Étant donnés.... In his doctoral dissertation entitled, "Toward a Phenomenology of the Self: Marcel Duchamp's Étant donnés...,"¹¹⁶ Klein examines the notion of identity (of Duchamp and the viewer) as an imaginary construction, his approach to the subject of the "self" being primarily Lacanian in nature. He views Étant donnés... to be the artist's "ultimate self-portrait and depiction of the human subject-the individual's relation to the world that is mediated in a variety of ways by one's relation to the Other, that is to say, the domain of language, principally represented by sexuality."¹¹⁷ In this regard, he discusses Duchamp's attack on a fixed identity and how Étant donnés... functions as a mechanism to decenter the viewer. The visual experience of Étant donnés..., he says, relates to the sensibility of loss and castration. It operates as a kind of destabilization which, as in the Mirror Stage, contributes to the acquisition of language. Using a Lacanian model, Klein also assesses Duchamp's subjectivity in terms of his "framing of a 'symbolic' self as opposed to the

¹¹⁶ Mason Klein, "Toward a Phenomenology of the Self: Marcel Duchamp's Étant donnés (Ph.D diss., The City University of New York, 1994).

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

imaginary and ego-oriented subjectivity" and, by so doing, exhibiting the "impossibility of a transcendent subject."¹¹⁸

Étant donné..., argues Klein, hinges on Duchamp's "understanding of the unconscious, or of subjectivity, as functioning within an arbitrary but structural system."¹¹⁹ In this regard, Klein also relates Étant donné... to various other works to illustrate the nature of such an "arbitrary but structural system." He does so by exposing "the multiplicity of themes in Étant donné... and also discusses the confusion of artistic identities."¹²⁰ Duchamp, he claims, rejects notions of artistic creativity including notions of intentionality, causality or rational narrative which illustrate how language in the artist's work is alienating.

What concerns me in Klein's study is his observations on the author and the viewer and "the structural system[s]" which I construe as different "allegorical" modes. Like Klein, I do not posit a fixed identity for Duchamp or for the viewer in either allegory. Even the intentional author with the strong subjective voice whom I encounter in Étant donné... is in no way an "originary" or "transcendent" subject. The perception of another subjectivity is always and totally contingent upon the imaginary of the reader or interlocutor. This will become evident in my first dialogue. In terms of the "impossibility of a transcendent subject" and of a fluid identity, my conception of the "self" thus coincides with Klein's. Where my perceptions stands apart from his is in the

¹¹⁸ Ibid., ix.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., viii.

¹²⁰ Ibid., vi.

manner in which the "identity" of the artist and of the viewer is implicated in Étant donnés...

Klein emphasizes the fact that Duchamp "intentionally" reinforced the fluidity of identity. Although his "fluid" identity is highlighted, accentuated and made manifest in what I call his open-ended "modern" allegory, such a "plural subject" is veiled and obscured, as I see it, in Étant donnés.... Instead, we encounter, as I have aimed to illustrate in my prologue, an intentional author-subject who entraps the viewer by means of his "monologic statement," inciting him/her to interact, to engage in a dialogue.

Not only does Étant donnés... imitate the manner in which statements are articulated in a unitary language but also sets up the conditions for a dialogue. No longer engaged in a semiotic game of "jouissance" as in the act of reading the open-ended "modern" allegory, the viewer-voyeur confronting Duchamp's Étant donnés..., must inevitably negotiate or formulate his/her own personal position. This dissertation is testimony to the manner in which I have reconstructed Duchamp's "closed" monologic statement as a patatautological game, a game which, I must concede, is of my own making, an effect of my own interaction with Duchamp's givens.

In this respect, my dialogical approach to Duchamp's Étant donnés... coincides with Amelia Jones' notion of intersubjectivity:

I negotiate Duchamp as an enunciative function through the erotics of interpretive exchange. The Duchampian 'discourse' is enunciated as continually in process to be continually appropriated and respoken by interpreters including myself as I invest in his enunciated 'presence.'¹²¹

¹²¹ Amelia Jones. Postmodernism and the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp. 114.

My three dialogues bear witness to my own presence as I negotiate, from different vantage points, the signs that inhabit Étant donnés..., how I effectively re-present them.

Dialogue One

In my first dialogue, I set aside the contentious nature of Duchamp's representation and my position as voyeur, and instead, as a Duchampian scholar, consider Duchamp's self-proclaimed position as a patatautologist, as one concerned with our signifying processes and the construction of meaning systems. As a patatautologist, I contend, he became an encoder of signs employing various stratagems to dismantle tautological truth statements.

To illustrate how the two allegories exhibit his patatautological position and dialogic imagination, I begin by examining how certain individual works relate to the artist's concerns with our signifying processes. I illustrate how he inverts, collides, or collapses the apparent symbiosis between sign and referent. This exploration of Duchamp's semiotic projects leads me to Mikhail Bakhtin and Paul de Man on the contextual and rhetorical nature of language. Their theories of dialogism and the dialogue permit me to further examine the different dialogic stratagems at play in Duchamp's two allegorical modes.

My dialogue with Duchamp's Étant donnés... unveils a whole array of obscured or deadened signs fixed within his "closed" representation. Basing myself on existing scholarship on Étant donnés... and most importantly on Duchamp's own Manual of Instructions, I reveal old and new ties that link this last "allegorical appearance" with his open-ended "modern" allegory. Every sign that inhabits Étant donnés..., invested with a

dual quality, operates patatautologically: as both a deadened and dynamic sign; as both a memento mori and the artist's personal memoire. In the space of my intersubjective exchange with his "allegorical appearance," Étant donnés..., my own givens quite openly intersect with those of Duchamp's. Representing a collision between Duchamp's inscriptions and my own given notions about signifying processes, about dialogism, this first dialogue also constructs the foundation for my subsequent dialogues.

Dialogue Two

In my second dialogue, I regard the signs inscribed into the "allegorical appearance," Étant donnés..., from the position of the voyeur at the peepholes. Released from the initial impact of the scene behind the closed doors and armed with the insights from my first dialogue, I conduct a "reasoned" dialogue with Duchamp's "allegorical appearance." This dialogue, like my first, is also an intersection of Duchamp's givens and my own, one which provides another context for the signs, and other meanings.

As such, the models I have formulated in my first dialogue reappear under other guises. The dialogic relationship between centrifugal open-ended allegory and Étant donnés... as a centripetal closed "allegorical appearance" become gendered components in Duchamp's patatautological games. Despite its blatant display of the female body, Étant donnés..., as I illustrate, is gendered as a male principle while the open-ended and centrifugal allegory is gendered as female. The interplay of these gendered categories constitute the basis of my second dialogue.

By constructing a series of historical representations, I contemplate how Duchamp's Étant donnés... constitutes an elaborate gendered game. The signs in this "allegorical appearance," I illustrate, cast an "illuminating" light upon ancient and modern, and gendered, epistemologies that have attained the status of readymade givens in Western culture. I examine how the signs inscribed into the structure of Étant donnés... tautologically replay essentialist categories of female-nature and male-culture that have been repeated and revised from ancient to modern times. By taking into account Duchamp's patatautological position, I observe how the signs in Étant donnés... can come to represent a series of specular inversions which deny these gendered constructs any ontological status.

I construct these historical representations so as to "uncover the complex components and implications that are inherent in the apparent straightforwardness of the woman/body/nature association."¹²² By setting out these various "historical" accounts, I aim to illustrate how Étant donnés... can operate as a conflation of past and present, of ancient myth and Enlightenment ideals. In this regard, I relate Duchamp's patatautological game to the negative dialectics of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer.¹²³ Where Duchamp, by means of specular inversions, exhibits the gendered

¹²² Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick, eds. "Introduction," Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader (New York: Routledge, 1999). As these authors illustrate, the inscription of the female body in cultural constructs is a problematic one.

¹²³ I thank Professor John Laffey for introducing me to the writings of the Critical Theorists. Their concept of the negative dialectic and their insights into the Enlightenment project have been most pertinent to me in this dissertation as well as to my development as a scholar. I refer most particularly to Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment (New

concepts as being either-or and neither-nor, the Critical Theorists negate specific concepts by juxtaposing them with their opposite: by illustrating, for example, how enlightenment is myth and myth is already enlightenment; how enlightenment reason is also positivistic; how modern progress is also regression.

Since gender also comes into play in the analysis of enlightenment culture by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, I draw further parallels between their studies and Duchamp's allegories. The observations of the Critical Theorists and Duchamp, in some respects, relate to those made by feminist scholars whose insights intersect with my own set of givens. My second dialogue is, in effect, interwoven with the theoretical writings (on the question of nature, culture and gender) of an array of such feminist scholars as Ruth Berman, Norma Broude, Genevieve Lloyd, Carolyn Merchant, Lynda Nead, and Carol MacCormack, as well the original cultural texts they cite. Their insights permit me to assess how the specular inversions call into question

the hierarchical oppositions which underpin our understanding of ourselves and of our environment, and which seem to guarantee the superiority of the male over the female, and mind over body, [and to recognize that these] are by no means stable or enduring over time. Far from describing a given reality, they constitute an unstable and provisional mechanism of discursive power.¹²⁴

It is my aim to disclose how a particular representation like Étant donné... can uncover "the constructed nature of both our epistemological and ontological categories."¹²⁵

York: Continuum, 1991); and indirectly to Theodor Adorno, Negative Dialectics (New York: Continuum, 1987).

¹²⁴ Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick, Feminist Theory and the Body, 217.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

In this second dialogue, I rely heavily on writings on the histories of modernization and the industrial revolutions by authors such as Siegfried Giedeon, David Landes and Lewis Mumford,¹²⁶ and refer only obliquely to Duchampian scholarship in this area. This is primarily because Duchampian scholarship on science and technology is based either on specific studies or interpretations that are peripheral to my concerns. For instance, where Octavio Paz compares the "world of machines" to a "transposition of the moans and sighs of eroticism" and sees in The Large Glass a "satire of the machine mentality [as] a vision of love,"¹²⁷ Linda Dalrymple Henderson makes a scholarly account of Duchamp's machine iconography, linking it to inventions and discoveries in the early part of this century.¹²⁸ Where Lawrence Steefel describes Duchamp's "interest in the

¹²⁶ I wish to express my gratitude to Professor John Laffey for introducing me to these and other pertinent authors whose writings have been crucial to my understanding of modernity and technological progress as well as to the epistemologies that underlie the "Enlightenment project." Most helpful to this aspect of my study are: Siegfried Giedion, Mechanization Takes Command (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955); Eric. J. Hobsbawm, The Age of Revolution 1789-1848 (London: Cardinal, 1988); Eric. J. Hobsbawm, The Age of Empire. 1875-1914. (London: Cardinal, 1989); David Landes, The Unbound Prometheus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); C. B. Macpherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962); Lewis Mumford, Technics and Civilization (San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1963); Eugen Weber, A Modern History of Europe (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971).

¹²⁷ Octavio Paz, *Ibid.*, 60-1.

¹²⁸ Linda Dalrymple Henderson, The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); "X Rays and the Quest for Invisible Reality in the Art of Kupka, Duchamp, and the Cubists" Art Journal 47 (Winter 1988): 323-340. Her studies on Duchamp's references to specific inventions and scientific or mathematical formulations are developed in a recent in-depth analysis, Duchamp in Context: Science and Technology in "The Large Glass" and Other Related Works (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). Like Henderson, Craig Adcock also is concerned with Duchamp's references to mathematics, particularly non-Euclidean geometry. Where Henderson has offered a scholarly documentation of Duchamp's astute mathematical studies, Adcock links Duchamp's interest in speculative mathematics, particularly n-dimensional geometry and the fourth dimension to sexuality. Craig Adcock, "Duchamp's Eroticism: A Mathematical Analysis" in Marcel Duchamp:

machine and the mechanistic...as a consequence of his pursuit of a poetic of impersonality...,¹²⁹ Pierre Restany sees this artist's concern for the machine as a visionary perception about the detrimental effects of industrialization.¹³⁰ Finally, where Michel Carrouges discusses the antics of the bachelor machine in terms of the burlesque,¹³¹ Molly Nesbit describes how the gendering of machine iconography in Duchamp's work and his mechanical drawings is founded on the French education system which Duchamp experienced.¹³² In some ways, Nesbit's, "The Language of Industry," does relate to my own observations in my second dialogue with Étant donné.... She discusses the gendered dichotomy between the "defenders of body" and the "advocates of line" which became the "language of industry." Duchamp's work, she says, encapsulates both modes. Where the latter is evident in his geometric drawings, the former, which stood outside the "language of industry" is represented by Duchamp's alter ego, Rose Sélavy.

Artist of the Century, ed. Rudolf E. Kuenzli and Francis M. Naumann (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, 1989); and Marcel Duchamp's Notes from the Large Glass. An N-Dimensional Analysis (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1983). Jean Clair offers still another interpretation of Duchamp's mathematical signs and references to the fourth-dimension in his Marcel Duchamp ou le Grand Fictif (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1975).

¹²⁹ Lawrence D. Steefel, Jr. "Marcel Duchamp and the Machine" in Marcel Duchamp, 70.

¹³⁰ Pierre Restany, "Des machines célibataires aux machines inutiles," XXe Siècle (June 1974): 132-40.

¹³¹ Michel Carrouges, Les machines célibataires. (Paris: Arcanes, 1954).

¹³² Molly Nesbitt, "The Language of Industry," The Definitely Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, 351-384.

Although Nesbit's interest also lies in the gendering of cultural signs (and can, in this respect, be read as a sub-text to my own particular discussions of Duchamp's quotations of cultural constructs), my focus is primarily on Duchamp's inscription of the nature-culture dichotomy as a repetition of readymade givens that are replayed and revised from ancient to modern times. Where Nesbit's study is based on a social history of art which situates the artist's work within his particular social context, mine is based on a semiotic approach based on diverse cultural histories and epistemologies.

In my dialogue or interaction with Duchamp's Étant donné..., I assess his specular inversions of ancient and modern inscriptions of nature, culture and gender as manifestations of his own personal philosophical or patatautological position, and as illustrations of his perspective on the cultural constructs of "man" and "woman". This said, I do not pretend to retrieve an "original" meaning or context for Duchamp's signs, nor for the cultural inscriptions he cites. Rather I wish here to display how multiple readings, diverse meanings, heterogenous voices can be engendered from a single word or sign, or constellation of signs like Étant donné...

Dialogue Three

My final dialogue with Duchamp is the most confrontational. Here I assume the position of the second viewer who stands behind Duchamp looking through the peepholes. From my position as the second viewer, I envision Duchamp himself as the voyeur looking at the generic "woman." From the perspective of the second viewer, I have a broader, more

distanced vantage point that enables me to decipher certain blind spots caused by Duchamp's restricted field of vision in front of the peepholes.

I envision how the specular games operating in Étant donnés... are, in effect, played out by two players: the "cerebral" Marcel Duchamp and his alter ego, Rose Sélavy, posing as the female principle. In this deconstructive dialogue or allegory of reading,¹³³ I take to heart Paul de Man's observations that it is precisely in a writer's (or artist/voyeur's) blindness that one encounters the greatest insights.

Assuming diverse theoretical positions regarding the problems inherent in cultural representations of "woman," I deconstruct Duchamp's patatautological game, bringing to the surface cracks in the specular inversions outlined in my second dialogue. In this regard, my allegory of reading illustrates how Étant donnés... can be read as a series of specular perversions that are, at one and the same time, subversive and transgressive as well as resolutely regressive.

As I illustrate, it is in the regressive aspects of his gender games where the greatest insights lie: insights into our signifying processes, into modern histories and epistemologies and particularly into gender politics. By revising the various historical

¹³³ An allegory of reading, for Paul de Man, is a deconstructive intervention which reveals the rhetoric inhabiting a text. Rhetoric, for de Man, is not a power of persuasion. Rather rhetoric refers to the different levels of meaning embedded in language and not intended or even perceived by the author. For de Man, rhetoric inhabits all language: both figurative and literal -- even in deconstructive texts themselves. De Man deconstructs the texts of writers and philosophers such as Mallarmé and Nietzsche, even Derrida's own deconstructions. By so doing, he illustrates how even the deconstructive texts of authors (because of the rhetorical nature of language) can never completely demystify. My deconstruction of Duchamp's Étant donnés... is such an allegory of reading, bringing to the fore obscured levels of meaning that inhabit the signs he inscribed. This does not mean that this or any allegory of reading discovers the "true" or "final" meaning. Paul de Man, Blindness and Insight. Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

contexts of the second dialogue, I disclose how Duchamp/Rrose's specular inversions are illusory, how they operate as specular perversions that tautologically repeat normative gender inscriptions. Their specular perversions, I illustrate, not only erase women's locatedness in culture but also perpetuate an ancient, illusory or "spectral" image, framed as "woman." In this allegory of reading, I consider how Duchamp's blindness to gender identity and difference, in effect, compromises the premise of his patatautological position.

This allegory of reading is assisted by Paul de Man's writings on deconstruction as well as by the significant insights of a number of feminist writers of whom Susan Bordo, Judith Butler, Laura Mulvey, Donna Haraway, Luce Irigaray and Janet Wolff are the most important. Also informing this dialogue are the studies of a number of historians whose task has been to recount the significant contribution of women in culture, and as agents in the process of modernization.

In terms of Duchampian scholars, the writings of Dalia Judovitz and Rosalind Krauss on the impact of Duchamp's Étant donnés... on the viewer underlie my own reading of the subversive and transgressive nature of Duchamp/Rrose's specular inversions. Although authors like Jean-François Lyotard have dealt with the gendered nature of the female figure, I take an opposing position, arguing that Duchamp does not dissimulate binary male-female categories, indeed that the female figure in Étant donnés... reflects the specifically "male" imaginary that authored or engendered her.

Amelia Jones' discussion of gender is of interest but also problematic for its reiteration of Lyotard's position on gender. She begins with a position that I agree with:

In Duchamp's works and self-presentational strategies, gender itself is played out as a system of shiftable codes, a socially ordained structuring of sexuality that is 'neither true nor false, but...[o]nly produced as the truth effect ...[o]f a discourse of primary and stable identity.'¹³⁴

Although I am in accordance with Jones' own views that gender is a construct, artificial and not natural, I will, in my deconstruction of Duchamp's Étant donnés..., expose that this artist's "feminine masquerade" is not "ambivalent," but rather is founded on stereotypical categories that reaffirm cultural constructions of gender. Even as androgyne, I will argue, Duchamp/Rose reasserts these given gender categories. Jones' assertion that "Duchamp's gesture can be seen not only as a deconstruction of gender, a marking of it as a social construction produced as visual sign through signifiers of clothing, coiffure and facial makeup, but also as a positive means of conferring authority on 'woman' as author"¹³⁵ must be read as diametrically opposed to my own argumentation. This said, her insights into feminist theories and contemporary women's art production have most emphatically colored my re-presentation of Étant donnés...

My three dialogues (including the allegory of reading) document my own changing subject positions with regard to Duchamp's Étant donnés... In the first two dialogues, I remain confined within the parameters of the artist's two allegorical modes

¹³⁴ Amelia Jones, Postmodernism and the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp, 143. The cultural construction of gender is reiterated in another essay, "The Ambivalence of Male Masquerade: Duchamp as Rose Sélavy," where she discusses how Duchamp's female persona exposes "gender as artificial not natural." In The Body Imaged, ed. by Kathleen Adler and Marcia Pointon, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 29.

¹³⁵ Amelia Jones, Postmodernism and the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp, 156.

which were written, I contend, by Duchamp posing, first as writer-scriptor, and then as intentional author. In this regard, I adopt a poststructuralist approach grounded in the theories of Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes. However, my dialogic approach and deconstructive strategies, based on the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin and Paul de Man, as well as on my own feminist perspectives, lead me beyond the intricacies of the Duchampian sign systems, particularly as I negotiate the problematics I see lying within them.

Though continuing to read Duchamp's oeuvre as two allegorical modes, my poststructuralist approach becomes considerably more Foucauldian as I come to recognize the manner in which the artist's gendered givens relate to concrete issues that touch real people in very tangible ways. Understanding how Duchamp's allegories and, more explicitly Étant donnés..., are modelled on the hegemony of first principles, I explore and display their kinship to other representational and discursive practices which inscribe (and not describe) hierarchical gender divisions, and which operate like false mirrors that obscure women's material histories in the process.

An awareness of the artist's blindness and insights in encoding his two allegories provides me with an acknowledgment of the fluidity of meaning, of the relativity of perspectives and of the open-endedness of the dialogic process, on the one hand; and on the other, the importance of making interventions, of articulating a position, of locating oneself within discourse, despite the potential blind spots this might entail. Let me then begin with my first interaction with Duchamp by examining what I construe as his patatautological allegories.

DIALOGUE ONE: THE TWO ALLEGORIES

"Étant donnés...": Duchamp's Patatautological Game

A secret work posthumously presented to the public, Étant donnés... functions, one could say, as the artist's last testimony. Like most testimonies, this one was not a simple afterthought. If one takes into account the intricate links that bind this final work to Duchamp's earlier ones, then the dates, 1946-1966, assigned to Étant donnés... appear quite arbitrary. By examining the words and works of Duchamp, one can propose that the gestation period for conceiving and executing this last work was actually a period of more than fifty years, from approximately 1912 to 1966.

In his handwritten notes of 1912, collected in "The Green Box," Duchamp appears to have already alluded to his final work by name.¹ Under the heading Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage (Given: 1. The Waterfall. 2. The Illuminating Gas), he refers to an "allegorical appearance" in quasi-photographic terms, calling it an "instantaneous state of rest" and an "extra rapid exposure."² Thus, it can be argued that, as early as 1912, he intended to take a "snapshot" called Étant donnés...

¹ The notes in the "Green Box" provide clues to the signs inscribed in The Large Glass. Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 27. In the first essay written on Étant donnés, Anne d'Harmoncourt and Walter Hopps acknowledge how these notes relate to Étant donnés...: "Duchamp's was an intellectual economy of means: not just one but two major works find their origin in his thoughts of 1912-20..." See their "Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage": Reflections on a New Work by Marcel Duchamp, 15.

² Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 28. Jean Clair has made an insightful study of the relationship between a variety of Duchamp's works and photography. See his Marcel Duchamp et la photographie (Paris: Chêne, 1977).

Questions must then be posed. What did Duchamp, in fact, plan to put into a "state of rest?" What were his reasons for making such an "allegorical appearance?" To answer these questions, let us look at his 1912 notes:

Given 1st the waterfall
2nd the illuminating gas,
we shall determine the conditions for the instantaneous state of Rest (or allegorical appearance) of a succession [of a group] of various facts seeming to necessitate each other under certain laws, in order to isolate the sign of the accordance between, on the one hand, this state of Rest (capable of all the innumerable eccentricities) and, on the other, a choice of Possibilities authorized by these laws and also determining them.³

I am prompted to regard these words as a general plan set out by Duchamp to construct a "picture" (Étant donnés... as an "allegorical appearance") that would freeze or put into an "instantaneous state of Rest," an array of centrifugal signs from his open-ended allegory that are "capable of innumerable eccentricities." These notes imply that when "isolate[d]" and contextualized, the centrifugal or eccentric signs produce a coherent picture which "under certain laws [seem...] to necessitate each other." The centrifugal signs which I see operating in the open-ended allegory have, as these words infer, the power to produce "innumerable eccentricities," providing a myriad "choice of possibilities," and an array of possible meanings for the viewer-reader. By limiting their "choice of Possibilities," one can, in effect, put the signs into "an instantaneous state of Rest" and establish or determine a stable (not eccentric) picture.

³ [All emphases and brackets by Duchamp]. Marcel Duchamp, "The Green Box," in The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 27-28.

If Duchamp was "determin[ing] the conditions for the...allegorical appearance," from 1912 on, then one must presume that, while he was encoding his "open" allegorical system, he was also in the process of planning out the intricacies of his final "snapshot," Étant donnés.... This would mean that over the span of fifty years he was simultaneously inscribing the shifting, moving and recurring signs and determining how to put them "into a state of rest."

As an "allegorical appearance," then, Étant donnés... has a double status. On the one hand, as the artist's last testament written with signs already inscribed in the open-ended allegory, it can be read as an epilogue. Engendered from a heteroglot sign system, Étant donnés... can also be read as a prologue that, in every single detail, announces the signs occurring in the open-ended allegory, as if it were the generating agent. The signs that inhabit Étant donnés... are, in other words, both traces and foreshadowings of the "centrifugal" signs in the pre-Étant donnés works.

As prologue and epilogue, preceding and succeeding the open allegory, Étant donnés... operates like a frame that contains, restrains and (en)closes the heteroglot and centrifugal signs of the open-ended allegory, obscuring their "eccentric" nature. Looking at the double status of Étant donnés... as both a pre-determined prologue and postscript-epilogue, one is confronted with questions about the philosophical position that might have prompted Duchamp to undertake such a project of putting "centrifugal" signs in a state of rest. These are questions to be addressed in this, my first dialogue. By considering his self-proclaimed position as a patatautologist, I examine how Duchamp's

project to encode Étant donnés... as both an epilogue and a prologue that "encloses" an array of "centrifugal" signs within its frame, discloses a dialogic imagination. My observations are inevitably based on my own givens, and on my own notions of dialogism.

Marcel Duchamp: Patatautologist and Encoder of Signs

During a conversation with Pierre Cabanne in 1966,⁴ Duchamp asserted that all our beliefs and thought systems are fundamentally tautological. He based his definition of the tautology on a mathematical model, stating that a tautology is like "a repetition of premises...it goes from a very simple theorem to a very complicated one, but it's all in the first theorem."⁵

A decade earlier, in a letter to the surrealist poet Jehan Mayoux, Duchamp wrote that he refused to be taken in by tautological constructs, by "all those philosophical clichés that are revised generation after generation since Adam and Eve."⁶ He declared that all our concepts, whether about the existence of God or atheism, whether about determinism or free will, are merely like chess pieces called language and are only of

⁴ Pierre Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, transl. Ron Padgett (New York: Viking Press, 1971). Duchamp made no reference to Étant donnés... in this lengthy dialogue.

⁵ Ibid., 107.

⁶ See Introduction, Footnotes 61 and 62.

interest if one did not try "to win or lose the game."⁷ This patatautological position is, however, problematic for Duchamp, given the nature of language itself: "You see, I don't want to be pinned down to any position. My position is the lack of a position, but, of course, you can't even talk about it, the minute you talk you spoil the whole game. I also mean that words are absolutely a pest as far as getting anywhere. You cannot express anything through words."⁸ Words, statements, signs inscribed into a work of art posit a particular position, a given based on a tautological repetition.

In his letter to Mayoux, Duchamp characterized his own particular non-position as "patatautological," no doubt borrowing the prefix "pata" from Alfred Jarry's neologism, "pataphysics." Indeed, like the French poet and playwright, Duchamp assumes a similar spirit or project of disintegration and dissolution. Where for Jarry, "pataphysics" signaled the collapse of metaphysics, laws, and logic, and "a science of imaginary solutions,"⁹ for Duchamp "patatautology" signifies the disintegration of the

⁷ "...je refuse de penser aux clichés philosophiques remis à neuf par chaque génération depuis Adam et Eve, dans tous les coins de la planète - [...] Toutes ces balivernes, existence de Dieu, athéisme, déterminisme, libre arbitre, sociétés, mort, etc., sont les pièces d'un jeu d'échecs appelé langage et ne sont amusantes que si on ne se préoccupe pas de 'gagner ou de perdre cette partie d'échecs'." [My translation of Duchamp's letter to Jehan Mayoux].

⁸ Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969) 194-5.

⁹ Jarry's Gestes et Opinions du docteur Faustroll, pataphysicien, written 1897-98 and published posthumously in 1911, was a key work that disclosed a "science of imaginary solutions." In 1935, Duchamp designed a bookbinding for Alfred Jarry's Ūbu Roi. He also commented on Jarry, stating that the word, "même," in the title of his work, The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even (La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même, was like "haha" in Jarry's text. See Otto Hahn, [interview with] "Marcel Duchamp," L'Express, 684 Paris (July 1964). For a discussion of the relation between Jarry's "pataphysics" and "patatautology" as well as word plays connected to Duchamp's neologism, see André Gervais, "Connections: Of Art and

closed, totalizing truth statement inscribed into the tautology, the collapse of the readymade circular idea.¹⁰ Despite similarities between these two figures, as André Gervais points out, "it is my feeling that the artist who said 'There is no solution because there is no problem' would not accept Pataphysics."¹¹

Even though Duchamp slipped the word "patatautology" into his discourse unobtrusively, this neologism, as I see it, aptly describes his work as an artist. Now one might ask oneself: how does a patatautologist create a work of art? Duchamp partially answered this question: "I have forced myself to contradict myself in order to avoid conforming to my own taste....Any idea that came to me, the thing should be to turn it around and try to see it with another set of senses."¹²

In his body of works, words and gestures, Duchamp continuously presents contradictory elements that operate like specular inversions, reflecting and deflecting former inscriptions. An example of such inversions is evident in the chess stratagem

Arrhe." The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, ed. Thierry de Duve (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1991), 397-425.

¹⁰ His regard for Jarry is also related to his interest in certain authors such as Mallarmé and Roussel whose project was also to challenge, by means of their writing, totalizing and unitary meaning. It should be noted, here, that the tendency among many philosophers and thinkers, during the 20th century, was precisely to question the notion of the absolute, of Truth. I think particularly of the theorists of the Frankfurt School and later French post-structuralism and postmodernist theory.

¹¹ André Gervais, "Connections: Of Art and Arrhe," The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, 409.

¹² Cited in "Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage." Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin LXIV, 299-300 (April-September 1969): 13.

outlined in his book "Opposition and Sister Squares are Reconciled" in which a rare end game is set out.¹³ Francis Naumann explains that Duchamp "...set about to prove that theories of opposition and theories of sister squares (usually referred to as "related squares" in modern chess terminology) are actually one and the same..."¹⁴ I would suggest that such preoccupations with "opposition" and "sameness" prompted Duchamp, the patatautologist, to assume the role of an encoder of signs and to inscribe his two allegories as similar and contradictory entities.

To begin with, his pre-Étant donnés open-ended allegory is encoded with readymade givens that have been repeated over and over in time. As André Gervais notes: "Everywhere we find patatautologies, the same taste for clichés, repetition, and death: et patati, et patata [and so on and so forth]."¹⁵ Though the various signs inscribed there, as we shall see, are tautological repetitions, variations of a given, they also operate like patatautological signifiers that are oppositional or contradictory. Significantly, like

¹³ Marcel Duchamp and V. Halberstadt. L'Opposition et les cases conjuguées sont réconciliées / Opposition and Sister Squares Reconciled (Paris and Brussels: Edition de l'Echiquier, 1932). Portion published in Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution (Paris), 2 (October 1930): 18-19 and Marchand du Sel. Ecrits de Marcel Duchamp, ed. Michel Sanouillet (Paris: Le Terrain Vague, 1958).

¹⁴ Although Naumann looks at this as a kind of reconciliation between positions of opposition, I understand Duchamp's use of the word "reconciliation" as a reference not to the synthesis of the dialectic but to the notion of co-existence of oppositional concepts. Francis M. Naumann. "Marcel Duchamp: A Reconciliation of Opposites" in Marcel Duchamp. Artist of the Century, ed. Rudolf E. Kuenzli and Francis M. Naumann (Cambridge, Mass. and London, Eng.: The MIT Press, 1989), 34.

¹⁵ André Gervais, "Connections: Of Art and Arrhe," The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, 410.

"chess pieces," these patatautological signifiers prevent the viewer-reader from ever "winning or losing the game," of being able to construct a definitive meaning.

Whereas in this open-ended allegory, recurring signs are continuously recontextualized in contradictory ways,¹⁶ always eluding totalizing closure, the signs in Étant donnés... appear static and fixed within the parameters of the hermetic enclosure, creating, in this way, a coherent, cohesive representation with an apparent one-on-one meaning. For the Duchampian scholar, however, the signs in this "allegorical appearance," as we know, are all too familiar, manifestly presenting already inscribed givens. Their status as repeated signs discloses Duchamp's patatautological project. Étant donnés..., I contend, operates like tautology "stripped bare," stripped so as to reveal the anatomy of a tautological statement, as Duchamp has defined the term. At

¹⁶ Jean-François Lyotard has attributed this kind of open-endedness to Duchamp's position of indifference. In this, he argues, the artist has antecedents. Lyotard places Duchamp in the tradition of the Sophists whose "discours duplices, dissoi logoi" carries an analogical strategy of dissimulation of totalizing and unifying truths: "A la prudence raffinée et apathique des discours dissimilé, vient se substituer la grossière prétention à la théorie unique et totale. La sophistique exige un espace-temps de la parole et de la société, politiques notamment, où la terreur du Vrai ou Faux n'a pas de place, où l'on n'a pas besoin de ces critères pour justifier ce qu'on dit et fait, où l'on ne juge que sur les effets." See his Les Transformateurs Duchamp (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1977), 48-9. In contrast, the American art critic and theorist, Thomas McEvelley, sees another ancient antecedent in Duchamp's attitude, drawing parallels between Duchamp and the ancient Greek philosopher, Pyrrho of Elis (CA 365-275 B.C.). He notes that the artist began speaking of 'beauty of indifference' and at various times, of the 'irony of indifference' and the 'liberty of indifference' after having read the ideas of this philosopher. He convincingly argues that Duchamp's notion of indifference is directly related to Pyrronism which confutes this so-called law, establishing a position that is neither affirmation nor negation but a kind of attention that is neutral and impartial while remaining alert and vivid. Pyrrho's central concept was the 'indifference'...[t]hat would lead to 'imperturbability'...He recommended, for example, an attitude of indifference toward not only philosophical questions but the entanglements of everyday life, which are based on hidden philosophical presuppositions." As Duchamp also would advocate, Pyrrho recommended to "cultivate a neglect of opinions...to avoid all positions." See Thomas McEvelley. "empyrrhical thinking (and why kant can't)," Artforum (October 1968): 122.

the same time that it can stand for the tautology, Étant donné..., also operates as a key element in Duchamp's patatautological enterprise. As we shall see, every sign inscribed into this "allegorical appearance," though appearing as a tautological sign, also operates like a patatautological signifier that incorporates oppositional or contradictory elements.

In order to encode his two (pata)tautological allegories, Duchamp conducted careful studies into the nature of our signifying processes, and particularly into the manner in which signs operate to construct meaning. Before reading his two allegories and their patatautological functions, I would like to present some examples of specific works which best illustrate Duchamp's preoccupation with our signifying processes.

Apparition and Appearance

Insight into this artist's semiotic studies is provided in the literary theories of Paul de Man. As de Man noted, the figure or trope constructs a meaning which seems to coincide with itself. Though it "is not 'really' the entity it literally means... it can be understood to refer to something in which meaning and being coincide. The meaning engenders and determines the metaphor as the appearance or sign of this meaning."¹⁷ The figure or trope gives the illusion that there is a direct correlation between sign and

¹⁷ Paul de Man, Allegories of Reading (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 90.

referent. The polarity between sign and referent comes to appear as "an entity that can be said to be identical with itself and that would engender, through a process of mediation, an appearance of which it is the origin and the foundation."¹⁸

In various artworks, Duchamp scrutinized this symbiotic relationship between sign and referent, between figure or trope and the real, or between what he called "apparition" and "appearance."¹⁹ For Duchamp, the work of art is essentially an "apparition" of an object of reality, while "appearance" is the physical manifestation of reality: "In general, the picture is the apparition of appearance."²⁰ In semiotic terms, the work of art is a pictorial signifier that relates to a signified. It is an apparition which refers to the appearance of a particular referent. Duchamp investigated the seeming specularity or reciprocity of sign and referent by intentionally inverting, colliding, even collapsing the symbiotic relation between the trope and the real, between "apparition"

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Duchamp's terms "apparition" and "appearance" often allude to the indexical sign. In this respect, they take on pictorial attributes that relate respectively to inside and outside, to an operation that engenders the form of an object, on the one hand, and to the surface "appearance" on the other. In Duchamp's words: "Appearance = retinal impression (and other sensory consequences)...The appearance of [an] object will be the sum of the usual sensory evidence enabling one to have an ordinary perception of that object...." In contrast, "its apparition is the mould of it...The mould of a chocolate object is the negative apparition of the plane / of the surface...generating... colored form...mass." There is also what he calls "the surface apparition (for a spatial object like a chocolate object) which is like a kind of mirror image looking as if it were used for the making of this object..." [Duchamp's emphasis]. Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 70, 84-5. The indexical nature of Duchamp's signs can relate to the manner in which they operate as both trace and foreshadowing of other signs. What concerns me here, for the moment, is the manner in which these terms relate to sign and referent as de Man has theorized.

²⁰ Marcel Duchamp, Notes, arrang. and trans. by Paul Matisse (Boston: G.K. Hall & Company, 1983), Note no. 77.

and "appearance." In so doing, he not only reveals that this symbiosis is illusory but illustrates how both figure or trope (apparition) and the literal object (appearance) are inherently rhetorical.²¹ how they are capable of constructing a myriad of possible readings; how both figurative and literal objects have the power to produce "innumerable eccentricities."²²

Duchamp's realization of the eccentric and open-ended nature of signs, of words and referent, of "apparition-appearance," is disclosed, for example, in his notion of specularity. In his notes, he wrote about a "mirrorial return" where a particular image seen from the left is perceived as one thing and from the right as another.²³ Like the mirror itself which reflects a given at the same time as it inverts it, so too does the "apparition" become an inversion of the "appearance."²⁴

Several works by the artist literally display such specular inversions. For example, Female Fig Leaf, 1950 (Fig. 37), a positive cast object, was made from the

²¹ Rhetoric here does not mean a power of persuasion. Rather rhetoric, as Paul de Man defines it, characterizes two incompatible and self-destructive perspectives within language. According to de Man, tropic or figurative language is in no way a marginal or aberrant form of language. Rather the figurative structure of the trope, in fact, characterizes all language, all sign systems. Rhetoric, de Man explains, radically suspends logic or codes such as (grammar) and "opens up vertiginous possibilities of referential aberration." Paul de Man. Allegories of Reading, 10.

²² As we have seen above, this is a term used by Duchamp to describe the myriad of potential meanings (the heteroglot language) inherent in a sign. [Duchamp's emphasis]. Marcel Duchamp. The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 27.

²³ Duchamp, "The Green Box," The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 65.

²⁴ He also commented on the manner in which the plane surface of a mirror creates a virtual reality. Marcel Duchamp, "A l'infinif," *Ibid.*, 98.

negative mould used for the casting of the pudendum of the naked figure in the final work, Étant donnés.... Thus the Female Fig Leaf, (though a negative apparition) becomes its opposite, a positive one or a surface apparition. This is a specular stratagem in which the negative and positive characteristics of the mould (negative apparition) and the cast object (surface apparition) operate like mirror images: the concave becomes convex, the negative becomes positive; the fig leaf as a traditional covering for the genitalia is inverted.²⁵ Such specular inversions also operate on a figurative level throughout his oeuvre. One example, The Large Glass, is conceived very much like a mirror or "hinge picture" as Duchamp called it.²⁶ Here numerous ideas or concepts can be viewed as specular inversions.²⁷

Specularity was only one of Duchamp's semiotic preoccupations. He also investigated how signs have the power to dissolve literal meaning and make fixed certainties slip away. At times, Duchamp intentionally confuses the relation between apparition and appearance by undermining the anticipated function of the sign/word to

²⁵ Craig Adcock has pointed this out and has also outlined many other examples of this kind of inversions. See his "Duchamp's Eroticism: A Mathematical Analysis" in Marcel Duchamp, Artist of the Century, 149-167. He also discusses these inversions in terms of the categories "apparition-appearance" in his "Duchamp's Way: Twisting our Memory of the Past 'For the Fun of It'" in The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, 311-334.

²⁶ Duchamp, "The Green Box," The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 27.

²⁷ For example, in the lower portion of The Large Glass, there is the subterranean world of the rational Bachelor Machine; in contrast, in the upper half, there is the ethereal world of the Bride's Domain. Male, female; separate and distinct, reflecting back their "other." Furthermore, in his notes for The Large Glass collected in "The Green Box," Duchamp makes several allusions to oppositional forces. He writes, for example, about the "Principle of subsidized symmetries," and how "...a point [in the lower part of the glass is] sent back mirrorically to the higher part of the glass...." See Duchamp, "The Green Box," The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 30, 65.

create meaning. This becomes manifest in his handwritten texts, entitled The (1915) (fig. 38) and Rendez-vous of Sunday, February 6, 1916 (fig. 39). The artist explains his thoughts on these written works:

[t]here would be a verb, a subject, a complement, adverbs, and everything perfectly correct, as such, as words, but meaning in these sentences was a thing I had to avoid...the verb was meant to be an abstract word acting on a subject that is a material object, in this way the verb would make the sentence look abstract. The construction was very painful in a way, because the minute I did think of a verb to add to the subject, I would very often see a meaning and immediately I saw a meaning I would cross out the verb and change it, until, working for quite a number of hours, the text finally read without any echo of the physical world... That was the main point of it.²⁸

On several other occasions, Duchamp again attempted to remove associative meaning, undermining the symbiotic relationship between code and referent, or apparition and appearance. For example, in the inscription upon the assisted readymade, With Hidden Noise, 1916 (fig. 40) the words are rendered incomprehensible. As he explains: "...they were French and English words with letters missing."²⁹ Juxtaposing words in such a way as to evacuate all coherent meaning, he eliminates all associations. Language in this way does not point to any meaning; it remains silent.

In the readymade, Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?, 1921 (fig. 41), such an erasure is also apparent. This work consists of a small birdcage containing small pieces of

²⁸ Cited in Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, 457.

²⁹ On the upper plate, Duchamp inscribed in white paint, in three lines divided into small rectangles, the following incongruous letters: P.G.-ECIDES-DéBARRASSE. / LE.-D.SERT.-F.URNIS.ENT / -AS-HOW. V.R.-COR.ESPONDS. On the lower plate, similarly incongruous letters were placed. *Ibid.*, 280.

marble that look like sugar cubes, a thermometer and a cuttle bone. The juxtaposition of these heterogeneous and incongruent objects prevent any coherent reading, as does the title itself. According to Duchamp, the objects have nothing to do with the title:

[O]f course, the title seems weird...since there's really no connection between the sugar cubes and a sneeze....[and furthermore] there's the dissociated gap between the idea of sneezing and the idea of ... "why not sneeze" because, after all, you don't sneeze at will...³⁰

With his readymade, In Advance of the Broken Arm, 1915 (fig. 2), Duchamp employs another stratagem to break the symbiotic relation between apparition and appearance and to defy the construction of meaning. Here Duchamp places a "real" literal and very banal object, a snow shovel, into an art context where auratic and referential art objects prevail. Totally decontextualized, this object becomes silent. What previously functioned as the apparition or trope (the work of art that related to a referent or appearance) is now the literal object. By evacuating its referential object, he permits the trope to exist in a vacuum, thus sabotaging the conventional relationship between sign and referent. As a sign, the literal snow shovel, reinforced by the nonsensical inscription, "In Advance of the Broken Arm," deflects meaning. As Duchamp himself affirmed: "Obviously I was hoping it was without sense, but deep down everything ends up having some."³¹ Indeed, this was a gnawing reality. Every sign ends up taking on meaning in the mind of the viewer-reader.

³⁰ Cited in Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, 487.

³¹ Pierre Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, 54.

Just as it is impossible to make language totally silent, neither can sign and referent, apparition-appearance have a simple, single one-on-one meaning. Words and tropes do not simply coincide with a pre-determined a priori meaning. As Duchamp stated: "There is something like an explosion in the meaning of certain words: they have a greater value than their meaning in the dictionary."³² As he realized, both sign and referent, both apparition-appearance (or both literal and referential object) are rhetorical, both having the power to create a referential confusion by opening up innumerable semantic possibilities.

Duchamp tried not only to collapse the inherent power of the sign to dialogue and to communicate, but also succumbed to its force, even augmenting it, as in, for example, his word plays. Duchamp made use of every kind of word play in his works: anagrams, alliteration, assonance, homonyms, spoonerisms, and puns.³³ Out of one word or sentence, with a seemingly unambiguous meaning, he could create double meanings, unexpected associations, unanticipated relationships, and unforeseen correlations. Duchamp, one can say, accepts the referential aberration caused by the rhetorical power of a word or sign and even revels in the explosion in meaning.

One example of this kind of referential aberration is his miniature French window, entitled Fresh Widow, 1920 (fig. 102) something Duchamp admitted to being

³² Cited in *Ibid.*, 16.

³³ For the most comprehensive study of these word plays, see André Gervais, La raie alitée d'effets. Apropos of Marcel Duchamp (Montreal: Hurtubise HMH, 1984).

"an obvious enough pun."³⁴ David Antin remarks that, "Fresh Widow...oscillates between the two divergent semantic poles fresh widow/french window /fresh widow/french window ..."³⁵ These, I would add, have the power to create further associations if one carries them beyond the English language to the French vernacular : "widow" = "veuve"; "veuve" (slang) = "guillotine"; "[fenêtre à] guillotine" = sash window.³⁶ And so here we have a meeting point between the trope 'widow' and the literal 'window': Widow-guillotine coincides with Window-guillotine (sash window). The sash window, in turn, also points to the morphology of another window, The Large Glass, like the guillotine, was also a revolutionary device since it ruptured or cut itself off from a preceding order, the traditional aesthetic of painting.

Words and referent, apparition and appearance are here confused, performing unexpected and "innumerable eccentricities."³⁷ It must be remembered that the intersections Duchamp constructs between apparition-appearance-thing (as in such verbal-visual puns or word plays) are ironic, often humorous. Again Paul de Man's observations are pertinent. "Irony" he writes, "enforces the repetition of [the] aberration

³⁴ Cited in Anne d'Harmoncourt and Kynaston McShine, eds. Marcel Duchamp (New York: The Museum of Modern Art. Philadelphia: Musuem of Art, 1973) 291.

³⁵ David Antin, "Duchamp and Language" in *Ibid.*, 105.

³⁶ Although I believed that my linking of 'veuve' and 'guillotine' was an original observation, I recently read an essay by Michel Butor to which he makes a similar connection between the two words. See Michel Butor, "Reproduction Interdite" Critique (Paris) 334 (March 1975): 269-83. Robert Lebel also already made such a link in his Marcel Duchamp (Paris: Trianon Press, 1959).

³⁷ [Duchamp's emphasis]. Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 27.

[of the tropological system]"³⁸ Humor, which one finds in abundance in Duchamp's words, works and gestures, also functions as a further way of breaking down the rigorously set relation between trope and the real. A semantic solidity, that comforting concordance between sign and referent, is always eroded with humor.

By toying with the laws controlling the relationship between apparition-appearance (or between sign and referent), Duchamp either silences or explodes meaning. By the same token, he reveals the rhetorical power of the sign: how both literal and figurative elements contain unforeseen meaning. Through such semiotic games, Duchamp discloses the impossibility of constructing a stable, definitive meaning. I would argue that these various games are like studies which serve him in his principal patatautological project: the "writing" or encoding of his two allegories, the pre-Étant donnés works, words and gestures as well as his final epilogue-prologue, Étant donnés..., in which the abovementioned artworks are constituent elements.

I would suggest that, Duchamp, cognizant of the inherent power of a sign to construct meaning, over the span of his working life wrote his two patatautological allegories. Though contradictory in structure, in author-function and viewer-reader experience, they operate in concert with each other. So that I may illustrate Duchamp's last "move" more effectively, an examination of the manner in which his pre-Étant donnés works, words and gestures have been set up as an open-ended, "modern" (and patatautological) allegory is in order.

³⁸ Paul de Man, Allegories of Reading, 301.

The "Allegory on/of forgetting"

Prior to the appearance of Étant donnés... in the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1969, Duchamp produced a variety of works, words and gestures, capable of being read as a network of recurring and self-reflexive signs that interweave, intersect and dialogue with each other. This sign system spawns an indeterminate and indefinable space that is neither presence nor absence, and posits neither a position nor a negation³⁹: a conceptual space in which readings are both simultaneously either-or and neither-nor. This is a patatautological space where a myriad of inscriptions and erasures of signs trace a field without origin and where there is a perpetual fluctuation between the creating or becoming of meaning and the state of "forgetting." In this patatautological space, there is a continual deferral of a teleological meaning.⁴⁰

How is one to name such a space, such a sign system: writing or *écriture*, a play of *différance*,⁴¹ or simply, the "modern allegory?" Perhaps Duchamp's own cryptic notes

³⁹ One can draw parallels between Duchamp's resistance to the notion of an Absolute and Jacques Derrida's post-structuralist philosophy, specifically regarding the philosopher's notion of "non-presence." Indeed, I would argue that Duchamp's patatautological stratagem and allegorical text is akin to Jacques Derrida's deconstructions of a "metaphysics of presence" -- an allusion to a totalizing truth statement founded on a transcendental signifier.

⁴⁰ Just as Derrida's deconstructions are never merely reversals of hierarchies, neither are Duchamp's patatautological games. Both Derrida and Duchamp escape the notion of "for" or "against." For Derrida, the phase of dissemination or marking the interval is situating oneself in the interval between oppositional forces. This can be considered like a playful exploration of the undecidable: the undecidable which can never figure in any binary oppositions. These intervals always resist and disorganize any centric position, any location on either side of the dichotomy. Duchamp's patatautological enterprise, as we shall see, displays a kinship to this kind of stratagem.

⁴¹ Jacques Derrida's notion of "*différance*" relates to writing as a series of traces and erasures and of deferral of definitive meaning. Not to be situated on one side of the dichotomy or

about an "allegory on 'forgetting'," about an "allegory of oblivion,"⁴² would best characterize it. Like the modern allegory which defies the simple correlation between one set of signs and a second order of meaning, in Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting" there is no shared code, no privileged signifier, no stable signified, no fixed referential object, and no definitive meaning. It reflects, to use Walter Benjamin's words again, "an appreciation of the transience of things" which, he noted, was "one of the strongest impulses in allegory."⁴³ So as to be able to visualize such a transient, ethereal space, I would like to trace certain locations in Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting" where the becoming of meaning and forgetting meet, the place where multiple meanings intersect.

For Duchampian scholars, such a demonstration may appear redundant, coinciding with the accepted notion of the elusiveness of the artist's oeuvre which when read as a whole, is "an entity so infinitely complex that [it] resists attempts to transmit

the other, Derrida makes nomenclature itself elusive, loose, changeable. In order to avoid the problem of creating a sign of "presence," these intervals or undecidables cannot be given a fixed name. Called simultaneously "the supplement," "the hymen," "the incision," "the spacing," "the gram" or "*différance*," these different words represent that indefinable space, that interval which is neither plus nor minus, which is neither confusion nor distinction, neither identity nor difference, neither inside nor outside, neither the signifier nor the signified. This interval is simultaneously either/or and neither/nor: it is neither a position nor a negation, neither presence nor absence. This concept of *différance* is akin, as we shall see, to Duchamp's notion of (non)-position and to his stratagem of "patatautology."

⁴² The original French terms are respectively "allégorie sur l'oubli,"[sic] and "allégorie d'oubli." Marcel Duchamp, Notes, Note no. 1, 16. Rather than employing the English translation cited above, I shall be referring to Duchamp's open-ended sign system as the "allegory on/of forgetting." I thank Catherine MacKenzie for pointing out to me the problem with the word "oblivion" in conveying this kind of play of *différance*.

⁴³ Walter Benjamin, The Origin of German Tragic Drama, trans. John Osborne (London: New Left Books, 1977), 223.

adequate experience of it."⁴⁴ However, I would like to underline that my purpose in displaying this allegorical space is to illustrate how it operates in Duchamp's patatautological enterprise and most particularly its significance to the construction of his epilogue-prologue, Étant donnés.... This task begins with Duchamp's readymade.

Though in no way a privileged signifier, the readymade plays an important role in Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting" since it is set up to pose as a tautology. The readymade inscribes a given that is repeated over and over in a variety of ways. Once read within the context of this open-ended allegory, however, the readymade object, word or idea refuses to perform tautologically as a repetition. Set into the allegorical sign system, it loses its link to a putative given, to the notion of an origin, and to a certainty of truth. In effect, as part of the allegory, the readymade given transforms into what I call a "patatautological signifier."

Duchamp's first readymade, The Bicycle Wheel of 1913 (fig. 33), is an appropriate place to begin a discussion about the readymade given, the tautology and patatautology. This is because The Bicycle Wheel, situated on a kind of pedestal, stands as a parody of the tautology, a parodic homage to circularity, to circular ideas.

Some of Duchamp's comments about the readymade are noteworthy here. He described the readymade as "a work of art without an artist to make it." The readymade, in other words, is a given. He also commented on the "serial characteristic of the readymade" and noted that "another aspect of the 'readymade' is its lack of

⁴⁴ Richard Hamilton, "Duchamp," Art International (Lugano), vol. 7, no. 10 (January 1964): 28.

uniqueness...The replica of a "readymade" delivering the same message."⁴⁵ The readymade and its replicas, as repeatable serial objects with a sole message, not created by the artist, then, can serve as a particularly good metaphor for the tautology.

Though it is the first or original readymade, The Bicycle Wheel is itself already a repetition: a repetition of the readymade idea of circularity as well as a repetition of already-made wheels or circular forms inscribed into a number of prior works. I have counted nine instances in which he "reinvents the wheel," so to speak.⁴⁶

After 1913, that is after the introduction of the readymade The Bicycle Wheel, it reappears in the "allegory on/of forgetting" in different media around twenty times.⁴⁷ Despite its many faces, it nonetheless always remains a variant of The Bicycle Wheel, of the circle: like a tautology, a variant of a given. We see it reappear, for example, in one of his major works, The Large Glass (1915-23): in the water wheel and the Chocolate

⁴⁵ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 32, 142.

⁴⁶ The Knife Grinder, 1904-5 (fig. 44); Woman Hack Driver, 1907 (fig. 35); Sundays, 1909 (fig. 45); Coffee Mill, 1911 (fig. 47); 2 Persons and a Car (study), 1912 (fig. 48.); Chocolate Grinder, (fig. 49); Bachelor Apparatus, 1. Plan and 2. Elevation, 1913 (fig. 50); Boxing Match, 1913 (fig. 51); Perspective drawing for the Water Mill Wheel, 1913 (fig. 52).

⁴⁷ To Have the Apprentice in the Sun, 1914 (fig. 53); Study for "The Chocolate Grinder, No. 2," 1914 (fig. 54); Chocolate Grinder, no. 2, 1914 (fig. 55); Cover: for Blind Man no. 2, New York, 1917 (fig. 56); Sieves, 1914 (fig. 57); Bottlerack, 1914 (fig. 58) readymade (circular form); Glider Containing a Water Mill in Neighboring Metals, 1913-15 (fig. 29); Tu m' (fig. 26.); To Be Looked At (From the Other Side of the Glass) With One Eye, Close To, For Almost an Hour, 1918 (fig. 7); Rotary Glass Plates (Precision Optics), 1920 (fig. 59); Frames From an Incompleted Stereoscopic Film, 1920 (fig. 60); Oculist Witnesses, 1920 (fig. 62); The Large Glass/The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even, 1915-23 (fig. 6); Disks Bearing Spirals, 1923 (fig. 9); Rotative Demisphere (Precision Optics), 1925 (fig. 8); Disks Inscribed With Puns, 1926 (fig. 63); Rotoreliefs (Optical Disks), 1935 (fig. 64), an element of the wheel in the mechanized rotary device that creates the illusion of a flowing waterfall in Étant Donnés..., 1946-1966. (fig. 124).

Grinder, as well as in the three circular forms of the Oculist Witnesses. As a readymade given, The Bicycle Wheel and its variants supposedly, as Duchamp stated, deliver the same message. Set into the context of Duchamp's allegory, however, this readymade given and its family members do not function as tautological repetitions for long. Together, they operate as "patatautological signifiers," as in The Large Glass, for example.

Duchamp's notes contained in The Green Box provide clues to the cryptic pictorial signs inscribed onto the surface of The Large Glass.⁴⁸ From these notes, one discovers that the lower portion of this work, called the "Bachelor Machine," is designed according to one-point perspective. The notes indicate that in the Bachelor Machine, there is a constant rolling away: the chocolate grinder and water wheel, as well as gears and rollers not featured pictorially,⁴⁹ rotate incessantly in monotonous, repetitive, circular activity inciting the inhabitants of the Bachelor Machine to lament, about "vicious circles...about monotonous fly wheels."⁵⁰ The readymade given, The Bicycle Wheel, here argues with my prior reading of it as a homage to tautology. Rather, The Bicycle Wheel, inscribed, as I have argued, as a progenitor of the gears, wheels and grinders in

⁴⁸ Duchamp himself stated: "[The Large Glass] must not be "looked at" in the aesthetic sense of the word. One must consult the book, and see the two together. The conjunction of the two things entirely removes the retinal aspect that I don't like." Cited in Pierre Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, 42-43.

⁴⁹ Many of the signs featured in The Large Glass exist only in written form in his notes collected in The Green Box.

⁵⁰ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 56-7.

the Bachelor Machine stands as a homage to that "original" tool which started the whole rickety Bachelor Machine rolling in the first place -- the invention of the wheel.

The parent Bicycle Wheel is also repeated in the three circular forms of the Oculist Witnesses. As Duchamp's notes indicate, the gaze of the Oculist Witnesses is cast upon the upper portion of The Large Glass, the "Bride's Domain." The Bride becomes an object of their desire. In this particular context, then, the readymade given, The Bicycle Wheel, can also come to stand for ocular desire, for vision, for the eye. From this perspective then, The Bicycle Wheel can even be viewed morphologically as an eye, as an iris.

As a sign for vision, The Bicycle Wheel also relates quite readily to one of its offspring, the streamlined, electrically-powered and more sophisticated Rotary Glass Plates (Precision Optics) of 1920 (fig. 59). Here five painted glass plates rotate simultaneously on a metal axis and form unbroken concentric circles when viewed at a pre-determined distance of one metre. As rational studies of optical effects, as resolutely cerebral studies, these mechanized rotating wheels eradicate any notion of ocular desire and announce rather a disembodied vision.

In contrast to the cerebral vision invoked by these Rotary Glass Plates, other variants of the readymade given, The Bicycle Wheel, point back to ocular desire and re-instate a carnalized vision. The rotating spirals of the Rotary Demisphere of 1925 (fig. 8) or the Disks Bearing Spirals of 1923 (fig. 9) are cases in point. These optical disks were used in the short film entitled Anémic Cinéma, allegedly filmed by Duchamp's alter ego,

Rose Sélavy (éros, c'est la vie), where they are rotated quickly. The circular rotations create a spiraling motion, a virtual third dimension that produces an "oscillating action," an "obsessional pulsation" of advancing and receding forms which, as Rosalind Krauss and other authors have suggested, allude to erotic or copulatory movement.⁵¹ These particular variants of The Bicycle Wheel, thus, operate as a symbol of Eros.

My point in presenting these few examples is to illustrate that The Bicycle Wheel does not stand as a homage to circularity or as a tautological repetition for long. As a readymade given, it is not unisemic. Duchamp's claim that "the 'readymade' ...lack[s] uniqueness [and...] deliver[s] the same message"⁵² is, as he illustrates in his allegory, ironic. Once inscribed into his allegory on/of forgetting, it no longer delivers one message. Repeated over and over as a recurring sign, it can stand at one moment, for the elemental tool, the wheel; at another, for the eye and ocular desire; at one moment, for cerebral and sexually-neutral optical studies; and at still another moment, it can stand for Eros. Every re-inscription of the readymade given in the allegory produces a new context, a different "persona" for the given, a different identity, and, therefore, a different meaning. In Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting," one can thus say, repetition always writes itself as difference.⁵³

⁵¹ See her "Where's Poppa?" in The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, 454; and Lawrence D. Steefel, Jr., "The Position of La Mariée Mise à Nu par Ses Célibataires, Même (1915-23) in the Stylistic and Iconographic Development of the Art of Marcel Duchamp" (Ph.D. diss. Princeton University, 1960), 312.

⁵² Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 32, 142.

⁵³ Even as these patatautological readymade signs repeat a so-called original model, a putative given (an irretrievable origin that goes back ad infinitum), they also differ from it. This

That repetition is inscribed as difference is made manifest in Duchamp's concept of the "inframince" or "infrathin." One definition that he provides for this concept is the following:

The difference / (dimensional) between / 2 mass produced objects / [from the / same mold]/ is an infra thin / when the maximum (?) precision is / obtained.⁵⁴

Even when one comes as close to sameness as one can possibly come (here two mass-produced objects engendered from the same mold), there is always an infinitesimal or "infrathin" degree of difference. Such difference undermines totalizing sameness. In Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting," repetition always transgresses the putative given or "original," not only undermining the myth of the origin but also the possibility of

repetition of signs begs a glance at Gilles Deleuze's notion of difference and repetition. Deleuze makes a categorical distinction between repetition and resemblance. Where many things can conform to certain similar qualities or share resemblances to varying degrees, repetition deals with "non-exchangeable and non-substitutable singularities"; or put another way, "to repeat is to behave in a certain manner, but in relation to something unique or singular." To repeat, therefore, means to posit an origin, a given which is unique and which, as Deleuze reminds us, is essentially unrepeatable. For this reason, Deleuze says, repetition always illustrates not only a difference from but a transgression of the original, because nothing can be equal or equivalent to what is singular. Because of its transgressive nature, repetition, Deleuze says, "belongs to humor and irony" See Gilles Deleuze, Difference & Repetition, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994). In Duchamp's patatautological allegory, his readymades function as "repetitions" as opposed to resemblances to a given. In an ironical way, Duchamp provides concrete instances of repetitions of givens that cite a putative unrepeatable "origin" and which manifest themselves as difference at the same time.

⁵⁴ [Brackets, slashes and question mark in Duchamp's text]. Marcel Duchamp, Marcel Duchamp, Notes, note 18. It is unclear when Duchamp first theorized the notion of the infrathin since the notes amassed by Matisse in the above publication were stray notes not included in his other "boxes." There was, however a reference made to the infra-slim in 1945 in the review View 5, no. 1 (March 1945). Moreover, the concept of the "infrathin" is multifarious. Besides referring to sameness/difference, it can also relate, among other things, to the indexical sign: "the warmth of a chair (which has just/been left) is infra-thin." Marcel Duchamp, Marcel Duchamp, Notes, no. 4.

producing a definitive meaning for it. It is then not so surprising that Duchamp even identified his "allegory on/of forgetting" as an "application of the infrathin."⁵⁵

Here we have seen only one readymade given at play.⁵⁶ In Duchamp's allegory, a whole network of readymade givens, operating as "patatautological signifiers," interweave, intersect, collapsing the readymade circular idea and allowing a variety of referential objects to appear and disappear, forever deferring or delaying a final or definitive meaning. Duchamp mused about the notion of such deferral, going so far as to give his major work, The Large Glass (fig. 6), the subtitle, The Delay in Glass. In his notes, he specified: "Use 'delay' instead of picture or painting." He qualified this by noting:

Picture on glass becomes delay in glass - but delay in glass does not mean picture on glass-...It's merely a way of succeeding in no longer thinking that the thing in question is a picture - to make a delay of it in the most general way possible....⁵⁷

The delay, he underlines, is "in the indecisive reunion. Of its different meanings."⁵⁸

⁵⁵ "allegory / (in general) / is an application / of the infra thin... The possible implying / the becoming - the passage from / one to the other takes place / in the infra thin...allegory on 'forgetting'...allegory of oblivion." Marcel Duchamp, Marcel Duchamp, Notes, note 1, 6 and 16. [Duchamp's brackets and slashes]

⁵⁶ Other readymades can produce similar cross-references. For example, Fountain (1917), his outrageous readymade, the urinal, makes reference to water and to bodily fluids. These signs can trigger, in the mind of the reader, numerous associations. Although I shall be examining some of these, the most evident reference here is to "water" in the title of Étant donnés.... and to the waterfall in this work and The Large Glass .

⁵⁷ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 26.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Indecisive, indefinite, inconclusive, deferral: these are words that describe The Delay in Glass as they do the rest of the allegory. An array of polysemic signs⁵⁹ in The Delay in Glass or The Large Glass, also called The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even, reappear in a variety of forms throughout the allegory to construct a multi-layered network of interrelated signifiers. As a constituent part of Duchamp's allegory, The Delay in Glass is, one can say, a transparent display of the deferral of a transcendental signified, a play of *différance*. Let me provide some examples.

The upper portion of The Delay in Glass, or the Bride's Domain, has been pictorially designed as an illegible, abstract shape hanging from a cloud-like formation. In the notes, these cryptic signifiers point to a female figure, inscribed among other things as a Bride, a Virgin, a "Hanged Female" ("pendu femelle,"), a Skeleton; as well as a Steam Engine, a Combustion Engine, a Motor, a Sex Cylinder, a Reservoir for Love Gasoline, and a Desire-Magneto.⁶⁰ This polysemic figure hangs from a cloud-like formation of multiple names: a Cinematic Blossoming, a Halo of the Bride, a Title or a Top Inscription, the Milky Way and so on. If such polysemia defeats the illusion of a unitary language, it does not deflect the possibility of constructing meaning. On the

⁵⁹ Where the readymade, employed as a sign, lacks uniqueness and has a "serial characteristic" that posits a kind of uniformity, a general type, the polysemic sign is, by definition, plural, multiple, a variable. By assigning multiple signifieds to a particular signifier, polysemia confuses the possibility of a simple one-on-one specular relationship between sign and referent. Duchamp, thus, employs polysemia to augment the potential for "innumerable eccentricities," for a virtual "explosion in meaning."

⁶⁰ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 26-72; and Marcel Duchamp, Notes, 98.

contrary, polysemic signs such as these produce, to use Duchamp's own words, "innumerable eccentricities"⁶¹ and "an explosion in meaning."⁶²

Indeed, the polysemic signifiers in the Bride's Domain beg to link with other polysemic signs in The Delay in Glass: notably to the nine bachelors that abide in the lower portion, the Bachelor Machine. Graphically these male counterparts have been designed as hanging hollow molds resembling chess pieces. The bachelors are called the Malic Moulds, the Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries, Eros' Matrix. They also hold individual names representing "Everyman": the Priest, the Gendarme, the Policeman, the Undertaker, and so on. As polysemic signifiers they point in a myriad of directions and entice the reader to construct meaning.

To do so, the reader must select a particular segment of a polysemic sign, must isolate it, and connect it to another isolated sign. One can, for example, select the hybrid Motor-Bride, as a signifier. This done, the mechanical bride quite readily associates with the mechanical movement in the male Bachelor Machine. From there, it is an easy jump for the reader-viewer to relate the signs in The Delay in Glass to the industrial revolution, to the Machine Age. By isolating other signifiers, such as the Hanged Female and the Skeleton in the Bride's Domain as well as the signifiers, the Cemetery of Uniforms and the Undertaker from the Bachelor Machine, the reader can assume that the signs refer to the Machine Age as a sign of regression and death. This can never be a final or definitive

⁶¹ [Duchamp's emphasis]. Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 27.

⁶² Pierre Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, 16.

meaning, however. By stringing together a different set of signifiers, one can produce quite contradictory readings.

For example, if one considers again the polysemic signs in the Brides Domain and selects signifiers such as the Sex Cylinder, a Reservoir for Love Gasoline, a Desire-Magneto and the Milky Way, one can interpret them as a marriage of body and machine, as a conflation of erotic love, mechanical reproduction and lactation. One can make further associations by connecting them to selected signifiers in the Bachelor Machine: to Eros' Matrix, to the Oculist Witnesses who gaze upon the bride and who desire to transcend to her domain. These juxtapositions no longer relate to the Machine Age as a sign of death, but point to desire, to sexual activity, to the potential for life and nourishment. Further, one can integrate readings with extraneous histories of modernity and interpret The Delay in Glass as a representation of the Machine Age as a dynamic force, as a sign of creative and procreative activity and of growth and progress.

Reading the signs in The Delay in Glass is a never-ending deferral of a transcendental signified, of a final, definitive meaning. If one takes into account Duchamp's statement that The Delay in Glass "has neither front, nor back; neither top, nor bottom,"⁶³ one must acknowledge that this is a picture without a fixed frame. To use Duchamp's own words, it is a "moving inscription,"⁶⁴ with the inhabiting signs shifting

⁶³ Marcel Duchamp, Marcel Duchamp, Notes, 67.

⁶⁴ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 38.

beyond their boundaries to a multitude of other signs within the "allegory on/of forgetting."

The polysemic and self-reflexive signs that inhabit the surface of the glass are already traces or foreshadowings of other inscriptions of other "patatautological signifiers" in the allegory. Duchamp's notorious rectified readymade, L.H.O.O.Q., 1919 (fig. 4) is such a patatautological signifier. Made from a reproduction of Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting of the Mona Lisa, this readymade constitutes a recurring sign which reappears in The Delay in Glass and throughout the allegory. Conversely, La Joconde is also a bride portrayed on Leonardo's "virtual glass": painted on the canvas he regarded as a window onto the world. Furthermore, if one takes into consideration the punning inscribed into the title of this readymade, one can understand how this bride, like the bride in The Delay in Glass, is also an object of the gaze and a subject of erotic desire. Read phonetically in French, the letters of the title read: "elle a chaud au cul," a "risqué title," as Duchamp called it, translated roughly as, "she has a hot ass." This tawdry reference to sexual desire is also related to the gaze if one considers how an English articulation of the title produces the word "look."

The conflation of erotic desire and the look is a readymade idea, a given, that is repeated over and over, in many different forms throughout the allegory, significantly, even in his "allegorical appearance," Étant donnés...⁶⁵ Never functioning as a

⁶⁵ The difference lies in the reader-voyeur relationship. In The Large Glass, the reader is positioned on the outside, if you will, observing how the Bride is the object of the gaze of the Oculist Witnesses and an object of desire for the Bachelors. In contrast, in Étant donnés, the viewer assumes the role of a voyeur (in the guise, one could say, of the Bachelors or Oculist

tautological repetition however, such a readymade idea always operates "patatautologically" and continually defers or delays the possibility of constructing a fixed referential object, a final signified.

One must recognize that the Mona Lisa has also been transposed by an iconoclastic gesture into a male figure. Her identity as woman, and as an object of erotic desire, dissolves when one considers this portrait to be a repetition of that other readymade given, "man," represented, for example, in The Large Glass by the bachelors. One may recognize then how this particular readymade points to Leonardo da Vinci, the male artist, the proto-scientist, and by extension to his empirical and perspectival studies, to his scientific experiments and mechanical inventions.

This said, it becomes clear how the signs in L.H.O.O.Q link quite readily to other signs in the allegory. In fact, Leonardo's own studies of gears and wheels and perpetual movement are easily associated with an assortment of recurring signs in Duchamp's allegory we have already encountered: to the readymade given, The Bicycle Wheel; to its offspring, the Rotary Demisphere; and to the circular and mechanical activity of "The Bachelor Machine."

Duchamp's readymade, L.H.O.O.Q, points back to other signs in his allegory as it also inevitably points to signs outside of it. The various quotations (here of Leonardo, Renaissance perspective, for example) that inhabit Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting," do not operate merely as clins d'oeil. Rather, a myriad of such "borrowed"

Witnesses) and is personally implicated in the act of looking not only at the female figure but at him/herself. These are not the only contradictory elements in the two allegories, as we shall see.

signs are intertextual.⁶⁶ They are placed into new contexts, and by so doing, produce a myriad of further possible readings. Again, as "original" signs (here taken from art history), Duchamp collapses any given pre-assigned meaning to the "original."

For the contemporary reader, Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting" may be equated to a "hypertext."⁶⁷ It similarly operates in a non-linear fashion by means of a series of recurring and cross-referential signs which produce meaning. Furthermore, Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting," like a non-linear hypertext, defies the possibility of perceiving, conceiving or reading it as a unitary "whole."

At the same time, any recognition of similarity between Duchamp's allegory and a hypertext must also take into account the distinctions between them. Contrary to the hypertext, Duchamp's allegory on/of forgetting is a network of polysemic and "patatautological" signs that create a virtual play of *différance*. Though constructed as a multilayered and cross-referential system of signs that defies unity, the "allegory of/on forgetting" engages the viewer-reader in a "creative act." Meanings are "constructed" by

⁶⁶ Although there are now many theories of intertextuality, I refer here to Julia Kristeva's understanding of the term she coined in 1966. Her neologism acknowledges Bakhtin's notion that a "text [is] constructed as a mosaic of quotations; [a text is] the absorption and transformation of another." Julia Kristeva, *Recherches pour un sémanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 1969), 66. Duchamp's incorporation into his work of quotations (be they aesthetic, literary or cultural) produce new contexts and, thus, many different meanings.

⁶⁷ I am grateful to Olivier Asselin for pointing this out to me. Duchamp's sign system can be read very much as a hypertext, particularly if one adopts Ted Nelson's definition of the term as: "Non-sequential writing with reader-controlled links." Ted Nelson, *Literary Machines*, 9.3.1 (Sausalito: Mindful Press, 1965), 15. Though one could argue that the creation of a hypertext is, in essence, similar to Duchamp's creation of his complex network of signs, I am reticent in accepting an outright comparison as will become clear shortly.

the intervention or interaction of the viewer-reader and are not simply obtained by a retrieval system.

Moreover, Duchamp's allegory has been encoded with a galaxy of signifiers that point beyond the parameters of its boundaries and illustrate the ethereal line that separates inside (the allegorical sign system) from the outside. This patatautological allegory, in other words, provides the possibility to engage in a semiotic game of constructing innumerable and indefinite meanings. Unlike the hypertext, Duchamp's allegory on/of forgetting is like a game that denies the reader any possibility of "winning or losing," of ever indulging in the construction of a stable meaning, of a retrieval of a fact, of establishing a totalizing truth. Rather than being based on a "digital" either-or foundation that produces the complex information network of the hypertext, Duchamp's allegory on/of forgetting produces meaning that is simultaneously both either/or and neither/nor. Such an allegory relates to a different system of numbers, if one considers Duchamp's words:

For me the number three is important, but simply from the numerical, not the esoteric, point of view: one is unity, two is double, duality, and three is the rest. When you've come to the word three, you have three million - it's the same thing as three.⁶⁸

The number three does not signify the "three" of the synthesis or of any, even temporary, resolution.⁶⁹ For Duchamp, it functions as the "other" of unity and duality, the "other"

⁶⁸ Pierre Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp. 46-7.

⁶⁹ The number three, then, is not regarded, as Derrida does, as the three of the synthesis, the three of the resolution. Rather Duchamp's notion of the "number three" being essentially incommensurable relates more readily to what Derrida refers to as "a 'dream' of the

of tautology, of the fixed readymade object, word, idea. The number three is a sign of all that is multiple, open, fluid; it represents an element which is never completely containable or definable. It epitomizes all that is beyond a totalizing grasp. It is "patatautological."

Representative of the number three, the patatautological "allegory of/on forgetting" has the capacity to melt away or confuse the boundaries between such dualistic categories as male-female, nature-machine, progress-regression, life-death -- between inside and outside.

Duchamp once said that he loved to set The Bicycle Wheel in motion and watch it because it was like, "...a sort of opening of avenues on other things...I enjoyed looking at it just as I enjoy looking at the flames dancing in a fireplace."⁷⁰ One can also say that once The Bicycle Wheel is set into motion in the allegory, it collides endlessly with other "patatautological signifiers," opening never-ending avenues on other things, on other meanings that can never be stabilized or frozen. Like the rotation of The Bicycle Wheel, like a flame in the fireplace, meanings constructed in the "allegory on/of forgetting" are ethereal, ephemeral, continuously in the state of becoming something other.

For the viewer-reader to construct meaning in Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting," he/she must stop the wheel, freeze the flame. In other words, the viewer-

"innumerable,...a desire to escape the combinatory...to invent incalculable choreographies." See Jacques Derrida, Dissemination, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 25; and Jacques Derrida and Christie V. McDonald, "Choreographies," Diacritics 12/2 (1982): 76.

⁷⁰ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 141.

reader indulges in a semiotic game, played with a moveable frame, a passe-partout. By displacing the frame, one passes from one picture to another. By moving the frame, one makes meaning appear and disappear. The moveable frame or passe-partout⁷¹ is, in effect, a centering device that separates inside from outside and isolates one sign from another, but only momentarily.

Reading Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting" is not, however, a self-indulgent game. By slipping from one sign to another with this moveable frame, one makes visible the fluid boundaries between inside and outside and the elasticity of words, ideas, readings. To read Duchamp's works, words and gestures as signs in the allegory is to recognize that meaning is a construction, created by a frame that contains a one-point perspective and only an illusion of a fixed, stable picture.

Framing the network of signs that constitute Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting" is, one can say, a centripetal act that compresses an array of "centrifugal" signs into a particular context. As contexts change, so do meanings. Such a process of

⁷¹ This moveable frame or passe-partout refers to Jacques Derrida's two chapters, "Passe-Partout" and "Parergon" in The Truth in Painting, trans by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1987), 1-14, 15-148. In these chapters, he explores the fluidity between the inside and the outside of an artwork. I borrow this term to denote how one constructs an ephemeral "inside." Duchamp's notion of specularly, particularly to his concept of the "mirrored return," also relates to such a notion of fluid meaning. Like a paper folded in accordion fashion and upon which a continuum of two different images have been applied: one continuum of images on the left side of the fold; the other on the right. One can only see one image at a time. Marcel Duchamp, "The Green Box," The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 65. The image (or by extension any readymade word or idea) changes according to one's perspective. This serves a means to understand how readings cancel each other out. They are not one or the other but both either/or and neither/nor at the same time.

contextualization is a coming together or collision of "centrifugal" signs and a reader's "centripetal" force. As Mikhail Bakhtin writes:

Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. The processes of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance; the utterance not only answers the requirements of its own language as an individualized embodiment of a speech act, but it answers the requirements of heteroglossia as well; it is in fact an active participant in such diversity.⁷²

By acknowledging such a dialogical process, one can draw parallels between Duchamp's allegory and our signifying processes and come to recognize the heteroglot nature of all ideas, all stances, how all positions are transient, ephemeral, and totally contingent upon the context in which a reader situates them. In this way, one can come to comprehend that all ideas, ideologies or positions are also constructions created by a framing device that contextualizes and that obtains, contains and retains, however momentarily, a one-point perspective.

Taking Duchamp's "patatautological" allegory as an example, one understands that to transcend the illusion of a definitive, one-point perspective is to envision a realm where a multitude of perspectives coexist. It is also to recognize that such heteroglossia is a patatautological space that always already exists: even when, most often, one ignores to acknowledge it.

Taking into account his own semiotic studies (with the concept apparition/appearance) as well as his writings, one might concede that Duchamp knew full well

⁷² Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, 272.

that no author-artist could orchestrate or intentionally inscribe all the myriad of readings or languages that can ensue from any given sign, from any system of signs. Indeed, though he set out each sign, aware of the potential meanings it could evoke, it is apparent from his writings that he also realized its capability of constructing a myriad of unforeseen meanings.

A patatautologist, he understood that meaning never precedes the word or language, stating in his letter to Jehan Mayoux that meaning is always constructed after the enunciation of a word.⁷³ As an encoder of signs, Duchamp knew that he was in no way the author of an a priori meaning or "truth." Indeed, he noted in his famous speech "The Creative Act," there is a space or gap between the writer's perception of possible meanings and the myriad of possible signifieds that may ensue. He calls this gap, the "art coefficient."⁷⁴

Paul de Man speaks of such a phenomenon as well. He defines it as the crisis which arises when "a separation takes place, by self-reflection between what in literature, is in conformity with the original intent and what has irrevocably fallen away from this source." Because of this separation, there exists what de Man calls, a "double aspect of language...capable of being at the same time a concrete, natural thing and the product of

⁷³ In his unpublished letter to Jehan Mayoux, he wrote: "Le langage, au lieu d'exprimer des phénomènes subconscients, en réalité crée la pensée par et après les mots (je me déclare 'nominaliste' très volontiers, au moins dans cette forme simplifiée)."

⁷⁴ Marcel Duchamp, "Creative Act," The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 139.

consciousness...a consciousness without a subject."⁷⁵ By taking into account what de Man calls the "double aspect of language" and what Duchamp himself calls the "art coefficient," one can see how the artist acknowledges that space "between the unexpressed but intended and the unintentionally expressed."⁷⁶

As an encoder of signs, Duchamp, therefore, did not assume the role of the omniscient author; he was a writer or scriptor, in the manner in which Roland Barthes later defined it.⁷⁷ He related his role of a writer to that of a medium,⁷⁸ perceiving a distinct separation between the artist as medium and the man as subject. Duchamp quotes another modern "writer" to explain his point:

T.S. Eliot, in his essay on "Tradition and the Individual Talent," writes:
"The more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material."⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Paul de Man, Blindness and Insight, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 69-70.

⁷⁶ Marcel Duchamp, "Creative Act," The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 139.

⁷⁷ For Roland Barthes, the term "author" signifies the traditional "romantic" concept of the omnipotent genius, a transcendental figure who is the omniscient form-giver and who has the power not only to unveil an absolute truth but to reify it in his/her work. The author, therefore, precedes the text and, in a sense, gives birth to it. In contrast, the "writer" or "modern scriptor" does not precede the text but evolves with it. The text is not a representation of an essential model and the writer does not lie omnipotently outside the text. Nor is the text a formulation of a pre-conceived idea with an a priori meaning or, for that matter, a truth declaration. See Roland Barthes, "Death of the Author," Image Music Text, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 143.

⁷⁸ Duchamp made this explicit: "If we give the attributes of a medium to the artist, we must then deny him the state of consciousness on the esthetic plane about what he is doing or why he is doing it." Marcel Duchamp, "The Creative Act" in The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 138.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

In taking on the mediumistic role, Duchamp, like the modern "impersonal" writer, seeks to remove himself, as a subject, from the act of writing. As a detached writer, he simply set out a series of signs, aware of their intrinsic power to construct meaning beyond his anticipations.

Writing becomes a "neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost."⁸⁰ It is a place where the authorial, intentional subject lies silent and invisible, where the author, according to Barthes, can become a writer. For Barthes, writing becomes an "intransitive narrative" which disconnects any original voice. It implies the "death of the author" and the re-birth of the writer-scriptor.

To the extent that the writer, as subject, is silenced by writing, language is activated. The writer, says Barthes, must "reach that point where only language acts, 'performs,' and not 'me'."⁸¹ As in Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting," the signs most definitely assume a life of their own, exhibiting that their potential meanings are beyond the total control of the writer.⁸² These signs are, in essence, autonomous, making the author/artist's presence invisible. In Paul de Man's words concerning the modern

⁸⁰ Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 142.

⁸¹ Ibid., 143.

⁸² If the writer does not have a total possession of language or of the signs at her/his disposal, the writer is like a medium. It is for this reason that both Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault have argued that the writer cannot be the instigator of any original meaning. A writer can write nothing original and can only mix already existing writings. Barthes, *Ibid.*; and Michel Foucault, "What is an Author," in Language, Counter-memory, Practice, ed. D.F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

allegory, the sign "speaks and writes by itself... [by means of] a kind of consciousness without a subject."⁸³

For the viewer-reader, constructing meaning with the signs in the "allegory on/of forgetting" does not entail an encounter with the artist as subject. One might even say that although the "allegory on/of forgetting" denies the viewer-reader the possibility of ever determining a definitive meaning or a teleological system, Duchamp makes the viewer-reader sovereign. Constructing one's "creative act," one may note how readings are not only contingent upon one's selection of signs from within the allegory. In finding a meaning, one also integrates voices from elsewhere: from other scholars' interpretations; and from other cultural inscriptions. In effect, in the "creative act" of constructing a meaning, there is no clear boundary between inside (the signs within the allegory) and the outside (other readings or cultural constructs). Inside and outside collide, interweave, further multiplying the possibility of producing innumerable possible readings. Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting" makes manifest the rhetorical power of the sign: its power to "open up vertiginous possibilities of referential aberration."⁸⁴ Cognizant of the power of the sign to create "innumerable eccentricities,"⁸⁵ Duchamp the patatautologist, I would argue, encoded his "allegory on/of forgetting" as the "number

⁸³ Paul de Man, Blindness and Insight, 69.

⁸⁴ Paul de Man, Allegories of Reading, 10.

⁸⁵ [Duchamp's emphasis]. Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 27.

three" or as Jacques Derrida might have described it as "incalculable choreographies."⁸⁶ One could also say that, as a patatautological allegory, it celebrates heteroglossia in that it invites numerous potential voices to engender and make visible, through their respective "creative acts," the never-ending possibility of readings.

Étant donnés...: The Allegorical Appearance

By providing this glimpse at Duchamp's open-ended "allegory on/of forgetting," I hope to have brought to the fore the manner in which his "allegorical appearance," Étant donnés..., differs in the author-function, in the viewer-reader experience as well as in the structure of the allegory itself. These contrasting allegories, as has already been discussed, can be seen to exemplify Paul de Man's definition of dialogism

[a]s a principle of radical otherness....As a principle of exotopy: far from aspiring to the telos of a synthesis or a resolution, as could be said to be case in dialectical systems, the function of dialogism is to sustain and think through the radical exteriority or heterogeneity of one voice with regard to any other.⁸⁷

Consider again how this dialogism operates in the viewer-reader experience and author-function. In the "allegory of/on forgetting," as we have just seen, the viewer-reader is invited to play a monologic semiotic game or detached "creative act" by isolating a series

⁸⁶ Jacques Derrida's words. See Jacques Derrida, Dissemination, 25; and Jacques Derrida and Christie V. McDonald, "Choreographies," Diacritics 12/2 (1982): 76.

⁸⁷ Paul de Man, "Dialogue and Dialogism," The Resistance to Theory, 108, 109.

of signs dispersed in time and place and by bringing these disparate signs together into a constellation that produces a certain, ephemeral meaning. Establishing a meaning in the "allegory on/of forgetting" is like an implosion of the centrifugal signs, as if one were employing a "centripetal" force upon them, centering and compressing them into a single coherent statement. Such an operation inevitably obscures the heteroglot signs by means of a closed frame.

In contrast, the viewer-voyeur of Étant donné... is confronted with the artist's already-made selection of signs, with a constellation of signs (en)closed as a static picture or "allegorical appearance." One could even say that this "allegorical appearance" was constructed as the artist's own "creative act," as if he were finally providing a coherent and definitive order for the array of "centrifugal" signs, as if he exerted a centripetal force upon them. If this is so, Duchamp no longer assumes the role of silent writer or "medium" displaying an array of signs capable of "innumerable eccentricities." Instead, he is now the intentional author who centers the heteroglot system of signs. Indeed was it not his intention already in 1912 to put them "in a state of Rest"?

This kind of a "centrifugal" operation, as Bakhtin states, is the prerequisite of any monologic utterance. In order to communicate, one inevitably veils the different stratifications of possible other meanings. One suppresses and obscures the heteroglot language; one ignores that "heteroglossia is a given."⁸⁸ Bakhtin explains that a "unitary

⁸⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, 270.

language opposes the realities of heteroglossia." ⁸⁹ Indeed, it must be so in order to convey a coherent meaning. A centrifugal operation makes a real presence felt as a force

for overcoming this heteroglossia, imposing specific limits to it, guaranteeing a certain maximum of mutual understanding and crystalizing into a real, although still relative, unity - the unity of the reigning conversational (everyday) and literary language, "correct language." ⁹⁰

Duchamp's "allegorical appearance," such a monologic utterance, is inscribed in everyday "correct language" that a viewer-reader can decipher as a legible statement.

The difference in the viewer-experience of the two allegories, then, lies inextricably linked with the different author-functions. By presenting his "allegorical appearance" as a cohesive and contentious statement, Duchamp presents himself, one could say, as an agent-provocateur. With his orchestrated real-life peepshow, he provokes, even taunts the viewer to react and to interact. As I have aimed to illustrate in my prologue, the viewer-voyeur at the peepholes is enlisted in a very direct, personal way – as a self-conscious subject, required to negotiate his/her position in front of this scene. In this way, Duchamp has, in effect, created the conditions for a dialogue with an interlocutor. Such a personal and engaged experience with Duchamp's givens contrasts with the monologic game of "jouissance" enjoyed by the reader-viewer of the "allegory on/of forgetting," a game in which the authorial voice of the artist remains silent or, at the very least, profoundly elusive.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

As such, one can understand that in both the author-function and in the viewer-experience, Étant donnés... contrasts with the "allegory on/of forgetting." Such a contrariness can be seen in the very structure of Étant donnés... itself. As an hermetic structure, it physically or literally encloses a static "appearance" of reality within its parameters. In this regard, it physically contrasts with the disparate, heterogeneous signs of the "allegory on/of forgetting" which are, as we know, dispersed in time and space. It also contrasts figuratively.

Where the "allegory on/of forgetting" exhibited its heteroglossic and "centrifugal" nature, Étant donnés... discloses how the signs "capable of all the innumerable eccentricities"⁹¹ have been put to rest, how they have been stabilized by the artist into a coherent, cohesive representation. Étant donnés..., in this way, bears a comparison with Julia Kristeva's notion of the "bounded text."⁹²

Kristeva notes that a bounded text has "an initial programming [and] an arbitrary ending."⁹³ This, she argues, is a process of writing (or encoding) "that ossifies, petrifies, and blocks. [It is] writing as an artificial limit, an arbitrary law, a subjective finitude."⁹⁴ As a pre-determined, stable selection of signs, one may consider Duchamp's "allegorical

⁹¹ [Duchamp's emphasis]. Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 27.

⁹² Julia Kristeva, Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

⁹³ One of the translators of Kristeva's Desire in Language, Leon S. Roudiez offers as a succinct example of Kristeva's notion of a bounded text, William Faulkner's comments about his writing of As I Lay Dying: "Before I ever put pen to paper and set down the first word, I knew what the last word would be and almost where the last period would fall." Ibid, 13-14.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 55, 58.

appearance" as such a "bounded" text, displaying an array of ossified, petrified or "deadened" signs. Such a "bounded" text also relates to Bakhtin's notion of "a single, holistic language [which] makes the actuality of its presence felt as a force resisting an absolute heteroglot state; it posits definite boundaries for limiting the potential chaos of variety, thus guaranteeing a more or less maximal mutual understanding...."⁹⁵

By encoding this "allegorical appearance" with an array of "deadened" signs (that have obscured their heteroglot state) within the boundaries of a closed structure, Duchamp may well be thought of as undermining his patatautological position. Étant donnés... has, indeed, been formulated and framed as if Duchamp were "trying to win" a final end game, one for which he himself set up the ground rules. In fact, Étant donnés... ostensibly manifests itself as a repetition of signs from the "allegory on/of forgetting," as a tautological repetition of already made givens.

However, his framing of this "allegorical appearance" as a tautological statement is, as I shall illustrate, a constituent element in Duchamp's patatautological enterprise. This becomes increasingly evident when one considers his notes of 1912 that state "we shall determine the conditions for the instantaneous state of Rest (or allegorical appearance)...." As argued above, these words suggest that despite the date 1946-66 assigned to Étant donnés..., Duchamp was planning to encode these "deadened" signs at the same time as he was inscribing his open-ended "allegory on/of forgetting." Both

⁹⁵ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, 270.

allegories, it should now be apparent, operate in concert with each other as part of his patatautological enterprise.

To begin with, one could say that Duchamp's patatautological position itself prompted him to encode Étant donnés... as a specular inversion of the open-ended "allegory on/of forgetting in order to avoid a kind of "negative theology"⁹⁶: a means of averting the possibility of giving the open-ended, heteroglot and subjectless allegory a new privileged position. By creating his own "bounded" text, he permits both allegorical modes, as oppositional sign systems to coexist.

This coexistence of oppositional concepts can thus be allied to Jacques Derrida's notion of a "double science." In Derrida's words, there is always a danger of constructing privileged centers from polarities:

In a binary opposition, one of the terms retains its old name so as to destroy the opposition to which it no longer quite belongs, to which in any event it has never quite yielded, the history of this opposition being one of incessant struggles generative of hierarchical configurations works the entire field within which these texts move. This structure itself is worked in turn: the rule according to which every concept necessarily receives two similar marks - a repetition without identity - one mark inside and the other outside the deconstructed system, should give rise to a double

⁹⁶ This is a term used by Derrida to describe how the negation of a given becomes a new position, attaining the status of a "metaphysics of presence." In Derrida's deconstructive process, it is essential to "put the old names to work": to make use of cultural concepts while, at the same time, manifesting its contrary. I suggest that Duchamp might have also realized the pitfalls in presenting only his open-ended, centrifugal "allegory on/of forgetting," as the "other" of tautological givens, how this might risk falling into the trap of establishing his patatautological enterprise as a new position. Derrida knows that to "leap into the outside of the classical oppositions is, apart from the risk of engaging in an interminable 'negative theology,' to forget that these oppositions have never constituted a given system..." Jacques Derrida, "Dissemination," Dissemination, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 5.

reading and a double writing. And, as will appear in due course: a double science.⁹⁷

This is a "double science" that, like Duchamp's patatautological project one can say, is "neither/nor, that is simultaneously either or."⁹⁸

Like a "double science," Duchamp's two patatautological allegories represent "neither a presence nor an absence, neither a position nor a negation."⁹⁹ There is a coexistence of opposing forces without a hierarchical privileging of either one. The "allegorical appearance" and "allegory on/of forgetting" as specular inversions, posit both a "position" and a "non-position" producing, one could say a double-voiced discourse. On the one hand, there is the silent voice of the impersonal writer who, as a medium, sets out a fluid, open and centrifugal "allegory on/of forgetting"; and, on the other, there is the subjective voice of a monological author who writes a closed centripetal and tautological "allegorical appearance."

In his bounded text or "allegorical appearance" Duchamp, the author, dialogues with his other self as the silent writer-scriptor, producing a double-voiced discourse. I would strongly argue that because Duchamp inscribed his two allegories with such different author-functions that he was conscious of the ironic specularity between his double-voiced discourse: between the writer of the "allegory on/of forgetting" and of the author of the "allegorical appearance." Although he made overt statements about his role

⁹⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Jacques Derrida. Positions, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981), 43.

as "medium," as the silent and indifferent writer, he did not make any comments about the possibility of his assuming the role of the "intentional author." The role of the silent writer represents a lack of a position. However, even a lack of a position posits a position as he was only too aware. To repeat his words again: "You see, I don't want to be pinned down to any position. My position is the lack of position, but, of course, you can't even talk about it, the minute you talk you spoil the whole game."¹⁰⁰

I would suggest that his only option was to take on the contradictory positions of silent writer and subjective author. No doubt he was also quite aware that both as impersonal writer and as subjective author, one is always both inside and outside the work. In fact a statement he made suggests this: "My intention was always to get away from myself, though I knew perfectly well that I was using myself. Call it a little game between I and me."¹⁰¹ Inscribing the two allegories with different voices constitutes, one could say, a continuous dialogue between "I and me."

As Derrida noted, there is no autonomous text which elides the writer; neither is there an "hors-texte." Duchamp, even in his subjectless "allegory on/of forgetting," is never really outside it. In effect, his dialogical imagination permeates both of his allegories and all the signs that inhabit them. It also extends beyond both its moveable and stable frames. Just as a writer-artist can never be "hors-texte" and cannot elide the artwork, neither can the viewer (reader or interactor) who comes into contact with it.

¹⁰⁰ Arturo Schwarz, Marcel Duchamp, 32.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Katharine Kuh, "Marcel Duchamp," in The Artist's Voice: Talks with Seventeen Artists (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1962), 83.

As a Duchampian scholar who has engaged in a dialogue with the signs in Étant donnés..., I therefore do not feign objectivity. In my dialogue with Duchamp's Étant donnés..., I deploy my own set of givens, my own theoretical framework in which I construct my own "allegorical appearance." In effect, the dialogic process involves a collision between subject positions. Though the interlocutor is not summoned to engage in a semiotic game as he/she is in the "allegory on/of forgetting," this kind of collision between two subject positions brings the artist's givens (to use Duchamp's words) "in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications...."¹⁰²

My ideas about centric and totalizing truth statements, about the nature of open-endedness, readily color my reading of Duchamp's words on tautology, patatautology, and of the signs which I read as two allegories. My reading of the signs is strictly contingent upon my set of givens and can, therefore, not be considered a definitive reading of Étant donnés... – nor, for that matter, can anyone else's. My own givens also prompt me to view Duchamp's patatautological position as exhibiting a resolutely dialogical imagination.

This dialogical imagination is, as I see it, evident in Étant donnés... itself. Thinking back at his words, "everything ends up having some [meaning],"¹⁰³ and at his various semiotic studies, I assume that Duchamp was cognizant of the manner that all

¹⁰² Marcel Duchamp, "The Creative Act," The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 140.

¹⁰³ Pierre Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, 54.

signs (irrespective of their open or closed nature) are rhetorical and have the power to construct meaning. Constructing his "allegorical appearance" or "bounded text," Duchamp illustrates how even "dead" signs have the power to become animate: how, once dialogized by a viewer-reader or interlocutor, even closed, tautological statements illustrate their interconnectedness with a host of other obscured or veiled signs; that even tautological statements have the capacity to produce a myriad of possible readings.

With the construction of Étant donnés..., Duchamp makes manifest how patatautology inhabits the dialogic space between two interlocutors. If the tautology lies in the repeated signs, in the posited statements, ideas, ideologies or closed "allegorical appearance" of each interlocutor, then the dialogic process that ensues, opens it up. To produce the effects of such a patatautological space, Duchamp must first induce the viewer to formulate his/her own tautological position or "allegorical appearance." As we know, he does so by transforming the viewer into a voyeur. Hence, by entrapping the viewer-voyeur with his provocative "allegorical appearance," Duchamp sets up the conditions for a dialogue, for an interchange between two subject positions.

My own intervention as interlocutor with Duchamp's closed tautological "allegorical appearance," opens up the closed signs. As we shall see, by linking each of the "dead" signs from his "bounded text" to those already inscribed in the "allegory on/of forgetting," they become dynamic. Interacting with the "dead" signs, I recognize how they are endowed with memory: how they operate as traces, shadows or apparitions of signs from the "allegory on/of forgetting." The recognition of different stratification of meaning with a single sign reaffirms Bakhtin's words about how

the centripetal forces of the life of language, embodied in a 'unitary language,' operate in the midst of heteroglossia....Every utterance participates in the 'unitary language' (in its centripetal forces and tendencies) and at the same time partakes of social and historical heteroglossia (the centrifugal, stratifying forces.)¹⁰⁴

By bringing to the fore different obscured heteroglot signs, by making them visible, I am able to animate the "dead" signs. The more the signs move beyond the boundaries or frame of Duchamp's "allegorical appearances," the more they induce memory. They readily connect to prior scholarly "creative acts" or readings.¹⁰⁵ By recontextualizing the dead signs, and linking them to other extraneous inscriptions, they become increasingly dynamic, open-ended and patatautological.

My interactive dialogue with Duchamp's Étant donnés... has permitted me to recognize that each sign inscribed into his "allegorical appearance" has a dual and contradictory status, that each sign is both "deadened" and dynamic. More specifically,

¹⁰⁴ Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, 271.

¹⁰⁵ In the first essay on Étant donnés written by Anne d'Harnoncourt and Walter Hopps, this was acknowledged: Étant donnés "bristles with cross-references, visual and conceptual, to many other objects and verbal constructs by Duchamp... It will take years for this new (though decades old) and rather recalcitrant work in which Duchamp has again contradicted himself as thoroughly as possible, to reveal its full relationship to the rest of his oeuvre, let alone to the art of his contemporaries. Given the multidimensional nature of all of Duchamp's work, the many layers of meaning and media suggested by the notes, and the broad hint of the title of the new assemblage, which is taken directly from an important passage in the Green Box, we should expect to find enough material in the boxes to reconstruct the thematic context and even the physical nature of Étant donnés." What ensues, in their essay, is an elaborate presentation of some of these cross-references, with Duchamp's prior nudes, his erotic narratives implied in the notes to The Large Glass and the female figure, the landscapes and so on. Although what follows in my own dialogue here may appear to be an instance of a reader bringing together signs in Étant donnés... with those of other works, I do so in order to exhibit how they operate as two distinct allegories and how they work in relation to Duchamp's patatautological enterprise. Anne d'Harnoncourt and Walter Hopps, "Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections On a New Work by Marcel Duchamp" Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin LXIV, 299-300 (April-September 1969): 13, 15.

each sign, in one way or another, is a personal memento of Duchamp's: both figuratively, as repetitions of selected signs from the "allegory on/of forgetting"; and literally, as souvenir of private, even intimate, experiences and events. Étant donnés..., thus, functions not only as Duchamp's own "creative act" but also as a kind of personal memoire.

My dialogue begins by exposing the double status of the various signs by lifting the "death shroud," so to speak: as both personal memorabilia that are inherently "animate" and as memento mori that are inscribed as "dead," closed, as readymade givens. This process is like a revitalization of the deadened, stabilized, signs. Contrary to the reading the signs in the "allegory on/of forgetting," I now exert a contrary centrifugal or de-centering force upon them. This produces an explosion of meaning, of conflicting readings. Let me then begin unveiling various strata of meaning obscured within this enclosure and so exhibit the (pata)tautological nature of Étant donnés...

Given: The Door

The viewer's first contact with Étant donnés... is the facade set in the alcove off the Duchamp room in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. This facade immediately announces, in a tangible way, the double status of this "allegorical appearance." As a sealed door set in a frame of mortared bricks, it declares itself as resolutely fixed and closed or, as

Octavio Paz noted, like a "dead end."¹⁰⁶ As a dilapidated old door, encased in aged bricks, it also bears the characteristic of time: it evidently has a past "life." Duchamp even left us some clues as to its history as well as to its status as a piece of personal memorabilia.

A photograph from the 1960s (fig. 62) shows his wife, Teeny, standing in front of this door during one of their holidays in Cadaqués, a favorite vacation spot for the Duchamps.¹⁰⁷ The photograph reveals that the original door, encased in brick, led to a courtyard of an old Spanish house. The door was sent back to New York where, in his studio, it was cut down to size to form part of the construction of this installation.¹⁰⁸ The Catalonian-style masonry arch that enframes the door was built by Museum craftsmen, using bricks selected by Duchamp in Cadaqués before his death.¹⁰⁹ In this way, the

¹⁰⁶ "The door sets its material doorness in the visitor's way with a sort of aplomb: dead end." See Octavio Paz, Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare, trans. Rachel Phillips and Donald Gardner (New York: Seaver Books, 1981), 95. Yve-Alain Bois makes a similar comment in comparing it to The Large Glass: "Alors que dans le Grand Verre nous faisons partie du tableau qui nous englobait dans sa transparence, nous sommes ici confiné dans notre solitude, dans un monde clos, imperméable." See his "La mariée nue: du nouveau sur Marcel Duchamp," VH 101 (Paris) 3 (Autumn 1970): 62-69.

¹⁰⁷ Photograph and information on the door was included in the museum bulletin. See Anne d'Harnoncourt and Walter Hopps, "Étant donné: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections on a New Work by Marcel Duchamp," Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin, vol. 64 (April-September 1969): 13, 59.

¹⁰⁸ For details on the acquisition and shipment of the door from Cadaqués to New York, see Calvin Tomkins, Duchamp: A Biography (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1996), 462, 431. See also the short essay by Anne d'Harnoncourt inserted into Marcel Duchamp's manual of instructions, Étant donné: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage, (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art), 1987. Also see Jean Clair's comments about the origin of the façade in his book, Duchamp et la photographie, (Paris: Chêne, 1977), 102.

¹⁰⁹ In his studio, the door was enclosed in a temporary archway of vinyl bricks and, according to the artist's notes, he left a certain leeway as to how the installation was to be encased, depending on the space permitted. See Anne d'Harnoncourt's essay mentioned above.

facade stands for the double status of the signs in Étant donnés...: as both closed and memory-endowed.

This facade represents more than the artist's personal souvenir. For the Duchamp scholar willing to dialogue with the various signs in Étant donnés..., the door readily recalls a number of signs from the "allegory on/of forgetting." As both closed and impenetrable as well as aged and memory-endowed, the door simultaneously reflects and deflects the previously-inscribed signs.

This door stands as a kind of modified readymade.¹¹⁰ As an aged, unique and memory-endowed readymade facade, however, it lies diametrically opposed to the 'already readymade idea' of the Duchampian readymade as a banal, anonymous, machine-made or mechanically-reproduced object. Neither a mass-produced nor serial object¹¹¹, it was most evidently not selected by the artist because it "lack[s] uniqueness [and because it] deliver[s] the same message"¹¹² – rather Duchamp went to great pains to select an aged, unique door made by human hands. One might even say that this particular modified readymade emanates an aura. As an auratic, memory-endowed readymade, it is capable of delivering different messages for each viewer. In other words, the meaning of this "closed" door is also open-ended. When viewed as an isolated, decontextualized sign, however, it stands fast as a "tomb-like" monument that is

¹¹⁰ Jean Clair noted this in his Marcel Duchamp et la photographie (Paris: Chêne, 1977), 102.

¹¹¹ Like his other readymades such as the snow shovel, In Advance of the Broken Arm, 1915 (fig. 2) the urinal, Fountain, 1917 (fig. 3), or the modified readymade made from the reproduction of the Mona Lisa, entitled L.H.O.O.Q., 1919 (fig. 4).

¹¹² Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 32, 142.

resolutely closed, impenetrable -- like a "dead" sign. In this double capacity as both a "dead" and open-ended sign, the facade signals its patatautological function as both either-or and neither-nor. This double status becomes more apparent when one links the door to other signifiers from the "allegory on/of forgetting." Let us look at some other examples.¹¹³

The sealed door readily dialogues with a number of doors and door-like signs from the "allegory on/of forgetting." The Door of 11 Rue Larrey, 1927 (fig. 65) is a case in point.¹¹⁴ This particular door was designed in an angle of a room in Duchamp's Paris apartment which was especially constructed so that it would serve as a door for openings in both corner walls.¹¹⁵ As a door that could simultaneously stand opened and closed, it defies the maxim that a door must either be closed or open, thereby arguing with the door of Étant donnés... which is presented as resolutely closed, sealed and impenetrable.

¹¹³ Because Duchamp's works are so cross-referential, many of the connections between signs that I will be making have already been noted by Anne d'Harmoncourt and Walter Hopps in their, "Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections On a New Work by Marcel Duchamp" Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin LXIV, 299-300 (April-September 1969): 13, 15 as well as by Arturo Schwarz in his The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, 557-562. My point here is not to recapitulate these various observations of correspondences, nor is to add still other examples. Rather I would here like to examine how these various repetitions operate in Duchamp's patatautological enterprise. Nonetheless, I shall make notations of other scholars' correlations, and highlight, within the body of the text, my own interconnections.

¹¹⁴ A correlation made by Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, 360.

¹¹⁵ Duchamp installed this door in a small Paris apartment where he lived between 1927 and 1942. About this door, he said, "When one opens the door to enter the bedroom, it closes the entrance to the bathroom, and when one opens the door to enter the bathroom it closes the entrance to the studio..." cited in Jennifer Gough-Cooper and Jacques Caumont, Ephemerides on and about Marcel Duchamp and Rose Sélavy (Cambridge: Mass: The MIT Press, 1993), date 9.10.1937, np. This door was removed in 1963 and exhibited as an independent object, later a full-scale reproduction was made of it in situ. It is now part of the Mary Sisler Collection, New York.

The tightly sealed door of Étant donnés... also argues with the transparent and permanently open glass door called Door for Gradiva (fig. 66) which Duchamp designed in 1937 for André Breton's Gallery Gradiva. This was a glass doorway whose opening was cut as a silhouette of a pair of lovers.¹¹⁶ The transparency and openness represented by the Door for Gradiva operates like a specular inversion of the impenetrable wooden door of Étant donnés...

I also see the door of Étant donnés... dialoguing with several other window-doors, for example, with Fresh Widow of 1920 (fig. 42). This door-like French window, signed by his alter ego, Rose Sélavy, is composed of eight panes of glass covered with black leather, which the artist insisted "should be shined everyday...."¹¹⁷ Though also sealed, its shining leather surface is meant to operate like a reflective and ethereal mirror. As such, it also stands in specular opposition to the opaque wooden door of Étant donnés... Upon still another French window entitled, The Brawl at Austerlitz, 1921

¹¹⁶ Duchamp designed this door for André Breton's gallery Gradiva at 31 rue de Seine, Paris. The original was destroyed at Duchamp's request (as were many of Duchamp's original readymades) after the closure of the gallery. A plexiglas replica was made for the exhibition, Doors in 1968 at the Cordier & Ekstrom, Inc., New York (March 19-April 20, 1968). A pencil sketch by Duchamp for the 1968 replica is in the collection of Mme. Duchamp. The correlation between this transparent door and the door of Étant donnés was noted by Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, 360.

¹¹⁷ Cited in Anne d'Hamoncourt and Kynaston McShine, eds., Marcel Duchamp, 291.

(fig. 43),¹¹⁸ Duchamp painted an elongated figure "8" (of the infinity sign)¹¹⁹ on the panes of transparent glass. The painted signs of infinity on this window-door contrast with the definitively finite, closed door of Étant donnés...

These door-like windows readily bring to my mind Duchamp's other major work, The Large Glass, 1915-23 (fig. 6).¹²⁰ This transparent door-like window depicts, as discussed, an array of cryptic signs that can only be deciphered by means of equally obscure notes from The Green Box. Where the signs in The Large Glass are ethereal, enigmatic, and open-ended, the door of Étant donnés... announces itself as resolutely material, as a closed, totalizing representation.

By situating the closed door of Étant donnés... within the context of the other door/windows, I can recognize that this physically impenetrable door stands as a sign that refers to a series of oppositional notions: open-closed, transparent-opaque, ethereal-material, boundless-boundary, infinity-finite. When one contextualizes the door of Étant donnés..., with a series of previously-inscribed givens, it no longer operates tautologically as a closed, dead sign. Rather in relation to the other signs, it stands like the sister

¹¹⁸ The title points to a historical event, Napoleon's battle at Austerlitz and, as Duchamp states, is also a word play: "I had another small window made, quite different from this one [Fresh Widow], with a brick wall. I called it THE BRAWL AT AUSTERLITZ in French BAGARRE D'AUSTERLITZ which is a simple alliteration on Gare d'Austerlitz, an important railroad station in Paris." [Duchamp's emphasis]. Cited in Anne d'Hamoncourt and Kynaston McShine, eds., Marcel Duchamp, 295.

¹¹⁹ An elongated, horizontal and open number "8" is a geometrical sign signifying "towards the infinite."

¹²⁰ For their own particular perspective on the relationship between The Large Glass, the two window works examined above and Étant donnés..., see Anne d'Hamoncourt and Walter Hopps in their, "Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections On a New Work by Marcel Duchamp," 29-31.

squares of a chess game, as oppositional elements that coexist; it takes on meanings that, like in his "allegory on/of forgetting," are both either-or and neither-nor.

When such a kinship with the other signs from the "allegory on/of forgetting" is dismissed, forgotten, and when the door is read as an isolated sign, the patatautological space appears to dissipate. Only then does it stand fixed as a closed tautological statement for the voyeur.

Furthermore, a Duchampian scholar investigating the physical structure of Étant donnés... may make a surprising discovery that can come to contradict totally the door's status as a definitively "closed" sign. Duchamp's Manual of Instructions, clearly indicates that this door is divided into four parts and that only the lower double panels are, in fact, sealed. The two upper segments of the door hang on a bar -- once a few screws are removed, the doors can be slid open (fig. 68).¹²¹ In light of the apparent sealed nature of this installation, the possibility of actually being able to open the sealed door is ironic: the "dead end" (to use Paz's expression again) is certainly not definitive.

Despite the inherently patatautological nature of the door, its closed characteristic is a dominant one. So securely sealed and set into a frame of cemented bricks, and seemingly so impenetrable, this door most evidently functions as a closed barrier, as an ineluctable boundary that blocks and situates me, the viewer, on the outside of Duchamp's "allegorical appearance." Like a distancing device, it situates me, as viewer-

¹²¹ In the Manual of Instructions, Duchamp notes that by sliding the doors open in this way, one is able to take good pictures of the interior. Duchamp himself took photographs while the installation was still in his studio. These are included in the manual. This sliding portion of the door may also have been designed in this way for practical reasons which the artist foresaw: for maintenance of the interior, changing of light bulbs and so on.

voyeur on the outside looking in at an array of ossified, petrified or otherwise seemingly "deadened" signs.

Given: The Peepholes

The only access the viewer has to the "allegorical appearance" is through two small peepholes drilled into the door. They effectively serve to elicit the viewer's gaze and, at the same time, to entrap him/her in the position of the voyeur. This set up, as already mentioned, creates the conditions for a dialogue. It is of significance, therefore, to examine the function of these peepholes more closely.

Unlike the "allegory on/of forgetting" which gives the viewer-reader a full range of heterogeneous signs dispersed in time and space, the peepholes offer the viewer a pre-determined set of signs. Where in the "allegory on/of forgetting," the viewer-reader makes use of a moving frame or *passe-partout*, making visible the fluid boundaries between inside and outside, and thus revealing the elasticity of words, ideas, readings, here the peepholes operate as static frames that resolutely separate subject (voyeur) and object (allegorical appearance). These tiny, incorporeal circular apertures serve as literal frames that enclose an object of vision and restrict the voyeur's vantage point. In this respect, the peepholes operate like signs that close or bind¹²² a pre-determined set of readymade givens within the boundaries of the "allegorical appearance."

¹²² I refer to the "bounded" text discussed above as having "an artificial limit." See Julia Kristeva, Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art.

At the same time, these peepholes are literally "open" and ethereal apertures which serve to set up the conditions for an open-ended dialogue. Furthermore, once the peepholes, as signs, are dialogized, they reveal their dual function: to "frame" a pre-determined number of tautological signs on the one hand; and, on the other, to create a patatautological space between the two interlocutors.

To begin with, the interlocutor can note that, in their physical characteristics as circular shapes that engage the viewer's "retina," these peepholes operate like tautological repetitions of a number of inscriptions from the "allegory on/of forgetting." As signs, they dialogue and argue with them. By eliciting the viewer's look so overtly, the peepholes bored into the door of Étant donnés... most evidently argue with the anti-retinal stance allegedly informing Duchamp's oeuvre.

As the artist declared to Pierre Cabanne: "Since Courbet, it's been believed that painting is addressed to the retina. That was everyone's error. The retinal shudder! Before, painting had other functions: it could be religious, philosophical, moral."¹²³ This anti-retinal statement, pronounced in a categorical, adamant, and decidedly personal way, became part of Duchamp's artistic persona. Even though the resolutely "retinal" quality of Étant donnés..., strongly reinforced by the use of peepholes, quite ostensibly contradicts or conflicts with his anti-retinal stance, it is neither the only nor the first "retinal" work that is founded on circular shapes like the peepholes.¹²⁴

¹²³ Pierre Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp. 43.

¹²⁴ It is ironic that despite the construction of Duchamp as the quintessential cerebral and anti-retinal artist, recent scholarship underlines the visual aspect of his works. It may well be that Étant donnés..., as such a highly "visual" work has triggered scholarship that runs counter to the

Duchamp's glass work entitled, To Be Looked At (From the Other Side of the Glass) With One Eye, Close to, For Almost an Hour, 1918 (fig. 7) is such a retinal work.¹²⁵ As the humorous inscription indicates, the viewer is prompted to "look" through the transparent glass with a monocular eye. In contrast to the viewer experience in Étant donné..., however, here the retina is offered no access to a tangible, material object of vision. Here the viewer sees nothing but what is situated on the other side of the glass, the literal environment in which he/she is located. The peepholes in these two works can thus point to opposing notions of nothingness and/or physicality, absence and/or presence.

In still another work, the "look" of a voyeur is elicited through circular shapes. These are the Oculist Witnesses in the male Bachelor Machine, situated in the lower portion of The Large Glass (fig. 6). The circular charts of the Oculist Witnesses provide the bachelors access to their object of desire: the bride situated in the upper portion called "The Bride's Domain." In their capacity to merge voyeurism and desire, the ocular charts of the Oculist Witnesses relate readily to the function of the apertures in Étant donné...: with a major difference, however.

traditional classification of Duchamp's oeuvre. Rosalind Krauss has made the most interesting and comprehensive study of Duchamp's resolutely "retinal" works. See her "Where's Poppa?" in The Definitely Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, ed. Thierry De Duve (Cambridge, Mass., London, Eng.: The MIT Press, 1991).

¹²⁵ Anne d'Hamoncourt and Walter Hopps discuss this work as another window work relating to Étant donné.... See their, "Étant donné: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections On a New Work by Marcel Duchamp," 31.

In The Large Glass, it is the bachelor's gaze which is elicited and it is the reader who deciphers their "look" in the process of reading. In Étant donnés..., it is the viewer him/herself who is positioned as voyeur. Rather than simply speculate, in a rational manner, about the bachelor's ocular desire, in Étant donnés..., the viewer-voyeur becomes both the subject and object of the gaze. Looking through the peepholes, the viewer-voyeur gazes directly at the "bride stripped bare" and is, in turn, gazed upon by the putative second viewer standing in the rear. In contrast to The Large Glass, then, the viewer-voyeur of Étant donnés... is not a detached reader of signs, but becomes directly implicated as subject. Read within the context of the signs in The Large Glass, then, the peepholes of Étant donnés... operate like specular inversions. Where the Oculist Witnesses situate the viewer as an objective reader of the voyeuristic act, the peepholes situate the viewer "retinally" as voyeur. Where the reader of the signs in The Large Glass is decidedly situated on the outside of its frame looking on, the voyeur, in being personally implicating as subject at the peepholes in Étant donnés..., is situated within its closed parameters.

The circular forms of the peepholes also recall The Bicycle Wheel (fig. 43) and all of its variant forms. Though considered a readymade and reproduced in a number of versions, it was originally an object in Duchamp's studio. As already mentioned, the artist enjoyed rotating and watching it: "I enjoyed looking at it just as I enjoy looking at the flames dancing in a fireplace."¹²⁶ When rotated, in effect, the visible, tangible

¹²⁶ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 141.

spokes of the wheel become invisible or ethereal, like the peepholes. In contrast, however, the invisible, ethereal peepholes of Étant donnés... offer the retina a concrete, material object of vision. Other "circular" signs from the "allegory on/of forgetting," like variants of The Bicycle Wheel, also address the retina in diverse ways and, when read in the context of the peepholes in Étant donnés..., also operate like specular inversions.

We have already seen how Duchamp's Rotary Glass Plates (Precision Optics) (fig. 59) of 1920 do so. They are constructed as a series of five horizontal and recessed glass plates, painted with a series of lines that are placed in intervals one in front of the other. When rotated mechanically, and viewed at a certain distance, they produce optical illusions of continuous concentric circles.

His Rotary Demisphere (Precision Optics) (fig. 8) of 1925 is a white demisphere painted with black concentric circles, fixed on a flat disc covered with black velvet. A ring of copper fitted with a glass dome covers and protects the demisphere and velvet. On the outer edge of the copper ring is engraved the following aphorisms with word plays: "RROSE SELAVY ET MOI ESQUIVONS LES ECCHYMOSES DES ESQUIMAUX AUX MOTS EXQUIS." When rotated, the words vanish.

Other disks, such as the rotating spirals of the Rotoreliefs of 1935 (fig. 9) that were used in Duchamp's film Anémic Cinéma, produce pulsating movements that suggest erotic activity. This, of course, is one perception. What intrigued Duchamp about the "retinal" experience of this work was, he noted, "the concept that two different people watching a disc at the same time would not be perceiving it in exactly the same

way all the time."¹²⁷ Patatautological, the rotating discs produced no stable, fixed vision. These various optical studies most definitively, however, address the viewer's retina in a psychophysiological manner which produces an array of optical effects that is particular to each viewer.¹²⁸

Read in concert with these particular circular signs from the "allegory on/of forgetting," the peepholes in Étant donnés... do not provide "special effects" upon the viewer's retina. Instead of providing optical illusions, these circular peepholes frame a stable, concrete object of vision. Once dialogized, however, even this framed object of vision creates other "special effects": not on the retina itself but in that patatautological space created between the two interlocutors. In effect, Duchamp's statement also operates here: "...two different people watching [the stabilized signs in this allegorical appearance] would not be perceiving [them] in exactly the same way all the time."¹²⁹

Like the various optical studies that provide both stable and moving impressions, the peepholes provide access to both stable, tautological signs and moving, open-ended ones. Read within the context of these signs from the "allegory on/of forgetting," the peepholes provide both a stable, fixed object of vision upon the retina and/or moving, open-ended and non-retinal impressions in the mind of the interlocutor.

¹²⁷ Cited by Toby Mussman, "Anémic Cinéma," Art and Artists (London) 1, 4 (July 1966): 50.

¹²⁸ For a comprehensive study of these retinal works, see Rosalind Krauss in "Where's Poppa?" in The Definitely Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, 433-462.

¹²⁹ Cited in *Ibid.*

As single circular shapes, the various "retinal" works from the "allegory on/of forgetting" that I have presented refer to monocular vision. Duchamp also inscribed signs that, like the double peepholes, refer to binocular vision. For example, binocular vision was explicitly addressed in Duchamp's rectified readymade, Handmade Stereopticon Slide (Hand Stereoscopia), 1918-19 (fig. 30)¹³⁰. Upon two photographs of a seascape, he drew a perspectival pyramid of visual rays, inscribed vertically instead of horizontally, which appears to float in the foreground. He hereby replicates the stereoscopic experience. The two slides, when viewed at a certain distance from each other, reproduce in the eyes of the viewer an impression of depth. Though there are no circular peepholes involved with this work, they are indeed implied since this was the customary way of observing stereoscopic slides.

Such optical experiences of 3-dimensionality, of illusions of infinite depth and floating shapes, are obtainable through the stereoscopic device¹³¹ or even by standing at a fixed distance from a particular point of view. The viewer at the peepholes is also positioned at a specific point in order to have access to an object. Contrary to the view provided by the stereopticon slides, however, the two apertures bored into the door of

¹³⁰ Made while he was in Buenos Aires, this was the first in a series of experiments which Duchamp conducted with stereoscopia. Upon the reverse side of a cardboard mount, he wrote the word, "original." Anne d'Hamoncourt and Walter Hopps relate this work to "stereoscopic vision" of Étant donnés.... See their "Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections on a New Work by Marcel Duchamp," 31

¹³¹ One cannot assume that everyone perceives such optical illusions in a similar manner. As a matter of fact, Jean Clair has noted that "four persons out of ten cannot perceive stereoscopic photography, being unable to perform the mental synthesis necessary for the illusion of relief obtained through a pair of photographic documents. See his "Opticeries," October 5 (Summer 1978): 104.

Étant donnés... do not permit an illusory 3-dimensional vista that is "elsewhere."

Looking through the restricted boundaries of the peepholes of Étant donnés..., there is an actual space: a resolutely finite space with a real, tangible 3-dimensional scene. This visual experience is not contrived by an optical device. Instead the viewer's experience as voyeur at the peepholes produces a real object of vision that produces a kind of introspection: where the object of vision is turned back upon the one looking.

Duchamp has often called upon the viewer to "look." Examining the inscription in the rectified readymade L.H.O.O.Q. of 1919 (fig. 4), for example, one can note that the viewer's "look" is also elicited and projected "elsewhere." Phonetically the inscription reads "LOOK." The two OO's, like the two circular peepholes relate to binocular vision, and point to the voyeurism implied in the French caption when read phonetically: "elle a chaud au cul." Read as an inscription for the modified image of the Mona Lisa, this title (as opposed to the viewer's retina) propels the viewer-reader into a myriad of possible interpretations relating to, for example, Leonardo da Vinci, to androgyny, to the sexualized woman and voyeurism, implied in the imperative mode of the title ("look!"). The meaning is evidently open-ended and produces an array of connotations in the mind of the interlocutor.

The stereoscopic and scopophilic connotations implicit in the rectified readymade L.H.O.O.Q. were made concrete, one could say, in a project that Duchamp undertook with Man Ray, an artist he collaborated with on a number of occasions. About 1920, with two movie cameras they filmed the Dadaist artist, the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Lorinoven, shaving her pubic hair. Their aim was to create a stereoscopic recording of

the event. Although filming went well, some complications occurred during the development which ruined the film, and they were only able to salvage two small matching strips of the film of two frames from the film of two spirals: one green, the other red (fig. 60).¹³²

In contrast to these stereoscopic impressions, Duchamp's "retinal" work Étant donnés... evidently provides a binocular view of a 3-dimensional female figure with a shaved pubic area. Furthermore, with regard the stereoscopic effects provided by the two cameras, it is significant to point out that the double peepholes in the old wooden door along with the single punctured brick wall¹³³ in the interior of Étant donnés... replicate the binocular and monocular operation in the retinal experience.

Étant donnés... replicates, in effect, the manner in which binocular vision (the two peepholes) merges into a monocular image (the tableau) in the brain.¹³⁴ Furthermore the floor plan, as we shall see further on, has been designed to reflect the visual distortions

¹³² For an account of this event, see Calvin Tomkins, Duchamp: A Biography, 230.

¹³³ Contrary to the bricks that encase the door which come from the countryside near Cadaqués, the bricks for the interior brick facade were collected from demolition sites near Duchamp's studio in New York. See Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, 558; and Calvin Tomkins, Duchamp: A Biography, 462.

¹³⁴ Like the dark chamber of the eye which, by means of light rays upon the retina, sends messages to the brain that result in an image, the dark interior chamber beyond the peepholes ends in the illuminated tableau. The metaphorical resemblance to the operation of the eye is so constructed. Although Duchamp no doubt draped the walls and ceiling of the first chamber with black velvet so as to prevent the light from the chamber which houses the tableau to shine through the cracks of the door, the resemblance to the operation of an eye is compelling. I shall be addressing this issue and the relationship between monocular and binocular vision more closely when I examine the relationship of Étant donnés to perspectival traditions.

occasioned by the transformation from a binocular to a monocular view.¹³⁵ Étant donnés... is, thus, "retinal" in a number of ways: it mimics, one could say, stereoscopic impressions; it imitates the experience from binocular to monocular vision; it elicits the viewer's "look": all by means of the double peepholes. Despite the fact that Étant donnés... is so resolutely "retinal," it most evidently also addresses the viewer as a resolutely mediated and introspective subject.

By looking through the peepholes in the wooden door, in concert with other signs in the "allegory on/of forgetting," one can see how the various circular shapes that evoke the viewer's retina in different ways, make manifest Duchamp's statement: "Any idea that came to me, the thing would be to turn it around and try to see it with another set of senses."¹³⁶

In effect, the apertures in Étant donnés..., when read in the context of the other signs from the "allegory on/of forgetting," operate as patatautological signifiers that are both either-or and neither-nor. As means to attain objects of vision, they stand for such oppositional notions as: nothingness and/or physicality, absence and/or presence, the real here-and-now and/or an illusory elsewhere, the finite and/or the infinite space, the

¹³⁵ In my view, Duchamp cites the transformation from binocular to monocular by basing the viewer's sightline, apparent in the irregular ground plan and perspective schema (fig. 107), on the drawings of Sebastien Le Clerc. These observations are based on Jean Clair's study of Le Clerc's perspectival drawings. Clair claims Duchamp would have seen Le Clerc's illustrations at the Bibliothèque Ste-Geneviève while studying the perspectivalists. See Jean Clair, "Marcel Duchamp et la tradition des spectateurs," Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques, ed. Jean Clair (Paris, 1977), 124-59.

¹³⁶ Anne d'Harnoncourt, and Walter Hopps, "Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections On a New Work by Marcel Duchamp," 13.

viewer's retinal impressions of an external object and/or the viewer's subjective, introspective reaction. When read in isolation, however, they function simply as tautological, circular or "deadened" signs. Without situating the circular apertures of Étant donnés... within the context of the signs from the "allegory on/of forgetting" and without taking into account these oppositional notions, they remain unisemic signs whose sole function is to entrap the viewer. By isolating the meaning of the circular apertures in this way, the tautological repetition stands simply for restricted vision, for a limited field of vision, for a bounded view of an ensemble of "dead" signs.

Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas . . .

Even though not explicitly mentioned in the title of this installation, the principal sign and in many ways the raison d'être for this installation, is the female figure which the voyeur views through the peepholes. By exhibiting her body in this provocative way, Duchamp frames a unidimensional picture of the sexualized woman. Taking into account his Manual of Instructions for the reinstallation of Étant donnés..., one can note that Duchamp makes every effort to highlight this figure's sexual features. For example, on two different occasions in his handwritten notes, the artist gives unambiguous directions regarding the spotlight that is to be directed straight down upon the female

"cunt": "la spot doit tomber vertical, τ exact τ, Sur le con...; Chute d'eau - spot light bien vertical sur le con...."¹³⁷

The intention to sexualize this female figure in order to produce a strong impact upon the viewer was corroborated by his wife, Teeny, who assisted Duchamp in the final stages of this work. Because of the sexual nature of the work, she (and no doubt Duchamp) had anticipated some resistance on the part of the trustees of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. It surprised her that they did not find the provocation of this sexually-explicit installation problematic and that they so readily accepted it as part of their collection.¹³⁸

Exhibiting such a sexualized female figure as a uni-dimensional sign is but a ploy, however. It is a strategy by which Duchamp provokes the viewer, as a subject, and draws him/her into a dialogue. As an interlocutor, one is able to discover that Duchamp has inscribed this female figure as an integral and central part of an intricate web of interrelated signs that spans beyond the boundaries of this "allegorical appearance," to the "allegory on/of forgetting," and that, as a sign, she also operates patatautologically. Furthermore, by unravelling certain threads in this intricate web of signs, one comes to recognize that both the female figure and Duchamp himself, as a subject, are at its nucleus.

¹³⁷ Marcel Duchamp, Manual of Instructions, 7 OP, 15OP.

¹³⁸ "Teeny thought the museum's trustees might balk at accepting such a sexually explicit work of art, but this proved not to be a problem. Evan Turner, the director, was enthusiastic from the start, and if any trustees felt qualms, they kept quiet about them." Calvin Tomkins, Duchamp: A Biography, 433.

Looking through the peepholes as a voyeur, however, one initially encounters this sexualized female figure as a uni-dimensional sign. Ironically, as the dialogic interaction proceeds, the appearance of a uni-dimensional figure assumes an increasingly complex and polysemic nature, becoming "capable of all the innumerable eccentricities."¹³⁹ I come to recognize that she is, in effect, a tautological repetition of pre-inscribed givens from the "allegory on/of forgetting." Over thirty representations of female figures, clad, half-clad or nude in the form of paintings, readymades, photographs can be related to the figure in this particular "allegorical appearance."¹⁴⁰ Some consist only of female body parts.¹⁴¹ Many of the female figures are characterized as brides or

¹³⁹ [Duchamp's emphasis]. Marcel Duchamp. The Writings of Marcel Duchamp. 27.

¹⁴⁰ Two Nudes on a Ladder, 1907-8 (fig. 69); Two Standing Nudes, 1907 (fig. 70); Nude with Black Stockings, 1910, (fig. 71); Two Nudes, 1910 (fig. 72); Standing Nude, 1910, (fig. 73); Red Nude, 1910 (fig. 74); Nude on Nude, 1910-11 (fig. 75); Study of Kneeling Nude, 1910 (fig. 76); Red Woman in a Painting, 1910-11, (fig. 77); Standing Nude, 1911 (fig. 78); Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 1, 1911 (fig. 79); Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2, 1912 (fig. 5); Two Nudes: One Strong and One Swift, 1912 (fig. 80); Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 3, 1916 (fig. 81); Rose Sélavy on the rue Surréaliste, Mannequin from the "Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme" at the Galerie Beaux-arts, Paris, January 1938 (fig. 82). Lazy Hardware, 1945 (fig. 83). This is a window display that Duchamp and André Breton were commissioned to do. Among books and reproductions of works of art, Duchamp placed a headless mannequin wearing a maid's apron. A tap was fixed to her right thigh.

¹⁴¹ For example, the collage In the Manner of Delvaux, 1942, (fig. 84) reveals, according to Arturo Schwarz, "how Duchamp imagined his Bride would have appeared when seen through the peepholes of the environment's door." Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, 560; Plaster Model for Prière de Toucher, 1947 (fig. 85) is a plaster breast mounted on velvet in a wood and glass box.; Prière de Toucher (Please Touch), 1947 (fig. 86) is a collage of foam rubber breasts mounted on a velvet-covered cardboard; there were 999 hand-colored foam-rubber breasts prepared for the cover of the catalog of the Exhibition Le Surréalisme en 1947 (Paris, 1947), anticipating the view of the breast of the female figure seen from the same viewpoint.

virgins.¹⁴² A few are depicted in landscapes.¹⁴³ Many of his representations position the female figure in opposition to a male counterpart: as in king and queen,¹⁴⁴ bachelors and bride,¹⁴⁵ young man and girl,¹⁴⁶ Adam and Eve.¹⁴⁷ The female figure exhibited in Étant donnés... is thus not unique.

As one moves beyond the boundaries of Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting," I recognize that even the explicitly "exhibitionist" position of this female figure is a tautological repetition. The common peepshow provides similar vantage points of the female anatomy, and so too do images from the history of art.¹⁴⁸ In effect, the female

¹⁴² The Virgin, No. 1, 1912 (fig. 87), The Virgin, No. 2, 1912 (fig. 88); The Passage from the Virgin to Bride, 1912 (fig. 89) The Bride, 1912 (fig. 12); The Bride Stripped Bare by the Bachelors, 1912 (fig. 90); The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even, 1913 (fig. 91); The Bride Stripped Bare by the Bachelors, Even, 1915-1923 (fig. 6).

¹⁴³ Paradise, 1910-11, (fig. 92); The Bush, 1910-11, (fig. 93); Baptism, 1911 (fig. 94); Draft of The Japanese Apple Tree, 1911 (fig. 95); Young Man and Girl in Spring, 1911 (fig. 96); L.H.O.O.Q., 1919 (fig. 4); L.H.O.O.Q. Shaved, 1965 (fig. 97).

¹⁴⁴ The King and Queen Traversed by Swift Nudes, 1912 (fig. 98); The King and Queen Traversed by Swift Nudes at High Speed, 1912 (fig. 99); The King and Queen Surrounded by Swift Nudes, 1912 (fig. 100).

¹⁴⁵ The Bride Stripped Bare by the Bachelors, 1912 (fig. 90); The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even, 1913 (fig. 91); The Large Glass/The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even, 1915-23 (fig. 6). Contrary to the bride in The Large Glass, who abides in an ethereal domain, the female figure of Étant donnés is very much embedded in an earthly region.

¹⁴⁶ Paradise, 1910-11 (fig. 92); Young Man and Girl in Spring, 1911 (fig. 96).

¹⁴⁷ Duchamp and Brogna Perlmutter played Adam and Eve in a performance presented in Picabia's Ciné Sketch, c. December 1924, during the short run of the ballet "Relâche." A photograph of them posing as Adam and Eve appeared in Picabia's Ciné Sketch (fig. 101). Duchamp made an etching after this photograph, entitled, Selected Details After Cranach and Relâche, 1967 (fig. 102).

¹⁴⁸ Dalia Judovitz has commented on Duchamp's consistent repetition of the genre of the nude which culminates in Étant donnés. She notes that this is a means to "question its premises as a pictorial and artistic genre...as a symptom of the problems embodied in pictorial representation

figure in Duchamp's "allegorical appearance" can be read as a tautological repetition of images of spread-eagled women by such respected artists as Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Dürer.¹⁴⁹

Duchamp openly acknowledged certain quotations from the history of art in a series of etchings which he executed during the last year of his life. They make explicit the fact that the female figure in Étant donnés... is related to a whole repertoire of sexualized female nudes executed by artists such as J.A.D Ingres, Auguste Rodin and Gustave Courbet, his proclaimed nemesis.¹⁵⁰ Selected Details from Courbet (fig. 13),

in general." For this reason, Duchamp resorts to voyeurism, visual fascination and seduction. See her Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 8-9. This last work is, for Judovitz, an example of the kind of "tautological logic" of the institution, the logic which makes "of the museum [...] a cemetery of authority." It functions, in other words, as a pastiche of visuality, of art discourses. She examines not only how "the 'visibility' of a work of art becomes the 'cemetery' of the artist, since it objectifies it" but also how Duchamp has constructed this work as a pastiche of art historical practice. See her "Rendezvous with Marcel Duchamp: Given" in Marcel Duchamp: Artist of the Century, 184-202.

¹⁴⁹ There is no indication, however, that Duchamp was actually citing these specific works, nor that he was even aware of them. See, for example, Leonardo da Vinci, The External Genitalia and Vagina, with Diagrams of the Anal Sphincter, drawing in his notebook, c. 1508-9 (fig. 23) found in his notes. Leonardo da Vinci Anatomical Drawings from the Royal Collection (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1977), 73, 17A. Original edition The Leonardo da Vinci Quincentary Exhibition, (Burlington House, 1952); Albrecht Dürer, Drawing of the Female Model, 1525 (fig. 22). The association between the female figure in Étant donnés and Dürer's print was made by Jean Clair and other scholars. See Jean Clair, "Marcel Duchamp et la tradition des perspectiveurs," Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques, ed. Jean Clair (Paris, 1977), 124-59.

¹⁵⁰ There were a number of etchings made by Duchamp prior to his death in 1968. For example, Selected Details After Cranach and 'Relache', 1967, makes reference to the theme of Adam and Eve as well as his own performance in Picabia's ballet, Relâche in 1924 (fig. 102). A series of etchings on the theme of The Lovers, 1968, consist of erotic figures from other artists: Selected Details from Ingres (fig. 17, 18); Selected Details from Rodin (fig. 16); Selected Details from Courbet (fig. 13). The etching, The Bec Auer, 1968 (fig. 103) is the most direct reference to Étant donnés, portraying the naked female figure with the gas lamp and her lover in the foreground. "The Lovers...makes direct use of the nude figure from Étant donnés (a quiet touch of humor, since the original model for the 1968 etching was still Duchamp's well-kept secret)." Anne d'Harmoncourt and Walter Hopps, "Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage":

for example, is a direct reference to Courbet's Femme aux bas blancs of c. 1861 (fig. 14). The position of Duchamp's female figure clearly echoes Courbet's. Duchamp has, however, added another element: an image of a falcon or faucon. As the artist himself noted, this is a play on the words, "faux con" meaning "false cunt."¹⁵¹

The sexually explicit pose of Duchamp's female figure can also be seen as an echo of another of Courbet's more infamous paintings: his own clandestine and sexually explicit painting of a female torso of 1866 now entitled The Origin of the World (fig. 21). A number of scholars have linked this female torso to Duchamp's Étant donnés...¹⁵²

However, by taking into account the elaborate set up that Duchamp erected, it soon becomes clear that the female figure in Étant donnés... does not simply repeat tautologically such "retinal" works. On the contrary, the whole structure in which he placed the female figure in Étant donnés... effectively erodes the aesthetic distance required for a contemplative "retinal" experience. Transforming the viewer into a voyeur, Duchamp, in effect, sexualizes the "retinal" experience. By so personally implicating the viewer within the boundaries of the work of art, Duchamp, as mentioned, sets up the conditions for a dialogue.

Reflections on a New Work by Marcel Duchamp," 11.

¹⁵¹ Calvin Tomkins, Duchamp: A Biography, 461.

¹⁵² This work, bought in 1866 by the Turkish diplomat Khalil Bey and acquired in 1955 by the French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan, was never on public view during Duchamp's lifetime. According to André Gervais, Duchamp met Lacan in 1958. He may have seen the work at that time or only in 1967 when reproductions of it were published.

As the dialogic process proceeds, the interlocutor soon discovers that this unidimensional "allegorical appearance," in effect, operates like Duchamp's personal snapshot, like a memory-endowed picture. By contextualizing the female figure within that complex web of interrelated signs, one is able to expose multiple layers of hitherto obscured signs. In this way, her "dead" tautological status, as a unidimensional sign, dissipates.

This is not to forget that Duchamp intentionally inscribed this figure as a resolutely sexualized one. That Duchamp intended such an unidimensional reading was disclosed to the artist's lover, Maria Martins, a Brazilian sculptress whom the artist met in 1945, the year before he officially began executing the work. In his correspondence to Martins in the late 1940s, he alluded to a work that he was making as "my woman with open pussy," and "N.D. [Notre-Dame] des désirs."¹⁵³ Martins has been the object of some speculation by scholars who have stated that she was, in fact, the model for the female figure in Étant donné.... This would include her serving as a model for the negative mold which was allegedly used for the female genitalia. This mold was inscribed as a sign in Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting" in 1950 as Female Fig Leaf. (fig. 37)

There are a number of reasons for the conjecture about Martins. For one, Duchamp gave her gifts of a few preliminary studies of Étant donné... which he dedicated to her. A drawing that explicitly foreshadows the female figure in his final

¹⁵³ Cited in Tomkins, Duchamp: A Biography, 366.

work is tellingly entitled, Étant donnés...: Maria. la chute d'eau et le gaz d'éclairage (fig. 104).¹⁵⁴ As well, Duchamp gave Maria Martins a relief sculpture (fig. 105), a preliminary study for the female figure in Étant donnés... which bears her name in a note written on the back of the work.¹⁵⁵

The conjecture about Duchamp's model for Étant donnés... is further reinforced by the fact that the female figure originally had dark hair like Martins. Duchamp even included a photograph of the female figure as a brunette in his Manual of Instructions (fig. 106). In the handwritten notes, Duchamp reminds himself to change the hair from dark to dirty blond.¹⁵⁶ He allegedly made this change to match the hair color of Teeny,

¹⁵⁴ This drawing was unknown until the mid-1970s when the director of the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Pontus Hulten, borrowed it from Nora Lobo, Maria Martin's daughter, to whom it had passed after her mother's death in 1973. See Calvin Tomkins, Marcel Duchamp: A Biography, 357.

¹⁵⁵ This is a small but elaborate study for the nude, modeled in gesso and covered with vellum. On its back, the words: "Cette dame appartient à Maria Martins/avec toutes mes affections/ Marcel Duchamp 1948-1949". It is "accompanied by directions for lighting it and for repairing it if damaged. This was an unknown work until Maria Martins lent it to Richard Hamilton for his 1966 exhibition in the Tate Gallery in London, entitled The Almost Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp. It served, as Anne d'Harnoncourt and Walter Hopps subsequently wrote, as "a most discrete hint at the existence of the yet unknown assemblage...." See their "Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections On a New Work by Marcel Duchamp," 11. Calvin Tomkins recounts how Duchamp was unaware that this relief sculpture was part of the exhibition and was clearly angry when he saw it there. "'Where did you get that?' he demanded. According to Hamilton, 'I somehow got the feeling that I had betrayed him. But he offered no information about it, and he said nothing about removing it from the show.'" Calvin Tomkins, Marcel Duchamp: A Biography, 437.

¹⁵⁶ In Duchamp's Manual of Instruction, there are two separate notes, as if reminding himself to change the brown hair to a dirty blond; the second is crossed out and the word, "fait" (done) added in pencil: "Cheveux - Changer les cheveux chatains (fait) en blonds légèrement foncés et faire photo de l'attache au bâton - peut-être se servir d'un mannequin de coiffure [last 3 words crossed out with the words "double coquille" and "fait"] pour soutenir la chevelure qui vient s'étaler entre les seins." See 15me OP, "Remarques générales et photos de détail." np.

the woman he later married.¹⁵⁷ Whether Martins was the model for the female figure is really a moot question. What is significant is how their intimate relationship is reflected in the intricate web of interrelated signs that positions this particular sexualized female figure and Duchamp, as subject, at the center.

By following the trajectory of "hair,"¹⁵⁸ for example, one can see how this female figure implicates Martins and how, as a sign, it can lead one into a complex network of signs that includes Duchamp himself, as subject. Though this headless female figure is portrayed with hair, her pubic area is strikingly hairless. One can readily read this as simply another tautological repetition since the whole tradition of the female nude in the history of art depicts such prepubescent bodies.¹⁵⁹ However, the female body, so evidently void of body hair, is more than a tautological repetition. It, in fact, takes on more personal dimensions, reflecting a whole other aspect of the artist's presence in this work.

¹⁵⁷ "We can assume that the torso conforms to the rather voluptuous proportions of Maria Martins, but the left arm and the hand, which holds the gas lamp, are Teeny Duchamp's (from a plaster cast), and the fall of blond hair on her shoulder is the same color as Teeny's hair." Calvin Tomkins, Marcel Duchamp: A Biography, 462. "As the other nudes were portraits of sister, friends, the model for Étant donnés was also a friend, Maria Martins. The hair was changed to match his wife's, Teeny." Francis Naumann, "The Bachelor's Quest," Art in America, 89, 9 (September 1993): 77-80. A 1997 BBC, Production, Marcel Duchamp: The Secret of Marcel Duchamp, explores "the revolutionary artist's love affair with Maria Martins, the woman who inspired to create this final work."

¹⁵⁸ I thank Olivier Asselin for pointing out the significance of Duchamp's preoccupation with "hair" which has led me to a whole new range of signs.

¹⁵⁹ For an account of the tradition of the aestheticization (and de-eroticization) of the female nude, see Kenneth Clark, The Nude: A Study of Ideal Art (London: John Murray, 1956). See also Lynda Nead's Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality (London: Routledge, 1992).

My inquiry into the question of "hair" begins with remarks made in the correspondence of Duchamp's first wife, Lydie Sarazin-Lavasser.¹⁶⁰ According to her, Duchamp "had an almost morbid horror of all hair." The artist reportedly requested that she remove her own body hair. Lydie Sarazin-Lavasser complied, stating, "why not, if it pleased him?"¹⁶¹ This is not the only recorded incident that implicates Duchamp in the removal of female body hair. As we have already seen, Duchamp, in collaboration with Man Ra, filmed the Dadaist artist, the Baronness Elsa von Freytag-Lorinhoven, shaving her pubic hair.¹⁶² These anecdotes are not gratuitous. Rather they cast a most significant light on some of Duchamp's other inscriptions in the "allegory on/of forgetting." His 1965 work, L.H.O.O.Q. Shaved (fig. 97) is a case in point. With moustache and goatee removed, this particular "Mona Lisa" evidently reverts back and parodies his infamous first L.H.O.O.Q.¹⁶³ L.H.O.O.Q. Shaved also points directly to the hairless body of the female figure in the "allegorical appearance," Étant donnés..., exhibited four years later. Though her hairless body operates, as noted, as a tautological repetition of hairless female bodies from the history of art, in Étant donnés..., Duchamp "animates" this dead

¹⁶⁰ This was a short lived marriage to the daughter of a well-to-do Parisian automobile manufacturer which took place in 1927. As Calvin Tomkins writes, "The unavoidable conclusion seems to be that Duchamp had made a cold-blooded decision to marry for money." As it turned out, Lydie did not bring him financial security. Calvin Tomkins, Marcel Duchamp: A Biography, 278.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 281.

¹⁶² Ibid., 230.

¹⁶³ This readymade of the Mona Lisa shorn of her beard and moustache was used as an invitation card to the preview "Not Seen and/or Less Seen of/by Marcel Duchamp/Rose Sélavy 1904-64: Mary Sisler Collection" at Cordier & Ekstrom in January, 1965. About 100 invitations were prepared.

sign by implicating the viewer's look. That is to say, in Étant donnés..., the artist "literally" sets up the voyeur to "LOOK" (L.H.O.O.O.) through two binocular peepholes at a female figure's shaved "hot ass." By so doing, he entraps the viewer/voyeur within the frame of Étant donnés..., forcing him/her, in this way, to become an integral part of the story of the woman with a "shaved ass." As an interlocutor, I have evidently become such a viewer-voyeur.

The artist is not outside the frame of this "allegorical appearance" either. If one continues to follow the trajectory of "hair," one encounters the artist himself. By so doing, one also discovers that the issue of "hair" crosses gender lines. To begin with, in 1921, Duchamp had his own head shaved in the pattern of a comet (fig. 108): the star-shaped area appearing on the back of his head and the tail of the comet ending on his forehead.¹⁶⁴

The shaved or cut hair, one could say, reappears later in his "allegory on/of forgetting" in the form of a 1948 work entitled, Tifs¹⁶⁵ (fig. 109): a French slang word for hair. Tifs is a barely legible pencil drawing of a profile of a male figure with an erection. Upon appropriate areas of this faint body, Duchamp glued strands of cut hair from head, armpits, chest and pubic areas. There is also a companion piece to Tifs called, Paysage Fautif, 1946 (fig. 110). Although this work has been translated as Wayward Landscape,

¹⁶⁴ According to Tomkins, Duchamp shaved his head in Buenos Aires in 1919 to counteract what he believed was a scalp condition that was causing him to lose his hair. Calvin Tomkins, Marcel Duchamp: A Biography, 214.

¹⁶⁵ According to André Gervais, this title was, in fact, provided by Jacques Caumont.

the word fautif can also be read as faux tifs or "false hair" which, in turn, dialogues with his 1968 inscriptio: , the "faucon" or "false cunt" in the etching, Selected Details from Courbet (fig. 13). Duchamp's work, Paysage Fautif, is relevant in other ways as well.

Recent analysis has revealed that the medium for this design, resembling an abstract painting on celluloid backed with black satin, is, in fact, seminal fluid.¹⁶⁶ Given the trajectory I am here following, it is significant to note that Maria Martins was the owner of this particular work, Duchamp having included Paysage Fautif in a numbered Boîte-en-Valise he gave to her. Awareness of this gift not only further reinforces the speculation about her implication in Duchamp's last work, but also leads one to conceive that there is, in fact, a male presence in Étant donné... Paysage Fautif, in effect, points to certain signs in Étant donné...: to the landscape or paysage, to "false or shaved hair" (faux tifs) and to its counterpart, the "false cunt" (faucon): hence to Maria Martins and to Duchamp as sexualized protagonists of this "allegorical appearance."

The presence of a male figure in Étant donné... becomes more evident if one follows other threads in the sign system. The sculpture of 1951, Objet-Dard (Dart-Object) (fig. 111) is a case in point. This is a ribbed phallic-like clay piece which was allegedly used in the fabrication of the mold for the nude figure in Étant donné... Serving as a temporary support to hold down the pig skin around the breast, the artist subsequently broke this clay piece off and had it bronzed, entitling the phallic-shaped object, Objet-

¹⁶⁶ Established in 1989 through chemical analysis. See Calvin Tomkins, Duchamp: A Biography, 354.

Dard. This French title is an obvious word play that links this phallic object to the "art object" as well as to euphemisms like "lance" or "spear" denoting the penis.¹⁶⁷

Another etching of 1968, Bec Auer (fig. 103), points more explicitly to a sexualized male presence in Étant donnés.... Like a preliminary study for the tableau, this etching foreshadows the naked female figure soon to be exhibited in the "allegorical appearance." She is lying in the same position and she also holds high a gas lamp called a Bec Auer. The most remarkable difference in this etching is that this female figure is depicted lying in the presence of a male nude. As a work that foreshadows the scene in Étant donnés..., one can only assume that the male presence has simply been veiled or obscured and that the ghost of Marcel Duchamp, the protagonist, lingers within the enclosure, and as the focal point. Because we have been following the trajectory of "hair," it becomes quite significant to note that the only darkened area, placed in the center of the composition, is the head of dark hair of this male figure.

By isolating a single sign like "hair" and following it, like a thread through the maze of interrelated signs, one is led to recognize that there is both a female and male figure at its nucleus. Martins and Marcel Duchamp are the protagonists of Étant donnés.... One might even say that Duchamp has provided the interlocutor with a

¹⁶⁷ When Étant donnés "was made public it was discovered that the Objet-Dard was part of the mould, directly under the breast of the bride, holding the skin in place. The mould was broken by Duchamp when its purpose was achieved, and the shape of one of the broken pieces gave him the idea of using it as an objet d'art." See Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, 526. Duchamp later made an edition of 8 numbered bronze casts issued by the Galleria Schwarz in Milan in 1962.

readymade given which can humourously confirm this particular trajectory of "hair." It is the readymade object, Comb, 1916 (fig. 112).

As I hope by now is self-evident, meanings constructed from Duchamp's complex sign system are never definitive, being totally contingent upon the thread the interlocutor chooses. By isolating other signs, the interlocutor can follow other threads linking the female figure to a different constellation of signs. For instance, one can do so by following the trajectory of the gas lamp depicted in the etching Bec Auer (fig 103), an especially significant trajectory since "the illuminating gas" is one of two features listed in the title of Étant donnés...¹⁶⁸

Bec Auer is a trade name for a gas light commonly used in Belgium and France at the turn of the century. The Bec Auer is an object that functions as a souvenir from his childhood. In fact, a Bec Auer was the subject of one of the Duchamp's earliest drawings of 1903-4, executed at age 16 (fig. 33). A version of the Bec Auer reemerges, as a readymade object, sixty years later in his final "allegorical appearance." This time the gas lamp is held high by the naked female figure.

In the light of Duchamp's etching, the Bec Auer which includes a male figure, one can recognize that the phallic-shape of the gas lamp readily alludes to a male presence in Étant donnés.... It certainly echos the phallic shape of Objet Dard. If the gas lamp serves to signify a male presence in Étant donnés..., it is but one aspect of this particular sign.

¹⁶⁸ This trajectory has, in part, already been followed by Arturo Schwarz in his The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp. However, I repeat some of his inscriptions here so that I can include into my dialogue what I consider a significant sign, the phallic lamp as a sign of the invisible protagonist, Marcel Duchamp.

Most evidently, it is significant because of its "illuminating" function. The title of Étant donnés... most evidently points to its role as an "illuminating gas" lamp. In this capacity, it links to an array of pre-inscribed signs from the "allegory on/of forgetting."¹⁶⁹ As we have seen, reference to the "illuminating gas," was first inscribed into Duchamp's notes in 1912. It is also a predominant feature in The Large Glass where, once dialogized, it points not only to erotic desire but also to technological progress. Let us see look at some examples.

In the lower portion of The Large Glass, called the Bachelor Machine, an "illuminating gas" runs through capillary tubes which simultaneously hold the bachelors in place and spark their desire for the female figure abiding in the Bride's Domain. As Duchamp's notes imply, the bachelors are engaged in repetitious movements suggesting masturbatory activity. This activity results in the movement of the illuminating gas through certain "slopes of flow" which end in "splashes."¹⁷⁰ Although the "illuminating gas" here suggests the flow of seminal fluid, it is not exclusively gendered as male.

The female figure in The Large Glass abides in the ethereal Bride's Domain. The Bride is motivated by a love gas(oline) that sparks her desire-gears.¹⁷¹ According to

¹⁶⁹ For example, Hanging Gas Lamp, Bec Auer, 1903-4 (fig.33); The Bec Auer (fig. 103). A gas lamp also appears in a cover and jacket Duchamp designed for André Breton's limited edition of Young Cherry Trees Secured Against Hares. It features André Breton's face on the Statue of Liberty, thus, also holding a gas lamp. This image references an essay Breton wrote on Duchamp's work that was entitled, Phare de la Mariée (The Lighthouse of the Bride) which appeared in Minotaure in 1935.

¹⁷⁰ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 66.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 43.

Duchamp's notes, this "develop[s] in a sparkling fashion her intense desire for the orgasm...she supplies the love gasoline to the sparks of this electrical stripping."¹⁷²

The "illuminating gas" links the male bachelors to a polysemic mechanical bride in an erotic way. At the same time, it also points to technological progress: most particularly to an electrical transformation of the illuminating gas. Duchamp's notes, in fact, emphasize that: "[p]rogress is an improvement of the illuminating gas."¹⁷³ Another sign from the "allegory on/of forgetting," Cols alités (Bedridden Hills) of 1959 (fig. 113) makes this point more clearly. This is a drawing of The Large Glass through which the faint landscape of Étant donnés... can be seen. Duchamp has here connected the apparatus of The Bachelor Machine to an electric pole situated in the landscape of Étant donnés.... In this way, Étant donnés... comes to represent an improvement of the "illuminating gas." The title Cols alités or "bedridden or reclining hills" not only takes into account the hilly terrain of Étant donnés... but also refers back to the reclining (bedridden) curves of the female figure and to her "electrical stripping."

Once the interlocutor links "the illuminating gas" to an array of signs, the female figure in Étant donnés... can no longer be perceived as unisemic. Along with her invisible male counterpart, she forms part of a constellation of signs from the "allegory on/of forgetting" that points, for example, to both erotic activity and technological progress.

¹⁷² [My emphases] "[T]here is no discontinuity between the bach. machine and the Bride. But the connections. will be. electrical and will thus express the stripping." Ibid., 39. Further references in Ibid., 43, 44.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 51.

One must not forget that the illuminating gas also refers to the system of lighting in this installation. As Duchamp outlines in the Manual of Instructions, the physical illumination is produced by a complex lighting system which includes fluorescent lights and incandescent spotlights. The direction of these various light sources are precisely prescribed so as to strategically illuminate the background, the sky and the waterfall as well as the female genitalia in the foreground.¹⁷⁴ Given the thread we have been following, it should be noted that the lighting effects upon these strategic points emanate not from the gas of the Bec Auer but from electricity. Even the Bec Auer is electrically-powered to produce the effects or illusion of a green gas light. In Étant donnés..., the transformation from gas to electricity is thus complete.

It is also pertinent to note that the optical effect of bright light that illuminates the scene has been amplified by means of a specially designed dark room situated between the sealed door and the enclosed area in which the female figure lies. Like a camera

¹⁷⁴ “2 OP: 1. à l'intérieur: lampe fluorescente en haut; devant éclairer le ciel par réflexion et transparence; 2. à l'extérieur arrière: moteur disques à trous boîte biscuits avec la lampe fluorescente rona dedans ...; 7 OP Electricité (lumières et moteur)...Placement des lumières: suivre instructions feuille spéciale (dessin en pleine page et photos) - Relier à des interrupteurs par groupes de 3 ou 4 lumières à la fois pour éviter court-circuits; Page 20: Eclairage (à vol d'oiseau) Placement des lumières...Bec Auer: Verre de lampe ronde; à l'intérieur: un manchon de bec de gaz et dans le manchon une petite ampoule électrique peinte en vert pour donner l'illusion de la lumière du gaz...spotlight 150 w. G.E. la spot doit tomber vertical, τ exact τ sur le con...; Page 35, 13 Op... Bec Auer (voir petit dessin dans la liste générale des OPérations) visser d'abord la petite lampe élect. sur la main -Puis placer le reste, manchon et verre de lampe -Le fil électrique sera caché dans le dessous du bras...; 15 OP Réglage général: Chute d'eau - spot light bien vertical sur le con...; 15 OP Remarques générales et photos de détail Montage du bâtis et placement des lampes - voir au détail des opérations "Bâtis et électricité" les nos. qui correspondent à ceux marqués sur les barres de bois du Batis - et aussi pour le placement des lampes sur les 2 barres métal reliant paysage à Briques. Réglage de la lumière éclairant la chute d'eau par derrière (voir 2me OP suite)... Bec Auer Faire grande photo très détaillée quand placé définitivement le Bec Auer n'est pas mathématiquement vertical; il reste légèrement incliné, la fixation du coude ne permettant pas de le redresser....”

obscura, this small space is a darkened box. By means of black velvet installed on the ceiling and walls, Duchamp effectively augments the visual sensation of light beyond it, deploying an optical effect of which most French "retinal" painters were well aware.¹⁷⁵

Duchamp's construction of this darkened space may, of course, have been prompted by very practical concerns, such as preventing the light within from seeping out through the cracks of the facade door. However, considering Duchamp's patatautological position, he would no doubt have been interested in the notion that dark and light, as oppositional forces, have such a reciprocal effect upon each other. Though darkness obscures, it also serves to augment the luminosity; though light illuminates, it also serves to further obscure. Considering Duchamp's notes about setting up his "allegorical appearance" in the dark, the interlocutor is further lead to believe that this dark space was definitely more than a structural imperative.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ This optical effect was theorized by Michel-Eugène Chevreul in his theory of simultaneous contrast of value or tone. When a dark mass is placed next to a light, it will augment the contrast by making the light appear lighter; and conversely the light will make the darker appear darker. Chevreul's theory greatly influenced the "retinal" painters from the end of the 19th century on. M.E. Chevreul, De la loi du contraste simultané des couleurs (Paris: 1839); The Principles of Harmony and Contrast of Colors and Their Applications to the Arts (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1981).

¹⁷⁶ Given: 1st the waterfall
[in the dark]
if, given 2nd the illuminating gas,
in the dark, we shall determine (the conditions for) the extra rapid exposition (=allegorical appearance/allegorical reproduction) of several collisions [assaults] seeming strictly to succeed each other according to certain laws, (unnecessary) in order to isolate the sign of accordance between this extra rapid exposition (capable of all the eccentricities) on the one hand and the choice of the possibilities authorized by these laws on the other. Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 28.

Significantly, the more that the interlocutor contextualizes the signs, the more the female figure holding a gas lamp becomes related to an intricate sign system that leads one in a variety of directions, prompting a myriad of possible readings. In this way, this figure can be recognized as an animate, memory-endowed sign. Perceived as such a vital and dynamic sign, her unidimensional appearance increasingly dissipates. Even her provocative, sexualized position begins to take on a completely different "appearance." If one regards this female figure as an animate, dynamic sign, one can easily recognize that she is lying in a birthing position, represented as an engenderer of "life." This said, it was most appropriate for Duchamp to desire to make the female figure in Étant donné... as "lifelike" as possible. According to his wife, Teeny, Duchamp used pig skin for his nude precisely because he wanted it to look as much like human skin as he could.¹⁷⁷

If the female figure can come to represent vital, dynamic characteristics, as both an engenderer of meaning and of new life, she can also come to represent the opposite. Looking at her from the opposing position, from the perspective of a "deadened" sign, one recognizes Duchamp's effort to reinforce her status as a sign of death. The rigid,

¹⁷⁷ "After he had stretched and glued the semi-translucent leather to the plaster maquette, he decided that, in order to get the skin tone he wanted, he would have to paint the inside surface; this required taking it off again, a long and tedious process. According to Teeny, the nude was far more beautiful before he did that - more subtle in color, with a soft, velvety texture. The museum's curators and conservators, amazingly enough, have no idea what is under the skin - whether it is a plaster cast or a metal armature of some sort." Calvin Tomkins, Marcel Duchamp: A Biography, 462.

corpse-like demeanor of this female figure, amplified by the eerily quiet setting and the tomblike structure that contains her, readily allude to death.¹⁷⁸

Such opposing perspectives (as both a corpse-like figure that represents death, and as a dynamic, life-giving presence) are not fanciful or incidental. They reflect the artist's notion of the "mirrorial return," images which, from one perspective, take on a certain impression; and from another, appear different.¹⁷⁹ The female figure is, in fact, such a multidimensional or palatological sign that, as a sign of life or death for example, can be seen as both either-or and neither-nor.

Furthermore, the dual nature of this figure is reinforced when one considers the actual construction of this figure. As seen from the photographs in the Manual of Instructions (fig. 114), this figure is constructed as a skeletal, hollow armature covered with pig skin. Her hollow form and severed limbs resemble a dead carcass. Seen from this perspective, she readily relates to her male counterparts in The Large Glass. There, the bachelors have also been inscribed as hollow chess-like pieces: called the "Malic Moulds," and the "Cemetery of Uniforms," these empty shells similarly allude to death.

As we have come to expect, if the form of the armature for the female figure in Étant donnés... points to a dead carcass, it can also come to counter this notion of death. The Manual of Instructions establishes that this empty armature was to rest exactly on three impact points. In light of Duchamp's notion of the number three, these impact

¹⁷⁸ Her deathlike demeanor recalls the photographs in police or detective magazines of dead or mutilated women. I thank Catherine MacKenzie for pointing this out to me.

¹⁷⁹ Drawing and explanation of "mirrorial return" in his notes, Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 65.

points are not necessarily simply a structural imperative, nor merely incidental.

Duchamp places a great significance upon the number three:

For me the number three is important, but simply from the numerical, not the esoteric, point of view: one is unity, two is double, duality, and three is the rest. When you've come to the word three, you have three million - it's the same thing as three.¹⁸⁰

As the other of unity, of duality, the number three is, in effect, a significant recurring sign in his "allegory on/of forgetting."¹⁸¹

In Three Standard Stoppages of 1913-14 (fig. 115), the number three stands for chance and probability. Here, Duchamp took three lengths of thread, each one meter long, and dropped them from a height of one meter onto canvas strips. The shape which resulted was fixed onto the canvas with varnish. This exercise with the three threads reflects his notion of the mirrorial return and of patatautology, as Duchamp's words make clear: "...the unit of length: one meter was changed from a straight line to a curved line without actually losing its identity [as] the meter, and yet casting a pataphysical doubt on the concept of a straight line as being the shortest route from one point to another."¹⁸² Templates made from these different but same threads also served him to

¹⁸⁰ Pierre Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, 46-7.

¹⁸¹ Although some of the references (i.e. the Three Standard Stoppages, the signs from The Large Glass) are prominent examples of recurring signs that relate to this number, I reiterate them here to illustrate how they anticipate or foreshadow the inscription of "the number three" in Étant donnés..., in the "centrifugal" structure of the "allegory on/of forgetting" in general and, most significantly, in order to emphasize the significance of this number to Duchamp's patatautological project.

¹⁸² Anne d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine, eds., Marcel Duchamp, 273-4. Duchamp's reference here to "pataphysics" is one more example of his alliance to the ideas of Alfred Jarry.

map the shapes of the "Capillary Tubes" in the Bachelor Machine of The Large Glass (Fig. 6). As we have seen, these threads hold the nine Bachelors (3 x 3) in place. They also serve a contrary purpose: to incite them to desire the Bride and to transcend their state.

In the Bride's Domain of The Large Glass, the number three also plays an important part. For example, the three irregular shapes of the "Draft Pistons" situated in the "Voie Lactée" or "Milky Way," were designed without pre-established rule, patterns, geometry. Duchamp placed a transparent square (geometrically-shaped) gauze and hung it in front of an open window. He then took three photographs showing the distortion of the gauze as it stirred in the breeze. The wind or nature determined the shape that these would take in the Glass. That there are three draft pistons (and that the number three and its multiples run through his entire work) is not insignificant.

The notion of the number three is patatautological. It defies the one (absolute truth, totalizing theory); it denies duality (either-or, black and white). It represents a myriad of possibilities, and is always both either-or and neither-nor. By taking into account how the female figure in his final "allegorical appearance" rests on three impact points, that she has the capacity to operate patatautologically as both either-or and neither-nor, as the number three, it becomes most pertinent to note that Duchamp has, in fact, added three dots (...) after the title of his work. In his Manual of Instructions, he entitled the work thus:

ÉTANT DONNÉS:
1° LA CHUTE D'EAU
2° Le GAZ D'ÉCLAIRAGE . . .

Signed: Marcel Duchamp, 1966¹⁸³

In effect, once dialogized, the female figure, like the other signs that constitute Étant donnés..., becomes patatautological. She can readily come to embody oppositional characteristics: life-giving properties as well as deathlike attributes; an open-ended, animate, vital sign as well as a closed, tautological or "dead" sign. This dual status as an animate and dead sign is unquestionably echoed in her natural habitat.

The dynamic element in the natural habitat is found in the lush, pastoral landscape with the flowing waterfall in the background. In turn, the deathlike qualities are represented by her bed of dried leaves and dead twigs. Examining these natural elements more closely, one can come to see how they too are also intimately related to the intricate web of interrelated signs and to some of the threads within it which we have already followed.

This natural scene readily cites another genre from art history: the landscape. At the outset, it thus operates like a tautological repetition, both of a painting tradition and of a number of natural settings already inscribed into Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting." We have already seen Paysage Fautif of 1946 (fig. 110) and Bedridden Mountains (Cols alités), 1959 (fig. 113). Despite Duchamp's anti-retinal stance and

¹⁸³ The three dots after the title can clearly be seen in the title inscribed into the Manual of Instruction in a small flap inserted on the first page (fig. 116). A photograph of the armature illustrating the title and signature on the arm of the female is also included in the manual. (fig. 114).

despite his status as an avant-garde artist, he had painted the "landscape" on numerous other occasions. His first known painting, Landscape at Blainville (fig. 117), was executed in 1902 at the age of 15, depicting an area around his hometown. Like his final landscape of Étant donné..., it also portrayed water and woods. Over the course of the years, Duchamp did a number of other landscapes in a variety of media, one having even been drawn with a chocolate bar.¹⁸⁴

As with the other signs in Étant donné..., one cannot assume that, on one level, the natural setting is simply inscribed as a tautological repetition. Like the other signs we have been examining, this particular landscape is also intimately related to the artist's personal history and to network of signs he has spawned.

The landscape depicted in the background of Étant donné... is, in fact, an enlarged photograph (fig. 122) that Duchamp altered somewhat so as to produce certain visual effects.¹⁸⁵ The snapshot was taken by the artist or by Mary Reynolds in the summer of 1946 during their holiday in Switzerland. Reynolds, according to various scholars, was a woman with whom Duchamp had a sporadic, yet close and long-lasting

¹⁸⁴ Arturo Schwarz cites three works that constitute "clear antecedents for the environment's landscape": Landscape at Blainville, 1902 (fig. 117) Moonlight on the Bay at Basswood, August 1953 (fig. 121), made from chocolate and other found materials; and Pharmacy, 1914 (fig. 120). Cols alités (1959), he says, links Étant donné... with The Large Glass. To these, I add other inscriptions (for example, Laundry Barge, 1910 (fig. 118); Landscape, 1911 (fig. 119), Paysage Fautif, 1946 (fig. 110) in order to relate how Étant donné... tautologically repeats these previous inscriptions and how they interrelate patatautologically with an array of other signs.

¹⁸⁵ The landscape background is a photographic blowup of a Swiss ravine near Puidoux. It is hand-colored in areas with a collage of cotton batton for the clouds and, as we shall see, a mechanical apparatus which provides the illusion of a flowing waterfall.

relationship.¹⁸⁶ Although there has been no conjecture about Reynolds "presence" in this work by scholars, one can assume that this landscape also operates as part of Duchamp's personal memoire. This site obviously held a particular meaning for Duchamp on several levels since he returned a number of years later with his wife Teeny only to have found it changed with new growth of woody terrain.¹⁸⁷

Duchamp's photograph was taken of a wooded area with a waterfall near Lake Geneva. The waterfall, which gushes down a deep ravine separating the towns of Chexbres and Puidoux, provided electrical power to local industries. As such, one can already note how this landscape relates quite readily to signs already encountered in his "allegory on/of forgetting," more precisely, to the signs in The Large Glass (fig. 6) and to Cols alités (fig. 113).

As Duchamp's notes for The Large Glass indicate, there is an invisible waterfall which activates the glider¹⁸⁸ and the mechanical activity of the whole Bachelor Machine. This activity, as we have seen, results in the process of converting natural energy into electricity, a transformation further implied in his Cols alités where an electric pole is

¹⁸⁶ When Reynolds was dying of cancer in France in 1950, Duchamp, who lived in New York, went to keep her company and was at her bedside upon her death. In thanks, her brother Frank Brookes Hubachek set up a trust fund for Duchamp in 1951 and invited him to his country place at Basswood Lake in northern Minnesota. Duchamp gave his host the small landscape drawing, Moonlight on the Bay at Basswood executed on blue blotting paper with materials he found on the houseboat that served as his sleeping quarters - a fountain pen, a lead pencil, talcum powder, and chocolate. The drawing now belongs to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Calvin Tomkins, Marcel Duchamp: a Biography, 375-6, 384-5.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 447.

¹⁸⁸ This glider is a repetition of the Glider Containing a Water Mill of 1913-15 (fig. 29).

links the scene of the "Bachelor Machine" and the landscape of Étant donné.... Water power produces energy for industry to make mass-produced products. In this regard, Duchamp's readymades stand as examples of technological products. Many of these readymades also operate as tautological repetitions of "water(fall)." Let us see how.

For instance, Bottlerack of 1914 (fig. 58), which is also a common object in French homes, used to dry wine bottles, is an indexical sign of water which drips from them. The infamous urinal of 1917 ironically entitled Fountain, (fig. 3) (a waterfall reversed) is meant to receive bodily fluids. As mass-produced objects, they signify technological progress. Duchamp explicitly referred to progress attained through water (and gas) in his imitated readymade of a plaque reading Eau et Gaz à tous les étages of 1958 (fig. 32). This particular imitated readymade also reflects how, in Duchamp's network of signs, water and gas, are inscribed as signs of technological progress.

The intimate interconnection between water and gas is also apparent on the erotic level. This becomes particularly evident when one considers some snapshots of Étant donné... which the artist included in his Manual of Instructions. There are four snapshots included in all. The first two appear to be unaltered copies of the original snapshots he took in 1946 (fig. 122). Of particular interest here are two modified photographs which he also inserted into the Manual of Instructions (fig. 123).

In the two latter photographs, the artist has almost totally obscured the wooded area around the waterfall, making visible only the silhouette of the hilltop. As a result, the waterfall, against the dark, nebulous ground, is transformed into a luminous, abstracted shape. Upon careful observation, one can note that this illuminated shape, in

an uncanny way, resembles two intertwining human forms, much like an embracing couple. On the second of the darkened photographs, Duchamp included a partial view of the female arm holding the gas lamp. Seeing this abstracted, luminous waterfall juxtaposed with the "illuminating light" of the Bec Auer, one can easily recognize how similar the two shapes are. In effect, the shape of the waterfall echoes the phallic shape of the gas lamp. Once the connection is made between the "waterfall" and the "illuminating light," one can follow this direction in Duchamp's sign system further.

Several other signs from the "allegory on/of forgetting" link the flow of water to a phallic shape. In Lazy Hardware of 1945 (fig. 83), a water faucet is attached to the thigh of a headless female mannequin. Here Duchamp also prompts one to associate a phallic-shaped object with water and with a female figure.¹⁸⁹ Most evidently the flow of water from phallic symbols readily points to erotic activity and the flow of seminal fluid. In this regard, the landscape painting, Paysage Fautif (fig. 110), executed with semen a year later, readily comes to mind.

In this photograph of the landscape featuring the gas lamp, Duchamp has created links between waterfall and the "illuminating gas" which point to the phallus and ejaculation. He has also done so in The Large Glass (fig. 6). In his notes to The Large Glass, Duchamp relates how the "illuminating gas" follows the "slopes of flow" of the capillary tubes, ending in "splashes." As we have seen, male erotic activity and

¹⁸⁹ Duchamp was commissioned to do a window display by Brentano's in New York on the occasion of Breton's Arcane 17. It included a painting by Matta which was the object of protest because it contained nudity. As a result the window piece was dismantled and reinstalled at the Gotham Book Mart.

ejaculation are not the only meanings ascribed to water and gas in Duchamp's array of signs. They can also point to mechanical activity and technological progress.

Where an invisible waterfall provides energy for the activity of "The Bachelor Machine" in the Large Glass, in Étant donnés... Duchamp went to great lengths not only to make it visible but also to create the illusion of an active, flowing cascade of water. As in the construction of the female figure, Duchamp aimed to make the waterfall as life-like as possible. The photographed area of the waterfall is, in fact, translucent plastic, behind which was hidden a specially installed apparatus (fig. 124). It consists of a perforated metal disc which is rotated by means of an electric motor in front of a light. Like a tautological repetition of already inscribed discs, such as Rotary Glass Plates (Precision Optics) (fig. 59) of 1920, Rotary Demisphere (Precision Optics) (fig. 8) of 1925, the Rotoreliefs of 1935 (fig. 9), all variables of the Bicycle Wheel of 1913, this particular rotating circle, is closely related to a key sign of Étant donnés..., light and water. This play of "illuminating light" shining through the transparent waterfall, thanks to the circular disc, gives the illusion of flowing water.

As the Bulletin of the Philadelphia Museum of Art indicates, the waterfall is "the only moving element in the silent tableau."¹⁹⁰ Though this comment was meant in the literal sense, one can, in fact, say that the waterfall, like all the other signs in Étant donnés..., moves: shifting into a myriad of possible directions. As a memory-endowed sign that refers to fluidity, to an animate nature, to erotic activity and technological

¹⁹⁰ Anne d'Harnoncourt and Walter Hopps, "Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections On a New Work by Marcel Duchamp," 8.

progress, the lush landscape with the flowing waterfall most strikingly contrasts with the natural setting in the foreground.

The female figure reposes not in a lush, fertile landscape but on decaying matter, on a bed of dead twigs and dry leaves. These natural elements were carefully collected by Duchamp and his wife in Lebanon, New Jersey.¹⁹¹ In the Manual of Instructions, the artist carefully explained, by means of photographs and notes, precisely how the bundles of twigs were to be placed. As he states, they are to give the impression that the female figure is actually embedded in the branches.¹⁹² Much like kindling for a funeral pyre, this bed of dying matter further reinforces her corpse-like demeanor. Even in this natural setting, therefore, Duchamp has inscribed signs of death.

Again, one can find in his "allegory on/of forgetting," signs which anticipate or foreshadow both her death-like demeanor and the decaying natural elements. Torture-Morte and Sculpture-Morte¹⁹³, (fig. 125, 126) both of 1959 are such pre-inscribed signs. Punningly referring to nature morte or "still life," in Torture-Morte, Duchamp again alluded to another art historical genre. This particular sculpture is a wrinkled, lifeless foot (of a cadaver) covered with flies and thus can readily link to the limbless carcass of Étant donnés.... In contrast, Sculpture-Morte, also a play on nature morte or "still life,"

¹⁹¹ Calvin Tomkins, Marcel Duchamp: A Biography, 462.

¹⁹² "[A]vant de placer le nue attacher...3 bandes étroites d'aluminium sur lesquelles sont soudées...quelques branches isolées qui doivent aider à l'effet d'enfoncement du nu dans les buissons 1,2,3,4,5,6." [the number refer to the six bunches of twigs placed in strategic areas. Marcel Duchamp, Manual of Instructions, 10 OP, Page 30.

¹⁹³ Torture-Morte (1959) is a painted plaster foot with flies; Sculpture-Morte (1959) is a marzipan relief sculpture of vegetables and insects on paper, mounted on masonite.

represents a bunch of limp vegetables, some phallic-shaped, upon which enormous flies have settled. Both "still lifes" are morbid depictions of decay and death. They point to the "dead" signs in Étant donnés... and, as such, operate as specular inversions of the flowing waterfall that animates the natural landscape and the gas light that illuminates it.

By means of the dialogical process, I have here attempted to unveil some obscured signs and to unravel a few threads in the complex system of signs which Duchamp has spawned. This can in no way be considered an exhaustive enterprise. In effect, the task of completely stripping bare Duchamp's intricate sign system is a virtually impossible task. As I have now said several times, the sign system permits a myriad of possible interconnections and can lead in innumerable directions, many of which the artist himself could never have anticipated.

My purpose in following these few threads in Duchamp's intricate web of interrelated signs is to illustrate how the sexualized female figure is not simply a "dead" tautological sign. By opting to stop and dialogue with the signs, this interlocutor discovers that the unisemic, uni-dimensional aspect of the signs beyond the door is illusory. Seen from one perspective, this is so: the female figure, as we have seen, can come to represent death, decay and a closed tautological system. Seen from another vantage point, however, she also appears as an animate sign of life, as a life-giving entity, and as part of an open-ended sign system.

What becomes evident when dialoguing with the signs beyond the wooden door, is the dual role of all the signs. As a result, Duchamp prohibits the interlocutor the possibility of constructing a teleological design or definitive meaning. As in the

"allegory on/of forgetting," the female figure, the waterfall, and the illuminating gas are also "capable of all the innumerable eccentricities."¹⁹⁴ As a sign of both death and life, the figure holding high the gas lamp and lying in a natural setting with a waterfall operates patatautologically as both either-or and neither-nor. The patautological nature of this scene is, however, obscured to the voyeur at the peepholes who has a limited field of vision of the uni-semic sexualized female.

Only by expanding beyond the boundaries, as an interlocutor, can one animate the signs. To do so, Duchamp must draw the viewer into a dialogue. He must entrap the viewer. Such a "trap," as an integral part of his patatautological game, should, therefore, also be examined.

Given: The "Closed" Structure

The structure of Étant donnés... operates as a double entrapment. It engages the viewer into a dialogue and also entraps the female figure lying in a natural habitat in an enclosure. This closed structure contains and retains within its limits an array of patatautological signs reducing them into an apparent semiotic univocity, into a seemingly monologic, tautologic "allegorical appearance." It would be significant, therefore, to examine Duchamp's structure or enclosure more closely and to discover

¹⁹⁴ [Duchamp's emphasis]. Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 27.

how, as a sign, it is also already prefigured in his "allegory on/of forgetting" in a number of ways.

Let us begin with the assisted readymade, Trébuchet, 1917 (fig. 127). This is a coat rack which Duchamp nailed to the floor in his New York studio, thus creating an object over which one could easily trip. The action of tripping over a trap is underscored by the title he gave to this assisted readymade. "Trébuchet" is a chess term for a pawn placed so as to "trap" an opponent's king -- if one changes the last letter in this French word from the letter "t" to an "r," retaining the same phonetics, it reads "trébucher" meaning "to trip."

The word "trébuchet" also signifies a small cage for trapping birds. Reading this assisted readymade in the context of Étant donné(s)..., one can draw parallels between the enclosure or cage which entraps the female figure and a bird cage, remembering that the word "bird" was a common colloquial term for "woman" in the 1960s.¹⁹⁵ Placed into the context of this assisted readymade, therefore, Étant donné(s)... can be read as a trap or cage for the female figure and as a means for the viewer to trip into a trap.

Whereas with Trébuchet, these meanings are metaphorical, suggested by the connotative power of the title, in Duchamp's "allegorical appearance," Étant donné(s)..., this double entrapment (of both the viewer and of the female figure) becomes literal. Here one has an array of patatautological signs that have been contained or framed within the physical structure of this cage or trap.

¹⁹⁵ It is interesting to note that a cage was placed over the head of a female mannequin by the Surrealist artist, André Masson, for the Surrealist Exhibition of 1938.

The notion of a cage that entraps an array of complex and open-ended signs within a closed structure was not new to the oeuvre of Duchamp. Why not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?, 1921 (fig. 41), an assisted readymade, is one example. It is a literal bird cage, containing heterogeneous objects (marble cubes, thermometer and cuttlebone), objects pointing to cryptic or undecipherable meanings. Such incongruous objects assembled together within the confines of a closed structure are reminiscent of another assisted readymade, With Hidden Noise, 1916 (fig. 40). In this work, metal plates, bolted together by means of long screws, hold in place a closed ball of string. This ball of string contains an unknown audible object that was hidden by Duchamp's friend and patron, Walter Arensberg. This trapped and obscured object produces an auditory effect that is unknown and unknowable with the enclosure intact. Analogies with the structure of Étant donnés... are obvious, as it too contains and confines within a physical structure, mysterious elements that cannot be deciphered.

Duchamp constructed various other enclosures for elements not easily contained or measured: like chance, for example. We have already seen how in Three Standard Stoppages, 1913-14 (fig. 115), the glass templates are designed from the serendipitous form engendered by dropping 3 strings from a given height. As Duchamp explains: "If a straight horizontal thread one meter long falls from a height of one meter onto a horizontal plane twisting as it pleases and creates a new image of the unit of length."¹⁹⁶ With these random shapes, he made three different templates which give tangible form to the notion of chance. In 1936, he put these templates into a croquet box which

¹⁹⁶ Cited in Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, 444.

contains and retains what he called "canned chance." In Duchamp's words: "This experiment was made in 1913 to imprison and preserve forms obtained through chance, through my chance."¹⁹⁷ Constructing boxes that contain and imprison the uncontainable bring to mind the uncontainable, patatautological elements contained and imprisoned in the enclosure of Étant donnés...

Perhaps Duchamp's Box in a Valise, 1935-41 (fig. 25),¹⁹⁸ relates even more directly to the structure of Étant donnés... It consists of a leather valise which contains a number of prior works: this time, miniature replicas, photographs, and color reproductions as well as, in some editions, original works like Paysage Fautif (fig. 110). As a collection or display of prior works, it operates, like Étant donnés... as the artist's miniature museum.¹⁹⁹

As an enclosure containing the artist's own souvenirs and personal selection of signs, Étant donnés... also recalls the various boxes²⁰⁰ in which, over the years, Duchamp kept his personal notes, scribbled on bits of paper. These boxes operate metaphorically as

¹⁹⁷ Anne d'Harmoncourt and K. McShine, eds., Marcel Duchamp, 273.

¹⁹⁸ Dalia Judovitz discusses the Box in a Valise as a portable museum or compilation of previous works, as well as a multiple itself since it was reproduced 20 times from 1941 to 1949. See Unpacking Marcel Duchamp.

¹⁹⁹ This is a point Olivier Asselin makes in his essay, "Mystère de la chambre jaune."

²⁰⁰ The Box of 1914, (1913-14). Facsimiles of 16 manuscript notes and a drawing, mounted on 15 matboards, contained in a cardboard box, are part of the Arensberg Archives at the Philadelphia Museum; The Green Box, (September 1934) Facsimile of manuscript notes, drawings and photographs contained in a green flocked cardboard box, published in Paris in 1934 in an edition of 320; In the Infinitive (The White Box), 1967 (box of 79 facsimile notes dating from 1914-23 contained in a plexiglass case with a silkscreen reproduction of the glider containing a water mill on the cover, published in 1966 in facsimile edition by the Cordier & Ekstrom Gallery, New York, in an edition of 150.

a means to contain or obscure ambiguous ideas, heterogeneous and undecipherable ponderings. Like the other signs in the various boxes or cages from the "allegory on/of forgetting," these notes are also cryptic, ambiguous, offering no clear and explicit meaning. The various boxes and cages contain disparate ideas and incongruous objects that can only become congruent when activated by a reader, when placed into a specific order.

Even though, "[t]here is no 'box' of notes to accompany [Étant donné...] only a strictly practical instruction manual on how to install it,"²⁰¹ the closed, box-like or cage-like structure of Étant donné... itself operates like a box or cage and, thus, like a tautological repetition of these prior enclosures, all of which contain patatautological elements. At the same time, however, the enclosure, Étant donné..., tends to argue or contradict the prior ones as well. Unlike the heterogeneous, enigmatic signs in Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?, or the array of disparate signs in Box in a Valise, Étant donné... presents a coherent, cohesive representation, a seemingly unidimensional "allegorical appearance" of a female figure lying in a natural habitat. Unlike the unknown and hidden sound in With Hidden Noise, and unlike the encasement of obscure and cryptic ideas or "canned chance" in the other various boxes, the collection of signs enclosed in the cage-like or box-like enclosure, Étant donné... serves to display its seemingly unisemic, tautological quality. If the various boxes induce the viewer to read the signs,

²⁰¹ Anne d'Harnoncourt and Walter Hopps, "Étant donné: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections On a New Work by Marcel Duchamp" Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin (April-September 1969): 12.

to be intrigued by them, the hermetic structure of Étant donnés, with its peepholes, serves to provoke the viewer on a personal, subjective level.

Like all the other signs in Étant donnés..., this enclosure has a dual status. Even though this structure is ostensibly a means to contain and retain a cohesive "allegorical appearance," its construction permits it to operate patatautologically as both either-or and neither-nor. The hermetic enclosure which frames and contains the female figure, the illuminating light and the natural waterfall is both a rational, pre-determined, "closed" structure and, at the same time, one that is haphazard, approximate, and "open-ended."

If one examines the Manual of Instructions for the reconstruction of Étant donnés..., this becomes even more evident. Let us begin by examining its status as a closed, rationally-conceived structure, noting first that the viewer is unable to assume a different vantage point or to enter its confines. As the spokespersons for the Museum in which it was reinstalled states:

One is unable to walk around Étant donnés..., one cannot get up close to peer at details or back away to get a different perspective. Marcel Duchamp has determined forever exactly the amount of detail and precisely the fixed perspective which he wants the viewer to perceive. The illusion is complete in itself; the essence of the piece is in the sheer visual impact of the view, and not in the materiality of the component parts assembled by the artist to create the illusion.²⁰²

Duchamp hinted at such a "retinal" structure in a statement made in the 1960s to John Cage: "Why don't artists require people to look at a painting from a specified distance?"²⁰³ This is exactly what he did in Étant donnés...: with great precision, he

²⁰² Ibid., 8.

²⁰³ Cited in Calvin Tomkins, Marcel Duchamp: A Biography, 411.

determined the exact distance from which the viewer would view his "allegorical appearance," as well as the precise vantage point.

In his Manual of Instructions, Duchamp provided diagrams and photographs of the behind-the-scene structure of Étant donnés.... It is apparent that the layout of this "closed" structure was pre-determined and designed with precise calculations and specific instructions so as to produce a measured and restricted viewpoint of the "allegorical appearance." One can observe that Duchamp designed this closed structure, with a pre-determined perspective, by means of rational formulae which date back to the Renaissance. For example, Duchamp's construction bears comparison, as several scholars have noted,²⁰⁴ with Albrecht Dürer's famous woodcut, Drawing of the Female Model of 1525 (fig. 22). In this print, a draftsman draws a female figure (positioned like Duchamp's) through a screen of perspectival threads also, like Étant donnés..., from a specific distance and with a single vantage point.

This installation was designed upon a checkerboard linoleum,²⁰⁵ as established through the photographs of the ground plan of Étant donnés... (fig. 128). Such a checkerboard grid serves as a means to construct the sightline for the viewer and to locate the nude figure in a precise location in the landscape. It is most evident that, in

²⁰⁴ See Jean Clair, "Marcel Duchamp et la tradition des perspectiveurs." Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques, ed. Jean Clair (Paris, 1977), 124-59.

²⁰⁵ Unlike many Renaissance artists who chose to leave the squares visible as a means to accentuate perspectival space, Duchamp chose to hide the grid. "The floor of the environment - which is invisible, being covered by the scene - is checkered: it repeats the design of the floor of Duchamp's Fourteenth Street studio." Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, 560.

this design, Duchamp cited Italian Renaissance perspectival formulae which also made use of the grid to convey the illusion of a three-dimensional space. I would moreover argue that Duchamp, in fact, cited perspectival formulae in more than just the checkerboard grid.

As I see it, the design of the structure of Étant donné... suggests a direct quotation of a study of Albertian perspective made by William M. Ivins, Jr.²⁰⁶ Ivins devised a method to explain the written treatise by Alberti, using an image of two chambers (fig. 129): the exterior wall of the first chamber containing the eyehole, the second chamber having a checkerboard floor. These two chambers are separated by a wall with an opening which serves as a template through which threads, or visual rays, emanate. They stretch from the eyehole in the first chamber to the checkerboard ground plan in the second. Étant donné... is also constructed as two chambers (fig. 11),²⁰⁷ the first with eyeholes, the second with a checkerboard floor, and in Ivins' illustration, the two chambers are separated by a punctured wall.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ Ivins refers, in this particular instance, to Leon Battista Alberti's treatise "Della Pittura" written in 1435-1436. William M. Ivins Jr., On the Rationalization of Sight (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art Papers no 8, in a limited edition of 500; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1973).

²⁰⁷ Duchamp inserted this folded cardboard scale model into his manual of instruction for the assembly of Étant donné, contained in a looseleaf binder, and numbered it page 1. It illustrates the artist's precise calculations for the two chambers: the dark empty space that separates the viewer at the peepholes from the tableau as well as the asymmetric room which houses the female figure.

²⁰⁸ Having come across Ivins' book illustrating Albertian perspectival formulae, I could not help but see the remarked resemblances between it and Duchamp's Étant donné. It leads me to assume that Duchamp may have been aware of Ivins' book published in a limited edition in 1938 (less than a decade prior to the beginning of its construction) and that he borrowed it for his final "retinal" piece.

Unlike the illustration by Ivins, however, Duchamp's ground plan is an asymmetrical copy of this ground plan. This re-adaptation of the Albertian chamber is, as I have already suggested, due to Duchamp's interest in stereoscopy and optical effects. In my view, Duchamp cites eighteenth century studies of monocular and binocular vision, basing the viewer's sightline (apparent in the irregular ground plan and the perspective schema (fig. 130) on the drawings of Sebastien Le Clerc (fig. 107) which illustrate the kind of visual distortions occasioned by the transformation from a binocular to a monocular view.²⁰⁹

Duchamp's rational construction is like a palimpsest of these prior methods of entrapping the viewer in a fixed position and of rationally constructing a "retinal" illusion. Although Duchamp carefully measures out the specified distance and precise vantage point according to pre-determined givens, he also modifies and rearranges them so that this "rational" structure is also, in effect, an approximation.

Duchamp also provided, in his Manual of Instructions, carefully drawn up plans, set out in fifteen operations with diagrams and photographs, of the exact order in which each element in the structure was to be reassembled. He gave, for example, the exact method of installing the door which is slightly concave and which, as already mentioned,

²⁰⁹ My observations are based on Jean Clair's study of Le Clerc's perspectival drawings. Clair claims Duchamp would have seen Le Clerc's illustrations at the Bibliothèque Ste-Geneviève while studying the perspectivalists. See Jean Clair, "Marcel Duchamp et la tradition des perspectiveurs." Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques, ed. Jean Clair (Paris, 1977), 124-59.

consists of four separate parts (fig. 68).²¹⁰ He supplied precise measurements for slightly angled planes for the glass photograph of the landscape.²¹¹ Even the the broken or chipped bricks for the punctured wall were specifically numbered and to be reassembled in exactly the same order (fig. 131).²¹² As we have already seen, he also gave precise instructions for a complex lighting system which includes fluorescent lights and incandescent spotlights. The directions of these various light sources are precisely prescribed so that they strategically illuminate key elements.²¹³ The angles of all the other

²¹⁰ "15me OP: la Porte composée de 4: Les 2 panneaux supérieurs s'accrochent par des [crochets] sur la grosse barre d'acier fixée (mais glissant horizontalement au sommet du bâtis (partie avant) - ces panneaux peuvent glisser horizontalement et séparément sur la barre d'acier pour permettre de prendre des photos. - les 2 panneaux inférieurs reposent sur le sol. Les 4 panneaux sont reliés ensemble au centre derrière par de petits tasseaux plats vissés. en haut, au milieu et en bas. - les 2 panneaux de gauche font un très léger angle concave avec les 2 panneaux de droite (vu du devant de la porte) - la porte (verticale) repose sur le sol juste au bord du 2me lino...- attachement des 3 panneaux de briques (vinyl) encadrant la porte. np. [In section with photographs, he adds] Photos - Pour faire de bonnes photos en couleur, 1. enlever le velour noir qui tapisse la porte par derrière, 2 - dévisser les 4 attaches 4, 5, 6, 7 qui tiennent ensemble les 4 panneaux de la porte et faire glisser à gauche et à droite les 2 anneaux supérieurs seulement sur la grosse barre ronde d'acier." Page 15

²¹¹ "2. OP. Toujours en suivant le modèle carton, placer le paysage pas tout à fait vertical (angle obtus de 91° ou 92° avec le plan du lino quadrillé." np.

²¹² "3 OP:... placer les briques numérotées, chacune à sa place numérotée sur la face de la planche tournée vers la porte. 4eme OP. Construire le bâtis entre les briques et la porte en suivant les indications des photos et du numérotage général." np. [my emphasis].

²¹³ "2 OP: 1. à l'intérieur: lampe fluorescente en haut.; **devant éclairer le ciel par reflection et transparence**;... 2. a l'exterieur arriere: moteur disques à trous boîte biscuits avec la lampe fluorescente rona dedans...; 15me OP: Bec Auer Faire grande photo très détaillée - quand placé définitivement le Bec Auer n'est pas mathématique vertical; il reste légèrement incliné, la fixation du coude ne permettant pas de le redresser; Page 20, 7 OP: Electricité (lumières et moteur)...Placement des lumières: suivre instructions feuille spéciale (dessin en pleine page) et photos) -Relier à des interrupteurs par groupes de 3 ou 4 lumières à la fois pour éviter courts-circuits. [On drawing]: Eclairage (a vol d'oiseau) Placement des lumières...Bec Auer: Verre de lampe ronde; à l'intérieur: un manchon de bec de gaz et dans le manchon une petite ampoule électrique peinte en vert pour donner l'illusion de la lumière du gaz...spotlight 150 w. ge...**la spot doit tomber vertical, τ exact τ sur le con...**; Page 35, 13 Op: Bec Auer (voir petit dessin dans la liste générale des OPérations) visser d'abord la petite lampe élect. sur la main. Puis placer le reste,

illumination is also precisely set out. Similarly, the table was to be situated in a precise place: set in incised grooves in the checkerboard linoleum.²¹⁴ So also was the female figure, designed so as to rest on three impact points, to be located on a precise place on the table.²¹⁵ Even the more amorphous natural elements like the dried twigs, gathered together in six bunches, were numbered and placed in specified positions.²¹⁶

Of course, by taking into account Duchamp's notion of the infrathin, one can assume he was aware that even the most exactly layed-out design can never be exactly reproduced. In his words, even "[t]he difference / (dimensional) between / 2 mass produced objects / [from the / same mold]/ is an infra thin / when the maximum (?) [Sic]

manchon et verre de lampe. Le fil électrique sera caché dans le dessous du bras...; 15OP Réglage général: **Chute d'eau - spot light bien vertical sur le con...**; 15 OP Remarques générales et photos de détail Montage du batis et placement de lampes - voir au détail des opérations "Batis et electricité" les nos. qui correspondent à ceux marqués sur les barres de bois du batis et aussi pour le placement des lampes sur les 2 barres metal reliant paysage à Briques; Réglage de la lumière éclairant **la chute d'eau par derrière...**" np. [my emphasis in bold].

²¹⁴ 8me OP - Placement de la table: les 4 pieds dans les 4 trous carré du lino quadrillé (photos) [sic]. np.

²¹⁵ "11OP Placement du nu sans l'avant bras ni jambe. Il vaut mieux être deux pour soulever délicatement le nu et le placer exactement aux trois points d'impact - un détail important: D'abord introduire le coude sur le baton de bois qui doit ensuite soutenir l'avant-bras, tout en tenant l'ensemble du nu en l'air; enfin descendre le nu sur ses trois points d'impact - (photos et détails supplémentaires pour cette 11eme opération en face des photos) - Quand le nu est bien en place, relever au dessous du nu le petit volet à charnière qui soutient la barre (épine dorsale) sans trop forcer...." [my emphasis].

²¹⁶ "9 OP Important: placer le buisson No. 4 à sa place exacte sur la table. avant de placer le nu...; 10OP Important: avant de placer le nu attacher sur 3 cotés du nu 3 bandes étroites d'aluminium sur lesquelles sont soudées [soudure froide] quelques branches isolées qui doivent aider à l'effect d'enfoncement du nu dans les buissons 1,2,3,4,5,6...; 14 OP Placer les buissons dans l'ordre suivant: le 4 est déjà placé avant le nu le 3, le 2, le 1 et les 5 et 6 (photos détail de placement) - le 2 est légèrement relevé par une barre de bois attachée à la table." np. [Duchamp's emphasis].

precision is / obtained.²¹⁷ Furthermore, in the Manual of Instructions he made it quite evident that this "closed" rational structure was, at the same time, to be subject to a degree of approximation. In fact, a small frontispiece to his Manual of Instructions labels the notes: "Approximation démontable, exécutée entre 1946 et 1966 à N.Y. (par approximation j'entends une marge d'ad libitum dans le démontage et remontage)"²¹⁸ He ends these notations with his signature and the date 1966.

His handwritten instructions and diagrams, meant to assist in the reconstruction, also read as if they were written to himself.²¹⁹ Furthermore, photographs provided of the interior of this structure illustrate it to be surprisingly makeshift and ostensibly unrefined. It becomes most apparent that Étant donnés... was constructed very much in an ad lib fashion, as an approximation, in a serendipitous manner. (fig. 132). For example, the cloudlike formation that one sees in the pastoral scene is made of wads of cotton batten stuck through the glass tableau. (fig. 133) In the notes, he states specifically that the cotton should be placed "ad lib" and replaced "à volonté."²²⁰ An old, battered, recycled

²¹⁷ Marcel Duchamp, Marcel Duchamp, Notes, note 18.

²¹⁸ "Dismountable approximation executed in New York between 1946 and 1966. By approximation I mean a margin ad libitum in the dismantling and reassembling." [My translation].

²¹⁹ This can be seen particularly in the last pages which read like a list of things he must still do: change the hair from brown to blond, etc. which are check off or marked "fait" (done). Étant donnés was, in fact, dismantled and reconstructed when Duchamp was forced to move studios. These instructions may have been conceived for this purpose. Even his hints about the best way of photographing the interior by unscrewing and sliding two parts of the upper door to the side, have been for his own photographs.

²²⁰ "2me OP. - les nuages (ad lib) attachés sur le ciel ou sur le verre dépoli qui pourront être modifiés dans le règlement définitif (en ouvrant les côtés du paysage) - ne pas oublier le long carton léger bleu environ. On the photograph (fig. 132) is written: "fond bleu sur lequel sont accrochés les nuages en coton (échangeables à volonté)." Page 4.

Peek Frean's biscuit box cover was employed to contain an important feature in Étant donnés...: the light that animates the flowing waterfall (fig. 124). Furthermore, the loose electrical wires and rough carpentry all suggest an amateur's bricolage (fig. 124).

The degree of approximation one finds in this structure leads one to assert that this "ad libitum" manner was intentional, not simply an amateur's construction. This was, in any case, the opinion of Paul Matisse, Teeny Duchamp's eldest son, who was entrusted with the task of disassembling Étant donnés... in Duchamp's studio and then reassembling it in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Matisse described the scene behind the wooden door as a "joyful chaos." There he found a great tangle of mismatched extension cords, bits of wood fastened together with nails that were too long or too short, masking tape used as a permanent binding agent. As he stated:

One thing that really struck me was the perforated disc that activates the waterfall. When you mount something like that on a motor-driven shaft, there is a setscrew, and us common folk usually set the setscrew. Not Marcel. The screw was loose. The disc was turning because there was no reason for it not to turn. It was perfectly well balanced, and the friction on the bushing was enough to turn the disc, But it was so typical of Marcel not to force the issue! A disc that could turn or not, as it wished. When I put it back together, I did not set the setscrew.²²¹

I would suggest that the element of "ad libitum" or "approximation" with which Étant donnés... was constructed, relates quite directly to the artist's patatautological position. As with all the signs we have already encountered in this "allegorical appearance," its structure is also constituted of opposing concepts that co-exist without any reconciliation. On the one hand, the perfectly repeatable (thus tautological) laws and

²²¹ Cited in Calvin Tomkins, Marcel Duchamp: A Biography, 463.

measurements with which the structure was constructed provide an element of exactitude, of totalizing, unitary and closed meaning. On the other hand, the "dismountable approximation," the element of ad libitum, introduces the opposite notion. Both coexist in the same structure without battling with each other.

Taking Duchamp's notion of the "mirrorical return," one can note how, when one looks from one perspective, one can see this "allegorical appearance" as a closed, fixed, totalizing, and dead structure; and when one looks at it from another, one can recognize Étant donnés... as open, approximate, dynamic and animate. Such specular inversions coexist within the closed structure of Étant donnés...: they are always patatautologically both either-or and neither-nor. This patatautological position, as I see it, exhibits a resolutely dialogic imagination.

Given: Duchamp's Dialogic Imagination

If the patatautological position of Duchamp can be encapsulated in his notion of the mirrorical return, then one can examine his various "patatautological" moves as specular inversions that reflect and deflect contradictory elements. Posing as either-or and neither-nor, these contraries serve as a means to dismantle any truth statement, or definitive reading. At the same time, such specular inversions are a means by which Duchamp (and this viewer-voyeur-reader-interlocutor) can "sustain and think through the radical exteriority or heterogeneity of one voice [concept, position, allegory, etc.] with

regard to any other."²²² These words by Paul de Man, I contend, describes the dialogic framework within Étant donnés... as well as its relation to the "allegory on/of forgetting."

Duchamp's patatautological project of encoding his two allegories can be described as dialogic from the Bakhtinian perspective as well. What is remarkable is that this artist made manifest how a "unitary language" of dead signs effectively compress and obscure the heteroglot language from which it is constituted. Engendered by a compression of the "centrifugal" and openly heteroglot "allegory on/of forgetting," Étant donnés..., as a monologic utterance or legible "bounded text," operates dialogically with the "allegory on/of forgetting." For Bakhtin, "heteroglossia is a given,"²²³ and so is it too for Duchamp. So much so that this artist inscribed the heteroglot "givens" into the title of Étant donnés... metaphorically as water and light. He ostensibly "contained" these fluid and ethereal or centrifugal qualities within the closed structure, presenting them tautologically as givens. Only in the dialogic space between Duchamp's givens and the viewer-interlocutor's can these tautological givens be "freed."

Already in this first dialogue which was conducted from the position of a Duchampian scholar, my own perspectives on dialogism, on our signifying processes, interweave with Duchamp's givens. This process as we have seen exhibited the signs in Étant donnés... as both tautological givens and as patatautological signifiers. A different vantage point will produce a further "explosion" of meaning. In my second dialogue, I

²²² Paul de Man, "Dialogue and Dialogism" in The Resistance to Theory, 108, 109.

²²³ Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, 270.

shall assume the role of voyeur at the peepholes and look at a resolutely contentious representation of the "woman behind a door" and how she has been imprisoned within the boundaries of this closed structure.

DIALOGUE TWO: ALLEGORIES OF NATURE-CULTURE-GENDER

"Étant donnés...": Duchamp's Specular Inversions

Released from my initial experience as voyeur and armed with the insights of my first dialogue, I recognize, as I once again stand at the peepholes, how the scene behind the closed door produces further levels of meaning. Now considering the dynamics between the centrifugal and centripetal forces in Duchamp's "allegorical appearance" from a different perspective, I envisage them as forces at play in an elaborate gendered game.

I understand, as I look beyond the closed door, how Duchamp has set out an array of gendered inscriptions of nature and culture as readymade givens. These givens, operating like tautological repetitions, unequivocally manifest to me how, "[n]ature is to culture as female is to male' [and how this] has been a recognizable formulation in western thought for many centuries."¹

From this perspective, I note how the signs inscribed into Duchamp's Étant donnés... operate as tautological repetitions of hierarchic dualisms of female-nature and

¹ Norma Broude, Impressionism: A Feminist Reading (New York: Rizzoli, 1991), 145; Regarding the gendering of nature and culture, see also Carol MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern, eds., Nature, Culture and Gender (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Carolyn Merchant, The Death of Nature (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980); Carolyn Merchant, Earthcare: Women and the Environment (New York: Routledge, 1995); and Sherry Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" in Woman, Culture and Society, ed. Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974).

male-culture, replayed and revised over time. I realize how easily these gendered constructs fuse and are confused with actual social structures and epistemologies, how the categories "man" and "woman" operate as readymade givens inextricably linked to societal norms and the perception of "reality."²

Lying in her natural habitat, the female figure in Étant donnés... represents, one could say, the generic "woman." Like a tautology rehearsed again and again, she signifies a number of ancient and modern inscriptions of "woman": the earth goddess, mother nature, the nurturing mother, the enchantress, the disruptive woman, matter, the body. Based on the insights achieved through my first dialogue, I recognize that to this generic "woman" have also been attributed such qualities as the ethereal, fluidity, chaos, the indeterminate, and the sublime. Thus, the readymade given, "woman," appears to echo the characteristics of Duchamp's centrifugal and open-ended "allegory on/of forgetting."

I also see the male principle inscribed as a readymade given. Representing the dynamics of the "allegorical appearance" itself, the male principle is a centripetal force

² Regarding such norms, Genevieve Lloyd writes: "Our ideas of maleness and femaleness have been formed within structures of dominance - of superiority and inferiority, 'norms' and 'difference', 'positive' and 'negative', the 'essential' and the complementary'. And the male-female distinction itself has operated not as a straightforwardly descriptive principle of classification, but as an expression of values....the equation of maleness with superiority goes back at least as far as the Pythagoreans" See her The Man of Reason: "Male" and "Female" in Western Philosophy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984, 1993), 103. Duchamp, as I shall illustrate, cites such inscriptions without assuming their "truth" value. In this way, his "allegorical appearance" can be seen to make manifest Carol MacCormack's eloquent statement: "The 'myth' of nature is a system of arbitrary signs which relies on a social consensus for meaning. Neither the concept of nature nor that of culture is 'given', and they cannot be free from the biases of the culture in which the concepts were constructed." Carol MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern, eds. Nature, Culture and Gender, 6.

that reduces and contains the female principle within a closed, ordered and coherent frame. Representative of the mind, of reason, of rationality, of order, “man” is the form-giver, the agent of earthly transformation, the civilizer, and the producer of modern culture.

The reader may already see that there are counter-examples to such strict gender characteristics. Even though Duchamp strips bare these gendered constructs in Étant donnés..., displaying them as readymade givens, his “allegorical appearance” can also be seen as a constituent part of an elaborate patatautological game. By looking at these readymade givens from another perspective, one can recognize how they operate like oppositional elements in a specular game, how they appear to simultaneously cite and invert gendered constructs.

By taking into account Duchamp's patatautological position, I assume that the artist inverted the female-male principles so as to dismantle the ontological status ascribed to these gendered givens. I surmise that his task is to display these gendered “normative” givens as both either-or and neither-nor, and thus to deprive them of their status as tautological truth statements. To demonstrate the intricacies of his patatautological game, I regard Duchamp’s givens as citations of different histories and epistemologies. In this task, I do not pretend to exhibit an exhaustive or comprehensive account of cultural constructs of nature, culture and gender. This second dialogue also comprises a “choice of Possibilities”³ made from a myriad of other possible givens. Such a selection is not arbitrary but discloses my own set of givens, my own cultural baggage,

³ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 27.

and my own personal predilections about the power of representational and discursive practices to create and perpetuate gender hierarchies. The histories and epistemologies I have elected to present have played a significant role, I believe, in the construction of normative gender categories in Western culture.

I regard Étant donnés... as a citation and an inversion of five main instances in Western cultural histories. These have been selected from ancient myths and philosophies, from specific narratives from the Judeo-Christian tradition, as well as certain Enlightenment epistemologies and moments from the histories of modern industrialization. The Eurocentric nature of this selection is intentional. Even though gender biases are certainly anything but exclusive to Western culture, I believe that, as a representation, Étant donnés... displays its inherent “Occidentalism.” As I see it, there is a hidden subtext in Duchamp’s “allegorical appearance”: the hegemony of Western culture as a given. My selection of these particular Eurocentric histories serve as a foundation for my third deconstructive dialogue which deals with hierarchic dualistic structures, founded on first principles, embedded in representational and discursive practices.⁴

By addressing these gendered constructs in a chronological “order,” I do not wish to imply that there is a continuity of ideas sharing a homogeneous given. Rather, as my reading of Duchamp's patatautological game makes clear, these historical accounts of nature, culture and gender continuously revise a putative given. Though operating as

⁴ Dialogue Three examines how “woman” in Étant donnés... implies a resolutely white woman and how “man” inscribed as the agent of culture is Western.

tautological repetitions, each revision is, in fact, singular with unique characteristics, contingent upon specific contexts. In essence, what follows here is an intersection of my own givens with those of Duchamp. Because his "allegorical appearance" frames and contains the signs already inscribed into the centrifugal "allegory on/of forgetting," by necessity this dialogue will again bring to the surface certain previously inscribed signs that lie obscured within the boundaries of Étant donnés...

This dialogue is based, in some cases, on original texts of philosophers and thinkers, but for the most part, I rely on secondary references. I do so for two interrelated reasons: to illustrate how these secondary texts, like Duchamp's own recitation of givens, are themselves revisions; and, also like Duchamp, to grant the "original" givens no ontological status. In other words, in keeping with the artist's patatautological position, I present these cultural constructs like so many "philosophical clichés that are revised generation after generation since Adam and Eve."⁵ This said, the scene behind the closed door can appear to cite prehistorical tales that predate biblical references to the "original" parents.

Given: 1. Ancient Inscriptions of Female-Nature 2. The Estrangement...

The female body displayed through the peepholes is closely associated with nature and such natural elements as the flowing waterfall and the illuminating gas. Primal givens, water and gas, have qualities that are fluid and formless, boundless and ethereal. Water

⁵ See Introduction, Footnotes 61 and 62; and Dialogue One, p. 82.

and gas also readily relate to the dynamic transformation of energy and the engendering of natural life. These primal elements are "centrifugal" in that they are not containable and possess a dynamic power. Inscribed as givens in the title of this "allegorical appearance," the centrifugal powers of water and gas, we shall see, are also exhibited by the female figure in Étant donnés...

In fact, the centrifugal qualities associated with this female figure are already a replay of signs from the "allegory on/of forgetting." For example the "Brides' Domain" in The Large Glass (fig. 6) is characterized as the ethereal, the boundless, the infinite, "the number three,"⁶ with the potential to produce energy and light.⁷ In Étant donnés, the female figure replays such dynamic energy: bathed in her own blinding light, she exerts an animating power over the viewer.

In contrast to the "Bride's Domain," however, this female figure does not abide in a celestial setting, but is embedded in a physical, earthly domain. Lying in a birthing position against a lush natural landscape, she personifies ancient inscriptions of the life-giving body of mother nature. She poses here like the goddess, "Gaia (also called Ge)...the ancient earthmother who brought forth the world and the human race from the 'gaping void, Chaos'."⁸ She recalls those inscriptions of woman as the great Earth

⁶ Abiding in a cloud-like formation and possessing the qualities of openness and chance, of "blossoming," she relates to Duchamp's notion of the "number three" which is incommensurable, the quality that is beyond unity and duality.

⁷ Duchamp inscribes the female figure in the "Bride's Domain," for example, as a "filament substance [that] resembles a solid flame." Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 48.

⁸ Charlene Spretnak Cited in Carolyn Merchant, Earthcare: Women and the Environment, 3.

Mother, as the Great Mother Goddess, as the first benign virginal Eve who was pure and inscribed as light, and as "pristine, untouched nature."⁹

The given, "woman," inscribed into this "allegorical appearance" tells of a world in which humans lived "in daily, immediate, organic relation with the natural order for their sustenance."¹⁰ In this way, the pose of female-nature replays other inscriptions from the "allegory on/of forgetting," such as The Bush, 1910-11 (Fig. 93) and Baptism, 1911 (Fig. 94), which represent edenic images of pregnant-looking women in paradisaical landscapes. In this natural habitat, the reclining mounds (or "Cols alités") (fig. 113) of her body and her single exposed breast also exhibit her as the nurturing mother who recalls "the golden age as a time when a bountiful (unplowed) mother earth brought forth grains, fruits, honey, and nectar..."¹¹

Yet as one stares down at this fertile mother earth, it is impossible to ignore that mythic Mother Nature lies fixed, immobile, on a bed of dried twigs. Furthermore, the frames of the peepholes insist that this is simply an "appearance" of a natural, boundless and "centrifugal" female nature. Simply a cultural artifact, female-nature poses here as a lost natural world. Indeed, as it has been told and retold, a rupture with mythic Mother

⁹ Carolyn Merchant, *Ibid.*, xvi.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹¹ Carolyn Merchant gives the examples of Hesiod, in the 8th century BC who "told of the time of immortal men who lived on Olympus where all was "of gold" and the "grain giving soil bore its fruits of its own accord in unstinted abundance." This image of a nourishing and nurturing nature is also evident, she notes, in the writings of Ovid. In his The Metamorphosis (7 AD), he told of "the golden age as a time when a bountiful (unplowed) mother earth brought forth grains, fruits, honey, and nectar and people were peaceful, 'unaggressive, and unanxious'." See *Ibid.*, 33.

Nature occurred at some point in human history. This separation was brought on by an emerging patriarchal culture which served to dethrone the mother goddesses, replacing them "with male gods to whom the female deities became subservient."¹² The transition from a fertility consciousness associated with cults of earth goddesses to the rites of rational gods and goddesses became legendary in early Greek literature.¹³ Epic narratives that began to be written in the seventh century BC recount a decline, a lost utopian world, an estrangement from an enchanted natural world, which had been previously symbolized by woman.

One such story of this estrangement, according to Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, is the Homeric epic The Odyssey, originating in the second half of the eighth century BC.¹⁴ In their Dialectic of Enlightenment, Adorno and Horkheimer relate how Homer's Odysseus is constantly challenged in his travels by the allurements of nature, forcing him continuously to combat the temptation of falling under her spell. In his travels, Odysseus thus estranged himself from the natural, from nature symbolized by various female figures, such as the Sirens.¹⁵ Odysseus, as the story goes, was already

¹² Ibid., 10.

¹³ See Genevieve Lloyd who studies these accounts in The Man of Reason: "Male" and "Female" in Western Philosophy. For an interesting study of rational goddesses, see Jean Shinoda Bolen, Goddesses in Everywoman: A New Psychology of Women (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984). The "headless" woman in Étant donnés... I argue, does not make reference to the rational goddesses.

¹⁴ Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment 2d ed., New York: Continuum, 1991 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972). Original edition: Dialektik der Aufklärung (New York: Social Studies Association, 1944).

¹⁵ Ibid., 3-80. Although in The Odyssey, Homer makes reference only to the Sirens's song and does not specify that they are female protagonists, writers such as Theodor Adorno and Max

forewarned of the song of the Sirens, a song so beautiful that anyone hearing it became forever entrapped, losing all sense of a coherent unified self. Odysseus escapes the Sirens' lure by having himself tied to the mast of his ship while his oarsmen, their ears firmly plugged with wax, avoid the song and swiftly sail by to safety. The Sirens, representing the ancient female enchantress (female-nature possessing a centrifugal force), illustrate, say Adorno and Horkheimer, how "men have always had to choose between their subjection to nature or the subjection of nature to the self."¹⁶

The story of the Sirens is significant in another way. For Odysseus, bound to the mast of his ship, does hear their song and begs the sailors to stop, but does so in vain for they cannot hear him. And thus, as Adorno and Horkheimer write, "[the Sirens'] temptation is neutralized and becomes a mere object of contemplation - becomes art."¹⁷ The Sirens' song is no longer a natural, centrifugal force with which man must contend: sublimated into art, female-nature is reduced and reified into a beautiful object, into an aesthetic object to be contemplated. Subjugating the centrifugal forces of the Sirens in this way, Odysseus drives a definitive wedge between man and nature, with "Art" symbolizing this estrangement.

The cleavage between man and nature, of course, also represents an estrangement from his natural sensuous self, his sense of oneness with nature. Indeed, the sensuous

Horkheimer interpret the Sirens to be female figures. Others, like the pre-Raphaelite painter of the nineteenth century John William Waterhouse, represented them in his artworks as both seductive females and as menacing birds possessing female heads.

¹⁶ Ibid., 32.

¹⁷ Ibid., 34.

self, according to Adorno and Horkheimer, must always succumb to the logic of the rational self. This estrangement, as we shall see in the ongoing narratives, is a process of denaturalisation. It represents what the two Critical Theorists call a "history of renunciation," a history signalling a shift from a concept of a powerful female nature to a male-dominated culture. As they write, "woman as an alleged natural being is a product of history which denaturalizes her."¹⁸

Duchamp makes just such an estrangement evident in Étant donné.... As we know, he provides us only with a distanced and restricted view of the natural enchantress. The old wooden door, in effect, serves as a barrier which denies us any possible union with her. Seen through the frames of the peepholes, she is reified, a mere object of vision. Such a separation from a centrifugal female-nature was already explicitly inscribed into The Large Glass. Here the ethereal, infinite, open-ended Bride's Domain is also totally separate from the male "Bachelor Machine." Furthermore, as for the viewer of Étant donné..., the Bride also exists only as a distanced object of vision for her male counterparts.

One can thus recognize how the female principle, once possessing the boundless life-giving energy and nurturing qualities of ancient Mother Nature, is contained by a centripetal force that reduces her to an object of vision. Equally apparent is that such a separation/estrangement from female-nature casts the male principle on the outside looking in. Separated from female-nature in Étant donné..., Duchamp effectively replays the mythic estrangement from nature.

¹⁸ Ibid., 55, 110.

This estrangement from or renunciation of nature (as a female principle) is replayed over and over in our cultural histories, and consigns female-nature to a hierarchically inferior realm. Ancient philosophical texts and narratives from the Judeo-Christian traditions, as well as Enlightenment epistemologies and histories of modern progress, revise this schism between female and male principles, as Duchamp's patatautological games illustrate.

Ancient philosophical tradition revealed this rupture with the natural world. In Parmenides' philosophy there is no longer any notion of a symbiotic relationship with female-nature. As Carolyn Merchant explains, "Parmenidean oneness represents the unchanging natural law that has lapsed into the appearances of [what will later become] the Platonic world. This fallen phenomenal world is incomplete, corrupt, and inconstant."¹⁹ The natural world as a female principle is, in this way, relegated to a lesser order.

Gendered hierarchical categories were, according to Genevieve Lloyd, already written by Pythagoras. She explains:

In the Pythagorean table of opposites formulated in the sixth century BC, femaleness was explicitly linked with the unbounded, the vague, the indeterminate as against the bounded - the precise and clearly determined. [Furthermore, a]ssociations between maleness and clear determination or definition persisted in articulations of the form-matter distinction in later Greek philosophical thought. Maleness was aligned with active, determinate form, femaleness with passive, indeterminate matter.²⁰

¹⁹ Carolyn Merchant refers to the philosopher Parmenides (540-450 BC): Earthcare, 31

²⁰ Genevieve Lloyd, The Man of Reason, 3.

The insights acquired from my first dialogue with Étant donnés... prompt me to equate the very structure of Duchamp's two allegories to these gendered principles. Étant donnés..., as an "allegorical appearance," is "bounded, precise and clearly determined"²¹ and thus gendered, if one accepts the Pythagorean tables, as masculine. In contrast, the unbounded, indeterminate "allegory on/of forgetting" is encoded as a female principle. Similarly the dynamic between the two allegories reenacts the manner in which a centripetal, "active determinate form" is exerted upon on the centrifugal, indeterminate form of the "allegory on/of forgetting." The "allegorical appearance" gives form to what was previously formless, containing what is indeterminate and framing what is infinite. Such a dynamic between male and female principles is played out in various ways in dualistic traditions, providing Duchamp with an array of readymade givens.²² Even though these gendered categories can be seen to operate in Étant donnés... (to use Duchamp's own words) like so many "philosophical clichés that are revised generation after generation," as I regard them more closely, I can also observe how they are inverted.

In the case of the two allegories, we know that Duchamp did not devalue or ascribe a lower order to the indeterminate and unbounded or centrifugal "allegory on/of forgetting." Nor are the female centrifugal and male centripetal qualities totally separate

²¹ As we have already seen in the first dialogue, this is only an "appearance." Once one transcends the boundaries of this "bounded" allegory by means of a dialogic process, one realizes it is not as precise and determined as it appears. Following the avenue taken in my first dialogue, one can thus say that the male principle has subjugated or sublimated (hidden) the female principle.

²² For a list of the hierarchal dualisms that prejudice mind (male) over body (female), see Donna Wilshire "The Uses of Myth, Image, and the Female Body in Re-visioning Knowledge," in Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing, ed. Alison M. Jaggar and Susan R. Bordo (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 95.

or mutually exclusive. They are part of an integral system, as we know. Although the signs in the "allegorical appearance" are engendered from the "allegory on/of forgetting," as the first dialogue established, Étant donnés... is both prologue and epilogue. Where the centrifugal signs from the "allegory on/of forgetting" are contained, enframed, and as "deadened" signs bound within the confines of Étant donnés..., they are also dynamic, potentially open-ended, able to reassert their centrifugal nature. There is, one can therefore suggest, a (con)fusion of male and female principles. Let us see how such specular inversions of tautological givens operate patatautologically in other instances: with Plato's givens, for example.

Given: 1. Mind & Matter 2. The Platonic & Aristotelian Traditions

Plato (427-347 B.C.) based his own dualistic notions of the Ideal (nonmaterial) world and the (material) world of appearances on the concepts of Pythagoras and Parmenides.²³ It was specifically "the numerical relationships of Pythagoras [as well as] the rationalist idealism of Parmenides"²⁴ that formed the basis for Platonic philosophy. The dualism between the Ideal world and the world of appearance is also reflected in the Soul/Mind

²³ Pythagoras introduced an idealist orientation based on "numbers and their relationships [as] the primary principles of matter [and the notion that] the contemplation of the eternal perfection of intrinsic form in all things was the ultimate moral and religious goal." Parmenides, according to Berman, "went even further. He held that the logical was the only real and that all change, motion, and variety in the universe were illusions." See Ruth Berman, "From Aristotle's Dualism to Materialist Dialectics: Feminist Transformation of Science and Society," in Gender, Body, Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing, 231-2.

²⁴ Ibid.

and Body/Matter dichotomy. Plato regarded the Soul or Mind as a derivation of the first Ideal world whereas the physical body, like matter, belonged to the temporal, phenomenal world.

His dualism reversed the hierarchic order of all-powerful female nature and prejudiced the nonmaterial over the material, Soul or Mind over Body/Matter, male over female. Plato's Ideal world of unchanging eternal form, as the realm of the Idea, is accessible only to the Mind. In contrast, the world of appearance represents the lesser phenomenal world of shadows, the natural world of matter that is imperfect and transient. As Plato's Allegory of the Cave,²⁵ makes clear, the philosopher, as knowing mind, must strive to escape the fetters of the transient world of appearance, of nature. The philosopher must leave the dark cave with its restricted vantage point of the world of appearances and shadows, in order to see the light of the Ideal world.

These dichotomous categories, as Ruth Berman underlines, are gendered. In Plato's dichotomy, "[s]uperior, rational souls [of the philosopher] were attached to master-class, male bodies before birth..."²⁶ "Woman" in her biological capacity to conceive, to give birth to the body, maintained her ancient connection to the fertility of the earth. She remained linked to nature, to the phenomenal and transient world of shadows. In the Timaeus, Plato relegated the role of limiting form by the knowing mind

²⁵ Plato, "'The Allegory of the Cave' (The Republic: Book VII)" in Great Dialogues of Plato, ed. Eric H. Warmington and Philip G. Rouse, trans. W.H.D. Rouse (New York and Toronto: The New American Library, 1956).

²⁶ Ruth Berman, "From Aristotle's Dualism to Materialist Dialectics," 240.

to that of the father, and the role of indefinite matter to the mother. As he noted, "Women 'imitate the earth'."²⁷

When the female figure in Étant donnés... is envisioned as the fertile mother earth, as nurturing mother nature, Plato's words, "women imitate the earth" readily come to mind. Furthermore, the dead twigs and dried leaves in which she is embedded associate her with the transience of matter. One might even suggest that the very structure of Étant donnés... reenacts Plato's "Allegory of the Cave." Like the shackled prisoners who, with their restricted vantage point, have only a visual access to the phenomenal or material world of appearances, the viewers looking through the peepholes have only a limited view of female-nature. Their similarly restricted perspectives permit them only a view of the world of shadows: an "(allegorical) appearance" of the world of shadows (or signs). With this singular vantage point, the viewer has no immediate access to the "other" world of centrifugal signs situated beyond its boundaries.

In his "allegory on/of forgetting," Duchamp had already reenacted aspects of Plato's "Allegory of the Cave," notably in his last painting, Tu m', 1918 (fig. 26). Where in Plato's cave, objects from the Ideal world paraded in front of a fire, casting shadows on the walls in front of the shackled prisoners who interpreted them as real, in Tu m', Duchamp placed his own readymades (posing as the "original") in front of the light of a projector, casting shadows which he subsequently fixed in paint.²⁸ The shadows or

²⁷ Cited in Genevieve Lloyd, The Man of Reason, 2.

²⁸ Jean Clair makes similar observations, stating that during the period he was working on The Large Glass, Duchamp's whole studio resembled Plato's cave because of the shadows of readymades projected onto the walls. Clair also notes that Duchamp fixed these shadows onto his

"appearance" of the readymade objects in Tu m' anticipate the readymade givens inscribed into his "allegorical appearance" which also operate, as we know, like mere intimations (or shadows) of another reality. More specifically, like the world of appearance perceived by the shackled prisoners in Plato's cave, the natural, physical world seen from the restricted vantage point of the peepholes is also but a shadow of the world from which it was engendered: the nonmaterial world (of signs) of the "allegory on/of forgetting." And, similar to Plato's allegory of the cave, the world that engenders the world of shadows is another realm, situated elsewhere, and is only accessible to the mind. Let us now see how Duchamp, in Étant donné..., inverts the Platonic givens of the Ideal and material worlds.

The philosopher who escapes Plato's cave with its restricted view of the world of appearance is blinded by the bright light of the Idea, of the Ideal world, of an unchanging, eternal world that conveys Truth. In contrast, the voyeur-interlocutor at the peepholes is dazzled not by the bright light emanating from an Ideal world but instead from the "illuminating (gas) light" from a resolutely material world of the "allegorical appearance." Moreover, once the boundaries and limitations of the world of "allegorical appearance" are transcended through a dialogical process, the mind of the interlocutor does not confront an unchanging, eternal Ideal design that conveys Truth. One's mind is confronted instead with an infinitely complex, limitless and ever-changing centrifugal

last painting, "qui marquait son définitif adieu à la peinture en 1918..." Jean Clair, Duchamp et la photographie (Paris: Chêne, 1977), 10. For a study of Duchamp's oeuvre from a neo-platonic perspective colored by mathematical theories of the fourth dimension, see also his Marcel Duchamp ou le grand fictif (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1975).

network of signs that emerge from the boundaries of Étant donnés.... Significantly, these "original" signs defy the possibility of obtaining a stable truth statement.

Despite its material characteristics, Duchamp's "allegorical appearance" takes on qualities closely resembling the Platonic Ideal world which is constant, unchanging. As we know, Duchamp has put signs in Étant donnés... "into a state of Rest," according to his design. Inasmuch as they are fixed, stabilized and assume a one-on-one relationship between sign and referent, they present themselves as givens that are unchanging, constant. Like a specular inversion, therefore, the signs inhabiting Duchamp's material "allegorical appearance" can be equated to the qualities assigned to Plato's unchanging and constant Ideal world. Conversely, the signs in the ethereal "allegory on/of forgetting" are openly centrifugal, unstable, producing ever-changing and ephemeral meanings. As such, they point to the transient, changing qualities of the material world of appearance.

As we have seen, both Pythagoras and Plato ascribed the material realm to the female and the nonmaterial to the male principle. Duchamp's patatautological game also encompasses an inversion of these gender categories. Duchamp's cryptic signs, along with his notes to The Large Glass, strongly suggest that he ascribed a higher "ideal" nonmaterial order to the female principle (the ethereal, limitless, centrifugal celestial and illuminated realm of the Bride's Domain) and a lower "material" order to the male Bachelor Machine situated in the bottom of The Large Glass. Here the bachelors abide forever, like the prisoners in their cave, in a dark underground temporal world, a restrictive world governed by one-point perspective.

We know that, in Étant donnés..., Duchamp locates the female figure in the transient, natural world. However, in a specular inversion, the female body operates like a centrifugal force that is dynamic in that it has the power to engage the viewer in a dialogic process. The ensuing dialogue prompts the viewer-interlocutor to transcend the limitations of the restricted vantage point of her world of appearance, to unveil the multitude of heteroglot signs obscured by her appearance and to discover complex layers of meaning.

If Duchamp effectively sets up Étant donnés..., and the signs from which this "allegorical appearance" was engendered, as tautological repetitions of Platonic hierarchic categories of male and female domains, he also simultaneously inverts them. By simultaneously citing and inverting such gendered givens, by displaying them as both either-or and neither-nor, Duchamp undermines the "truth" value ascribed to them. As I see it, Duchamp's specular games similarly target the gendered categories of Plato's disciple, Aristotle.

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) revised Plato's dualism by altering the relationship between the ideal and the natural or phenomenal world. According to this philosopher, the Idea or ideal form was seen to animate the elements: air, water, fire, earth. "These internal Aristotelian [ideal] forms were now the organizing and activating principles of substantive phenomena, but they themselves remained unchanged and unchanging, nonspatial and immaterial. The dualist disjunction was maintained."²⁹

²⁹ Ruth Berman, "Aristotle's Dualism, Materialist Dialectics," 232.

All matter including the body was animated, said Aristotle, by an ideal design, a telos. In this teleology, women were relegated to the realm of the natural, not celestial world:

It was Aristotle who divided the cosmos into the heavens, presumed to be immutable and perfect, gendered as male and the earth, subject to generation and decay, gendered as female. To explain human procreation, Aristotle made a further, qualitative distinction in the terrestrial realm between passive, inert, female "matter" and active, shaping, male "form."³⁰

This dualism was also applied to the soul and body. He claimed that "nature has distinguished between the female and the slave...making each thing for a single use."³¹

Woman was ascribed the role of the mother, but no longer as sacred earth mother. She was but an inferior being: "The spiritum, the principle of the soul" is conveyed to the embryo by the male heredity-bearing secretion, the semen. The female secretion does not carry the soul, "for the female is, as it were, a mutilated male."³²

Aristotle equated the soul and rational powers with male qualities. While "the male is more courageous... woman is more compassionate than man, at the same time more jealous, more querulous, more apt to scold and strike...more prone to

³⁰ Norma Broude, Impressionism: A Feminist Reading, p. 145. Broude underscores the fact that "in the Western philosophical tradition, the gendering of nature as female can be traced back to the writings of Plato (The Timaeus) and Aristotle (On the Generation of Animals)." See also the writings of Aristotle, "De Generatione Animalium," The Works of Aristotle, ed. J.A. Smith and W.D. Ross, trans. A Platt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910), 716a, 732a, 737a, 741b, 767b.

³¹ Cited in Ruth Berman, "Aristotle's Dualism, Materialist Dialectics," 233. See also original text of Aristotle, "Politics," in Great Books of the Western World 9, trans. D.W. Thompson (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 495.

³² Cited in Ibid. See original text in Aristotle, "Biological Treatises: History of Animals" in Great Books of the Western World 9, (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica), 278.

despondency...more void of shame..."³³ In the Aristotelian vision of things: "Soul rules over body, reason over emotion, male over female and so on."³⁴

Considering Aristotle's gendered dichotomies from this perspective, one can observe that Duchamp plays out such gendered notions of the natural female order in his "allegorical appearance." He displays Aristotle's natural elements as givens: the (illuminating) gas as "air"; the waterfall as "water"; the illumination from the gas as "fire"; and "earth" as the natural habitat.³⁵ Further, he replays the Aristotelian notion that all matter, gendered as female, is both generative and subject to degeneration. Presented in her birthing position, in a lush natural setting, the female figure represents the powers of generation, at the same time as her corpse-like demeanor and her location on a bed of

³³ Ruth Berman. "From Aristotle's Dualism to Materialist Dialectics," 233.

³⁴ Donna Wilshire. "The Uses of Myth, Image, and the Female Body in Re-visioning Knowledge." 93.

³⁵ These elemental givens were already inscribed into the "allegory on/of forgetting" on numerous occasions. For example: 1. "Air" is inscribed in Air de Paris, 1919, (fig. 27); in the Draft Pistons, 1914 (fig. 28). 2. "Water" is inscribed in Glider Containing a Watermill, 1913-14 (fig. 29) and later to reappear in The Large Glass: Fountain, 1917, the readymade urinal (fig. 3); Handmade Stereopticon Slides, 1918-19 (fig. 30); in numerous landscapes. (Both water and air are inscribed in: Belle Haleine, Eau de Voilette, 1921 (fig. 31) since the title refers to both air (breath) and water; in contrast, Eau & Gaz à tous les étages (fig. 32) refers to both water and fire. 3. "Fire" is also inscribed in numerous works as the illuminating gas in Hanging Gas Lamp (Bec Auer), 1903-4 (fig. 33); as the illuminating gas in The Large Glass (fig. 6) that fires the Bachelor Machine, and which reappears in the "allegorical appearance," Étant donnés, as the lamp held by the female figure; in Twelve Hundred Coal Bas Suspended from the Ceiling Over a Stove, 1938 (fig. 34), there is a suggestion of fire; in Duchamp's poster for the exhibition, Editions de et sur Marcel Duchamp, 1967 (fig. 35) depicts a hand holding a cigar with a cloud of smoke (Duchamp mentioned that he was amused by this photo because of the formal analogy between the shape of the lower part of the smoke cloud and the female genitalia." See Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, 564. 4. "Earth" is inscribed in Dust Breeding, 1920, (fig. 36) a photograph which records several months' accumulation of dust on the lower section of the Large Glass; as well as in the numerous landscapes that reappear as an "allegorical appearance," in Étant donnés.

dead twigs points toward decay and death. Lying dormant, female-nature in Étant donnés... also recalls Aristotle's theory that matter was inherently passive and inert.

In the Aristotelian vision of things, it is only by means of the Idea, by the ideal design, of an active, form-giving "male" principle that inert matter becomes animated. In Étant donnés..., such an invisible male principle activates visible matter. As the artist who constructed this "allegorical appearance," Duchamp assumes the role of the generating agent, or a male principle. Duchamp, as the form-giver, has set up the condition for inert matter, represented by the lifeless female-nature, to become animated. The "dead" signs become dynamic, animated by the voyeur's bodily engagement, which, in turn, engages the viewer in a dialogue.

Seen in this way, the rational design of the artist's enclosure is itself an animating force for the dead and gendered signs. The dialogic process is such an animating force, making the dead signs in the "allegorical appearance" become "moving inscriptions," capable of engendering innumerable interpretations.

These tautological givens can also be read from an opposing perspective, like a "mirrorial return." Although posing as the male form-giver and setting up the condition to animate the inert signs, Duchamp also restrains and contains the vital power of the centrifugal signs from the "allegory on/of forgetting," selecting and isolating a restricted number of signs in order to produce his "allegorical appearance" as a seemingly unisemic picture. In this way, Duchamp the form-giver, and representative of the male principle, contains and deadens the centrifugal signs. In contrast, the inert, female body is instilled with a vital power which emanates not from a finite ideal, teleological design, but from

an inherently centrifugal female principle. Duchamp's tautological repetitions can, from this perspective, be seen to invert Aristotelian categories. Where for the philosopher, "[t]he spiritum, the principle of the soul"³⁶ is a male principle, Duchamp appears to install this animating power in the female figure.

The gendered dualism of the ancients became a model rewritten and revised in a number of ways in subsequent Western narratives and epistemologies. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, for example, one can discern a similar dynamic between a centrifugal female force and centripetal male principle. Interestingly, Duchamp explicitly cites iconic figures such as Adam and Eve, central to this tradition. By recontextualizing the signs inscribed in Étant donnés... as a quotation of these narratives, I can discern, once again, how the assigned roles attributed to such figures have also been inverted.

Given: 1. Hierarchic Gender Roles 2. The Judeo-Christian Tradition

The end of the Middle Ages, as Carolyn Merchant recounts, embraced two visions of mother nature: one was "the lost world of mother nature," perceived as organic, and the other a female nature that was "wild and uncontrollable [and...] could render violence, storms, droughts, and general chaos."³⁷ Organic nature was identified as a nurturing mother: "a kindly benevolent female who provided for the need of mankind in an

³⁶ Cited in Ruth Berman, "Aristotle's Dualism, Materialist Dialectics," 233. See original text in Aristotle, "Biological Treatises," 278.

³⁷ Carolyn Merchant, Earthcare, 77.

ordered, planned universe,"³⁸ representatives of this natural order being the benign Eve and the Virgin Mother. In contrast, wild, untamed nature, also first set out in biblical narratives, evoked awe and fear. Both these models repeat and revise the pre-hellenic symbiosis and subsequent rupture with nature.

In one biblical version of Genesis,³⁹ God created both male and female in his own image. They live in harmony in the Garden of Eden, a paradisaical existence where they are at one with nature. Eve in such narratives is inscribed as "virgin, pure and light - land that is pristine or barren, but having the potential for growth." She is also referred to as a mother and as "an improved garden; a nurturing earth-bearing fruit."⁴⁰ The female figure in Étant donnés... can be seen to embody the female qualities inscribed into such narratives, as can the bride in The Large Glass who is explicitly referred to in Duchamp's notes as a virgin and as light.⁴¹

³⁸ Ibid., 77.

³⁹ I shall be referring to different biblical versions of Genesis as mapped out by Carolyn Merchant: "Genesis 1, or priestly version (Genesis P), composed in the fifth century B.C. [...] the Genesis 2, or Yahwist version (Genesis J), composed in the ninth or tenth century B.C." Ibid., 231. Genesis 3 "narrates the Fall from the garden, beginning with Eve's temptation by the serpent, the consumption of the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil (which in the Renaissance becomes an apple), the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden 'to till the ground from which he was taken,'" Holy Bible, King James Version (Genesis 3: ;18, 19, 23). Ibid., 29, 232. For an overview of the historical traditions of the Genesis stories, see Artur Weiser, The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development, trans. D.M. Barton (New York: Associated Press, 1961).

⁴⁰ Carolyn Merchant, Earthcare, 32.

⁴¹ He inscribes the female figure, for example, as "an apotheosis of virginity," as the "halo of the bride" as well as a "filament substance [that] resembles a solid flame." Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 39, 42, 48.

The figure of the benign mother was replayed out in subsequent religious narratives of the Virgin Mother nursing the Christ child and offering spiritual sustenance to the saints, the Church, and those in her flock. The female figure in Étant donné..., exposing a single breast, cites such a nurturing mother.⁴² In effect, her exhibited breast recalls the many medieval images of the maternal body of the nurturing Virgin Mary. From this perspective, one reference from the "allegory on/of forgetting" alluding to the Virgin as a lactating mother, comes immediately to mind. In the notes to The Large Glass, for example, Duchamp refers to the veil and halo of the bride, signifying the saintly state of the female figure.⁴³ This haloed and veiled virgin abides in a celestial realm called the "The Milky Way" ("Voie Lactée"),⁴⁴ an indirect but nevertheless clear association with the lactating Virgin Mother. Duchamp makes several allusions to such a celestial haloed virgin, even calling the "(Virgin) Bride's Domain," the "apotheosis of virginity," to an ethereal, non-corporeal body.⁴⁵ In a specular inversion, however,

⁴² Regarding the symbol of the single bare breast, see Margaret R. Miles, "The Virgin's One Bare Breast: Female Nudity and Religious Meaning in Tuscan Early Renaissance Culture" in The Female Body in Western Culture. Contemporary Perspectives, ed. Susan Rubin Suleiman (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 193-208.

⁴³ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 42.

⁴⁴ As Ulf Linde remarks the Voie Lactée can also be read phonetically as Voile acté or "activated veil." See Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, 155.

⁴⁵ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 39. I am suggesting that the "apotheosis of virginity" alludes to the supernatural qualities of the Virgin Mary. In Roman Catholic tradition, the immaculate conception of Mary signifies that she was born pure without the stain of original sin, and thus fit to conceive the body of the Christ-God. Her virginal birth dissociates her maternal body from the natural realm. As a pure being, cleansed of any earthly procreative characteristics, and thus separated from the earthly realm, she was worthy of ascending to heaven with body intact. Although the immaculate conception of Mary is not universally accepted in the Christian tradition, it was a dogma with which Duchamp, brought up in a Catholic environment, would have been very familiar since it was celebrated as a religious holiday. I do

Duchamp also alludes to the "flesh color" of this celestial virgin and to the "flesh-like milky way."⁴⁶ As if playing a patatautological game with such givens, Duchamp inscribed the benign female figure in his two allegories as both earthly and celestial: as both either-or and neither-nor.

Though these particular Christian traditions preserved the benign image of the nurturing mother, other historical narratives, including biblical narratives, came to be the dominant ones. These reflect the second version of "woman," founded on ancient dualistic principles that relegated the male principle to the higher realm of the mind, the Soul, and the female principle to the realm of matter and the corporeal.

In Genesis 2, woman is derived from Adam's rib and is cast as a secondary creature. In Genesis 3, which focuses on the fall and on the expulsion from the paradisaical nature of Eden, Eve becomes a more malefic figure, designated as the "mother" of the great fall from grace. No longer living in harmony with nature, according to the biblical narratives, man must but "till the soil" and woman "give birth in pain." Both must "labor" in different ways: "the man will look for food, the woman for children."⁴⁷ These versions of the origin of the human race are themselves revisions of earlier stories; as

not wish to suggest that such references are explicitly cited here, only that the signs inscribed point in such directions for viewers familiar with the doctrine.

⁴⁶ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 36.

⁴⁷ Mieke Bal, "Sexuality, Sin and Sorrow," The Female Body in Western Culture, 333.

Carolyn Merchant recounts, "Europeans reinforced the image of the precipitous fall from the garden of Eden with pagan images of a gradual decline from the Golden Age."⁴⁸

The rupture from the edenic state also resulted in a replay of the hierarchic dualism between male and female principles in which nature is deemed, as in Plato's world of appearance, to be a lesser realm. One cannot attain the higher heavenly realm as "body" but only as non-material "soul," the exception being the Virgin Mary. As in Platonism, it was only by leaving this earthly world that one could regain an Ideal realm.

The fallen Eve, as the mouthpiece of the serpent Satan, is not merely a lesser being, as had been the female in ancient philosophies. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the malefic mother is transformed into a supremely powerful force, capable of producing the greatest of disasters. As Mieke Bal aptly writes about Eve:

Her disobedience is the first independent act, which makes her powerful as a character. Not only has she the power to make the man eat, hence to make him know (her), disobeying in his turn; but she also manages to turn the almighty God of Gen.1 into a character with equal status, equal features, equal feelings. From now on, this creating Spirit (Gen.1:2) has a body which seeks the freshness of the garden, strolls in it and looks for its fellow-inhabitants; it has a personality which makes him angry, and even later (3:22), afraid. It is no longer in a position to 'take' and 'put' the human objects wherever he wishes. Speech becomes dialogue; action, confrontation. The relationship between them is now basically horizontal, both in terms of actantial power and in terms of space.⁴⁹

It is no wonder that narratives of the Fall inscribed Eve as disorderly and chaotic nature, as wilderness requiring improvement. Relating the power of the female principle over

⁴⁸ Carolyn Merchant, Earthcare, 29, 32-33.

⁴⁹ Mieke Bal, "Sexuality, Sin and Sorrow," 331-2.

the male, the fallen Adam is cast as victim and as the one who must right Eve's wrong. In this way he becomes the agent of earthly transformation, the hero who redeems:

In the Christian religious story, the original oneness is male and the Fall is caused by a female, Eve, with Adam, the innocent bystander, being forced to pay the consequences as his sons are pushed into developing both pastoralism and farming. While fallen Adam becomes the inventor of the tools and technologies that will restore the garden, fallen Eve becomes the Nature that must be tamed into submission. In the Western tradition, fallen Nature is opposed by male science and technology.⁵⁰

Although the notion of science and technology as a means to tame and perfect disorderly and chaotic nature is, as I see it, a most significant element in Duchamp's patatautological game, the history of the making of modern "male" culture begins with Adam and Eve⁵¹ Let us see how they operate in the artist's two allegories.

In his "allegory on/of forgetting," Duchamp played out the readymade attributes and narratives of these two biblical figures in a number of ways. An early painting entitled Paradise, 1910-11, (fig. 92) situates Adam and Eve in an edenic, natural setting. In a second work, Young Man and Girl in Spring, 1911 (fig. 96) Duchamp similarly locates a male and female figure in a harmonious natural setting, as if at one with mother-nature. A third image is a photograph from the ballet, Relâche, 1924 (fig. 101) in which the artist himself poses as Adam. Naked, wearing only a fig leaf, Duchamp/Adam

⁵⁰ Carolyn Merchant, Earthcare, 32. Merchant explains how he is also represented as Father Adam, as the image of God, as patriarch, as law and rule.

⁵¹ In his analysis of Étant donnés..., discussed in my preamble, Mason Klein also makes mentions of the "enchanted Eden" and the "Adam and Eve" theme played out in Duchamp's appearance in the ballet Relâche. See his "Toward a Phenomenology of the Self: Marcel Duchamp's Étant donnés (Ph.D diss., The City University of New York, 1994), 23, 217. My own interest in this theme relates to its status as a tautological repetition and as an element in Duchamp's specular inversions.

is thus represented after the fall and expulsion. As in so many representations of the first couple in the history of art, he stands beside a naked Eve who also hides her nakedness.⁵²

As we know, a series of etchings of 1967-68 heralded or announced the signs about to appear in Étant donnés.... Two of these etchings work in concert with each other to cast Duchamp, once again, as Adam – this time, however, as an invisible protagonist. The first etching, a direct copy of the 1924 photograph entitled, Selected Details After Cranach and "Relâche" (fig. 102) points to the presence of both original parents in his last work. The second is the etching, Bec Auer (fig. 103), which, as established in Dialogue One, discloses Duchamp's spectral presence in Étant donnés.... These two etchings suggest to me that while the female figure represents Eve, Duchamp assumes the role of an albeit invisible Adam. If the etching, Selected Details After Cranach and "Relâche", presents naked Duchamp/Adam and Eve after the fall, the etching, Bec Auer, depicts them in their prior edenic state. In contrast, in Étant donnés..., the corporeal Eve and the invisible Adam represent the chapter in the biblical narrative in which specific roles are assigned to the original parents. Let me explain.

In Étant donnés, Eve is represented after the fall, after her expulsion from the lush pastoral setting with a flowing waterfall. She is located in a distinctly separate realm where natural elements degenerate and decay and where she must give birth in pain. The mother of the great fall from grace, she lies as a reminder of how "woman" was the cause of the rupture between man and an edenic state.

⁵² This photograph was taken from a short performance by Duchamp and Bronja Perlmutter in a ballet of Picabia's entitled Relâche, 1924.

While fallen Eve is conspicuously visible in this narrative, Adam is noticeably absent from the scene. No longer depicted within the natural edenic setting beside Eve as he was in Bec Auer, Duchamp/Adam alone has been expelled from the natural setting. He has, in his exile, become the builder of Eve's garden, assuming his responsibilities as the role of the "agent of earthly transformation."⁵³ Thus charged, he transforms the disorderly, chaotic world of Eve (which, as we know, is allied to the centrifugal female principle of the "allegory on/of forgetting") into the coherent, orderly world of the "allegorical appearance."

While these protagonists appear to cite biblical narratives, they can also be said to invert them patatautologically. In contrast to the biblical narratives, Duchamp's role as form-giver is ironic. His "allegorical appearance" is engendered from "the allegory on/of forgetting," that is, from a centrifugal female principle. Nonetheless, as form-giver, Duchamp effects an "earthly transformation" which does not perfect the centrifugal force of this female figure. His form-giving capacities, as we have seen, produce only an "appearance" of order and clarity. The very structure of the "allegorical appearance," as Duchamp himself, admits is an "approximation," an "approximation démontable."⁵⁴ It is an earthly transformation which can be undone.

Additionally, the centrifugal energy of the malefic Eve in Étant donnés... has the capacity to transcend the boundaries of "Adam's" form. If the function of the hermetic

⁵³ Description of Adam given by Carolyn Merchant in Earthcare. 32.

⁵⁴ This expression, meaning "demountable approximation," were the first words written in his Manual of Instructions for the reconstruction of Étant donnés.

enclosure is to contain this disruptive female figure, she still possesses the power to entrap and engage the viewer, and by so doing, to "expulse" the viewer into a world beyond the limiting form provided by the form-giver. Duchamp patatautologically disempowers the male hero and empowers the centrifugal female figure principle.

Cast into the malefic role of the fallen Eve, the female figure represents many other tautological repetitions of "woman" as malevolent or initiators of misfortune. She can come to personify such mythic and historical women as Pandora, Lilith, Delilah and, much later, the witches⁵⁵ who, according to our cultural histories, brought disaster to humankind and consequently were put to death. From this perspective, the corpse-like figure resting on twigs associated to a pyre, Étant donnés... takes on an ominous resonance.

These malevolent female figures are themselves repetitions of that ancient enchantress, recounted in the Homeric epic as the lure of nature, having the capacity to triumph over the higher mind. This notion of nature as malevolent, as wild and untamed, was never so explicitly conceived as in the notion of the sublime. In the conceptualization of the sublime, the centrifugal force of female-nature is a source of awe, terror, a disruptive force, causing the descendants of Adam to become civilizers in

⁵⁵ Over the centuries, the witch-hunts were endorsed by the witch-hunters' bible, Malleus Maleficarum or the Witch Hammer, written in 1484 by two distinguished friars Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger at the request of Innocent VIII. Thirty editions were published by the leading German, French and Italian presses between the date of the first edition and 1669. This text was used by inquisitors, witch-hunters, and judges throughout Western Europe and England, and most particularly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when the witch persecutions reached their most intense level. See Heinrich Institoris, 1430-1505. The Malleus Maleficarum of Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, trans. by Montague Summers (New York: Dover, 1971).

order to control, to subdue and dominate sublime female-nature. The histories of aesthetics, Cartesian epistemology, and the stories of scientific and technological progress bear witness to such a process of reification and domination.

Given: 1. Sublime Female-Nature 2. Cartesian Epistemology

The concept of the sublime was formulated in the writings of Edmund Burke (1729-1797) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). In Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful, first published in 1756, Burke conceives of sublime nature as awesome and overpowering, as a natural force which is indeterminate and ultimately uncontrollable.

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling...and in nature dark, confused, uncertain images have a greater power on the fancy to form the grander passions than those have which are more clear and determinate....Infinity has a tendency to fill the mind with that sort of delightful horror, which is the most genuine effect, and truest test of the sublime.⁵⁶

For Burke, "human" or "animal" nature can also be sublime, and therefore a source of terror and fear. Condemning "animal" nature when it manifested itself as radical agitation and violence during the Reign of Terror, Burke was a defender of the dominant power of the aristocracy and monarchy in France during the French Revolution. In a

⁵⁶ Edmund Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful, ed. by J.T. Boulton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), 39, 62, 73.

seemingly ironic fashion, he also justified the American revolution in its fight against colonial oppression. For him, it was the transgressive or "sublime" ideas and revolutionary force of the Jacobins and of colonialist powers which stunted otherwise stable and peaceful societal advances. A stable society, "clear and determinate," was in constant danger of such apocalyptic natural forces.⁵⁷ Burke believed that sublime forces should be contained by a civilizing model, one which was to become, as we shall here see, the dominant theme in the histories of Enlightenment culture.

Taking Burke's notion of the sublime as infinity as a starting point, Immanuel Kant theorized the sublime as the perception of what is devoid of form and limitless.⁵⁸ The perception of the sublime is both a source of pleasure and unpleasure and, as it had been for Burke, terror. "[T]he sublime is to be found in an object even devoid of form, so far as it immediately involves, or else by its presence provokes, a representation of limitlessness."⁵⁹ The sublime is that which lies beyond boundaries and is "presented in terms of excess, of the infinite; it cannot be framed, and is therefore almost beyond presentation."⁶⁰

⁵⁷ "Above all, his argument that political institutions should conform to the political traditions of their particular society combined relativism and tradition in a pragmatic way which would provide the basis of modern conservatism." Eugen Weber, A Modern History of Europe, 666-667.

⁵⁸ Immanuel Kant, "Analytic of the Sublime," Critique of Aesthetic Judgement, trans. J. C. Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), 82-105.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁶⁰ Lynda Nead, The Female Nude. Art, Obscenity and Sexuality (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 26.

From the Kantian perspective, Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting," as a centrifugal force that is limitless and devoid of a unifying form, and capable of transcending boundaries and frames, can come to stand, on some levels, as a concept of the sublime. Similarly, taking the Burkean perspective of sublime nature, one can argue that the female figure inhabiting Étant donnés... signifies this concept since she too is an overpowering force, indeterminate and ultimately uncontrollable, with a disruptive and destabilizing effect upon the viewer.

Although these analogies imply that the sublime is characterized as female, the gendering of the concept of the sublime is more complex than it has been with other conceptions of nature. Even though the sublime represents the wild and untamed concept of nature, and even though nature has, in the various narratives I have here presented, consistently been inscribed as a female principle, the sublime, as a concept of power and terror, contrasts with the social status and categorization traditionally assigned to women. It is arguably for this reason that Burke and Kant tended to characterize the sublime as a masculine category, in contrast to beauty which they associated with feminine characteristics.

For Burke, nature, as benign beauty, stands in opposition to the sublime, and is decisively equated to the feminine: "The beauty of women is considerably owing to their weakness, or delicacy, and is even enhanced by their timidity, a quality of mind analogous to it."⁶¹ For Immanuel Kant, the sublime is not feminine either: "The merits

⁶¹ Edmund Burke, Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful, 116.

of a woman should unite solely to enhance the character of the beautiful which is the proper reference point; and on the other hand, among the masculine qualities the sublime clearly stands as the criterion of his kind."⁶²

There is a further problem ascribing the sublime, in an unequivocal way, to the female domain since, as Burke's discourse reveals, it is generally the revolutionary actions of men that are equated to the sublime. Thus nature, traditionally conceived as a female principle, becomes "as the sublime" a powerful metaphor which simply cannot unambiguously be ascribed to the socially less empowered sex. Nevertheless, the sublime does not stand unambiguously as a masculine characteristic either. As Lynda Nead argues, "the sublime is not simply a site for the definition of masculinity but is also where a certain deviant or transgressive form of femininity is played out. It is where woman goes beyond her proper boundaries and gets out of place."⁶³ Hence, the sublime, for Nead, represents a transgression of the preconceived boundaries of femininity.

She examines how such transgressions are manifested in aesthetic criteria and more specifically in the tradition of the nude. Her study is founded on the binary opposition, made by Kenneth Clark, between the naked and the nude. Nead asserts that Clark

extends the binarized model of classification based on the mind/body opposition....The transformation from the naked to the nude is thus the shift from the actual to the ideal - the move from a perception of

⁶² Immanuel Kant, Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime (1764). trans. by J.H. Goldthwait. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960), 76-7.

⁶³ Lynda Nead, Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality, 29.

unformed, corporeal matter to the recognition of unity and constraint, the regulated economy of art.⁶⁴

For Clark, the mythic Venuses represent the naked and the nude: the Earthly Venus is the naked, erotic female body from the corporeal world who has an eruptive, sexual effect upon the viewer; the Celestial Venus is the immaterial Platonic entity aestheticized as the nude, which permits quiet, disengaged contemplation of beauty.⁶⁵ As Nead reminds us, Jupiter and Juno gave birth to the erotic Earthly Venus while the more immaterial Platonic Venus was a male creation, born of Uranus.

It is the Platonic model of the Celestial Venus that prevails in representations of the female nude, a genre tellingly also engendered without female agency.⁶⁶ As Nead states, the aestheticized nude is "the body produced by culture."⁶⁷ The artist, says Nead, transforms "vulgar or earthly objects into celestial ones through the controlling discipline of artistic form."⁶⁸ By means of the aesthetic process, the erotic female body undergoes "a process of containment, of holding in and keeping out"⁶⁹: a process by which the

⁶⁴ Ibid., 13.

⁶⁵ Nead's study of the traditional relationship between the viewer and the art object is "loosely based on a Kantian aesthetic of 'pure' form and disinterested appreciation." Ibid.

⁶⁶ The tradition of the nude was based on academic training in life-drawing classes from which women, until the end of the nineteenth century, were prohibited. Regarding such exclusions, see Linda Nochlin's classic essay, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" Women, Art and Power and Other Essays (New York: Westview Press, 1988).

⁶⁷ Lynda Nead, The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality, 14.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 19.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 20-21.

female body is de-eroticized. The Celestial Venus or the idealized nude, in other words, is the erotic female body, sublimated into "Art."

In different terms, Nead states that the tradition of the nude is "Art...defined in terms of the containing of form within limits [in contrast to obscenity of the exhibited naked woman which goes beyond art and which] is defined in terms of excess, as form beyond limit, beyond the frame and representation."⁷⁰ Nead employs the term "obscene" in both the everyday sense of the word and the etymological context of "off the scene" which Jean Baudrillard gives it. Nead explains how the female body is "framed" so as to keep in abeyance "the production of a rational, coherent subject... integrally bound up with the perception of self."⁷¹

As Nead points out "the process of sublimation" of the erotic body, though integral to the traditional representations of the female nude, is sometimes incomplete. This female body is situated at the edge of an eruption, always threatening to free herself from that "ideal" frame, to become obscene. Contemplating the nude is thus related to the Kantian notion of the sublime, defined as "the apperception of the unrepresentable."⁷² The nude, as both the presentation of the unrepresentable and the containment of a disruptive force, can be characterized as a female sublime whereby "woman" has been held in check

⁷⁰ Ibid., 20.

⁷¹ Ibid., 7.

⁷² Ibid., 30.

by the controlling hand of aesthetics, but also always risks going "beyond her proper boundaries and get[ting] out of place."⁷³

Lynda Nead's studies, one could say, make apparent how the tradition of the female nude in art repeats and revises ancient stories of the enchantress. As a kind of "sublime" force capable of the destabilization of a unified self, the centrifugal female principle has been contained and transformed by a male form-giving principle. We have already seen this in a number of narratives: Odysseus estranges himself from "sublime" female-nature and reifies her as an object of contemplation; the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions in separating the gendered female body/matter and the male Mind/Soul, assign the eternal, non-changing Idea as a stable masculine principle; Adam is the agent of earthly transformation who contains and improves Eve's malefic powers. In a similar way, the traditional aesthetics of the nude is also a story of the separation and containment of a centrifugal female force by a centripetal male principle.

Duchamp, I would argue, cites and inverts these gendered givens in a number of ways. In The Large Glass, Duchamp reinscribed the Celestial Venus as an idealized female figure whose erotic qualities are contained, neutralized in the guise of a haloed virgin. She abides in a separate domain, an object of the Bachelors' contemplation. In contrast, Duchamp inscribes the Earthly Venus into his "allegorical appearance," Étant donnés... Although Duchamp, as in the tradition of the nude, has literally contained such an unrepresentable and disruptive female figure in the hermetic enclosure of Étant

⁷³ Ibid., 29. Nead bases this on Clark's discussion of the "disruptive" nudes of Rubens and Renoir and reminds us that "[t]he universal sexual "instincts" to which Clark alludes are evidently based on those of the male, heterosexual connoisseur." Ibid., 13-4.

donnés..., the overt sexuality of his Earthly Venus transgresses aesthetic boundaries. Despite the measured distance and the restricting frame of the peepholes, her exposed sexualized body disrupts the disengaged, contemplative viewer. As if the client in a cheap peepshow, the viewer is "caught" in the act of gazing at a sexualized spread-eagled female body.

This is not a representation of the female nude aesthetically contained by the controlling device of a frame. Rather, enclosed in this cage, and exposing herself only to "his" eyes, (for the sublime body, as Nead's text make clear, addresses an expressly male viewer), the female nude becomes a disruptive force, acting upon the viewer. She is the female sublime, as Nead suggests, a kind of "deviant or transgressive form of femininity...where woman goes beyond her proper boundaries."⁷⁴

This female sublime, as Duchamp has presented it in Étant donné..., can also be seen as a form of the Freudian "uncanny" for which Hal Foster provides a succinct definition: "[This is a condition] in which repressed material returns in ways that disrupt unitary identity, aesthetic norms, and social order."⁷⁵ More specifically, though the sublime centrifugal force has been suppressed, sublimated, and contained by the centripetal force of the artist, as we know, the obscured or sublimated elements continually reassert themselves in the dialogic process. The uncanny quality of the female figure thus operates as a kind of specular inversion of the tradition of the nude.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 29.

⁷⁵ Hal Foster, Compulsive Beauty (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press), xvii.

Duchamp's patatautological game with the concept of the sublime can be perceived with "greater clarity" when juxtaposed with the principles of Cartesianism. Indeed, the epistemological framework of René Descartes (1596-1650) can be seen to counter the sublime elements which we have seen played out in Étant donné.... Echoing the dualistic tradition set out by the ancients, Descartes conceived of two independent and separate realms: the mental res cogitans and the material res extensa. However, where for the ancients, the mind was the means to gain access to the Ideal world, for Descartes, rational thinking was the means to attain knowledge and certainty of truth of the natural world conceived as a given a priori condition.

The inventor of analytic geometry, Descartes believed that mathematics was an important means to obtain truth. Contrary to predecessors such as Plato who were concerned with numerical relationships as a manifestation of an ideal (supra-natural) design, he believed mathematics to be "the sole key needed to unlock the secrets of nature."⁷⁶ Mathematics was an effective tool for eliminating approximations, irrelevant data and subjective judgments. Through mathematics, Descartes could observe, he claimed, "a universe of precision, of exact measure, of strict determination."⁷⁷

Rational thinking or what came to be called "the Cartesian method" was more than a way of reasoning as it had been for earlier philosophers. For Descartes, method

⁷⁶ [My emphasis]. Cited in Eugen Weber. A Modern History of Europe, p. 374. It is also pertinent to note, in the context of this discussion, that geometry propositions begin with the word, "given" (étant donné).

⁷⁷ Ibid., 374.

was the natural operation of the mind itself. In his Rules for the Direction of the Mind, he defines method as

certain and simple rules such that, if a man observe them accurately, he shall never assume what is false as true, and will never spend his mental efforts to no purpose, but will gradually increase his knowledge and so arrive at a true understanding of all that does not surpass his powers.⁷⁸

The Cartesian method could distinguish between truth and untruth. Through it, the mind is capable of correctly mirroring a pre-given extended world outside of itself. Absolute certainty of truth of the world, however, can only be attained with rigorous scrutiny. More specifically, the Cartesian subject must cleanse the mind from the shortcomings and imperfections of the senses: it must deny the vagaries of the physical body that produces mirages, afterimages and so on. The inner mind, as an objective judge, must always be sceptical and cautious of the discrepancies produced by the senses, by the body.

Descartes, although suspicious of the reliability of the senses, believed the eye to be the noblest of our senses for it transmits images of the external world to our mind. Therefore he studied the nature of the eye and the mechanics of vision extensively. In the ten discourses which comprise La Dioptrique (1637),⁷⁹ Descartes worked at methods to improve vision by means of such optical instruments as glass or crystal lenses and telescopes. He also made careful studies of the nature of the senses in general and the

⁷⁸ René Descartes, "Rules for the Direction of the Mind" in The Philosophical Works of Descartes, trans. E.S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 9.

⁷⁹ René Descartes. "La Dioptrique" Oeuvres philosophiques (1618-1637). Tome I (Paris: Garnier, Edition Ferdinand Alquié. 1963, 1973).

eye in particular: the effects of light and refraction upon the eye; how the optical nerves transmit the image to the mind; how binocular vision merges two disparate images into one in the pineal gland of the brain. This pineal gland is the point of junction between mind and body. It is like a mind-eye which has a dual function: on the one hand, it is the lieu of vision; on the other, it is the place where retinal images are rigorously censored through clear, logical reasoning. His studies illustrate how the inner mind-eye, like an impartial, disinterested observer, inspects and scrutinizes. It monitors not only the exterior natural world and the body, but even the workings of the mind itself. The mind-eye perceives itself as a separate coherent, unified entity, and the res extensa (the natural extended world) which includes the physical body is conceived as totally separate from the mind.

This new concept of the human subject, arising from a particular kind of separation between mind and body, is central to Cartesian epistemology. Indeed, contrary to earlier dualistic categories, Descartes' method is based on this absolute distinction between mind and body. "The error which has been committed in making [the soul] play the part of various personages, usually in opposition one to another," he writes, "only proceeds from the fact that we have not properly distinguished its functions from those of the body, to which alone we must attribute everything which can be observed in us that is opposed to our reason."⁸⁰ As Richard Rorty maintains, it is precisely this "conception of the human mind as an inner space" which could objectively observe "bodily and perceptual sensations" that radically breaks from any previous

⁸⁰ René Descartes, The Philosophical Works of Descartes, 353.

definition of the subject.⁸¹ Rorty describes the Cartesian conception of the mind as a great mirror capable of reflecting truth: “For Descartes, it was a matter of turning the Eye of the Mind from the confused inner representations to the clear and distinct ones.... Without the notion of the mind as mirror, the notion of knowledge as accuracy of representation would not have suggested itself.”⁸² This primal mind capable of regarding itself, in fact, defines the subject and guarantees a self-presence. Descartes’ famous declaration, “cogito ergo sum” refers, in essence, to this transcendental self-presence. Such a cogito implies a disregard for the subject as socially-constructed; it “fails to recognize its corporeality, its intersubjectivity, its embeddedness in the flesh of the world.”⁸³ The Cartesian inner mind is transcendental and disembodied. It is decarnalized.

Although the Cartesian mind-body dualism can be seen to replay and revise the radical separation which had occurred since ancient times between man and nature, now the “cleansed-from-body” mind, capable of mental representations of a given apriori world, has another significant function: to “unlock the secrets of nature”⁸⁴ in order to

⁸¹ Richard Rorty, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 50.

⁸² Ibid., 159, 12.

⁸³ Martin Jay, “Scopic Regimes of Modernity,” Force Fields (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 128.

⁸⁴ Cited in Eugen Weber, A Modern History of Europe, 374.

improve it. By "joining together the lives and labors of many," Descartes writes in the Discourse on Method, "science will become progress."⁸⁵

With Cartesian dualism, Geneviève Lloyd argues, "[s]omething happened... which proved crucial for the development of stereotypes of maleness and femaleness, and it happened in some ways despite Descartes' explicit intentions."⁸⁶ Although Descartes' method is essentially private and accessible to all, whether male or female, method for Descartes was a collective endeavor. And it is from this collective endeavor of science and progress that women have, according to our cultural constructs, been excluded. "This crucial development" writes Lloyd, "springs from the accentuation of women's exclusion from Reason, now conceived - in its highest form - as an attainment."⁸⁷

The prime purpose of the Cartesian mind is to censor the body or the centrifugal qualities of a sublime nature, and thus Cartesianism could be made to stand in opposition to what, since ancient times, has been characterized as a female principle. Lynda Nead elaborates on this point: "For Plato and Aristotle and throughout the Middle Ages, the natural world had been conceptualized as female, as 'mother'. With his celebration of the scientific mind, Descartes effectively recasts knowledge and reason as masculine attributes."⁸⁸

⁸⁵ René Descartes, The Philosophical Works of Descartes, 120.

⁸⁶ Genevieve Lloyd, The Man of Reason, 39. Descartes' mind-body dichotomy was perceived by feminists, as we shall see, to be resolutely gendered.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁸⁸ Lynda Nead, The Female Nude. Art, Obscenity and Sexuality, 23.

For this very reason, a number of feminists have interpreted Cartesian philosophy as positing a suppression of the female principle. Luce Irigaray, for example, maintains that the Cartesian cogito, in effect, sublimates the maternal body:

The 'I' thinks, therefore, this thing, this body that is also nature, that is still the mother, becomes an extension at the I's disposal for analytical investigation, scientific projections, the regulated exercise of the imaginary, the utilitarian practice of technique.⁸⁹

We have observed how the various narratives disclose an estrangement from nature, from mother, from the female body and how the female principle has been objectified, neutralized, considered a separate entity. In Cartesian philosophy, there is a separation between the "I" who knows and the thing that is known. Irigaray dismisses "the unity and simplicity of the cogitans and cogitatum," calling it "a sham."⁹⁰ It is a sham, she says, because it subordinates the object of inspection to its own limitations; it reduces objects to commensurable, legible entities: "The eye/I' (of the spirit) is closed to the charms of seductively deceptive things, and, once its mechanism has been analysed, it will frame and reproduce only what is technically set up in front of it."⁹¹

In the various narratives we have encountered, the body or female-nature, once regarded as dynamic and vital, has continuously been considered a force to be neutralized, reified and relegated to a hierarchically lower realm. One has seen how the sublime centrifugal natural forces have been suppressed and contained within boundaries

⁸⁹ Luce Irigaray, Speculum of the Other Woman, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 186.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 184.

and frames. We have also seen these variations of givens played out in Duchamp's "allegorical appearance," recognizing that his patatautological games expose how the suppressed "charms of seductively deceptive things" uncannily reassert themselves. This becomes particularly apparent in his specular inversions of Cartesian principles.

Descartes' formulation, "cogito ergo sum" refers to a transcendent subject who is capable of obtaining certainty of truth. The female body in Duchamp's "allegorical appearance," destabilizes such a unified and decarnalized subject. Fearing the gaze of a second viewer behind, the voyeur at the peepholes is transformed into a self-conscious body. Forced to recover and repossess its corporeal nature, the cogito can no longer utter Descartes' statement, "I think, therefore, I am." Such a declaration becomes garbled and transformed into: "I am seen by someone as body, therefore, I am."

If for Descartes, the mind-eye was the means to transform "the confused inner representations [produced by the body] to the clear and distinct ones,"⁹² Duchamp inverts this process. Even though the "allegorical appearance" presents a clear, coherent representation, it is disruptive for the viewer, triggering a complex, multidimensional, and open-ended dialogic processes. By setting up the conditions for a dialogue, therefore, Duchamp also sets up the means for centrifugal forces or for "seductively deceptive things" to reassert themselves.

Just as Descartes was concerned with vision, with optics and with optical instruments that improve the capabilities of the eye, so too is Duchamp preoccupied with vision. In his numerous "retinal" works in the "allegory on/of forgetting," he produces

⁹² Richard Rorty, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, 159.

optical effects which engage the viewer's eye in a variety of ways. Yet as we have seen in the first dialogue,⁹³ none produce a clarity of vision and a certainty of truth. Though optical illusions, they instead make the vagaries and inconsistencies of the senses reappear.

Not even in Étant donnés..., whose very structure is a replication of Cartesian binocular-monocular studies, is there a cleansed-from the body representation of the res extensa. The sightline provided by the binocular peepholes traverse the dark space (of the retina) and meet as a single monocular image in the enclosed space (of the pineal gland or mind-eye) where the mirror-image of the female-nature observed (the objective res extensa) reveals itself.⁹⁴ In Duchamp's "allegorical appearance," however, the clear (mental) representation is blurred and confused by the disruptive female body. Though reified in the confines of the enclosed space (of the "cleansed-from the body" mind-eye),

⁹³ Such "optical" works operate dialogically as: nothingness and/or physicality, absence and/or presence, the real here-and-now and/or an illusory elsewhere, the finite and/or the infinite space, the viewer's retinal impressions of an external object and/or the viewer's subjective, introspective reaction.

⁹⁴ Duchamp based the viewer's sightline on Descartes' studies of optics (on binocular and monocular vision). Descartes deduced that the two images reflected on each retinal surface merge into a single image in the material substance of the pineal gland or the "mind-eye." This is the physical site of monocular transformation. In my view, he cites Cartesian studies of monocular and binocular vision in Étant donnés... by basing the viewer's sightline, apparent in the irregular ground plan and perspective schema (figs. 11 and 107) on the drawings of Sebastien Le Clerc, evidently a Cartesian disciple. My observations are based on Jean Clair's study of Le Clerc's perspectival drawings, particularly those which reflect the visual distortions occasioned by the transformation from a binocular to a monocular view. Clair claims Duchamp would have seen Le Clerc's illustrations at the Bibliothèque Ste-Geneviève while studying the perspectivalists. See Jean Clair, "Marcel Duchamp et la tradition des perspectiveurs," Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques, ed. Jean Clair (Paris, 1977), 124-59.

Duchamp displays the body as a sublime force. Her natural centrifugal force permits her to shatter the reflecting mirror of the mind/eye.

There are also other specular inversions of Cartesian principles at play here. The title of Étant donnés... itself alludes to Descartes, the geometer. Although Duchamp pretends to pose a geometric problem (given, 1...2....), he does not prove anything definitive.⁹⁵ His comment, "[t]here is no solution because there is no problem"⁹⁶ stands, one can say, as a maxim that inverts Cartesian formulae. Instead his particular givens – the waterfall and the illuminating gas – are elements associated with a number of non-geometric signs and produce an array of "eccentricities" that defy an absolute truth. Any statement of "truth" in his "allegorical appearance" is an evident construction relative to the interlocutor's position. Such inversions of Cartesian geometry can be further seen in the actual structure of the "allegorical appearance."

With his own precise geometric calculations, Duchamp seems to assert, like Descartes, that only mathematics can permit one to observe "a universe of precision, of exact measure, of strict determination."⁹⁷ Yet, Descartes sought to eliminate approximations, irrelevant data and subjective judgments, whereas Duchamp's geometry produces, as the title of his Manual of Instruction for the reconstruction of the

⁹⁵ As already noted, Linda Dalrymple Henderson, Craig Adcock and Jean Clair offer scholarly documentation of Duchamp's mathematical studies. I read Duchamp's "geometry" as a specular inversion of Cartesianism.

⁹⁶ Statement made in 1945 and cited in Arturo Schwarz. Marcel Duchamp: Notes and Projects for the Large Glass (New York: Abrams, 1969) 28-9.

⁹⁷ Cited in Eugen Weber, A Modern History of Europe. 374.

geometrically-designed Étant donnés... clearly affirms, "an approximation." Similarly, the "[t]he principal forms" or perspectival design of the Bachelor Machine, Duchamp writes in his notes also, "are imperfect." He qualifies this, claiming they are "imperfect and freed."⁹⁸ In any geometrical calculations, such as linear perspective, he says, "the lines, the drawing are "strained" and lose the nearly of the "always possible."⁹⁹ They are subjected to limitations that deny them, in other words, their "always possible" or centrifugal qualities. As his notes indicate, in the Bachelor Machine, the lines are freed by means of the illuminating gas (the primal natural elements that are fluid and boundless) which cause "dizziness" and a "loss of awareness of position."¹⁰⁰

On one level, then, Duchamp's patatautological game can be regarded as a citation and inversion of Cartesian principles. I should emphasize that this enterprise does not consist of a negation or critique of Cartesian principles but instead is a game making those elements which Cartesian philosophy evacuated suddenly reappear. By so doing, Duchamp illustrates how oppositional concepts coexist as either-or and neither-nor.

The nature of Duchamp's game with Cartesian principles is perhaps best revealed by the artist's own comments:

You must understand that I am not a Cartesian for pleasure. I happen to have been born a Cartesian. The French education is based on a sequence of strict logic...the logic meaning, the reasoning Cartesianism implies.

⁹⁸ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 44, 83.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 36.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 50.

Nothing left to the vapours of the imagination. It implies an acceptance of all doubts, it's an opposition to unclear thinking... You carry it with you. I had to reject Cartesianism in a way. I don't say that you can't be both. Perhaps I am.¹⁰¹

If Duchamp's words disclose an idea of Cartesianism loosely based on the philosopher's writings, his patatautological game asserts both Cartesian and anti-Cartesian principles. On the one hand, the "vapours of the imagination [and] unclear thinking," reemerge in the guise of a centrifugal female body, while on the other hand, the Cartesian clear thinking of the artist contains and suppresses such centrifugal elements, producing a clear, coherent picture: Étant donnés...

With the development of the scientific and industrial revolutions and the ensuing modernization, the conception of female-nature as an object of scrutiny and as a "sublime" force in need of control merged with the myth of progress. These tautological revisions of readymade givens of female-nature and male-culture are also to be discerned in this artist's patatautological game. It is here, in fact, that his game takes on for me the greatest resonance.

Given: 1. Searchers and Spies of Nature 2. The Enlightenment Project

Acclaimed as the "father of modern science" and the founder of the inductive method, Francis Bacon (1561-1626), is said by Carolyn Merchant to have "transformed tendencies already extant in his own society into a total program advocating the control of

¹⁰¹ Dore Ashton, "Interview with Marcel Duchamp," Studio International 171 (June 1966): 144.

nature....Female imagery became a tool in adapting scientific knowledge and method to a new form of human power over nature."¹⁰² The use of gendered metaphors are especially striking in Bacon's early work, The Masculine Birth of Time (1603): "I am come in very truth leading to you Nature with all her children to bind her to your service and make her your slave."¹⁰³ For nature to be bound into servitude, she must be put "in constraint" and "molded" by the mechanical arts.¹⁰⁴ To enslave her, to dominate nature, to force her to reveal her secrets, "[I]et us," says Bacon,

establish a chaste and lawful marriage between Mind and Nature...[Nature is] only to be commanded by obeying her....Nature betrays her secrets more fully when in the grip and under the pressure of art than when in enjoyment of her natural liberty.¹⁰⁵

Obviously, for Bacon, "marriage between mind and nature" does not imply a reunion with an estranged mother nature. The mind must dominate nature for her to reveal her secrets. Nature must be stripped bare, her centrifugal "natural liberty" held in check.

The personification of nature as female is clearly not new. The notion of knowledge attained by a dominion over nature is a revision of prior cultural texts. For example, Plato's picture of knowledge involved "the subjection of the slave-like body to the soul."¹⁰⁶ Bacon replaces the soul with the "scientific mind," an entity which tames the bride. The searchers and spies of nature, he wrote, do not "merely exert a gentle

¹⁰² Carolyn Merchant, Earthcare, 80.

¹⁰³ Cited in Norma Broude, Impressionism: A Feminist Reading, 146.

¹⁰⁴ Carolyn Merchant, Earthcare, 81.

¹⁰⁵ Cited in Genevieve Lloyd, The Man of Reason, 11-12.

¹⁰⁶ Cited in *Ibid.*, 12.

guidance of nature's course; they have the power to conquer and subdue her, to shake her to her foundation."¹⁰⁷ It is in nature's "womb" that her secrets can be found and exploited. "Nature" states Bacon, "is to be unveiled, exposed and penetrated even in her "innermost chambers." Such a violent taking of nature by scientific methods would disclose her secrets. In Bacon's words:

[t]here is therefore much ground for hoping that there are still laid up in the womb of nature many secrets of excellent use having no affinity or parallelism with anything that is now known...Only by the method which we are now treating can they be speedily and suddenly and simultaneously presented and anticipated.¹⁰⁸

By Bacon's inductive method, the searchers and spies could verify "the truths of science by the reading of nature's book."¹⁰⁹

Carolyn Merchant argues that Bacon was "sensitive to the same social transformations that had already begun to reduce women to psychic and reproductive resources."¹¹⁰ As a result, Bacon developed a language which reduced female nature to a resource for economic production. Indeed, as Bacon writes, from this wedlock with nature will emerge "...a blessed race of Heroes or Supermen who will overcome the immeasurable helplessness and poverty of the human race..."¹¹¹ The domination of female nature by the scientific mind it was thought would improve the lot of humankind.

¹⁰⁷ Cited in Carolyn Merchant, Earthcare, 83

¹⁰⁸ Cited in *Ibid.*, 81.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹¹¹ Cited in Genevieve Lloyd, The Man of Reason, 12.

This "connection of knowledge with power," Genevieve Lloyd reminds us, later developed into the eugenic marriage of "Reason and progress."¹¹²

Bacon's imagery of female-nature exhibiting her secrets to the scientific mind can be seen in visual terms in a sculpture executed in 1899 by Louis-Ernest Barrias. Tellingly entitled, Nature Unveiling Herself before Science (fig. 134), it was made for the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers in France and subsequently placed in the medical faculty in Paris. The statue personifying nature is of a semi-clad woman in the process of removing her veil and exposing her breasts, her body, to science.¹¹³ According to Ludmilla Jordanova this statue reveals "[t]hat science is a masculine viewer, who is anticipating full knowledge of nature, which is represented as the naked female body."¹¹⁴ Jordanova's study of the role of the biomedical sciences in the social construction of gender difference during the nineteenth century is revealing in other ways. She notes that

the figures of recumbent women seem to convey, for the first time, the sexual potential of medical anatomy. (fig. 135) Until this time it was usual in engravings for the actual genitals to be covered by a cloth but in the waxes, as in some contemporaneous medical illustrations, they are not just present, but drawn to the attention. Not only is the literal naturalness of

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ The female figure as a symbol of various qualities and attributes is a common motif in the visual arts. Cesare Ripa's Iconologia (1593), revised in 1779 by George Richardson as Iconology: or A Collection of Emblematical Figures, illustrates numerous examples of both male and female figure. Some display the female figure carrying a torch, or light, which can provide further relevant links to Duchamp's Étant donnés. I thank Olivier Asselin for pointing Ripa's Iconologia out to me. When one looks at Étant donnés... from the perspective of the scientific viewer and Jordanova's interpretation of Barrias' statue, one can draw compelling links between them, particularly in view of the fact that, due to its location, Duchamp may well have been familiar with it. Both Barrias and Duchamp, representing the searchers and spies, unclad female-nature.

¹¹⁴ Ludmilla J. Jordanova "Natural Facts: A Historical Perspective on Science and Sexuality" in Nature, Culture and Gender, 54.

women portrayed, in their total nakedness and by the presence of a foetus, but their symbolic naturalness is implied in the whole conception of such figures. Female nature had been unclothed by male science, making her understandable under general scrutiny.¹¹⁵

Duchamp's Étant donnés... can be read not only as citing from the history of art but also from medical illustrations which clearly positioned "science as a masculine viewer." By constraining her and molding her "by the mechanical arts" in his rationally-constructed enclosure, Duchamp has, as Bacon declared, also forced his Bride of nature to "reveal her secrets," by exposing her "innermost chambers." As an unveiled Bride of nature, enslaved by the scientific mind, she is deprived of her "natural liberty," of her centrifugal nature. So restrained, "so shaken to her foundation," this recumbent female allows for an array of "searchers and spies of nature" to discover her plots and secrets.¹¹⁶ By scientific methods, the spy of nature can verify the "truths" that Bacon and others would have emerge from "nature's womb."

Like a nineteenth century biomedical scientist, Duchamp has drawn attention to her genital area¹¹⁷, thus exhibiting her "sexual potential." The Bride Stripped Bare by her

¹¹⁵ "While the female figures are recumbent, frequently adorned with pearl necklaces," says Jordanova, "[c]omparable male figures are usually upright, and often in a position of motion." Ludmilla J. Jordanova "Natural Facts: A Historical Perspective on Science and Sexuality," Nature, Culture and Gender, 54.

¹¹⁶ Francis Bacon cited in Carolyn Merchant, Earthcare, 80, 81.

¹¹⁷ It must be noted that as a medical illustration, the genitalia on Duchamp's female figure is ironically inaccurate, with effectively no access to "nature's womb." Indeed, this particularly "lady," as poet and critic Rachel Blau-Duplessis points out, "has her bottom put on wrong.... What you see, head on, ahead of you, is cunt. Estranged cunt, the cant or can't of cunt. Duchamp has made a twisted, asymmetrical gash - richly labial but curved and wayward - where a vulva 'is.'" See her "Sub Rosa: Marcel Duchamp and the Female Spectator" in The Pink Guitar: Writing as Feminist Practice (New York & London: Routledge, 1990), 70. Regarding the anatomically incorrect genitalia, Amelia Jones makes similar observations: "There are no 'labia

scientific bachelors, as Duchamp makes explicit in The Large Glass, is also the object of their desire for progress. Like Bacon's Bride of nature, she is observed by the Ocular Witnesses, spies and searchers of nature. As the mechanical bride, she comes to embody progress. In this way, the mechanical bride in The Large Glass and the bride of nature in Étant donnés..., both relating to other signs in the "allegory on/of forgetting," represent two generic female figures. Like two sides of the same coin, on the one side, there is the mechanical bride removed from nature, and on the other, the natural bride subjugated by the bachelor searchers and spies.

The subjugation by the searchers and spies of the mechanical/natural bride relates quite readily to the story of modern scientific and technological progress, to the Western story of modernity, defined under the umbrella term, the Enlightenment project.¹¹⁸ Both the positive and negative aspects of these histories are played out, as I see it, within the "natural" space of Étant donnés.... In effect, the rationally constructed enclosure that contains the mechanical/natural bride lies as a patatautological testimony to the Enlightenment project as both progressive and regressive. To elaborate upon this story of progress-regression, I would first like to identify other relevant cultural inscriptions

majora.' 'labia minora' in view; there is no vaginal vestibule or clitoris.... The strangely flaccid, not quite womanly body of the figure lying in the bed of twigs is uncanny precisely because she has no vagina leading into her interior, her womb, but a shallow crevice with no exterior lips at all." See her "Re-placing Duchamp's Eroticism" in The En-gendering of Marcel Duchamp, 201.

¹¹⁸ The term, Enlightenment, denoting the modern Western project of scientific and technological advancement, has been used by several theorists I shall be discussing, most notably, by Adorno and Horkheimer in their Dialectic of Enlightenment, (New York: Continuum, 1991).

and epistemologies that come into play, most particularly positivism, instrumentality and possessive individualism.

To begin with, the positivist philosophy of Auguste Comte, according to Norma Broude, relates to prior epistemological models,: "Comtean positivism may be said to reflect the unbroken authority in 19th century France of mainstream, Cartesian, Baconian, and Newtonian science and the eighteenth-century French Rationalism these had helped to inspire."¹¹⁹ George Sarton, the founding father of the history of science, believed that "the goal of positivist science was to solve the mysteries of nature by disclosing the secrets "she" harbors within."¹²⁰ For Auguste Comte, it was only through empirical science, through information acquired by observation and experiments, that "positive" knowledge of nature could be acquired. This was a method by which one could eliminate, one can say, all centrifugal elements that might cloud or obscure the "truth" about female-nature. Indeed for positivists, it was possible to submit all aspects of experience to scientific inquiry. Nature was understood as a controllable mechanism, a machine that could "be divided into parts and that the parts can be extracted from the environmental context and rearranged according to a set of rules based on logical and mathematical operations."¹²¹

Closely allied to positivistic methods are rational systems defined as instrumental reason. Instrumental reason is reason used as a rationalization for a particular ideology

¹¹⁹ Norma Broude, Impressionism: A Feminist Reading, 121.

¹²⁰ Carolyn Merchant, Earthcare, 57.

¹²¹ Ibid., 86.

or predetermined goal: for scientific inquiries, positive knowledge and capitalist interests, for example.¹²² As a determinist method, instrumental reason denies and excludes all that does not belong to or is not coherent with its project. Ruth Berman, describing this kind of system of thought as "machine ideology," views it also as a tautological, repetitive model of thought:

Contemporary Aristotelians, Cartesians and Positivists do look at nature but through the eyes of this machine ideology. They seek only mechanical, reproducible, nonrevolutionary change, the kind that can indeed be described by immutable laws, derived by abstracting selected data points at fixed times under fixed conditions. And these abstracted regularities often do approximate nature or rather an image of it, much as do the dots on our television screen. The greater the number of dots, the more coherent the image produced. This picture conveys much useful information, but it does not involve us with the process of nature itself. Thus our contemporary dualists begin by defining the conditions for locating the machine within nature; it is not surprised that this is what they find. The massive explosion of technology with the past century is the monument to their success.¹²³

This compression and reduction of the centrifugal process of nature by a centripetal machine ideology was assigned to human beings as well. Possessive individualism, a

¹²² Instrumentality has been the leitmotif of a number of critics of modernity. Max Weber's concept of the "iron cage" (which I shall return to below), built from reductive bureaucratic rational structures, is a case in point. The Critical Theorists of Frankfurt Institute for Social Research comprised of various members who were outspoken about what Jürgen Habermas, a disciple of the Critical Theorists, refers to as "purposive rationality." He provides an enlightening account of the Critical Theorists' critique, underlining that "[i]n cultural modernity, reason gets definitively stripped of its validity claim and assimilated to sheer power." In turn, he claims that the Dialectic of Enlightenment by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, to which I shall be referring, "does not do justice to the rational content of cultural modernity that was captured in bourgeois ideals (and also instrumentalized along with them)...to the universalistic foundation of law and morality, that have also been incorporated...into the institutions of constitutional government into the forms of democratic will formation and into individualist patterns of identity formations..." See his The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, trans. By F. G. Lawrence (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1992), 112, 114.

¹²³ Ruth Berman, "From Aristotle's Dualism to Materialist Dialectics," 240-1.

model based on a system of mathematics, defines human beings by or confines them to their countable, measurable possessions, whether these be property or human energy, making them a medium of exchange.¹²⁴

Whether positivism, instrumentalism or possessive individualism, this machine ideology became a mode of action, the basis for political movements and operations as well as bureaucratic organizations, creating, to use Max Weber's term, an "iron cage":

Weber argued that the hope and expectation of the Enlightenment thinkers was a bitter and ironic illusion. They maintained a strong linkage between the growth of science, rationality, and universal human freedom. But when unmasked and understood, the legacy of the Enlightenment was the triumph of...purposive-instrumental rationality. This form of rationality affects and infects the entire range of social and cultural life encompassing economic structures, law, bureaucratic administration, and even the arts. The growth of [purposive-instrumental rationality] does not lead to the concrete realization of universal freedom but to the creation of an 'iron cage' of bureaucratic rationality from which there is no escape.¹²⁵

The "iron cage" is like a centripetal force that represses, one could say, centrifugal energy. Despite the fact that machine ideology constructed an "iron cage," it was fueled by a positive force. In effect, an unbounded faith in the perfectibility of humans and society became the motor for social, economical and political change, culminating in the scientific and technological revolutions of the last few centuries.

¹²⁴ For a historical study of the development of possessive individualism (a term coined by C. B. Macpherson) from Hobbes to Locke, see his The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

¹²⁵ R. Bernstein, Cited in David Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity (London: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 15.

The Faustian desire to improve nature inspired the great dream of progress and faith in the power of reason to effect change, and as we know, produced spectacular results. The advancement, in the last few centuries, in science and technology in industrialized nations is a veritable testimony to the material success of the Enlightenment project.¹²⁶ This project began, one might say, with the searchers and spies of nature. It must be remembered that the great modern project had as its goal, according to Francis Bacon, to provide the methods by which "...a blessed race of Heroes or Supermen [could] overcome the immeasurable helplessness and poverty of the human race..."¹²⁷ Indeed, the modern Enlightenment project began as an essentially noble project, to alleviate human subservience to natural¹²⁸ and supernatural forces, to transcend myth and mythology.

Though acknowledging the material success of the enlightenment project, the Critical Theorists Adorno and Horkheimer, also viewed this progress to be regressive. Their sombre insights were published in 1944 in their book, Dialectic of Enlightenment.

¹²⁶ It was particularly at the turn of this century that this wonderful dream of progress seemed, for many, to be truly realizing itself. The extraordinary acceleration of technological break-throughs and the rapid growth of scientific discoveries during the Second Industrial Revolution, in industrialized societies in Europe and North America, permitted an increasing portion of the general population to enjoy unprecedented health and longevity and a relatively comfortable and affluent lifestyle, in comparison to earlier centuries. In this way, modernization became, for many, synonymous with progress. The new society created by modernization and technological advances that brought material progress instilled in more people a growing sense of individualism, of the notion of individual rights that were increasingly defended by legal systems and organized labor.

¹²⁷ Cited in Genevieve Lloyd, The Man of Reason, 12.

¹²⁸ For example, to eradicate famine, disease and pestilence and generally to improve the lot of humankind. For an overview of the positive goals and achievements of the Enlightenment, see for example Eugen Weber, A Modern History of Europe, 628-67

There, in the aftermath of the Second World War, they endeavored to understand why and how the Enlightenment project had gone awry. The authors sought to discover "why mankind, instead of entering into a truly human condition, is sinking into a new kind of barbarism."¹²⁹ Indeed, in the eyes of Adorno and Horkheimer, although the enlightenment project was a noble one which aimed to "liberat[e] men from fear and establish[...] their sovereignty...the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant."¹³⁰

According to Adorno and Horkheimer, the prime cause of a retreat from the ideals of the Enlightenment is enlightenment reason¹³¹ itself, the reductive models of thought, described here as "machine ideology." Even though, they say, scientific method of thinking is a tool, Enlightenment is nonetheless the philosophy which "equates the truth with scientific systemisation." It "substitute[s] formula for concept, rule and probability for cause and motive." All that does not "conform to the rule of computation

¹²⁹ Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment (New York: Continuum, 1991), xi. Although they were not alone in their critique of cultural modernity. I will be referring to these critiques of cultural modernity since they coincide most readily with the cultural narratives I have laid out and with my perspective on Duchamp. This said, it must be noted that "critical theory" was the umbrella for a whole range of positions associated to the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, with prominent members such as Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse. For key readings of the members of the Frankfurt School, see Andrew Arato & Eike Gebhardt, eds., The Essential Frankfurt School Reader (New York: Continuum, 1992). For a comprehensive historical account of the Frankfurt School, see Martin Jay, The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-1950 (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1973). See also Susan Buck-Morss, The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt Institute (New York: Macmillan Free Press, 1977).

¹³⁰ Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment , 3.

¹³¹ Enlightenment reason, a term that encapsulates the notion of a positivistic instrumentality and possessive individualism, fueled the whole modern project.

and utility is suspect."¹³² For this reason, the Critical Theorists perceive the enlightenment yearning for the "blindly objective" to be a "false clarity."¹³³

Though enlightenment reason originates in the negation of myth, and in the desire to eradicate superstition and magic, it remains, as their negative dialectic illustrates, embedded in myth. Their negative dialectic is a method that juxtaposes seemingly antithetical concepts such as enlightenment-myth in order to expose how such polar opposites are inextricably intertwined. Let us see how it reveals "myth is already enlightenment [and how] enlightenment reverts to mythology."¹³⁴

Ancient myth, the enlightenment thinkers thought, asserted the ancients' fear of natural phenomenon. By anthropomorphizing spirits and demons, the ancients reduced nature to a human scale. The Critical Theorists argue that enlightenment reason is also mythic in that it is founded on a similar fear of all that transcends the human boundaries. By subjecting nature to abstractions, to numbers, to a repeatable entity, to "what is directly given" enlightenment reason, like pre-enlightenment myth, reduces nature to the limitations of the human mind, thus also to the human level.¹³⁵ Enlightenment is thus founded on ancient mythic models. Indeed, as the Critical Theorists say, "[e]ven the

¹³² Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment, 5, 6.

¹³³ Ibid., xiv, xv.

¹³⁴ Ibid., xvi.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 85, 26.

very notions of spirit, of truth and, indeed, enlightenment itself, have become "animistic magic."¹³⁶

Enlightenment is myth, but myth is also already enlightenment. In their Dialectic of Enlightenment, the authors explicate this inversion by illustrating how the mythic figure, Odysseus, is already like the enlightenment thinker. Here gender comes into play. Acknowledging that nature has been inscribed into our cultural constructs as a female principle, as a natural, sensuous being to be subjected to enlightenment reason, "woman" represents, they say, at one and the same time the "enigmatic image of irresistibility and powerlessness."¹³⁷ As Adorno and Horkheimer contend, the oppression of women in society represents "the desperate will to destroy everything that embodies the allurements of nature."¹³⁸ The subjugation of nature and the sensuous self by enlightenment reason, as we have seen with the story of the Odysseus and the Sirens, is already played out in the Homeric epic, The Odyssey. Already like the enlightenment thinker, the Critical Theorists explain, Odysseus must overcome, bypass and reduce nature and its natural forces to human reason.

The regressive aspects of enlightenment reason are also exemplified by its impact upon the human subject. For the enlightenment individual, like Odysseus, there is a process of estrangement from centrifugal nature and from the natural sensuous self. Adorno and Horkheimer explicate this suppression of the sensuous self with the Marquis

¹³⁶ Ibid., 11.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 71.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 111.

de Sade's "Chronique Scandaleuse" of Justine and Juliette. The Story of Juliette illustrates, they say, how sensuousness or "physical emotions" are reduced to "production line methods" and how Sade's chronicles represent "the Homeric epic with its last mythological covering removed: the history of thought as an organ of domination."¹³⁹

The Marquis de Sade's Juliette is no longer "woman" represented as centrifugal nature, as sensuous being and enchantress. This libertine is instead a uni-dimensional being, a mechanical body. She epitomizes the denaturalized self. Mere body, Juliette is not only the product of enlightenment reason but also, Adorno and Horkheimer contend, the inverted reflection of the enlightenment intellect. Where she is the female body separate from the mind, the enlightenment intellect is mind separate from the body.¹⁴⁰ Perhaps for this reason Juliette admires her radical "other," the enlightenment intellect, and believes in science and enlightenment reason: "[s]he wholly despises any form of worship whose rationality cannot be demonstrated...."¹⁴¹ A denaturalized self, she represents a similar sadistic logic of domination of all that is nature within the self. Like the denaturalized enlightenment intellect, Juliette also "objectifies [herself] to become an automatic, self-activating process; an impersonation of the machine."¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Ibid., 117.

¹⁴⁰ Indeed, as Adorno and Horkheimer write: "Mind and body are separated in reality, just as the libertines required." Ibid., 107.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 96.

¹⁴² Ibid., 25.

By reassessing the attributes of both the Sirens and of Juliette, the Critical Theorists disclose that the objectification of nature and the denaturalisation of the self by enlightenment reason is reductive. Most significantly, their stories underline the fact that these representations of a denaturalized "female" nature are effectively projections or specular reflections of the enlightenment intellect himself. Reified female-nature (in the form of the Sirens) and the denaturalized mechanical body (Juliette), in fact, mirror back the enlightenment intellect's own nullified and denaturalized self.

Instead of exploring the enlightenment project as a continuous road toward perfectibility and progress, the Critical Theorists thus illustrate the intimate, specular relationship that lies between myth and enlightenment, between progress and regression, and between the enlightenment intellect and reified female-nature. In this regard, their negative dialectic manifests a strong affinity with Duchamp's own patatautological project which presents oppositional gendered principles as specular inversions.

Étant donnés... similarly cites and inverts an array of readymade givens, from ancient myth to enlightenment epistemologies, conflating ancient and modern constructs within its confines. Moreover, within the boundaries of his "allegorical appearance," one can also envision the positive and progressive, the negative and regressive elements of the modern enlightenment project as both either-or and neither-nor.

One can see how Étant donnés... operates simultaneously as an inscription of age-old myths of female-nature and the modern "iron cage" constructed by the "enlightened" bachelor machine. Not only an object of vision for the searchers and spies of nature, the centrifugal powers of female-nature are literally contained within the "rational cage."

Built by the centripetal powers of the bachelor machine and fueled by "machine ideology" and the great dream of progress, this cage provides the spies and searchers an object of vision. Subjugated within its confines by the "...blessed race of Heroes or Supermen...",¹⁴³ female-nature lies as a testimony to the modern project that progressively taps and regressively saps the centrifugal energy of female nature, the project that gave birth to the industrial revolutions.¹⁴⁴

Duchamp's drawing Cols Alités, 1959 (fig. 113), as a superimposition of Étant donnés... and The Large Glass, discloses the intimate interrelationship between the rolling hills of reclining mother nature depicted in the former and the story of the mechanical bride and the bachelor machine related in the latter. As both a prologue and epilogue to the "allegory on/of forgetting," Étant donnés... converges time and place within its boundaries, rather like the negative dialectic of the Critical Theorists Adorno and Horkheimer. As signs that both foreshadow and shadow an array of signs from the

¹⁴³ Francis Bacon cited in Genevieve Lloyd. The Man of Reason. 12.

¹⁴⁴ David Landes explains the ambiguity of the term, "industrial revolution" and relates the various meanings that have been attributed to this term. Where the First Industrial Revolution depended upon the mechanization of traditional industries, the Second Industrial Revolution, Landes explains, took place after the declining momentum of early modernization in the late 19th century which subsequently renewed itself with the rise of new industries based on advances in chemical and electrical science and the invention of the internal combustion engine which initiated a cluster of innovations. This Second Revolution was abetted by a continuing growth in the capitalist spirit, in bourgeois liberalism, in increased secularization exemplified by a growing faith in human reason, and belief in progress. Industrial development, scientific research, social systems and government policy all were based on the scientific method, particularly inductive reason (founded on 17th century scientific theories of Bacon and on Newtonian science), and upon what David Landes calls "the rationality principle [or] the adaptation of means to ends": as a means to master the environment, whether natural, political or economic. Such rationality, or instrumental reason, Landes calls "the Faustian spirit of mastery." David Landes, The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

"allegory on/of forgetting," Étant donnés... is intimately linked to the tale of the enlightenment project. The story of modern progress-regression is, however, displayed more prominently in the "allegory on/of forgetting."

This tale can be said to begin in the Bachelor Machine,¹⁴⁵ in the lower portion of The Large Glass, where one can discern the various stages of mechanization and industrialization: from the pre-industrial epoch to the periods of the First and Second Industrial Revolutions.¹⁴⁶ This is the story of the transformation of female-nature and its resources water and gas, elements that are explicitly referred to in the title of Étant donnés... We can see how the various sources of natural energy are converted into movement and light, but not true "enlightenment." Although the control and transformation of nature engenders the myth of progress, the Bachelor Machine also displays "progress" to be regressive.

¹⁴⁵ To my knowledge, there are no explicit references in Duchampian scholarship to the various stages of industrialization, yet I believe this to be a significant orientation. My account is based primarily on the study of mechanization and the industrial revolutions made respectively by Siegfried Giedion, Mechanization Takes Command (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955); Lewis Mumford, Technics and Civilization (San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1963); David Landes, The Unbound Prometheus.

¹⁴⁶ From its early beginnings in Britain in the 18th century, the First Industrial Revolution introduced a process of industrialization that created a succession of technological changes which substituted mechanization for human skills, inanimate power for animate, as well as improvements in metallurgy and chemical industries. The industries which were at the heart of this process and played a decisive role in the transition to mechanized production of the First Industrial Revolution were textile manufacture, metallurgy and chemical industries, machine building, steam engineering and railway transport. The ever-increasing mechanization of the work place resulted in the development of the iron industry, in the replacement of the waterwheel by the steam engine and then later in the second phase of the industrial revolution by the internal combustion engine. These changes, in turn, created the possibility of an increasing number of industries to mechanize their production.

Stipulating the process of mechanization to be a series of changes in the transformation of female-nature, the Bachelor Machine relates how progress, machine ideology and mechanization began with the most elemental invention of all, the wheel.¹⁴⁷ As might be expected, the wheel figures prominently in *The Bachelor Machine*: as a waterwheel,¹⁴⁸ and as a series of gears and grinders, all of which rotate continuously.¹⁴⁹ Besides the wheel, "The Bachelor Machine" features other elemental tools such as the pulley and the endless screw¹⁵⁰ which similarly enable continuous movement. The "Bachelor Machine" is, as we have learned from Duchamp's notes, continuously active: it rolls and grinds relentlessly, moving up and down, sliding back and forth.

The energy required for the perpetual motion of this machine is produced by nature, by an invisible waterfall. This waterfall activates the watermill that, in turn, activates a pulley system next to it, to which are hooked weights, four Benedictine bottles

¹⁴⁷ The wheel served to transform energy, to accelerate production, to increase mechanization and locomotion. As such, one can even interpret Duchamp's first readymade, *The Bicycle Wheel* of 1913 as a homage to this important symbol of progress, without forgetting, of course, that the humble bicycle was also an invention of the late 19th century which helped to change society. As well, the wheel stands as a symbol of tautology and tautological repetition: like "circular time" that reverts back to the beginning, to myth.

¹⁴⁸ Although waterwheels existed as early as the third century B.C., it was waterpower and the waterwheel that transformed the textile industry in 18th century England during the First Industrial Revolution. It revolutionized the weaving machines which permitted the faster production of a finer yarn, with less manpower, contributing to the expansion of the textile industry and its control of world markets. See Siegfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command*, 92.

¹⁴⁹ Giedion explains how the rotative movement of gears and grinders perfected or improved upon manual activity. See *Ibid.*, 46-7.

¹⁵⁰ Alexandrian inventors had already introduced the screw, the wedge, the lever and pulley. Already during the Renaissance in 16th C. Italy, technical books by Leonardo da Vinci (who was a particular interest to Duchamp) were concerned with pumping machines, waterwheels, levers, gears, pulley systems. See Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization*, 33.

to be precise. Once set into motion by water and another natural force, gravity, the pulley causes a glider or chariot, set on rails, to slide back and forth.¹⁵¹ This power is then conveyed to a series of cones or sieves which cause the grinder, consisting of three rollers, to rotate. These grinding wheels revolve an endless screw called the "bayonet" which, in turn, opens and closes scissors or calipers.¹⁵²

Thanks to the transformation of the energy of nature and by means of a series of rationally constructed wheels and other primary tools, such as calipers, grinders and endless screws, there is an incessant, constant rolling away in the whole Bachelor Machine.¹⁵³ The perpetual motion of the Bachelor Machine is like a parody of basic laws of mechanics, the laws of motion, the laws of the screw; it mimics the circular motion so important to the evolution of the milling process which, during the next phase of industrialization, becomes the continuous production line so significant to the modernization process.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ These rails not only point to the railway age (a major boon to industry) but also to the wooden rails which eased the hauling of coal in early 17th century English mines. See Siegfried Giedion, Mechanization Takes Command, 33.

¹⁵² Calipers were a means of measurement prior to precision tools such as gauges, references disks, end measuring blocks which were invented in the beginning of the 20th century. See David Landes, The Unbound Prometheus, 314.

¹⁵³ It was precisely such ancient mechanical aids such as the wheel and axle, the pulley and endless screw which in the 18th century evolved into the continuous production line of which the Bachelor Machine is a parody: the pulley is like the endless belt or belt conveyor, the endless screw, like the screw conveyor, the series of cones, like the chain of buckets or a bucket conveyor.

¹⁵⁴ A book published in 1795 by Oliver Evans from Philadelphia, entitled The Young Millwright and Miller's Guide, became a standard manual on the mechanization of the milling process for more than half a century. Whether Duchamp was aware of this book can never be established; however, the activity in the Bachelor Machine could be interpreted as a parodic account of this manual. Giedion relates here the laws of mechanics and hydraulics recounted in this guide; it could be an account of the activity in the Bachelor Machine: "The reader can follow

The signs in the Bachelor Machine can thus stand for aspects of the First Industrial Revolution and the transformation of nature and its resources. It is the story of how natural resources, like the waterfall displayed in Étant donné..., motivated the Bachelor Machine. Where in the Bachelor Machine, the waterfall turns the wheel, providing the power for its operation, in Étant donné..., there is a specular inversion. Here instead a man-made wheel, in the form of an electrically-run rotating disc, produces the illusion of a flowing waterfall.¹⁵⁵ This specular inversion points to the evolution of the machine, which through electricity and other progressive inventions, brought about the next stage of industrialization.

Before moving to the inscription of the Second Industrial Revolution, however, it is important to state that if the Bachelor Machine represents progress, it also relates a story of regression. The inhabitants of this machine, the bachelors, live on natural products: they "live on coal or other raw material..."¹⁵⁶ in an underground world,

almost step by step as the simple theorems, the 'laws of motion and force of falling bodies [benedictine bottles], of bodies on inclined planes [drainage slopes, parasols, cones or sieves], the laws of the screw and circular motion' [bayonet and chocolate grinder] are transformed into mechanical devices, whence is composed the mill that runs by itself, the mill without workers, the automaton. The paddles of mill wheel [watermill and glider] whose laws of motion under the influence of water...are changed into baskets [sieves or parasols] into buckets on an endless belt, carrying products from a lower to a higher, or from a higher to a lower level. The water on the paddles of the overshot wheel is changed to grain, moving and moving ever onwards; but it does not drive. It is driven." [My comments in brackets which refer to the notes in the Green Box] See Giedion, Mechanization Takes Command, 84.

¹⁵⁵ An electric motor rotates a perforated disc behind which a light has been placed. The oscillating light shines through a transparent image of a waterfall producing the illusion of flowing water. This image is an enlarged photograph of a real waterfall separating the towns of Chexbres and Puidoux and which, as we have seen in the first dialogue, provided energy for the local industries.

¹⁵⁶ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 45. Coal was the fuel of the First Industrial Revolution.

subjected to a rational machine whose incessant, repetitive and circular movement induce them to lament their mechanical existence. In concert with the sliding back and forth of the watermill, they chant their litany of the Chariot:

Slow life - Vicious circle - Onanism - Horizontal -Buffer of life [...] -
Rebounding = junk of life - Cheap construction - Tin - Cords - Iron Wire -
Crude wooden pulleys - Eccentrics - Monotonous fly wheel...¹⁵⁷

Most evidently not the enchanting song of the centrifugal Sirens, their chant is a lamentation about the deadening mechanical life of the whole "enlightened" Bachelor Machine. It is reminiscent of the denaturalized state of which Adorno and Horkheimer speak, where even thought "objectifies itself to become an automatic, self-activating process; an impersonation of the machine."¹⁵⁸

Of course, the bachelors refer not to individuals, but to "everyman" with no distinguishing features. It is thus appropriate that Duchamp also calls the bachelors the "Cemetery of Uniforms," representing them pictorially as empty shells, or "Malic Moulds."¹⁵⁹ They are but mere remnants or traces of a whole being. By means of such signs of uniformity and death, Duchamp illustrates how the subjugation of human nature (to use the words of the Critical Theorists) to "production line methods...[becomes an] an organ of domination."¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 56-7.

¹⁵⁸ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment, 25.

¹⁵⁹ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 51.

¹⁶⁰ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment, 117.

In this respect, the underground abode of the Bachelor Machine is appropriately designed, according to a pre-given formula, "one-point" perspective. Duchamp reveals how, in the Bachelor Machine, these geometric lines "are strained and lose the nearly of the 'always possible'...."¹⁶¹ In effect, the "always possible" has been evacuated in the Bachelor Machine since in this mechanistic world only circular, tautological thought patterns can reign.

The constellation of pictorial signs in the Bachelor Machine, taken in conjunction with the artist's notes, seem to coincide with the Critical Theorists' critique of enlightenment as a process of denaturalisation that simultaneously nullifies the self. As a sign of regression, The Large Glass tells the double tale of the whole Enlightenment project as both a process of mechanization and of denaturalisation.

The bachelors hang precariously from thin threads which Duchamp calls "capillary tubes."¹⁶² According to his notes, these threads separate or remove the bachelors from nature at the same time as they nurture their desire for progress, for through these capillary tubes runs an illuminating gas. This is an illuminating gas which, much like enlightenment reason, controls and subjugates the natural self, at the same time as it fuels their pursuit of progress. Duchamp's notes for the Bachelor Machine indicate that the restrictive geometry is "freed" by means of the illuminating gas (the primal natural elements that are fluid and boundless) which causes "dizziness" and a

¹⁶¹ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 36.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 53.

"loss of awareness of position."¹⁶³ These are the centrifugal natural elements of female-nature, of water and gas, inhabiting the boundaries of Étant donnés..., elements which must be contained and subjugated if there is to be progress. Progress, for the bachelors, is effectively represented by the Bride's Domain situated in a distinctly separate location in the upper portion of the Large Glass.

Standing for progress, the bride simultaneously represents what the bachelors have lost in their process of de-naturalisation. As Duchamp's notes tell us, she abides in a natural, animate, dynamic domain. This ethereal world, not a world of one-point perspective nor of reductive reasoning, but a sublime world of openness and chance, is similar to the world of the Sirens. Like the centrifugal female-nature depicted in Étant donnés..., the Bride's Domain is, the notes stipulate, a world of the "always possible." Here, Duchamp writes, all exact mensurability is eliminated: "In the bride, the principal forms are more or less large or small, have no longer, in relation to their destination a mensurability...parabolas, hyperbolas (or volumes deriving from them) will lose all character of mensurable position."¹⁶⁴ In the Bride's Domain chance, randomness, or the 'always possible' reign. For example, the three irregular shapes of the "Draft Pistons" situated in the "Voie Lactée" or "Milky Way," were designed without preestablished rules, patterns, or geometry. Duchamp placed a transparent square gauze and hung it in front of an open window. He then took three photographs showing the distortion of the

¹⁶³ Ibid., 50.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 44-45.

gauze as it stirred in the breeze (fig.28). The wind or "nature" determined the shape that these would take in The Large Glass.¹⁶⁵

It is because she represents what is boundless, incommensurable, that the bachelors are enchanted by the Bride, much like Odysseus by the Sirens. They long to join her but, like Odysseus bound to the mast of his ship, cannot. They are forever confined, as the notes emphasize, to their underground mechanical existence. And so forever separated from them, this bride of nature, like the female figure in Étant donnés..., becomes an object of desire, an aestheticized object of vision. Most significantly, the centrifugal bride of nature instills in the bachelors the desire to transcend to her realm, to progress.

The Bride's Domain as a sign of progress represents the next phase of modernization, the Second Industrial Revolution.¹⁶⁶ This stage of industrialization was

¹⁶⁵ This nature-induced form reflects another work of Duchamp's, Unhappy Readymade of 1919. Here, Duchamp sent instructions from Buenos Aires to his sister Suzanne in Paris who was to execute the work: a geometry book was to be hung on a balcony of her apartment and as Duchamp explained, "the wind had to go through the book, choose its problems, turn and tear out the pages..." which it did. Cited in Anne d'Hamoncourt and K. McShine, eds., Marcel Duchamp (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, Philadelphia: Museum of Art, 1973), 288-9. Such exercises with randomness or chance also recalls The Three Standard Stoppages (fig. 115). The random shape of one-meter long strings became the templates for the drawing of the capillary tubes in the Bachelor Machine, the "naturally-engendered" tubes that carry the illuminating gas.

¹⁶⁶ The Second Industrial Revolution gave rise to new industries, to precision manufacturing and assembly-line production which initiated an array of innovations, most notably automotive devices, electrical power and motors, synthetic materials as well as new commodities made for mass consumption. New sources of energy and power fueled this revolution. Chemical substances or electrical current replaced the age old sources of energy, such as falling water, coal, wood, gas, oil, the sun. Motors converted energy into movement. Electrical dynamos and generators converted water, steam, into current. Falling water, nonetheless, remained a source of electrical energy. Electricity permitted the improvement of light sources (the invention of the incandescent filament lamp), heat and communication possibilities (electromagnetic telegraph, the wireless). Electricity also transformed the factory, mechanizing productions, streamlining the means of production by means of the motor.

propelled not so much by natural resources such as water, coal, and gas as by advancements in science, particularly in physics and chemistry which produced such inventions as the internal combustion engine. The Bride herself takes the shape of protoplasm, a substance which is the basis of life, having the powers of growth and reproduction. We see, therefore, in the Bride's Domain the chemical transformation of elementary forms of matter: water to air, gas to gasoline to electricity, waterpower to electrical power. In the Bride's Domain, the wheel and mechanical movement are transformed into the combustion engine, into the motor car. Perpetual motion is dynamic movement provided from energy of a different sort: no longer from a waterfall, but from gasoline and electrical power. The Bride's power comes from gasoline and from electricity. As a "desire-magneto," the Bride is, at one and the same time, a source and generator of electricity (energy) and a converter of energy which changes gas to electricity. Duchamp's notes underline that "Progress [is the] (improvement of the illuminating gas...)." ¹⁶⁷

And so, the illuminating gas is transformed into electric light. Like the dynamo-magneto, the Bride is, at one and the same time, the source of light (electric light described as "filament substance") which "resembles a solid flame...in a glass cage" (an electric light) and also the energy, the electrical energy which sparks the bachelors' desire for progress.

¹⁶⁷ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 53. Gas was also, like coal, a fuel which permitted evolution. Although as early as the 18th century, experiments with gas engines were already under way, it was only with the invention of the internal combustion engine in the 19th century that gas became a new source of power, as important as the old coal beds. See Lewis Mumford. Technics and Civilization, 235.

Significantly, it is the Bachelors' desire for progress which permits such evolution. As Duchamp writes: "This desire-part - then alters its mechanical state - which from steam [the steam engine representing First Industrial Revolution] passes to the state of internal combustion engine [a sign of the Second Industrial Revolution]."¹⁶⁸ Such evolution transformed the circular motion of the Bachelor Machine to the continuous production line and to the modernization of industry.

Thanks to the modern production line, myriads of mass-produced readymade objects became available: like bicycle wheels and snow shovels, like combs and urinals, like hat racks and bottle racks, like standardized doors and windows.¹⁶⁹ These readymade objects, the offspring or byproducts of the marriage between the mechanical bride and the Bachelor Machine, were joined by ever-increasing signs of progress linked to the transformation of water and gas. Amenities such as running water and gas for light and heating appeared in city dwellings. Signs advertising "water and gas on every floor" [Eau & Gaz à tous les étages (fig. 32)] became commonplace.¹⁷⁰ More people than ever

¹⁶⁸ [My brackets] Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 39.

¹⁶⁹ These objects refer to many of Duchamp's readymades: The Bicycle Wheel (fig. 43); In Advance of the Broken Arm (fig. 2); Comb (fig. 112); Fountain (fig. 3); Hat Rack (Trébuchet (Trap)) (fig. 127); The Bottle Rack (fig. 58). The windows and doors refer to various "window" works such as Fresh Widow (fig. 42) and The Large Glass (fig. 6) and "door" works such as Door of la rue Larrey (fig. 65) and, of course, Étant donnés.

¹⁷⁰ This is the title of an imitated Readymade made in 1958 for the front lid of the boxes of the limited edition of the monograph, Sur Marcel Duchamp by Robert Lebel. Such readymade signs were found (and can still be seen) on city apartments in French cities. Towards the turn of the century, running water and (gas) light and heat were new commodities: a sign of the progressive industrial machine and the population explosion which increased urbanization and which produced a flourishing middle class and labor power ready to produce the new inventions. See David Landes, The Unbound Prometheus.

before enjoyed an affluent lifestyle and more were able to profit from advancements such as running water, light and heat in their city apartments.¹⁷¹

As the image depicted in Cols alités (fig. 113) reveals, the implantation of the rolling hills of the natural female-nature by the electric pole transformed the mechanical activity of the Bachelor Machine into progressive electric power in the Bride's Domain producing, as a result, the material objects of progress. Fraught also with an erotic charge, the image inscribed into Cols alités (of reclining hills), in effect, announces the marriage bed "between Mind and Nature," to use Bacon's term, or between the male Bachelor Machine and the Bride of Nature. Their marriage produces the illuminating light of progress as well as regressive enlightenment reason.

The Bride's Domain represents the progress of the Bachelor Machine, but as we now anticipate, her electrical power is also the sign of regression. Like the bachelors, she is also subject to a process of denaturalisation. Just as the illuminating gas (or enlightenment reason) transforms the natural forces in the Bachelor Machine into mechanical activity, so too does it convert the dynamic, ethereal and sublime nature of the Bride's Domain into a denaturalised, mechanical state. Represented by the pendu femelle she, like the Bachelors, is removed from nature. Like her male counterparts, she

¹⁷¹ In effect, during the Second Industrial Revolution, change begot change: one innovation led to another into a never-ending spiral. The need to export depended on large-scale movement of goods from factory to ever-distant markets. This resulted in improved transportation, in communication innovations. There were also smaller but not insignificant inventions such as the sewing machine, readymade clothing and goods, and the bicycle. The camera, together with the lithographic printing process, was instrumental in creating another major revolution, the second printing revolution and the beginning of mass-media communication. As much as the railroad, the steamship, the telegraph, the photomechanically-reproduced image gave great impetus to the development of the industry and creating a new desire for consuming.

hangs: this time not from capillary tubes but from "a shiny metal gallows."¹⁷² The pendu femelle clearly reflects back to the Homeric epic, and to ancient rituals in which hanging was the preferred method of execution, and a symbol of woman's separation from nature.¹⁷³ In Étant donnés..., the decapitated and lifeless body of the female figure, as if cut down from the noose, is a reminder of how mechanical progress also signifies the death of nature.

Even though a modern machine produced by the improvement of the illuminating gas, the mechanical bride retains her female erotic body. Described as a motor with "desire-gears" and "sex cylinders" running on "love gasoline,"¹⁷⁴ she is a marriage of the erotic body and machine. In this regard, one can see parallels between this mechanical bride and the Marquis de Sade's Juliette, drawing once again on the recounting of the story by the Critical Theorists. A female body reduced to a machine, she is no longer nature, body, mother. She is denaturalised, deadened and, like Juliette, without sublime centrifugal qualities. As a mechanical bride, she is a unidimensional

¹⁷² Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 39.

¹⁷³ Duchamp's pendu femelle, I have found, relates quite readily to an interesting study by Eva Cantarella, "Dangling Virgins: Myth, Ritual, and the Place of Women in Ancient Greece" in The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives, 57-68. Cantarella examines the myths and social customs relating to the practice of female hangings. Not only was the noose the "privileged instrument of female death" as means of revenge or punishment for alleged crimes, but as a mythic rite of passage from virgin to woman, it was also a means to inscribe woman's deposition or withdrawal from nature.

¹⁷⁴ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 39, 42-43.

being, the erotic machine body who, like the denaturalized enlightenment intellect, is but "...an automatic, self-activating process; an impersonation of the machine."¹⁷⁵

As both the prologue and epilogue of these stories of mechanization and industrialization, Étant donné... exhibits, as do the Critical Theorists, how progress and regression, how enlightenment and myth, are inextricably intertwined. Headless and still, like a petrified corpse, like the culminating end of the pendu femelle, no longer dangling from a "shiny, metal gallows," as she was in The Large Glass, this mythic bride of nature lies immobile, prostrate in a decaying, deadened natural setting. Made to lie on a bed of dead twigs, she is like a tautological repetition of Duchamp's other denaturalized mechanical brides, most particularly, the re-embodiment of the bride in The Large Glass. A reified and denaturalized force, she is female-nature violated. At the same time, she is a sublime, centrifugal power that is never completely contained and that has the power to engender the dream of progress. Female-nature represented in Étant donné... is both a sign of progress and regression, of positive and negative elements. She operates patatautologically as both either-or and neither-nor.

Given: Duchamp's Patatautological Games...

Étant donné..., as an "allegorical appearance," illuminates, one can say, the stories of modernization which were fuelled by both the progressive ideals and regressive ideas of enlightenment, as the Critical Theorists have defined them. It also highlights how these

¹⁷⁵ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment, 25.

stories tautologically repeat ancient mythic premises. We have already seen how Étant donnés... represents diverse forms of female-nature. We have also seen, in the various narratives cited, how the dynamic energy or centrifugal power of mythic female-nature has been contained or subjugated by centripetal structures constructed by the heroic figure Odysseus, by the ideal, immutable designs of the ancients, by the agent of earthly transformation, Adam, by the Cartesian geometer, by the spies and searchers or enlightenment intellects. These historical figures, conflated in the notion of a centripetal force of a resolutely male agent, estrange, reify, distance, transform and subjugate a centrifugal natural force.

Duchamp, as we now understand, also inverts these roles in his patatautological game. If the Bachelor Machine was designed with mathematical precision and rational formulae, the rationally-constructed enclosure of Étant donnés... is ironically imperfect. With its array of loose electrical wires, rough carpentry, assembled as an "approximation démontable," Duchamp exhibits how the dynamic, sublime female-nature has been contained in a rather makeshift, rickety construction, as a mere bricolage (fig. 132). He illustrates, in this way, that it is with flimsy man-made constructions that centrifugal nature has been subjugated, that rather simple, limited and tenuous centripetal means have been called upon to control her natural forces.

Furthermore, even though, in the various narratives, nature has been represented as a centrifugal force, contained and controlled by the invisible centripetal mind of a male agent, in Étant donnés... this containment is not complete. Mythic Mother Nature may lie prostrate, contained in a makeshift "enlightened" enclosure, but her body

continues to dominate the scene. For the viewer who looks through the small apertures in the wooden door, she remains an imposing and disquieting figure, one who inhibits the gaze. Despite her reification, containment and subjection, nature's presence continues to overwhelm and astound the viewer who can glimpse at her only for a short time, and only through tiny peepholes.

Gendered personae, as we have seen, are significant players in Duchamp's patatautological games. They operate, one might argue, like "opposition and sister squares," presenting the gendered givens as both either-or and neither-nor. Though his elaborate gendered game cites and inverts readymade givens, Duchamp's specular inversions of cultural constructions can also be seen to disclose a major blind spot. Despite the insights into the various histories and epistemologies of nature, culture and gender, Duchamp, like the enlightenment intellect, also can be said to revert back to mythic thought. He does so by reducing concepts to anthropomorphic and androcentric models that portray "woman" as the specular reflection of a male player. In effect, the female figure in Étant donné... operates, like the polysemic bride in the Bride's Domain as an inversion of the bachelors. As an aestheticized bride of nature (like the Sirens), she is "a mirror reflecting back to them their own complexity..."; as the mechanical bride (like Juliette), she reflects "alongside their regrets..." the nullification of their natural complexity.¹⁷⁶ While invisible to the blind eye, Duchamp's presence is similarly reflected by this female figure. Posing as both estranged mythic bride and the denaturalized mechanical bride, this reclining female figure in her natural habitat, as we

¹⁷⁶ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 51.

shall see, reflects back only his givens of nature, culture and gender. Indeed, there is essentially only one gendered perspective provided in this “allegorical appearance,” a masculinist one. It would, therefore, be enlightening not only to revision the patatautological game as one played between Marcel Duchamp and his specular “other” but also to consider how it might have been possible to give a voice and real presence to this spectral persona.

DIALOGUE THREE: AN ALLEGORY OF READING

"Étant donnés...": Duchamp's Specular Perversions

My final dialogue with Étant donnés... finds me as the second viewer at the entrance of the chamber, envisaging Duchamp himself looking through the peepholes. From this more distanced vantage point, I visualize two figures positioned on either side of the door: Marcel Duchamp, standing on the outside looking in, and Rose Sélavy, his alter ego, as the reclining figure inside.

Duchamp adopted the female persona of Rose Sélavy around 1920,¹ and thereafter she even came to own the copyright, so to speak, of various works such as Fresh Widow, 1920 (fig. 42). It was shortly after this date that Rose added another "r" to her name, calling herself Rose Sélavy - "Eros is life." The most well-known work under the name of Rose is her Anémic Cinéma (1926), a seven-minute film shot with a camera that carries her name. In this film, disks bearing spirals (fig. 9) are rotated rapidly, creating suggestive erotic movements.²

Judging from this "sensual" film as well as from her name, Rose, it is evident that, in contrast to the celebrated "cerebral" Marcel Duchamp, designer of the rational

¹ For more details on the artist's creation of Rose and Rose Sélavy, see my Prologue, page 9.

² On these observations, see Lawrence D. Steefel, Jr., "The Position of La Mariée Mise à Nu par Ses Célibataires, Même, Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1960, 312; and Rosalind Krauss, "Where's Poppa?" in The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, ed. by Thierry de Duve (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1991), 454.

enclosure, the persona Rose Sélavy is cast here as his "other," the erotic female body. By extrapolating upon such gendered works, it becomes apparent to me that the specular inversions operating in Étant donné... are played out by two protagonists: Duchamp and his alter ego, Rose Sélavy.

I now revisualize the body of Rose in the role of the generic "woman": as mythic mother nature, the enchantress, inert matter; as the female sublime, the disruptive body, the bride of uncivilized nature.³ Rose, therefore, comes to personify "woman" as a "centrifugal" force that is indeterminate, infinite and ethereal, endowed with the power to transcend rational boundaries.

Conversely, the "cerebral" Marcel Duchamp plays the other role of the "estranged-from-nature" unified subject, the active mind, the agent of earthly transformation, the searcher and spy of nature, the enlightenment intellect, and the civilizer. He possesses the "centripetal" energy that has the power to control and contain the diffuse and chaotic female principle.

Thinking back at their specular inversions, I realize that in their capacity to subvert and transgress readymade givens, their gender games are ostensibly perverse. As I revision the games played out by these two gendered personae from my more distanced

³ This is not say that she cannot, in the mind of another viewer-reader, take on other roles as well, particularly if one looks at her other personae. For example, in the photograph by Man Ray (fig. 24), Rose is cast as a coy, smartly dressed woman.

vantage point as the second viewer, I come to recognize that their specular perversions are not only subversive and transgressive -- they are also resolutely regressive.⁴

A first encounter with Rose's provocative exhibitionism announces subversion since it perverts, with vengeance, the "normal" expected viewing experience. I think, again, how Duchamp, as the male player, framed me, how he has set me up as a voyeur at the peepholes. Through a type of coercion, he has forced me to participate in a quasi-deviant act, in a necrophilic ritual that deadens vibrant "centrifugal" qualities. As I look down at his counterpart, Rose the exhibitionist, I see how they together have dramatically subverted my expectations as a viewer. Duchamp has ostensibly designed Rose's enclosure as a means to subvert a "normal" aesthetic experience but, as I see it, the spectacle of her sexualized body makes Rose totally complicitous in this subversive act.

Rose's exhibitionism makes explicit what Laura Mulvey has theorized as female "to be looked-at-ness." Blatantly making herself available for the scopophilic pleasure of her male counterpart, Marcel Duchamp, Rose encapsulates the notion of "woman" as object of the gaze. The more I view the stereotypical roles of active male subject and

⁴ Recent reception of Étant donnés... ignores altogether what I see as regressive in Rose's exhibitionism and in Duchamp's specular games. As I have argued, Duchamp constructed Étant donnés... to "shock" the viewer in order to engage an interaction or dialogue. If the shock value triggered certain negative reactions and silence in the past, these have now waned considerably. See my "Introduction," p. 11, Footnote, 1. My third dialogue is an intervention into the banalizations of Étant donnés... and aims to bring back to the forefront issues which this work evokes and which, I believe, need to be addressed.

passive female object⁵ played out by Duchamp/Rose, the more I realize that this quasi-peepshow is somehow too subversive.⁶ It seems to me that Rose has assumed, far too conspicuously, the qualities of the female fetish. In this regard, other words by Laura Mulvey come to mind. Fetishism, she writes

is the most semiotic of perversions. It does not want its forms to be overlooked but to be gloried in. This is, of course, a ruse to distract the eye and the mind from something that needs to be covered up. And this is also its weakness.⁷

Duchamp has indeed made it impossible for Rose's fetishized body, that supreme subversive sign, to "be overlooked." It overtly begs to "be gloried in."⁸ Initially, I interpreted this ruse as a ploy to engage the viewer in a dialogue and, as an interlocutor, to enter into the intricacies of the specular games. Recalling these specular inversions, I am reminded of their transgressive quality: how by means of their gendered roles, each

⁵ Laura Mulvey's influential essay regarding the role of the gendered viewer (male and female as respectively subject and object of the gaze) has come under criticism (even revisited by Mulvey herself) for its monolithic model that does not sufficiently take into account the female viewer and that is also uni-dimensional in terms of the male viewing experience. See her "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Visual and Other Pleasures (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), 1989, 14-28; and "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' Inspired by Duel in the Sun," Framework 15/16/17 (1981): 12-15.

⁶ Dalia Judovitz makes interesting observations in this regard. She examines how the hyperreal scene in Étant donnés "stages eroticism as a 'too' obvious spectacle," stating that "the strong voyeuristic experience is received as a museum piece, as a given of Western pictorial and philosophical tradition." Discussing how the traditional visual and discursive practice of the museum goer is disrupted, she notes: "The image here 'unmakes' its viewer. The authority and the legitimacy that Western 'retinal' painting confers upon its spectator is here undone, since the eroticism of the image challenges the act of looking." See her "Rendezvous with Marcel Duchamp: Given" in Marcel Duchamp: Artist of the Century, ed Rudolf E. Kuenzli and Francis M. Naumann (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989), 187-8.

⁷ Laura Mulvey, Fetishism and Curiosity (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), xiv.

⁸ Ibid.

player transgresses the opponent's position and how, by so doing, they pervert normative givens.

Duchamp, as the male player, distances, contains, sublimates the female body, nature. By means of her disruptive "natural" body, Rose Sélavy, in turn, consistently entices, entraps, destabilizes or confuses the reasoned mind. In this way, she puts into peril the disengaged and unified, rational self. In effect, a series of inversions of hierarchical categories serve to transgress the ontological status ascribed to the various tautological constructs. Their games transgress the hierarchical "truth" value traditionally assigned to the "normative" readymade givens of "man" or "woman." They do so moreover without positing a new hierarchic center: without replacing a "higher" male principle with a "centrifugal" female one.

However, in envisioning Duchamp/Rose playing out a kind of specular "end game," I see how Rose's body, like all fetishes, also serves to "distract the eye and the mind from something that needs to be covered up." This obscured element is most emphatically "also its weakness." From my vantage point as the second viewer watching Duchamp/Rose on either side of the peepholes, I see how they are positioned as mirror images, as inverted reflections of each other, playing at dissolving essentialist categories by means of androgyny, androgyny here meaning a (con)fusion of genders. However, it is precisely in their "end game" as androgyne that a blind spot comes into view and where their specular inversions of gender categories reveal themselves to be regressive specular perversions.

In 1919, Duchamp's infamous rectified readymade, L.H.O.O.Q. (fig. 4) introduced the notion of androgyny. Here, he transformed Leonardo da Vinci's famous female bride, the Mona Lisa, into a female/male representation by adding a moustache and a goatee, thereby creating a convergence of genders. Conversely, in the 1920s, Duchamp was photographed in drag by Man Ray as Rose Sélavy (fig. 24) several times. Here the male artist not only poses as his female persona but effectively merges the two genders. In 1938, a half-clad female mannequin, Rose Sélavy, masqueraded in male garb at the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme in Paris (fig. 82).⁹ This kind of androgynous convergence of male-female genders, I would suggest, also comes into play in Étant donné...¹⁰ Observing Duchamp positioned at the peepholes, I see him staring, as if in a mirror, at his own inverted self-reflection, at his alter ego Rose Sélavy.

⁹ For a description of Rose Sélavy's presence at this exhibition, see Amelia Jones, Postmodernism and the En-gendering of Marcel Duchamp, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 78-79. Jones offers a very insightful view of Rose-Duchamp as an indeterminately gendered artist. In this regard, see particularly Chapter 5, "The Ambivalence of Rose Sélavy and (Male) Artist as 'Only the Mother of the Work'."

¹⁰ In my two dialogues I have already argued that there is both a male and a female principle present in Étant donné...: as a personal memoir reflecting his relationship with Maria Martins and Mary Reynolds; as the centripetal and centrifugal force as well as the many inscriptions of gendered inscriptions cited that converge within the parameters of this work. Jean-François Lyotard has also noted that the nude figure itself is, in fact, half man (left side) and half woman (right side). He writes: "Elle fait oeuvre. Vous avez renversé l'image de la femme... Vous avez trouvé l'homme dans la femme." Moreover he also presents the notion of androgyny. In Étant donné, he argues, the gender dualism of The Large Glass is transformed into the androgynous nude whom he identifies as Rose Sélavy. Androgyny, as Lyotard explains, is a kind of duplicity. Rose is not a case of travestism but a transformation where disparate (resolutely separate male and female elements) from The Large Glass are transformed, assimilated into one. Duchamp and/or Rose Sélavy are two figures of the same object. See his Les transformateurs Duchamp (Paris, 1977), 16, 18, 36. My understanding of androgyny in Étant donné... does not consist of the unifying of disparate male and female identities. As I shall explicate, I see Duchamp/Rose's "(con)fusion" of gender from a different "specular" vantage point here, as a regressive tautological repetition of gendered givens.

It is significant, here, to recall that Rose Sélavy signed a short essay, called Men before a Mirror.¹¹ In it, Rose inverts woman's traditional role as the object of the gaze. She explains how men see their face, their body, only through the eyes of a woman and how such self-representations are objectified and imprisoned in the mirror. Rose's words can effectively be read as a description of Duchamp at the mirror-peepholes:

Many a time the mirror imprisons them and holds them firmly. Fascinated they stand in front. They are absorbed, separated from reality and alone with their dearest vice, vanity... There they stand and stare at the landscape which is themselves, the mountains of their noses, the defiles and folds of their shoulders, hands, and skin... and the multiple primeval forests of their hair... [t]he nape of a neck that rises steeply to lose itself in the forest's edge of the hair, the tender curve of the skin behind an ear, the mysterious mussel of the navel, the flat pebbles of the knee-caps, the joints of their ankles... and beyond the farther and still unknown regions of the body...¹²

Now, in Étant donnés..., it is Rose who is objectified and imprisoned as Duchamp's self-image in a mirror.

The androgynous reflection which ensues is much like Duchamp's notion of the "mirrorial return." When one looks one way, one sees one image, Duchamp; when one looks the other way, one sees another, Rose. Seen from one side, she is male; seen from the other, he is female. This is his/her body; this is his representation and/or hers.

Marcel Duchamp/Rose Sélavy, one and the same - he/she, the androgyne. From my location as the second viewer, I watch their specular "end game" as androgyne, noting

¹¹ This text is a kind of literary readymade, composed by an unidentified German friend of Man Ray as Mann vor dem Spiegel subsequently translated into English and signed by Marcel Duchamp (Rose Sélavy). English text originally in Man Ray, Photographies 1920-1934 (Paris: Cahiers d'art, 1934); rpt. in Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 188-89.

¹² *Ibid.*, 188.

how their male-female identities merge on the plane surface of the mirror. I watch them become one.

Now considering Duchamp/Rose in this way, certain issues and problems about gender identity begin to surface. Gender identity, it has been demonstrated, is a regulative ideal based on cultural constructions of gender difference, of sexual divisions. As Judith Butler, for example, argues, the normative character of an original identity is but an illusion, "an effect of discursive practices."¹³ For this reason, gender parody, like drag (or androgyny) can operate as a transgression of normative givens. She explains:

In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself - as well as its contingency [...] As imitations which effectively displace the meaning of the original, they imitate the myth of originality itself. In the place of an original identification which serves as a determining cause, gender identity might be reconceived as a personal/cultural history of received meanings subject to a set of imitative practices which refer laterally to other imitations, and which, jointly, construct the illusion of a primary and interior gendered self or which parody the mechanism of that construction.¹⁴

For Butler, gender parody represents a perpetual displacement of the notion of an original identity, constituting "a fluidity of identities that suggests an openness to resignification and recontextualization, and [depriving] hegemonic culture and its critics of the claim to essentialist accounts of gender identity."¹⁵ A gender parody (like the androgynous image)

¹³ Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 18.

¹⁴ Judith Butler, "Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory, and Psychoanalytic Discourse." in Feminism/Postmodernism, ed Linda J. Nicholson (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 338.

¹⁵ Ibid.

is, thus, neither male nor female, but is simultaneously either/or and neither/nor, a confusion of given gender categories which transgresses normative givens and the notion of an original identity.

In this respect, one could say that the transgressive nature of gender parody coincides with the object of Duchamp's patatautological games which, as we have seen, also confuses gender givens by presenting male and female principles as both either-or and neither-nor and, serving to dismantle notions of an original, of readymade givens.

Even though gender parodies can be subversive, Judith Butler also acknowledges that this is not always the case: "I want to underscore that there is no necessary relation between drag and subversion, and that drag may well be used in the service of both the denaturalization and the reidealization of hyperbolic heterosexual gender norms."¹⁶

Looking at their end game as androgyne, it becomes quite clear that Duchamp/Rose's (con)fusions as well as inversions of male-female genres are not subversive gender parodies at all. Failing to displace the notion of an original gender identity, the androgynous masquerade of Duchamp/Rose perversely reaffirms them.

This affirmation occurs because their androgynous reflection in the plane surface of the mirror-peepholes overstates Rrose's body while it also erases or obscures Duchamp's presence. Such display/erasure is but a reiteration of the manner in which gender hierarchies have been constructed through representation. As Lynda Nead has eloquently noted in her study of the female nude: "Rather than the female nude being seen as the progressive display of the body of woman, it can be understood instead as a

¹⁶ Ibid.

kind of tyranny of invisibility, as a tradition of exclusions as much as it is a tradition of inclusions."¹⁷

To be sure, Duchamp is invisible in this "allegorical appearance," but Rose stands precisely as a monument to the "tyranny of invisibility." Despite the spectacular display of her female body, Duchamp has not really given Rose any corporeality, a real body, a real identity. To reiterate Rachel Blau-Duplessis' observations, Rose "has her bottom put on wrong.... What you see, head on, ahead of you, is cunt. Estranged cunt, the cant or can't of cunt. Duchamp has made a twisted, asymmetrical gash - richly labial but curved and wayward - where a vulva 'is'."¹⁸ In effect, Rose is fixed as a transhistorical construct, a sign of "woman" and, thus ultimately incorporeal.¹⁹

The over-representation of the female body, as several feminists have illustrated, in no way provides women with a reflective mirror in which to see themselves. On the contrary, such a false mirror serves to erase and obscure women's histories and experiences. Luce Irigaray's phrase, in this regard, readily comes to mind: "I am seeking, in simplest terms," she says, "to be united with an image in a mirror."²⁰

¹⁷ Lynda Nead, The Female Nude. Art, Obscenity and Sexuality (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 60.

¹⁸ Rachel Blau-Duplessis, "Sub Rosa: Marcel Duchamp and the Female Spectator," in The Pink Guitar: Writing as Feminist Practice (New York & London: Routledge, 1990), 70. For further discussion of the "malformed" genitalia, see Dialogue Two, Footnote, 117.

¹⁹ On this subject of woman as an empty signifier, see Elizabeth Cowie, "Woman as Sign" in The Woman in Question, ed. by Parveen Adams and Elizabeth Cowie (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1990).

²⁰ Luce Irigaray, Speculum of the Other Woman (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1974), 189.

One of the principal political interventions for feminists has been to bring to the fore women's obscured histories and to examine how the historical metanarratives and discursive practices construct a false mirror of "woman,"²¹ one which serves to reinforce gender inequalities. Writes Janet Wolff,

the question of why women are hidden from history is not just a question about the discipline of history.... It is also a question about the wider context of historical events, which traditional historical method cannot perceive.... The institutional organizations of knowledge operates to marginalise women, as well as to reinforce the gender inequalities in contemporary society. The historical development of the different disciplines, arbitrary as it has been from the point of view of our actual experience in the world and in everyday life, reinforces the division of the sexes.²²

Although Duchamp's specular games can come to represent the inversion of gendered constructs, as I have illustrated in my re-presentations of various historical moments, they do not provide Rose, the "woman behind the door," with a female identity, with a genuine subject position. Only his alter ego, Rose is cast as his fetishized other.

Étant donnés..., like all mirrors, reveals that there is really no one else on the other side of the mirror's tain. This mirror reflects only he who looks into it - here, the artist Marcel Duchamp. For this reason, the body of Rose lying in her natural habitat is

²¹ Many feminist art historians, for example, have written about the structural gender bias that operates within the discipline of art history which served to erase or undermine the contribution of many women artists over the centuries and to maintain hierarchical gender structures. See, for example, Linda Nochlin, Women, Art and Power (New York, 1988); Griselda Pollock, Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art (London and New York: Routledge, 1988); Lisa Tickner, "Feminism, Art History, and Sexual Difference" Genders 3 (Fall 1988): 92-128.

²² Janet Wolff, Feminist Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 70-71.

not androgynous at all. The end game as androgyne does not confuse given gender categories. Instead Rrose the fetish, that supreme perversive sign, serves to "distract the eye and the mind" from the real object, Duchamp himself. Her fetishized body obscures the intimate and tautological relation between voyeur and fetish, between Duchamp and Rrose.

The display of Rrose Sélavy's body effectively reflects back only the artist's vision of gender: his fantasy of gender based on readymade inscriptions of a monolithic female identity, of a unitary category "woman." Fixed as he is in front of the mirror-peepholes looking, in narcissistic fashion, at his own self-reflection as Rrose, Duchamp remains blind to the perspective of the second viewer now watching him from behind.

Standing beyond the range of the reflecting surface, the second viewer is not subject to the framing device of the mirror and, thus, has a less restrictive perspective. The second viewer can more clearly see how Étant donnés... exposes the tautological premise inherent not only in this specular reflection but also in the voyeur-fetish relationship. Escaping Duchamp's blind spot, the viewer can gain significant insights. The blindness and insight²³ inherent in Étant donnés..., I venture to say, is more likely to

²³ I refer here to Paul de Man's notion of blindness and insight. By probing into the nature of our signifying processes, de Man examines the rhetoric embedded in language. Rhetoric here does not mean a power of persuasion. Rather, for de Man, rhetoric refers to the different levels of meaning embedded in both figurative and literal language, meanings not necessarily intended or even perceived by the writer, hence the blindness. It is precisely in the writer's blind spots, de Man insists, where the greatest insights can be found. Moreover, it is the acknowledgment of such blindness and insight that should inform any allegorical reading. De Man examines how rhetoric is embedded even in texts by writers and philosophers such as Stéphane Mallarmé and Friedrich Nietzsche, even in Jacques Derrida's own deconstructions. De Man's allegory of reading exposes how deconstructive texts can never completely demystify. They too contain blind spots. See Paul de Man, Blindness and Insight. Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971). My allegory of reading or deconstruction of Duchamp's Étant

be visible to a female viewer. Realizing the pitfalls of assuming such a seemingly unitary figure as a "female viewer," I would also argue that "she" can come to represent a diversity of women (and men for that matter) who recognize both the commonalities and differences in women's experiences, men and women who question the illusory nature of fixed gender identities and who explore the mechanisms in discursive and representational practices which construct and perpetuate gender hierarchies that erase and exclude women's histories.

Discussing Susan Bordo's observations on the problems of deconstructive strategies which tend to collude with patriarchy by positing a unified feminist consciousness, Janet Wolff aptly writes: "As [Bordo] shows, the search for an adequate account of the diversities among women is an impossible one (since such diversities are potentially infinite)."²⁴ To speak of the female gender in a unitary way can be a strategic and provisional method to deconstruct discursive and representational practices such as Duchamp's specular inversions, for example. Although an author like Judith Butler, as

donnés also aims to discover the blind spots and insights, the hidden levels of meaning that lie embedded in Duchamp's inscriptions. My allegory of reading differs in one significant respect to de Man's deconstructive project, however. It is based on my own representation of Duchamp's givens as a series of specular inversions. It is founded, in other words, on viewing a given set of signs from different perspectives. Such recontextualization, as in Bakhtin's notion of dialogism, shifts the meaning and, in this way, permits one to see blind spots. In my allegory of reading, thus, I do not look at the text (Étant donnés...) as an object outside of myself, as an object that contains disparate levels of meaning. Instead I take into account my own position as an interlocutor, my own point of view. One could say that I adopt Duchamp's notion of the "mirrorical return" in my allegorical reading. This is a concept, as we have seen, which acknowledges the contingency of one's point of view. When one looks at a particular image from the left, one perceives one thing, and from the right another. Duchamp, "The Green Box," The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 65.

²⁴ Janet Wolff, Feminist Sentences, 8.

we have seen, most definitively avows there is no originary identity, no unitary gender, she acknowledges that "[w]ithin the terms of feminist theory, it has been quite important to refer to the category of "women" and to know what it is we mean."²⁵

In my mind, such a feminist project would benefit from an acknowledgement of the socially-constructed position that women have come to occupy:

We tend to agree that women have been written out of the histories of culture and literature that men have written, that women have been silenced or distorted in the texts of philosophy, biology and physics, and there is a group of embodied beings socially posited as 'women' who now, under the name of feminism, have something quite different to say.²⁶

It is indeed paradoxical to recognize that there is no original gender identity and, at the same time, be obligated to "map sexual difference and an inquiry into femininity - the need to know what we ourselves are."²⁷ Understanding how sexual difference has been constructed in representational and discursive practices and, at the same time, recognizing the fluid nature of gender, one might be able to bring to the surface women's obscured histories as agents of culture.

By accepting such a tension between the acknowledgement of what one can call "gender as *différance*" and gender identity as difference, let us imagine that Rose, Duchamp's "woman behind the door," has escaped the confines of his restrictive enclosure. Assume that she has been given a head and eyes with which to observe the reified body assigned to her. Once on the outside of this framing device, she can come to

²⁵ Judith Butler, "Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory, and Psychoanalytic Discourse," 324.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Lisa Tickner, "Feminism, Art History and Sexual Division," 116-7.

occupy the position of the second viewer watching Duchamp at the peepholes and stare at him gazing at his own self-reflection.

Rose can recognize how Duchamp has impersonated her in order to play out his specular games, and that his "allegorical appearance" is, in effect, a "spectral image" which does not represent her. On the outside of the framing device, she may realize how, as an empty signifier, this "spectral image" serves to repeat, once again, ancient discourses of the female body as the "other" of rational man. Written by his imaginary, this grand fiction positions her both on the inside and outside.

It might be argued that this dual position inadvertently places Rose in a privileged location. Since she is not uniquely cast as a subject looking at her own reflection through the peepholes, since she is represented and objectified as Duchamp's "other," she is more likely to escape being "framed," duped or blinded into believing that this representation mirrors her as subject.²⁸ This non-recognition can prompt her to see how her "spectral image," in fact, perversely serves to obscure her identity.

As a female viewer standing behind Duchamp, Rose is now able to see how her body has served the artist's grand masquerade, and how it tautologically repeats, and thus, reinforces normative givens. She can more readily recognize that his transgressive acts regressively pervert the goals of his patatautological enterprise, rather than invert and dismantle readymade givens. Significantly, the recognition and misrecognition that

²⁸ This is not to say that all women see the false mirror presented in representational and discursive practices nor that all men are duped. Historically, many women have remained blind to the false image constructed of them and conform to its restrictive frame.

arises from Rose's gaze outside the mirror's surface, is not a neutral one. Hers is not a putative "innocent" eye.

Standing alongside Rose, I too feel implicated in Duchamp's masquerade. I use the word implicated in the sense of the Latin, implicare, meaning "to be folded within."²⁹ As a female viewer, I wish to revision Duchamp's specular inversions and to "unfold" some histories and epistemologies obscured by Rose's normative appearance. Neither neutral, indifferent or innocent, my gaze can also throw itself within the frame and outside it. Though I realize that Rose is a "spectral image," an empty signifier, I understand that she is also meant to represent me and myriads of other women. I recognize that her monolithic representation as body/nature is grounded in societal structures that inscribe hierarchical sexual divisions. Indeed,

[o]ne paradox is that binaries inscribe (not describe, note) not balanced oppositions, but a single standard whereby the devalued term - most often that associated with the feminine or indeed with the body as such - is measured against the primary norm and found wanting.³⁰

In this regard, my own position as second viewer looking at Duchamp's specular perversions implicates me in complex ways.

Though I position myself as a "female viewer," I strive not to hide, like Duchamp, behind a unitary concept "woman." I consciously incorporate multiple theoretical and

²⁹ I borrow this term from Abigail Solomon-Godeau who examines, in her discussion of the artist Lynn Hershman, how vision is always implicated in "in questions of power, knowledge, sexuality, and subjectivity." See her "Conscientious Objectification: Lynn Hershman's Paranoid Mirror" in Paranoid Mirror (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, c. 1995), 23.

³⁰ Janet Price and Margrit Shildric, Feminist Theory and the Body (New York: Routledge, 1999), 217.

historical perspectives into my act of looking, taking careful account of Suzanne Moore's insights: "If a female gaze exists it does not simply replicate a monolithic and masculinised stare, but instead involves a whole variety of looks and glances - an interplay of possibilities."³¹

In adopting multiple perspectives, I do not wish to imply that I can expand the unitary "woman" to the category, "women," and thus provide a more complete and accurate picture of what it is to be a woman. On the contrary, I would agree with Judith Butler that

[g]ender is a complexity whose totality is permanently deferred, never fully what it is at any given juncture in time. An open coalition, then will affirm identities that are alternately instituted and relinquished according to the purposes at hand; it will be an open assemblage that permits multiple convergences and divergences without obedience to a normative telos of definitional closure.³²

In effect, in this third dialogue with Étant donnés..., I would like to propose a set of dialogic encounters with divergent theoretical positions which serves to disclose the cracks in Duchamp's specular games. In this task, I emphasize the strategic importance of certain theories, at the same time, recognizing their provisional nature. As Janet Wolff writes, "recognition of the limits of specific theories and analyses does not entail abandoning these, and insistence on the commonalities of women's experience (and oppression) is both valid and crucial for feminist critique."³³ The dialogic encounters

³¹ Suzanne Moore, "Here's Looking at You, Kid!" in The Female Gaze (London: Women's Press, 1988), 59.

³² Judith Butler, Gender Trouble, 16.

³³ Janet Wolff, Feminist Sentences, 8.

with a variety of perspectives on issues relating to "woman" constitute my "allegory of reading."

It is more than worthwhile then to revisit some of Duchamp's specular games from a position outside his "framing" mirror and to explore how his patatautological games maintain the boundaries between gendered binaries. Conversely, by examining some obscured histories and (fe)male perspectives, we can observe how "the very boundaries that apparently secure the either/or structure of binary difference - the body or the mind...Male or female - [can be] opened up to slippage and uncertainty, such that the reliance on sameness and difference is lost."³⁴ Perhaps we could then call my own "allegory of reading," a patatautological enterprise. It too will inevitably contain its own blind spots, a subject to which I will return in the final pages of this dialogue.

Given: 1. Ancient Inscriptions of Female-Nature 2. The Estrangement...

Revisioning Rose play out the ancient narratives, I recognize how she was cast as the female enchantress, as a powerful, dynamic, infinite or "centrifugal" female principle. These stories relate how her natural powers were contained, objectified and distanced by the controlling "centripetal" power of the male principle. Duchamp, the male player, restrained Rose within his rational enclosure and he, like Ulysses in the story of the

³⁴ Janet Price and Margrit Shildric, Feminist Theory and the Body, 217-218.

Sirens, neutralized her natural centrifugal forces by aestheticizing her, making her into an object of vision. Lying prostrate and headless in her natural setting, Rose is also the quintessential representation of the dethroned earth goddess, of mother nature violated.

I remember Duchamp's specular inversions of these narratives. Even though she has been distanced and reified, Rose, as ancient enchantress, as "centrifugal" mother nature, maintains her power to endanger the unity of the rational self of the male player, Marcel Duchamp. Even though the male "centripetal" principle remains a persistent controlling force able to reify and contain the female principle, Rose's dynamic spirit is never completely neutralized.

Rose's vital power, I recollect, is more apparent in her appearance in The Large Glass where she is literally elevated to a higher domain. As the natural bride, she abides in a celestial, ethereal domain, while her male counterparts, the bachelors, dwell in a resolutely separate and restrictive subterranean domain. In an obvious inversion of gender hierarchies, the male Ocular Witnesses look up to her, admire her complexity, desire her. Having estranged themselves from their natural "centrifugal" condition, however, they are forever bound to their lowly state.

Let us for a moment imagine that Rose, having escaped the confines of the restrictive enclosure of Étant donnés..., has cast off her role as this natural bride. One wonders whether she would be able to identify with the figure of the idealized bride or with the natural earth goddess who possesses such enchanted "centrifugal" powers.

Forgiving me my interjection as a second viewer, I also ask whether Rose can come to represent the histories of women in ancient times. In what way does such a

"centrifugal" principle convey women's material realities? Though theirs are largely unwritten, forgotten and probably irretrievable stories,³⁵ Rose's misrepresentation, it seems to me, further distances us from the experiences of women in prehistoric times. While performing their daily pre-agricultural tasks of gathering food and rearing their young, would women have actually identified themselves as nature any more than men would have? In their daily lives as tool makers and tool users would prehistoric women have viewed themselves as "one" with nature or, would they, like their male counterparts, have been inclined to estrange themselves from "her?" Even though these are moot questions, I cannot help but find them significant. In assigning such a symbolic role to Rose, her "spectral image" serves to obliterate the idea that a myriad of women over many millennia actually participated in and contributed to early civilizations.

An even more intriguing question emerges from Rose's role as the imaginary or spectral "woman." Would patriarchal societies have developed if women had indeed been enchantresses who possessed magical "centrifugal" powers over men? Most evidently, the specular games played out between Duchamp/Rose represent only the bachelors' (and thus man's) experience of an estrangement from nature. Posing as the monolithic "woman," Rose is, most definitely, a "spectral" reflection of their estranged

³⁵ Such stories are becoming the object of study for historians. For example, Elizabeth Wayland Barber has examined ancient artifacts, designs on pottery and architecture, and surviving ancient cloths, to reconstitute women's role as workers during the Stone Age, through the Bronze Age and into the Iron Age. For this very informative study, see her Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years . Women, Cloth, and Society in Early Times (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994).

and denaturalized state. As a figment of Duchamp's imaginary, one could say that Rose is indeed but an "allegorical appearance," one that does not invert readymade givens.

The regressive aspect of the specular games of Duchamp/Rose lies not so much in the fact that Rose is an empty signifier, an illusory woman, nor that such an "allegorical appearance" eradicates women's historical positions. It is regressive in that it perverts Duchamp's own patatautological game. By assigning a "centrifugal" principle that is unbounded and indeterminate to Rose and a "centripetal" force which is "bounded, precise and clearly determined"³⁶ to the male player, Duchamp tautologically repeats ancient essentialist gender categories that ascribe mythic qualities to "man" and "woman."

It might appear, in assuming the androgynous role of Duchamp/Rose, these two players fuse both "centrifugal" and "centripetal" qualities, thereby asserting that both exist within a human subject. Such a conclusion, however, would deny the fact that Rose is simply a self-reflection of Marcel Duchamp and that such a fusion only occurs within the "male" subject. Posing as a headless, corporeal "woman" who represents chaos, the indeterminate, the ethereal, the boundless, Rose never comes to possess both "centrifugal" and "centripetal" forces.

How might Duchamp's gender games have dismantled such givens? A simple reversing of fortunes, an assigning the centrifugal and centripetal powers to Duchamp

³⁶ These are terms that Genevieve Lloyd employs to describe the gendered categories of Pythagoras and which, in my second dialogue, I relate to the "centripetal" and "centrifugal" nature of Duchamp's two allegories. See her The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

and Rose respectively might have caused a genuine slippage in normative givens. Thinking back at his etching of 1968, Bec Auer, in which both a male and female figure inhabit the natural scene, I try to envisage this. I imagine Rose looking through the peepholes at her male counterpart who is located in a natural scene exhibiting his genitalia as a sign of his generative, "centrifugal" powers.

An image immediately comes to mind. In response to Gustave Courbet's infamous painting, Origin of the World, 1866 (fig. 21) that depicted the torso and pubic area of what might be called Rose's predecessor, the French artist, Orlan, in 1989, created a computer-manipulated photograph of the painting. In the place of the female persona, a male actor adopts her position, with his erect penis constituting the focal point. Orlan called her own work, L'Origine de la Guerre/The Origin of War, (fig. 136). Her specular inversion of gender serves to jar one's perception of the representations of the objectified female body and call attention, through irony, to the problematic inscription of an "originary" natural entity. By so doing, Orlan subversively perverts and/or perversely subverts the myth of "woman" as the originary body and gender as a normative given.

It is not hard to imagine what kind of response such a scene would have elicited had Duchamp made the male persona in Bec Auer the person behind the closed door. Such a gender flip might have caused a greater uproar, a less muffled indignation. It would, however, have displaced the fantasy of woman as nature objectified and man as the "estranged-from-nature" subject. More significantly, it would have displayed the readymade givens as a fabulous fiction, as truly mythic.

This natural mythic female body has nonetheless been the object of concern for many feminists. The project of both Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, for instance, has been to exhibit the female body as "the empty signifier" and, in diverse ways, to retrieve women's corporeal experience from the realm of representation. To perform this rescue, Julia Kristeva, as a Lacanian psychoanalyst, reempowers the maternal body, the phallic mother. She asserts that the Lacanian imaginary order of the mother (what she calls the semiotic) is, in fact, vital and ever-present in the human psyche, whether male or female. She insists that the semiotic order (the realm which is prelinguistic, pre-rational and bound or identified with the maternal body) continues to inform and to form us. The female principle, in contrast to ancient narratives, is not at all a quality that is distanced and contained by one's entry into the symbolic rational order of the father.³⁷ In other words, like an inversion of ancient myths, Kristeva's notion of the semiotic order exhibits that there can be no estrangement from nature, from the centrifugal powers represented by the mother, neither for the male nor female subject. This kind of identification or reinstatement of the maternal "centrifugal" body contrasts sharply, however, with Irigaray's position.

In Irigaray's view, the female body is resolutely absent or invisible, having been erased from cultural constructs and representational practices. For this reason, there is a pressing need to 'write' the body from women's perspective. Her concept of écriture

³⁷ See Julia Kristeva, Desire in Language, ed. Leon Roudiez (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980); Revolution in Poetic Language (New York: Columbia University Press); Toril Moi, ed. The Kristeva Reader (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986). See also, Carolyn Burke, "Rethinking the Maternal," in The Future of Difference (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 107-114.

féminine presents the possibility of inscribing women's experiences of her body (not his body) in language, into discourse. The recognition and articulation of woman's own erotic embodiment inverts traditional representations of woman as scopical objects of male desire. This project is not simply a specular inversion of ancient inscriptions, it is the creation of a new mirror which reflects back to women their own experiences.³⁸

Irigaray's mirror is concave, like a speculum, which distorts the rational, linear kind of thinking which has created an "estranged-from-nature" disembodied mind. For Irigaray, looking through a concave mirror is more holistic since it reveals the curves, complexities and incongruencies that a boundless vision entails. Unlike Duchamp's specular games, her concave mirror inverts, one can say, the story of the Sirens in that it (con)fuses the male "centripetal" principle with the female "centrifugal."

More recently, ecofeminism has also sought to reinscribe narratives of female-nature as a more complex, polyvalent and harmonious whole. The aim of ecofeminists such as Carolyn Merchant, for example, is to elevate and liberate women and nature from the confines of rational and reductive structures that have served to estrange all humans from the environment. "Rather than seeing nature as more powerful than and dominant over human beings (whether as goddess or witch)" she suggests, "a dynamic balance may be attained through a partnership ethic."³⁹

³⁸ See Luce Irigaray, Speculum of the Other Woman as well as An Ethics of Sexual Difference (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993); The Sex Which Is Not One (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993).

³⁹ Carolyn Merchant, Earthcare: Women and the Environment (New York, 1995).

It is appropriate to question whether such re-feminizing of the body and of nature is a strategy capable of shattering the false mirror. Does such a gynocentric language not retain or reinscribe the spectral image of woman as body and nature? Such theoretical positions arguably do not reverse readymade normative gender givens any more than Duchamp's specular inversions do. They equally obscure, I would suggest, women's material reality as food gatherers, as agricultural subjects and as tool makers and users, and as contributors to culture. Retaining such ancient models, indeed, risks perpetuating essentialist categories which posit an original identity and thus retain woman's alterity, woman as man's 'other.' Nevertheless, in their feminizing of the body and nature, there is a major difference that distinguishes the feminist positions from Duchamp's project. The inscribing of "woman" as body and as nature is an attempt to shatter the "spectral image" that denies women their corporeal reality, a search for a means to relate women's own stories, their own histories, their subjectivities as well as their hopes to transcend reductivist and regressive models.

At the same time, their projects expose the crucial problems and dilemmas facing those who strive to redress gender hierarchies or, even like Duchamp, to reverse them. How to undo the dualisms embedded in our social structure without resorting to "woman" or the collective "women?"⁴⁰ Perhaps one way is by also acknowledging that men too are "nature." When we are no longer surprised about men's natural selves and their possession of "centrifugal" qualities, perhaps these questions will have already

⁴⁰ For an interesting and lyrical study of these issues, see Susan Griffin, Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her (New York, 1978).

been resolved. This evidently would demand women's histories as rational beings with "centripetal" powers of language-formation also be inscribed into culture. Perhaps only then, would one no longer find oneself tautologically repeating the language of gendered binaries. Until such time, ancient dualistic philosophies remain persistent models of thought informing our discursive and representational practices.⁴¹

Given: 1. Mind & Matter 2. The Platonic & Aristotelian Traditions

As has been established, the specular games between Duchamp/Rose can come to be read as citing and inverting Platonic dualistic notions of the material and Ideal world. The "material" world of the (allegorical) appearance, Étant donnés... assumes to be static, fixed and constant, and thus to possess qualities closely allied to those of Plato's notion of the "immaterial" Ideal world of immutable form. Conversely, Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting" is essentially an "immaterial" play of *différance*, where meaning is ephemeral, resembling Plato's "material" world of appearance of change and mutable form.

Where Plato prejudiced the non-material Ideal form over the material world, male over female, Duchamp's patatautological games appear to invert these gendered

⁴¹ As we shall see, authors like Donna Haraway argue that gendered binary categories have been challenged, disrupted and redefined thanks to the global economy and "our" cyborg condition.

gives. The "immaterial" idealized realm in The Large Glass is not gendered as male: it is the Bride's Domain. In contrast, the "material" temporal world of the Bachelor Machine is inscribed as a male principle. Like the prisoners in Plato's cave, the bachelors abide in a dark underground world from which they cannot escape. However, where Plato's philosopher is able to escape the material transient world, Duchamp's bachelors are restricted to the "limiting form" of the reductive Bachelor Machine, doomed only to desire transcendence of their material condition.

The allegory of the cave, one could say, is literally materialized by the structure of Étant donnés.... As body, as matter, and as an object of vision, Rose can quite readily represent the natural world of appearance which the prisoners in Plato's cave mistake as reality. Like the philosopher-prisoner in Plato's cave, the viewer-interlocutor at the peepholes can escape the fetters of a restricted, "closed" world of (the "allegorical") appearance.

This is where similarities end, however. Once outside the confines of the cave, the philosopher's mind is blinded by the eternal, immutable Idea; conversely, once outside the restrictive vision of Duchamp's cave, the interlocutor, engaged in a dialogic process, encounters an infinitely complex, limitless and ever-changing "centrifugal" network of signs that transcend the boundaries of the enclosed space of Étant donnés.... Thus by revisioning Étant donnés... as a replay of Plato's allegory of the cave, one can see that the Platonic values attributed to the world of matter are inverted. The philosopher encounters the "Truth" of the Ideal, but Duchamp's interlocutor does not.

Duchamp's specular inversions can be seen as insightful perversions of Platonic metaphysics, but they also prompt pertinent questions. By positioning the viewer at the peepholes looking at Rrose's body lying in a natural habitat, does Duchamp not reiterate Plato's statement that women imitate the earth? Furthermore, does not Duchamp, like Plato, assume that the viewing and knowing subject-philosopher is male?⁴² Transgress Platonic metaphysics they might, but Duchamp's specular inversions remain tautologically grounded in essentialist presumptions about male mind and female matter.

Luce Irigaray's revisioning of Plato's allegory is most enlightening in this regard. She inscribes the cave as a "feminized" state, as "the representation of something always already there, of the original matrix/womb which these men cannot represent since they are held down by chains...."⁴³ Can Rrose's transhistorical presence in Étant donnés... be read as this original matrix/womb that is always already there? In response, one must understand that for Irigaray, as Judith Butler reminds us, the original matrix/womb "is not a metaphor based on likeness to a human form"; this is because, for Plato, "material objects are copies of Forms and exist only to the extent that they instantiate Forms." In this way, the feminized matrix/womb is "but a disfiguration" since "it cannot take a form, a morph, and in that sense, cannot be a body."⁴⁴ In a kind of specular inversion of

⁴² In the Timaeus, Plato relegated the role of limiting form by the knowing mind to that of the father, and the role of indefinite matter to the mother. As Plato noted, "Women 'imitate the earth'." Cited in Genevieve Lloyd, The Man of Reason, 2.

⁴³ Luce Irigaray, Speculum of the Other Woman, 244.

⁴⁴ Judith Butler, Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex' (New York, London: Routledge, 1993), 41, 40.

Platonic metaphysics, Irigaray can be said to construct the feminized cave itself as Ideal. The original matrix/womb is, therefore, not like Rose's body, simply an object of vision; it is the Ideal which cannot be represented in Platonic metaphysics.

For her part, Butler explains that the original matrix/womb, "is not a woman, but it is the figure that women become within the dream-world of this metaphysical cosmogony, one which remains largely inchoate in the constitution of matter."⁴⁵ It is for this reason, Butler argues that "the figures of...the mother, the womb" which Irigaray describes "are specular figures which displace the feminine at the moment they purport to represent the feminine."⁴⁶

Although she is represented as matter, as the natural transient and even "centrifugal" world, Rose is also but a specular figure which "displaces the feminine" while at the same time "purport[ing] to represent the feminine." Posed as woman, Rose as a genuine feminine subject is not "really" there. In her ethereal, celestial abode in the "Bride's Domain," Rose continues to possess "centrifugal" qualities traditionally assigned to mythic "woman." She embodies the "woman who is not one."

As a player in Duchamp's specular games, Rose, like the shackled prisoners, is ostensibly confined within representation, imprisoned within the "natural" world of appearance that continuously denies her an identity as subject. Would this condition not prompt her to assume the role of the Platonic philosopher, seeking to escape the fetters of appearance? Indeed, historically such female philosophers existed, according to

⁴⁵ Ibid., 54.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Diogenes Laertius who recounts the presence of women in Plato's academy.⁴⁷ The recognition of the existence of female philosophers makes evident that women do not simply imitate the earth. Neither do they represent an Ideal feminized cave. Women, like their male counterparts, were also shackled prisoners in Plato's cave, capable of escaping and seeing the light of Truth.⁴⁸

Since Plato's time, there have been numerous women philosophers. However, more recent philosophers, like Irigaray and Butler,⁴⁹ as we have just seen, have effectively escaped the illusory world of shadows that mistakes the appearance of the "female" world as the real. Outside the cave, such women philosophers are not blinded by the illuminating light of "Truth" as Plato's philosopher was. Rather they understand that "Truth" is but a construction, a readymade given, that serves to confine women in

⁴⁷ In his Lives of Eminent Philosophers, Diogenes Laertius mentions two women disciples Latheneia of Mantinea and Axiothea of Philius. The latter female philosopher "is reported by Dichaearchus to have worn men's clothes." Taking on a male persona, she can stand, from my point of view, as a specular inversion of Rose, who as a resolutely female body remains embedded within the cave. Diogenes also writes of another woman philosopher, Hipparchia of Maronaeia of the fourth to third century B.C. For a more thorough account, see Natalie Harris Bluestone, Women and the Ideal Society: Plato's Republic and Modern Myths of Gender (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), 9, 198, 209.

⁴⁸ The gender bias implicit in Plato's writings, as feminists such as those cited make evident, is less attenuated, according to other scholars, in the Laws, or even The Republic in which the "Allegory of the Cave" is found. There is a "sharp discrepancy between the misogyny scattered throughout the dialogues and Plato's claim that both sexes have the same nature....the contrast between arrangements for women in the ideal city and those in the second-best (or more correctly, third) actual city of the Laws." One could thus assume that, for Plato, "mankind" imprisoned in the cave also includes women. For a study on scholarship relating to Plato and gender, see *Ibid.*, 84.

⁴⁹ There have been numerous other women philosophers and thinkers who have contemplated the construction of "woman" in philosophical tradition: Irigaray and Butler are cited here as representative of those who deal with Platonic metaphysics.

the cave in the first place and simultaneously to obscure their real material, corporeal realities.

Such inscriptions are not simply representational models reflecting an imaginary or mythic fiction. They are powerful images inextricably bound to societal structures. Eva Cantarella makes this clear in her interesting study entitled, "Dangling Virgins: Myth, Ritual, and the Place of Women in Ancient Greece." Also citing Diogenes Laertius,⁵⁰ she argues that the old "male/female opposition... in the precivic age [was] far from being merely a biological distinction." Rather it served, she says, as "one of the cornerstones (or rather the first cornerstone) of social organization" which created the "opposition between free and slave."⁵¹ Cantarella examines how societal gender biases are reflected in myths and social customs, and particularly in the practice of female hangings, where the noose was the "privileged instrument of female death."⁵²

⁵⁰ "In Diogenes Laertius's lives of the philosophers, we come across an unusual anecdote: one day, Diogenes the Cynic, while strolling among the olive groves, saw several hanged maidens swinging from the branches of the trees. At this sight, he exclaimed: 'If only all trees bore such fruit!' Is this a case of particularly acute misogyny? Perhaps. But, beyond the initial impression, what is most surprising about the episode is not Diogenes's hatred of women. In a society, such as that of the Greeks, which completely excluded women from social, cultural, and political life, feared them and scorned them, misogyny not infrequently reached levels of particular intensity." Giving other examples of stories and myths, Eva Canatarella notes that, as Diogenes's account makes evident, it "was quite normal to see hanged women swinging from trees along the road." See her "Dangling Virgins: Myth, Ritual, and the Place of Women in Ancient Greece," in The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives, ed. by Susan Rubin Suleiman (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1985), 57-8.

⁵¹ Ibid., 66.

⁵² As underlined in Dialogue Two, female hanging was the traditional form of suicide for women, was a means for them to escape a tyrant's wrath, and was used as a form of revenge or punishment for alleged crimes. It was also a mythic religious rite of passage from virgin to woman. Though mythic, Cantarella argues that "[t]he link between women and the noose, which is so frequent in literature and in iconography, is founded on a quasi-institutional link. Ibid., 58.

The persistence of female hanging in mythic texts, Cantarella says, suggests the rites of initiation and a change in status in that the virgin/bride symbolically dies to be reborn a woman. It also suggests, she says, women's detachment from the earth, her separation from nature, a perversion of woman's telos, of her natural state of being. In this sense, hanging becomes a symbol of de-naturalization, a kind of deterioration of her "natural" identity. As a result, hanging became the ultimate form of punishment for women. In this regard, Cantarella relates how, in the Iliad, Zeus menacingly reminds his wife, Hera, about the punishment that resulted from her disobedience: "Do you remember when you hung high...and you hung in the air amongst the clouds?"⁵³ In effect, the social custom of hanging, as Cantarella states, is the supreme symbol of woman's demise: "...it is difficult to imagine a better way to symbolize the death of a woman than by separating her from the earth."⁵⁴

As a Duchampian scholar, I find the reference to hanging or dangling virgins removed from the earth most compelling. This is because Duchamp also inscribed the "celestial" Bride as a dangling virgin, more precisely as a "pendu femelle" (a hanged female) "swinging to and fro"⁵⁵ Whether Duchamp was actually making reference to Greek texts is unknown. Nonetheless, the Bride's inscription as a female hanging in a cloud-like formation operates like a tautological repetition of Hera and of the custom of

⁵³ Ibid., 60.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 45. Although no Duchampian scholar I am aware of has made this association, I do believe that, given his numerous references to hanging, further studies can be made in this area.

hanging as a symbol of the negation of woman's natural state.⁵⁶ The headless, decapitated and corpse-like body of Rrose in Étant donnés... can also be read as the ultimate demise of the pendu femelle.

Can one then assume that the lifeless body of the hanged female, Rrose, operates as the death of female-nature, as a specular inversion of the Platonic inscription of woman as earth? Such a culminating end, it must be recognized, is not redemptive or liberating in nature. Nor does such finality patatautologically present ancient readymade givens as both either-or and neither-nor. I would suggest that Rrose's status as the pendu femelle, as a decapitated, mutilated body can quite effectively operate as a specular reflection of Aristotelian philosophy.

Aristotle himself does not make such a clear distinction between the corporeal world of matter and the Idea, but Aristotelian teleology continues to confine woman's identity to her biological body. The Ideal spiritum was for Aristotle, "the organizing and activating principles of substantive phenomena," that which animated matter according to an ideal design or telos. In this way, the Ideal spiritum makes "each thing [including "woman"] for a single use."⁵⁷

In Aristotelian teleology, as Ruth Berman reminds us, women were assigned the role of mother. For the philosopher this maternal role was a deficient one. Believing

⁵⁶ This is not forget that the polysemic Bride's Domain and her celestial setting can also be read from other perspectives.

⁵⁷ Cited in Ruth Berman, "Aristotle's Dualism, Materialist Dialectics," Feminism/Postmodernism (New York: Routledge, 1990), 233. See also the original text of Aristotle, "Politics," in Great Books of the Western World 9, trans. D.W. Thompson (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 495.

that "pregnant women were to take care of their bodies but 'ought to keep their minds quiet'," Aristotle assigned a "naturally" inferior order to women's birth-giving capacity: where the "spiritum, the principle of the soul" is conveyed to the embryo by semen, the male heredity-bearing secretion, the female secretion does not carry the soul, "for the female" says Aristotle, "is, as it were, a mutilated male."⁵⁸ Women, these mutilated males, were deprived, it was thought, of "the deliberative faculty."⁵⁹ Even master-race women (as opposed to slaves), said Aristotle, were "constitutionally different from men" because they were less rational, and were governed by "appetites" or "passionate elements."⁶⁰

Rrose's decapitated or headless body quite readily alludes to such a deficient, mutilated person, while her birthing position emphasizes woman's telos which determines her biological function. Yet Rrose, as we know, emphatically possesses a vital power that has as its telos the goal of engendering an animated dialogue. In this way, one could argue that Rrose's animating body, in fact, inverts the Aristotelian notion that women, because of their lack of spiritum, are like "mutilated males." Reading Duchamp's tautological repetitions as a specular inversion of Aristotelian categories, we

⁵⁸ Cited in Berman. See original text in Aristotle, "Biological Treatises: History of Animals" in Great Books of the Western World, 9 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica), 278.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

can say that where for the philosopher, "[t]he spiritum, the principle of the soul"⁶¹ is male, Duchamp installs this animating power in the female figure.

This being said, it must be recognized that this vital power is not Rrose's at all. The "cerebral" artist Marcel Duchamp is the active agent, the author of Rrose's animation. In this respect, he is representative of the Aristotelian form-giver and, one can say, of the "male spiritum," the animating agent. As the artist who constructed Étant donnés..., could it have been otherwise? Indeed because Rrose is a fabrication of Duchamp, because, as his alter ego, she is a self-reflective image of the artist, it must evidently be so.

Despite the fact that in Étant donnés..., one can observe the inversion of Aristotelean concepts by the animating female body, her headless state, once again, "naturalizes" women's status as a soulless creature (without an animating mind) that appeals to bodily "appetites" and "passion." Rrose, once again, stands for the biologically determined body that was inscribed into Aristotle's gendered categories.

Judith Butler's observations on Aristotelean teleology are insightful in this respect. She argues that Aristotle

does not supply us with the kind of "body" that feminism seeks to retrieve. To install the principle of intelligibility in the very development of a body is precisely the strategy of a natural teleology that accounts for female development through the rationale of biology. On this basis, it has been argued that women ought to perform certain social functions and not

⁶¹ Cited in Ruth Berman, "Aristotle's Dualism, Materialist Dialectics," 233. See original text in Aristotle, "Biological Treatises," 278.

others, indeed, that women ought to be fully restricted to the reproductive domain.⁶²

In effect, Rose's body, though animated with a kind of dynamic intelligibility produced by the active form-giver, Duchamp, is confined to the predetermined role as a sexually potent being with reproductive potential. Rose's identity is teleologically fixed, in other words, as a biological (albeit imaginary) body, by the active male "spiritum," by the agency of the male player, Duchamp. Duchamp/Rose's specular games, once more, reassert normative givens and effectively pervert the artist's patatautological game. Their specular games with ancient inscriptions do not dialogically "think through the radical exteriority or heterogeneity of one [gendered position] with regard to...[an] other."⁶³ Failing to present readymade givens as both either-or and neither-nor, their specular perversions regressively reassert them.

How can one dash the teleological determinism that entrenches women in such a centrifugal" matrix/body? Even though such essentialist bodies have, it could be argued, been reinscribed by feminists like Irigaray, Janet Price argues, "hers is not a 'real' biology, so much as the discursive reconfiguring of a contested terrain that takes on board the force of psychic investments, notably that of desire."⁶⁴ As such women like Irigaray are compelled to shatter the false mirror of "woman" and to inscribe her own biological body. In this way, one could say

⁶² Judith Butler, Bodies that Matter, 33.

⁶³ Paul de Man. "Dialogue and Dialogism" in The Resistance to Theory (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 108, 109.

⁶⁴ Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick, eds. Feminist Theory and the Body, 6.

Irigaray's insistence on the sexed specificity of corporeality speaks not to the female body as such, but to a feminine morphological imaginary, the body that is never one....Irigaray engages with the supposedly biological body in a highly complex way that seeks to disrupt the fixed parameters of sex and gender. The material forms of which she speaks are never given, but are filtered through and constructed by a set of discursive strategies.⁶⁵

Standing outside the house Duchamp built, Rose would undoubtedly also misrecognize the body assigned to her. She might thus, like Irigaray, attempt to subvert the readymade gender givens. Such a strategy was, in any case, adopted by the American artist, Carolee Schneeman. In her twice-performed, Interior Scroll of 1975 and 1977 (fig. 137), she stands naked, as a biological body, and slowly unravels a long scroll from her vagina, which she reads as it emerges. The words on the scroll reflect ancient inscriptions: "...you are unable to appreciate...the numerical rational procedures - the Pythagorean cues..."⁶⁶ Standing erect, Schneemann assumes a Rose-like persona who has escaped the fetters of appearance, and who has rid herself of man-made "frames." Schneemann exhibits her un-mutilated body, revealing her capacity to "appreciate...the numerical rational procedures - the Pythagorean cues." The words on the scroll unravelled from within her body, says Lynda Nead "represents the female body as a source of interior knowledge and matriarchal power."⁶⁷ Schneemann herself writes that her performances were indeed a means to reclaim a real corporeal body:

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Cited in Henry M. Sayre, The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde since 1970 (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press), 90.

⁶⁷ Lynda Nead, Female Nude, 67.

In some sense I made a gift of my body to other women; giving our bodies back to ourselves. The haunting images of the Cretan bull dancer-joyful, free bare-breasted, skilled women leaping precisely from danger to ascendancy, guided by imagination.⁶⁸

Women's bodies are, most evidently, more than inscriptions, more than abstractions, more than discursive strategies. They are bodies of real women bound by the fetters of discursive and representational "appearances" that serve to "mutilate" real identities. Schneemann is one artist whose specular inversions (dis)play these practices at the same time as they expose their other side. Amelia Jones explains:

Schneemann plays out the oscillatory exchange between subject- and objectivity, between the masculine position of speaking discourse and the feminine position of being spoken. By 'speaking' her 'spokenness' already and integrating the image of her body (as object) with the action of making itself, Schneemann plays out the ambivalence of gendered identity - the fluidity of the positions of 'male' and 'female,' subject and object....⁶⁹

Women such as Schneemann have escaped the "cave of appearances" and have disclosed the imaginary female body as "that which is not one."

Such strategies also demonstrate that women possess bodies which are physically situated in culture. These are the bodies that concern Judith Butler. She explores how the "imaginary body" is materialized in culture, how it becomes matter:

The classical association of femininity with materiality can be traced to a set of etymologies which link matter with mater and matrix (or the womb) and, hence, with a problematic of reproduction. The classical configuration of matter as a site of generation or origination becomes

⁶⁸ Cited in Lucy R. Lippard, From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art (New York: E.P. Dutton. 1976), 126.

⁶⁹ Amelia Jones, "'Presence' in Absentia" Art Journal 56/4 (Winter 1997), 13.

especially significant when the account of what an object is and means requires recourse to its originating principle.⁷⁰

There is probably no better way to explore this "originating principle" than by observing how Duchamp/Rose play out the hierarchic roles of the "original" parents inscribed into the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Given: 1. Hierarchic Gender Roles 2. The Judeo-Christian Tradition

By revisioning Rose's role as the matrix (as the original benign Eve or spiritual mother as well as the malefic fallen Eve) and Duchamp as Adam, the agent of earthly transformation, one can again recognize their gender games as specular perversions, undercutting the artist's patatautological enterprise. They distance and misrepresent women's corporeal realities and material histories. In order to set out their perverse games, I would like to resituate Rose in the roles of the iconic mothers, beginning with her inscription as the polysemic virginal Bride in Duchamp's, The Large Glass.

The "dangling virgin" (pendu femelle) or Bride is also referred to as light and as a veiled, haloed virgin.⁷¹ These references, as I have argued, readily relate to the original benign Eve who, in early versions of Genesis, is inscribed as "virgin, pure and light...,"⁷²

⁷⁰ Judith Butler, Bodies that Matter, 31.

⁷¹ Duchamp inscribes the female figure, for example, as "an apotheosis of virginity," as the "halo of the bride" as well as a "filament substance [that] resembles a solid flame." Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 39, 42, 48.

⁷² Carolyn Merchant, Earthcare, 77.

as the earthly mother, the engenderer of all life. They allude to the immaculate Virgin Mother, the celestial mother. Duchamp has appropriately assigned ethereal, heavenly qualities to the celestial Virgin Bride and locates her in a "flesh-like milky way."⁷³ This reference to lactation relates, as discussed, to the Virgin Mother who provides (spiritual) nourishment to her flock.⁷⁴ Taking into account other signs in The Large Glass, one can assume that her "flock" is represented by the bachelors or celibates who chant litanies or refrains.⁷⁵ They look up to her, idealize her, are inspired by this original matrix and mediatrix.⁷⁶ "By eros' [Rose's] matrix, they receive the illuminating gas, her light."⁷⁷ This illuminating gas, like spiritual nourishment, ignites them and produces the activities of the celibate machine.

Yet Duchamp endows benign Eve/Virgin Mother with a "flesh color," perhaps as a means to reinstate the original benign Eve's earthly qualities of engenderer and nurturer of humankind. This flesh-like maternal figure is embodied in Étant donnés... by Rose. Indeed, posing as the original Eve, Rose even holds high, as if in apotheosis, her attribute, the illuminating gas "light." Exposing only one bare breast, Rose also alludes to medieval imagery of the nurturing, nursing Virgin Mother. As both earthly and

⁷³ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 36.

⁷⁴ Christian imagery of the lactating virgin depicts saints like St. Bernard de Clairvaux, as well as the Church itself depicted in symbolic form, drinking the milk pouring from her breast.

⁷⁵ "...the litanies sung by the chariot, refrain of the whole celibate machine..." Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 51.

⁷⁶ Roman Catholic dogma and prayers refer to the Virgin Mother as a mediator between the believers and God.

⁷⁷ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 51.

physical, as well as celestial and non-physical, as both the original benign Eve or the haloed Virgin Mother, Rose patatautologically presents the physical and non-physical characteristics of these iconic mothers as both either-or and neither-nor. However, one may ask, do such specular games really invert readymade gender roles?

Even though there is no explicit reference in Étant donnés... to the matrix's "flock," one might assume that the congregation of viewers, each one coming individually to gaze at her through the peepholes, fills this role and that Duchamp himself represents the "original" viewer. Recollecting Le Bec Auer, one can also say that Duchamp as the original (dis)embodied viewer is embodied in the phallic lamp. This would mean that Duchamp, the male player, has appropriated the female attribute of light from the "virgin, pure and light." Thinking back to the story in The Large Glass, to the manner in which the "Malic Moulds" or bachelors were filled with the illuminating light, and to the way that it fueled their celibate machine, one is prompted to conclude that in Étant donnés..., this illumination has also occurred. Indeed, is this consumption of illuminating light not the appropriation of the female life-giving force by the male principle? In effect, is this not the "light" which enabled Duchamp, the male agent, to construct or "engender" the material abode for the originary matrix? If the male principle has effectively assumed the female qualities of light as well as its life-giving force by becoming the engenderer of Étant donnés..., then by assuming these attributes, Duchamp has arguably inverted given gender categories.

Specular inversions these may be, but they nonetheless pervert the artist's patatautological enterprise inasmuch as they tautologically repeat readymade givens that

inscribe woman as the female-matrix and the male principle as the active agent. Their status as specular perversions become still more evident when one regards Rrose's appearance as the malevolent earthly mother, as the fallen Eve, and Duchamp/Adam as the agent of earthly transformation.

In this narrative, the fallen Adam is cast as "the innocent bystander, being forced to pay the consequences" of Eve's sin by "developing both pastoralism and farming [by becoming] the inventor of the tools and technologies that will restore the garden" and most significantly by "tam[ing] into submission...fallen Eve," representative of nature.⁷⁸

As has been established, Duchamp the male player takes up the role of Adam, the agent of earthly transformation who contains and controls fallen Eve/Rrose in her natural garden. Although the pastoral setting behind Rrose reflects the lush paradise from which they were both banished, Rrose alone lies in decaying matter. By envisioning Duchamp/Rrose, cast as Adam and Eve, on either side of the garden gate, one can see how Étant donnés... reiterates ancient notions of man's estrangement from an edenic "female" natural state. Rrose/Eve is cast as the "nature" from which Adam alone was removed, her isolated position within decaying nature a reminder that she, and she alone, was the cause of this expulsion.

In this role as malefic Eve, the cause of misfortune, the display of Rrose's body begs further questions. Lying in a birthing position, does Rrose not here tautologically repeat the biblical pronouncement that "woman must give birth in pain?" Does Rrose's position not imply that childbirth is woman's only labor and that motherhood is her sole

⁷⁸ Carolyn Merchant, Earthcare, 32.

role? Furthermore, as builder of the structure for her natural setting, does Duchamp, the male player, not reassert that Adam alone is condemned to "till the soil," as the sole agent of earthly transformation?

In this regard, it is interesting to note that Rose has only one arm, one which is broken and thus unfit for labor. Even though her broken limb appears to be "mended," the fissure is ironically hidden from the eye by natural means, by a cluster of dried twigs. It is with this broken arm that Rose holds high her illuminating light, the beams of which can be said to cast a dark shadow on the representational and discursive practices that negate women's material realities.

Rose's female personae as the benevolent or malefic mother Eve, or even as the celestial Matrix, tautologically repeat ancient inscriptions that obscure women's experiences as laboring subjects, just as they also reinstate the male principle as the sole active agent of earthly transformation. One might ask how Rose's roles as Eve represent the millions of women who, first as food gatherers, and then, for centuries, as planters, tenderers, and harvesters laboriously worked the soil? Without wishing to attribute a universal experience to the conditions of agrarian societies through time, it is simply unrealistic to think that women were not along with Adam, "tillers of the soil."

Few detailed historical records of women's role in agricultural societies in very early periods exist, but one can draw on certain historical accounts and contemporary studies that recognize both women and men as agricultural subjects. For example, the remarks of Jean de La Bruyère during the golden years of Louis XIV in France acknowledge a non-gendered view of agricultural labor. Though sympathetic about the

plight of women and men, his aristocratic tone belies his perception of their "animal-like" existence: "males and females, scattered about the countryside, dark leaden, and all tanned by the sun, bound to the soil which they dig and stir with invincible stubbornness; they have something like an articulate voice and when they rear up on their legs they show a human face...."⁷⁹

In an enlightening study, Bridget Hill sets out the various working roles of women in eighteenth-century England as, for example, agricultural workers who were both contributing members to the family economy and paid female servants in husbandry.

As she explains:

In the first half of the eighteenth century by far the majority of households were rural, and the great majority were dependent at least in part on the cultivation of land. Very few of the labouring classes owned more than ten acres of land, and many owned none. The unity of production for these classes therefore was usually small. In whatever role they are found, outside the upper classes, it was taken for granted that women worked. 'Female labour', as one historian has put it 'was universal...it was normal for women to share in the heaviest manual work.'⁸⁰ It was indeed often essential for the bare subsistence of the household. The fact that a great deal of that work was done in the home and passed unnoticed does not make it any less work, and hard at that.

In a further contribution to our understanding of the labor of women, Karen Sayer inscribes women's histories as "tillers of the soil" in nineteenth century England. At the same time, Sayer deconstructs the preconception of women's role encapsulated in Alfred

⁷⁹ Cited in Eugen Weber, A Modern History of Europe (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971), 443.

⁸⁰ Bridget Hill, Women, Work, and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 27.

Lord Tennyson's words: "Man for the field and woman for the hearth."⁸¹ Such maxims, like biblical references, serve to construct fictional notions of women as non-agents in society. As Sayer's study of rural life makes clear, agricultural work was performed by the majority of married, widowed and single women as paid and unpaid labor. Their labors in the fields not only consisted of tilling the soil and harvesting, but also "stone-picking, muck-spreading, weeding, hoeing, pulling up and cutting turnips or mangolds, and were often physically hard, carried out in poor conditions, universally badly paid and rarely recognized as skills."⁸²

A further glimpse of women's work in agrarian structures elsewhere (since female tillers of the soil are not exclusive to England or Europe) can be obtained, for example, by looking at non-industrial countries today. As Zenebeworke Tadesse states: "In spite of...variations, women represent a high proportion of the labour force in predominantly agricultural areas."⁸³ Even when the introduction of new technologies resulted in commercialization of agricultural products, Tadesse explains, women assisted or, at least, continued to be responsible for the subsistence sector of agricultural production.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Cited in Karen Sayer, Women of the fields: Representations of Rural Women in the Nineteenth Century (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 1.

⁸² Ibid., 6.

⁸³ Zenebeworke Tadesse "Women and Technology in Peripheral Countries," in Scientific-Technological Change and the Role of Women in Development, ed. Pamela M. D'Onofrio-Flores and Sheila M. Pfafflin. Published for the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), 83.

⁸⁴ For more detail on women's labor force in the agricultural sectors in non-industrialized countries, see Ibid., 77-111.

The words of nineteenth-century economist Ada Heather-Bigg, written in 1894 at the onset of the second industrial revolution in Britain, underscores women's continuous role as workers, reminding us of women's contributions to the labor force throughout history: "The popular impression seems to be that women today are taking a larger share of the world's work than they have ever done before - that this is a new departure, the outcome of the factory system. As a matter of fact the share taken by women in the work of the world has not altered in amount, nor even in intensity, only in character."⁸⁵ Rose's role as malefic Eve resoundingly ignores the contributions of her "descendants" to the development of agricultural societies, and to industrialization. She is mute on the subject of women's continuous and active "presence" in culture.

The misconception about women's contributions as active "agents of culture" lies precisely in what Janet Wolff calls "the institutional organizations of knowledge" which serve "to marginalise women, as well as to reinforce the gender inequalities in contemporary society. The historical development of the different disciplines, arbitrary as it has been from the point of view of our actual experience in the world and in everyday life, reinforces the division of the sexes."⁸⁶ The pervasive historical accounts that eclipse women's contributions are, in effect, a symptom of gender imbalance. In this regard, Anna Davin makes some interesting observations: "Social history, economic history, oral history and women's history all overlap with labor history, and have probably

⁸⁵ Cited in Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work, and Family (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978), frontispiece. Original text: Ada Heather-Bigg. "The Wife's Contribution to the Family Income" Economic Journal 4 (1894): 51-58.

⁸⁶ Janet Wolff, Feminist Sentences, 70-71.

contributed to, or at least reinforced, its narrow identification with labor organization and work. But to the narrow definition of labor history there has generally been added a further restriction - that of the male bias." Davin acknowledges that "such bias is not the result of conscious conspiracy; it is nevertheless very pervasive and sadly weakens the usefulness of labour history."⁸⁷

Since the genesis of the "original parents," women have, alongside their male counterparts, "tilled the soil." They have also been tool makers and tool users as well as paid and unpaid laborers. The division of labor into private and public realms operates, in many ways, to further conceal the significant and continuous contribution of women in both the public and private realm, most often working a "double shift." Davin reminds us that: "...the study of work should recognize the contribution and the inter-relation of all the different kinds of work..."⁸⁸ Such history writing, says Davin should be inclusive:

The study of the working class should recognise the existence of women and children, of young and old, of families and relationships which determined so many aspects of daily life, including work, and gave richness and complexity to the class. The study of struggle should look for where women did struggle, instead of denouncing them for absence from male-dominated organisations.⁸⁹

Such (art) history writing would acknowledge that woman's labor was not only restricted to her biological capacity to give birth and would find Rose's position as the matrix to be

⁸⁷ Anna Davin, "Feminism and Labour History," People's History and Socialist Theory, ed. Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1981), 176.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 178-9.

anomalous.⁹⁰ In these stories, Rrose's position would stand as a blatant misrepresentation of women's corporeal histories as culture-makers.

Represented as a "headless" (anonymous and mind-less) woman behind a closed door, "woman," as inscribed by Duchamp, is removed from societal activities. She is a nonparticipant in culture. In this capacity, Rrose's presence reinforces hierarchical stereotypes that eradicate women's ongoing contributions to civilization and that negate women's histories. Rrose's personification of the "original mothers" tautologically inscribes, one more time, an illusory, spectral body, a readymade given that constructs and maintains hierarchical sexual divisions. Her transferral of the attribute, "light," to her male counterpart cannot be viewed as a specular inversion of gender roles. It stands only as an appropriation of her power, one in which she is forced to participate.

Despite her physical quality, Rrose's figure in Étant donnés..., remains inscribed as a non-corporeal sign. And despite the fact that Duchamp, as the male player, is invisible in these narratives, his structure inscribes men's role as agents of culture. Duchamp/Adam does not presume to be a "perfect" form-giver, taking shelter in his "approximation démontable"⁹¹ but nevertheless tautologically casts "man" as the agent of

⁹⁰ Representations of "woman" in art, of which Rrose is a symbol, distance and silence the stories of millions of women as "tillers of the soil," a rare subject in art and literature. There are, of course, some well-known exceptions such as Jean-François Millet's The Gleaners (1857) but for the most part, as Karen Sayer points out, images of working women do not "belong to 'great art' or the literary canon. In order to understand the relationship between discourses, the process of representation and negotiation inherent within the definition of rural womanhood, it is necessary to look at the mundane, that which belonged to the dominant ideology, and at the resistance to the ideology and social relations of the day, not just that which the discourses of art and literature have defined as the work of genius." Karen Sayer, Women of the Fields, 10.

⁹¹ As we have seen, "Demountable approximation" is the title of Duchamp's Manual of Instructions for the reconstruction of Étant donnés.

earthy transformation. Rose, like Eve, may well possess the power to entrap and "expulse" Duchamp/Adam, but she is never assigned the power to transcend the boundaries of Adam's limited form and to become an agent of even a tenuous transformation.

Were she able to stand on the outside of this man-made construction, Rose might look at her spectral appearance as the iconic mothers with some dismay. She would no doubt recognize how her embodiment as an illusory maternal figure serves to obscure, once again, women's various roles as culture-makers. Seeing herself cast as the malefic Eve, Rose might be prompted to pose different kinds of questions: Were men never agents of catastrophes, bringing misfortunes to humankind? Were men never in communion with nature? By assuming a "real" corporeality outside the limits of Duchamp's construction, could Rose do anything but respond to these questions in the positive? This would activate further inversions of the Adam and Eve narratives, ones capable of bypassing the pitfalls of tautological repetitions of readymade givens. Standing on the outside of these representational and discursive practices, Rose might decide to invert Carolyn Merchant's description about readymade gender givens, cited earlier:

While fallen [Eve] becomes the inventor of the tools and technologies that will restore the garden, fallen [Adam] becomes the Nature that must be tamed into submission. In the Western tradition, fallen Nature is opposed by [female] science and technology.⁹²

⁹² Carolyn Merchant, Earthcare, 32. Merchant explains how he is also represented as Father Adam, as the image of God, as patriarch, as law and rule.

These words ring false to our ears despite the fact that women have over the centuries been tool makers and users. Moreover, one might argue that it is the predominantly masculine war machine which requires "taming into submission." Such an inversion of the roles of Eve and Adam illustrate the power of representational practices not to describe stereotypes but to inscribe, as normative, gender categories, even when they are preposterous.

Even when one considers exceptions to the masculinist paradigm, such gender inscriptions naggingly persist. As an example, let us briefly examine the writings of and studies on the "nature" saint, St. Francis of Assisi.⁹³ It is commonly understood that St. Francis of Assisi's relation to nature was like a communion with the natural world and with its creatures. However, scholars and biographers, Thomas of Celano and Saint Bonaventure,⁹⁴ conceived of the saint's relationship with nature not so much as a "communion" but as a "reunion" or return to the Edenic state lost to Adam.

Thaumaturgic control over creation is strongly associated with a return to primordial, paradisaic innocence. When Francis submitted to Brother Fire and was not harmed by him, Celano asserted, 'I believe that he had returned to primitive innocence...for whom, when he wished it, cruel things were made gentle'.... Bonaventure expresses similar sentiments. 'So it was,' he says, 'that by God's divine power the brute beasts felt drawn

⁹³ I am grateful to Catherine MacKenzie for pointing out the relevance of St. Francis of Assisi as an example of man's relationship with nature. My conception of this saintly figure as a kind of modern "environmentalist" or "nature enthusiast," was, I believed, an historical counterexample of women's association to nature. Scholarship on this saint as well as the saint's own Cantic serve to reinforce, however, the power of discursive and representational practices to perpetuate gendered categories.

⁹⁴ Thomas of Celano wrote the First Life of Francis (Vita Prima) two years after St. Francis's death in 1226 and Second Life of Francis (Vita Secunda) in 1246. Saint Bonaventure wrote The Little Flowers of St. Francis and Major Life (Legenda Maior) between 1261 and 1263.

towards him and inanimate creation obeyed his will. It seemed as if he had returned to the state of primeval innocence, he was so good, so holy.' Several passages in Bonaventure's writings demonstrate he believed that Francis' unusual affectionate interactions with animals symbolized his return to the perfect relationship humankind had attained with creatures in Eden.⁹⁵

Such interpretations of St. Francis of Assisi's asceticism as a means to recapture the lost paradise of Adam are interesting in terms of the arguments I have been making. Adam, deprived of his original innocent natural state, is so absolutely removed from nature that only a miraculous act can return him to her.

Interestingly, a reading of St. Francis's Canticle of Brother Sun reveals that this "nature saint" considered earthly nature and water to be female: "Be praised, my Lord, for Our Sister, Mother earth,/Who nourishes and governs us./ And produces various fruits with many-colored flowers and herbs [...] Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Water,/ She is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure."⁹⁶ Most significant in terms of the perspective I have here taken, St. Francis also gendered fire and "light" as male:

Brother Fire,/ Be praised, my Lord, with all your creatures, Especially Sir
Brother Sun,/ Who brings the day, and you give light to us through him
[...] Be praised, my Lord, for whom you light up the night./How
handsome he is, how happy, how powerful and strong!⁹⁷

Light, formerly ascribed to the original virgin Eve, is perceived, even in the eyes of St. Francis, as a male principle. The female principle is a sign of earthly matter,

⁹⁵ Roger D. Sorrell, St. Francis of Assisi and Nature: Tradition and Innovation in Western Christian Attitudes toward the Environment, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 51-2.

⁹⁶ St. Francis of Assisi, "The Canticle of Brother Sun." Cited in *Ibid.*, 101.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

“centrifugal” water, as well as being a sign of death and of man's demise: "Be praised, my Lord, for our Sister, Bodily Death,/From whom no man living can escape."⁹⁸

Nature, whether perceived as a higher order or not, remains inextricably linked to gendered principles inscribed into the Judeo-Christian tradition. Their persistence illustrates the power of discursive and representational practices to inscribe gendered categories into the minds of men and women as normative givens. Seemingly innocent, such inscriptions construct and perpetuate hierarchic sexual divisions in the societies in which men and women live out their everyday lives.

Understandably then, feminists have attributed a great significance to representations of "woman" as nature and as matrix. For the past several decades, scores of women artists have tackled the problems inherent in representational practices. In this regard, I have selected two artists whose work can serve as counter-images to Duchamp's tautological inscription of Rrose as the iconic mothers.

For one, the bizarre and sensational self-portraits of the artist Cindy Sherman operate simultaneously like traces of representational practices and cues about their “fantastic” nature. With a series of masks, costumes and prosthetic breasts, Sherman re-inscribes or re-embodies various iconic female figures.⁹⁹ Her self-portraits serve not

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Although I examine only one image of Sherman, she has cast herself into the “bodies” of an array of stereotypical women from ancient to contemporary times. For illustrations and studies of Sherman’s work, see, Peter Schjeldahl, Cindy Sherman, (New York : Pantheon Book, c 1984) and Elizabeth Amada Cruz, A.T. Smith, Amelia Jones, Cindy Sherman : Retrospective, Exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, July 9 to October 4 (New York : Thames & Hudson, 1997).

only to trigger an awareness of the illusory quality of these seemingly "innocent" images but also to expose their insidious nature. In her self-portrait as the Madonna, she displays herself as the religious icon, exhibiting one prosthetic breast (fig. 138). In this particular role, as in others she assumes, she poses, one could say, as "a freak with a false identity." Amelia Jones aptly writes that "Sherman's self-imaging - through her aggressive adoption of costumes, props and exaggerated poses - may thus seem to surface more directly the *falseness* of the picture (its obviously contrived projection of femininity as abject objecthood)...."¹⁰⁰

In light of Sherman's work, I wonder about the strategies Duchamp might have employed so as not to undermine his patatautological enterprise. Would a less lifelike display of Rose's body have effectively suspended her status as a tautological repetition of gendered givens? Remembering the photographs supplied by Duchamp in his Manual of Instructions (fig. 114), I imagine how Rose's body might have been represented in a less compromising manner. By making visually evident to the viewer at the peepholes, Rose's carcass-like structure with its broken arm and prosthetic head, Duchamp might have constructed, like Sherman, a potent counter-image of readymade bodies of "woman." In this way, Rose's freakish body might have served as a specular inversion of traditional representational practices. Her carcass might have illustrated instead how representations of the iconic "matrix" are essentially staged aberrations.

¹⁰⁰ Amelia Jones, Body Art Performing the Subject (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 174.

If Sherman displays the "falseness" of representational practices, such as that of the iconic Mother, then Mary Kelly displays the lived experience of the maternal experience in her Postpartum Document. Consciously eclipsing conventional references to the "mother and child," she recorded her ongoing experiences as mother of a young son. Made between the period 1973-9 and comprising six sections and 135 images, the work was an "allegorical document" that displays an array of personal artifacts and souvenirs of motherhood. Like Duchamp's "allegorical appearance," this document freezes into a given set of signs a myriad of other isolated moments, of half-forgotten stories. To construct her particular set of givens, Kelly also compressed, in a systematic, rational and methodical fashion, a selection of signs. Incorporating objects like used diaper liners, her son's drawings and scribbles, casts of tiny hands, his feeding schedules, and so on, Kelly's own "allegorical document," like Duchamp's Étant donné..., represents both personal memorabilia and memento mori, souvenirs that remind her of the series of small deaths, of the irretrievable moments, that constituted her maternal experience.

Unlike Duchamp's "allegorical appearance," however, Kelly's Postpartum Document does not tautologically repeat ancient givens about the matrix, about the iconic mothers who have served to construct false images of women as both maternal and laboring subjects. By consciously refusing all references to the mythic mother inscribed into cultural constructs, Kelly's Postpartum Document effectively operates like a specular inversion of the maternal body, of the spectral figure, Rose.

One must conclude that Duchamp/Rose's specular games do not invert or dispel the discursive and representation practices that inscribe woman as mother-nature and as

the "other" of culture. To repeat, they are regressive and emphatically rewrite gendered inscriptions that are so aptly encapsulated in the following words:

Woman's identity has traditionally been associated with the body and nature, just as man's has been located in their transcendence as mind and culture. Woman is thereby positioned as man's attenuated inversion, as mere specular reflection through which his identity is grounded. The brute matter of woman's embodiment and the immediacy of her lived experience provide the corporeal substratum upon which man erects himself and from which he keeps a safe distance.¹⁰¹

The safe distance provided by Rose's hermetic enclosure is a particularly effective means for Duchamp, the agent of earthly transformation, to play out tautologically still other instances of the age-old nature-culture dichotomy.

Given: 1. Sublime Female-Nature 2. Cartesian Epistemology

The specular games that I see Duchamp/Rose play out with the concepts of the sublime and Cartesianism are particularly tenacious. However, by envisioning Rose outside Duchamp's enclosure, I observe how their specular inversions are, yet again, regressively tautological. Let me begin by elaborating on the oppositional positions that Duchamp/Rose hold.

Personifying the "female sublime," Rose exhibits herself as the disruptive and eruptive body and as the radical "other" of the Cartesian disembodied "mind-eye." By entrapping the male viewer's gaze at the peepholes, however, she is able to transform the

¹⁰¹ Vicki Kirby "Corporeal Habits: Addressing Essentialism Differently," *Hypatia* 6 (1991) 4-24. Cited in Alison Adam, Artificial Knowing: Gender and the Thinking Machine (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 134-5.

decarnalized viewer into a self-conscious body. As we have seen, the self-consciousness of the viewer's bodily location in front of Rrose eliminates the objective distance required by the Cartesian mind-eye. In effect, Rrose transposes the Cartesian disembodied mind into a body, one which itself has become the spectacle. At the very moment that the viewer gazes upon Rrose's naked figure, he finds himself transformed into a self-conscious body. And it is, as body, that he himself is gazed upon by that putative second viewer behind him. In this way, Rrose significantly undermines the mind as mirror of an extended world: the Cartesian mental image of an objective res extensa (the natural setting) becomes a resolutely self-reflective and carnalized experience. On the one hand, positioned behind a closed barrier, she parodies the separation between a distinct subject-viewer and object-viewed; on the other, she melts away this separation between subject-object by "(re)embodying" the male subject.

The male player of this specular game, Marcel Duchamp, suppresses this carnal experience by censoring the gaze. By means of his rational construction, Duchamp - in true Cartesian fashion - contains the subversive power of Rrose's body, reducing the female power to subvert the mind. Kept securely distinct and separate from the viewer (by means of the sealed door, as well as by a measured distance between the viewer space and the nude), the body can only disrupt for a short period. In this way, the Cartesian separation between mind and body is regained and maintained.

Hence, posing as the Cartesian mind, Duchamp constructs both a rational structure to contain the subversive power of the sublime body of Rrose and an enclosure or cage which effectively disposes the body, the mother, nature. It even controls and

reifies the flow of the natural waterfall.¹⁰² Duchamp thus signals a Cartesian displacement of the female principle by a male one, sublimating, reifying or petrifying the female principle. As such a "petrified" object, Rose operates as his fetish. In this regard, the observations of Simone de Beauvoir are most relevant: "[her] paradigm accounts for the masculine project of disembodiment by which men transcend their bodies by projecting their otherness (their immanence, their contingent corporeality) onto women."¹⁰³

Standing outside the range of the dynamic interchange between Duchamp/Rose, I can detect certain problems. Although Rose has effectively managed, albeit momentarily, to re-embody the Cartesian mind, she is never assigned the Cartesian power of clear thinking, the capacity for strict logic and reasoning. She is "headless," physically incapable of assuming the position of the rational mind-eye, and her "sublime" body continues to be her only power. Duchamp, as the Cartesian persona, is always able to contain the vagaries caused by this carnal power.

Consider how their patatautological games might instead have inverted such essentialist roles: how, in a gender flip, Rose might have been cast as the clear thinking "subject" and Duchamp in the role of a disruptive masculine sublime. Thinking about

¹⁰² The waterfall, as I have noted above, appears to "flow" because of a motorized disc (perforated around its circumference) that rotates in front of a light, placed behind the transparent image of the waterfall. The play of light and shadow gives the illusion of movement, of flowing water.

¹⁰³ Cited in Amelia Jones, Body Art Performing the Subject, 43. Jones is discussing the ontology of the subject in relation to issues of the body.

such possibilities, the 18th century philosopher, Mary Wollstonecraft, comes to mind.

In her reproach of Edmund Burke's declarations about sublime feeling, she noted:

I perceive, from the whole tenor of your Reflections, that you have a mortal antipathy to reason; but if there is anything like argument, or first principles, in your wild declamation...[they are] that...our feelings should lead us to excuse...the venerable vestiges of ancient days.¹⁰⁴

Susan Khin Zaw has written an interesting and informative study of the gendered positions of these two philosophers, particularly Wollstonecraft's perspective on the sublime and this philosopher's view of Burke influential writings. Khin Zaw notes that for Burke

[p]assion is more reliable than reason: there is a uniform standard of taste because reason has little to do with it. We duly find that in [Wollstonecraft's] Rights of Men, distrust of reason in favour of feeling [as her] main charge against Burke.¹⁰⁵

In contrast to her attribution of non-reason and "embodied" feelings to Burke, Wollstonecraft advocated a "dis-embodied" sublime. In Wollstonecraft's words, imagination is capable of producing "a sublime idea that shrinks from the enquiry of sense, and mocks the experimental philosophers who would confine this spiritual phlogiston in their material crucibles."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ [Wollstonecraft's emphasis] Cited in Susan Khin Zaw, "'Appealing to the Head and Heart': Wollstonecraft and Burke on Taste, Morals and Human Nature" in Femininity and Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Art and Culture", ed. Gill Perry and Michael Rossington (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 126-7. Original quote in Mary Wollstonecraft, "Vindication of the Rights of Men," The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft. (London: Pickering, 1989), 10.

¹⁰⁵ Susan Khin Zaw, "'Appealing to the head and Heart'," 126.

¹⁰⁶ Cited in Ibid., 125; Original quotation in Mary Wollstonecraft, "Vindication of the Rights of Men," The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, 33.

Wollstonecraft, according to Khin Zaw, "continually taxes Burke with 'feminine' sensibility - and appropriates 'male' reason (and metaphysics!) for herself."¹⁰⁷ Despite this kind of gender flip, she does not wish "to renounce her own, 'feminine' claim to sensibility."¹⁰⁸ Her desire to appeal to both "head and heart" leads one to conclude that, despite her reversal of gender roles, she also wished to bypass the gendered dualistic inscriptions of mind (head) and body (heart/feelings). While the specular games of Duchamp/Rose reinscribe cultural inscriptions that relegate reason (and metaphysics) to the male principle and an unreasoned sublime to the female domain, Wollstonecraft's "inversions" serve to exhibit that these gendered categories as fluid and transgendered.

The sublime as a concept that breaks the binary borders of mind and body can also be seen, from an entirely different perspective, in Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection.¹⁰⁹ Abjection, like the sublime, disregards all that has been inscribed as a "centripetal" male principle, respecting neither borders, rational positions, rules nor regulations. Abjection is that which "...disturbs identity, system, order" and can be conceived as "the in-between, the ambiguous, the composite."¹¹⁰ Contrary to male

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Julia Kristeva, Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4. Regarding Kristeva's theory of abjection, I rely primarily on the study of Elizabeth Gross and on Lynda Nead's notion of abjection as a female sublime. See Elizabeth Gross, "The Body of Signification" in Abjection, Melancholia and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva, ed. by John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 80-103; Lynda Nead, "Obscenity and the Sublime," The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality, 25-34. See also Jacqueline Rose, "Julia Kristeva - Take Two," Sexuality in the Field of Vision (London and New York: Verso, 1991).

¹¹⁰ Julia Kristeva, Powers of Horror, 4..

inscriptions of the sublime, Kristeva's notion of abjection relates to female subjectivity and an awareness of the limits of the body, to what one might call the "centrifugal." As Lynda Nead explains, "the most significant border" for Kristeva, is that "between the subject and the object, the distinction between the inside and the outside of the body. Subjectivity is organized around an awareness of this distinction and the sense of the body as a unified whole, defining the forms and limits of corporeal identity."¹¹¹

Unlike the traditional notion of the sublime defined by Burke or Kant as a phenomenon that transcends rational boundaries, the abject is situated in the gap, between mind/body, between subject and object, between the inside and the outside. This is not a euphoric notion of an "in-between" but rather a kind of destabilizing moment that causes a recognition of the instability of identity, of the elastic borders between the subject and the exterior world, the fluid interplay between subject and object.

As Elizabeth Gross states: "Abjection is a reaction to the recognition of the impossible but necessary transcendence of the subject's corporeality, and the impure, defiling elements of its uncontrollable materiality."¹¹² One of the categories Kristeva defines as abject is "the signs of sexual difference (roughly corresponding to oral, anal, and genital erotogenic drives). The subject's reaction to these abjects is visceral...They

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Elizabeth Gross, "The Body of Signification," 87-88.

represent body in revolt, a body disavowed by consciousness which it is yet unable to ignore."¹¹³

Quite literally, the site of the abject is the threshold of or border between the inside and the outside of the physical body: blood, urine, feces, and bodily fluids, as well as pregnancy. Most particularly, it is the manner in which what passes through the body dissolves constructed notions of a unified, coherent identity. The abject is the borderline between desire and danger, between attraction and repulsion, the site in which the identity of the unitary subject is disturbed.

Kristeva situates, by the abject, "a psychical 'interior' for the body's object-like status."¹¹⁴ Writes Gross, only by projecting the body's physical interior outward, and conversely, by introjecting the body's material externality can the necessary conditions of female subjectivity be constructed and "the dualism of our Cartesian heritage... challenged."¹¹⁵ Abjection is the inversion of rational order and boundaries. Considered to be disruptive, impure or unclean, the abject is that which the mind "must reject, cover over and contain."¹¹⁶ Lynda Nead explains that

[t]his process of rejection can never be final or complete but remains always at the border of the subject's identity, threatening to dissolve apparent unities and making identity a continuously provisional state. It

¹¹³ Ibid., 89.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 82.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 89.

is the individual's recognition of the impossibility of a permanently fixed and stable identity that provokes the experience of abjection.¹¹⁷

In the concept of the abject, Nead reminds us, there are echoes "of the Kantian sublime, for both terms signify an immense power in their generation of attraction and repulsion in the subject."¹¹⁸ How do these concepts relate to the positions of Duchamp/Rose? Is, one may ask, Rose's body abject? Might she be considered to embody such a "female sublime? Does her body disrupt or threaten to dissolve the unified identity? Or does Rose resolutely remain inscribed as the sublimated 'other' of her male player, Marcel Duchamp? I would suggest that the porno-performances of the artist and former sex worker, Annie Sprinkle, can cast a light on these questions.

From 1990 to 1993, Sprinkle performed her Post Porn Modernist in front of live audiences in various art venues.¹¹⁹ In a segment of this performance called The Public Cervix Announcement, Sprinkle exposes her vaginal canal, kept open by means of a speculum and "illuminated" by a flashlight which she herself hands to a series of "voyeurs." This is no longer the voyeur gazing at the objectified outer surface skin that "contains" Rose's female body. Significantly, the gaze of Sprinkle's voyeurs is not cast upon a spectral image of "woman" either. It is as if Rose, escaping her enclosure, had

¹¹⁷ Lynda Nead . The Female Nude, 32.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Her work has been shown at the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of Art, the New Museum of Contemporary Art and many other prestigious institutions and galleries internationally.

confronted the voyeur's gaze with a body no longer contained and controlled by representational practices.

Moreover, the voyeur's gaze is situated beyond the threshold of the body's surface. Permitting the voyeur's eye to traverse the boundary between inside and outside, to move to the interior of her body, Sprinkle exhibits "the dark continent of the female sex."¹²⁰

Says Amelia Jones,

[i]t is difficult, in fact, to view Sprinkle's cervix in an unequivocally self-empowering way (to pretend to possess an unmediated, dominating gaze of desire). Sprinkle's sex looks back: the subject of viewing is confronted by the "eye"/I of the female sex.¹²¹

Sprinkle has effectively "abjectified" her body and, by means of her abject performance, disrupts or destabilizes the unified viewing subject, safely distanced from an object of vision..

Sprinkle continues her Post Porn Modernist performance by creating another site of danger for the unity of the viewing subject. She does so by adopting the persona of "Anya," an archaic-goddess, performing a twenty-minute long "spiritual/sexual orgasm on stage."¹²² Assuming the qualities of the earthly Venus, of the "centrifugal" body in this way, she further disintegrates that safe distance provided by Rose's enclosure.

¹²⁰ Amelia Jones, "'Presence' in Absentia" Art Journal 56/4 (Winter 1997): 16.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid., 17.

Sprinkle, traversing its borders and "performing the body" threatens "to dissolve apparent unities and mak[e] identity a continuously provisional state."¹²³

Rose's body has triggered a reaction in me which has resulted in a dialogic process that has brought me to the point of this encounter with Sprinkle, a controversial individual who has been arrested for "conspiracy to create pornography." This encounter further reinforces my realization that Rose's sublime body, headless (without an identity) and hidden away is a construct that conceals the identity (or face) of the real protagonist, Marcel Duchamp. Rose's sublime body, as it has turned out, is a distraction that initially prevented me from immediately recognizing her as Duchamp's objectified 'other,' as his fetish. Rose's body is thus not abject, but for me, is, in fact, objectionable in that it purports to represent woman, women, female identities.

Sprinkle's body, unlike Rose's passive, objectified and petrified body, does not operate like a fetish. Her abject orgasmic performances are not such masquerades. Sprinkle not only gazes back at the voyeur, she makes her body the site of her own liberation. "It felt liberating," she says "to expose myself in a new way, to reveal a deeper truth of who I was."¹²⁴ Such an emancipation is caused, I might suggest, by the reclaiming of her sublime "centrifugal" body as spectacle and by dissolving the "centripetal" unifying power of the voyeur. Where Duchamp always remains the

¹²³ Lynda Nead, The Female Nude, 32. Nead, who does not discuss Sprinkle's work, is discussing Kristeva's notion of abjection which, as I see it, relates quite readily to this artist's performances.

¹²⁴ Annie Sprinkle, "Some of My Performances In Retrospect" Art Journal 56/4 (Winter 1997): 68.

controlling agent in Étant donnés..., permitting Rose the pretense of a sublime identity, Sprinkle has repossessed her body and, at the same time, destabilized the identity of the viewing subject.

Sprinkle's performances are, indeed, abject, but I cannot help but find them as objectionable as Rose's exhibitionism. The words of Peter Gidal encapsulate my thoughts on this issue:

I do not see how...there is any possibility of using the image of a naked woman [or, for that matter, a real woman]...other than in an absolutely sexist and politically repressive patriarchal way in this conjuncture.¹²⁵

This is because (and I hope this allegory of reading illustrates this), "the positing of a body is a condition of discursive practices."¹²⁶ Indeed, can one imagine the relevance of the porno-performances of Annie Sprinkle in an art venue without the tradition of the nude and the distanced viewer as a foil? Sprinkle's performances are a product of representational practices. If her performances are a consequence of and reaction to this tradition, Rose's exhibitionist body is, as Duchamp has made clear, a tautological repetition of this tradition. Whether for or against such traditions, one is not able to stand, like a distanced, disembodied "mind-eye," outside of culture. One is always a mediated subject. In fact, by basing his specular games on Rose's naked body, on such a culture-ridden body, Duchamp doomed his whole patatautological enterprise right from the outset.

¹²⁵ [Words in brackets are mine]. Peter Gidal, cited in Mary Ann Doane, "Woman's Stake: Filming and the Female Body," Constance Penley, ed. Feminism and Film Theory (New York and London, 1988), 217.

¹²⁶ Mary Ann Doane, cited in Janet Wolff, Feminist Sentences, 120.

Given: 1. Searchers and Spies of Nature 2. The Enlightenment Project

A mediated subject, I perceive Rrose to be the quintessential female body as “a condition of discursive [and representational] practices.” Rrose’s body, we have seen in the various narratives and histories, stands for a “centrifugal” force to be contained by rational “centripetal” means, by a male principle which I have assigned to Duchamp himself. These dynamics are tautologically repeated, once again, with modern constructs. This time, however, the gendered scenario played out by the two protagonists reflects how the exertion of centripetal forces upon centrifugal nature is materialized in modern societal institutions of knowledge.

In their prototypical gendered roles, Duchamp/Rrose play out the story of modernity as a specular game, citing and inverting instances in the histories of scientific and technological progress which authors such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer have called the enlightenment project. Duchamp/Rrose cite modern stories of progress, but I also recognize how they perform specular perversions.

We have already seen how the negative dialectics of Adorno and Horkheimer reveals the specularity between enlightenment reason and ancient myth, between progress and regression. By adopting a similar dialectical perspective, one can also discern how the gendered positions of Rrose/Duchamp are mirror images of each other, how these two personae are one and the same. Despite her overt display of a “centrifugal” body, Rrose is but a spectral image, an ethereal “other” of the male imaginary. Let us again assign her a female identity with a corporeal body, and position

her on the outside of his "centripetal" structure, and witness how the gendered scenario undermines the artist's patatautological enterprise.

Standing on the outside, Rose can observe how the enlightenment project began with "the searchers and spies of nature"¹²⁷ who made her body an object of scientific scrutiny. By "unveil[ing], expos[ing] and penetrat[ing her] innermost chambers," by discovering her plots and secrets, they believed, as we know, that "...a blessed race of Heroes or Supermen [would be able to] overcome the immeasurable helplessness and poverty of the human race..."¹²⁸ Rose might also come to recognize how Duchamp assumed the role of such a heroic Superman. Indeed, as the male agent who constructed her enclosure, he created the conditions for an array of searchers and spies to inspect, through the peepholes, her reified body, permitting them to seek there the secrets "laid up in [her] womb."¹²⁹ Rose can see how her body, overtly exhibiting a "sexual potential," engendered in the bachelor searchers and spies the desire for scientific and technological progress.

Cast as the ethereal and centrifugal bride of nature abiding in the celestial Bride's Domain, Rose can discern how she became the bachelors' object of desire. As the erotic mechanical bride, and symbolizing the fruit of their enlightenment project, she embodies aspects of the Second Industrial Revolution. Rose's role as the mechanical bride effectively represents the culmination of a process that began with the natural bride

¹²⁷ Carolyn Merchant, Earthcare, 80.

¹²⁸ Francis Bacon cited in Genevieve Lloyd, The Man of Reason, 12.

¹²⁹ Francis Bacon cited in Carolyn Merchant, Earthcare, 81.

stripped bare by her bachelor searchers and spies, with the "blessed race of Heroes or Supermen...."¹³⁰

Now observing these representations through the eyes of Rrose, one might ask what by now may appear to be obvious enough questions: why does Rrose not also desire to be a searcher and spy of nature? Why does she not become implicated in this scientific project to study, understand and perfect nature? Why does she not also possess, like her modern male counterparts, the dream of progress? Indeed, why does she not also construct a rational structure which permits her to scrutinize the male bachelors, making them an object of her own scientific investigations? Are women not capable of such an enlightened project?

Like Francis Bacon who viewed the female body/nature only as an object of observation for the heroic Supermen, August Comte assumed that the adventure of modern progress was a uniquely masculine one. For the positivist, this was because women were not adequately endowed with the power of reason:

It is indisputable that women are, in general, as superior to men in a spontaneous expansion of sympathy and sociality, as they are inferior to men in understanding and reason. Their function in the economy of the family, and consequently of society, must therefore be to modify by the excitement of the social instinct the general direction necessarily originated by the cold and rough reason which is distinctive of man...of the two attributes which separate the human race from the brutes, the primary one indicates the necessary and invariable preponderance of the male sex, while the other points out the moderating function which is appropriate to woman.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Francis Bacon cited in Genevieve Lloyd, The Man of Reason, 12.

¹³¹ August Comte cited in Norma Broude, Impressionism: A Feminist Reading, 154.

Noting that her passive body is headless, Rose can only acknowledge that she has been deprived, forever, of the capacity for scientific reasoning. Even in her role as the mechanical bride, dangling from shiny metal gallows, Rose is not provided the conditions by which she might observe her bachelors, let alone participate in their activities.

No doubt Rose would also recognize the futility of becoming a "reasoning" searcher and spy whose project it is to scrutinize her male counterparts. This is because the bachelors, inscribed as empty shells, as "Malic Moulds," as a "Cemetery of Uniforms,"¹³² are also deficient. They do not possess a "womb" containing the secrets of nature. With no secret plots left in their entrails, they are but remnants of a whole centrifugal being. Instead, they reflect the effects of the centripetal force of the "enlightened" Bachelor Machine. Cast in the role of "everyman," the bachelors are also confined to a restrictive structure of one-point perspective. Their Bachelor Machine is, one can even say, like an embodiment of Max Weber's "iron cage," a rational machine from which there is no escape.

Seeing how the bachelors have been limited to the confines of a rational "iron cage" that reduced or eradicated their natural, centrifugal qualities, Rose remarks how similar their respective habitats are. She notes how her own carcass-like body, enclosed within a kind of cage, mirrors the Bachelors' condition. Rose makes some "enlightened" observations best encapsulated in the words of Theodor Adorno and Max

¹³² In his notes to The Large Glass, Duchamp gives such inscriptions, as we have seen, to the male bachelors.

Horkheimer: "As soon as man discards his awareness that he himself is nature, all the aims for which he keeps himself alive...are nullified..."¹³³

The modern condition of the Bachelors, their existence as empty shells, as deadened natural beings inhabiting a rational "iron cage" is, in effect, a specular reflection of her own deadened, prostrate body incarcerated in a restrictive enclosure. Realizing that even her "centrifugal" nature is but a "specular inversion" of the bachelors lost self, Rose remembers Duchamp's words: "They [are] enveloped, alongside their regrets, by a mirror reflecting back to them their own complexity."¹³⁴ Rose provides a reflective mirror for the Bachelors. Even as the natural bride, Rose represents what the bachelors are not, or at least, of what they are no longer.

Liberated from her cage, Rose now recognizes how her/their deadened condition all began with the containment and subjugation of her centrifugal powers. She remarks how Duchamp effectively heeded Francis Bacon's advice to the scientific minds, the male agents, stating that they must not "merely exert a gentle guidance of nature's course; they [must] conquer and subdue her, to shake her to her foundation." Lying prostrate in Duchamp's cage, Rose's body lies as a testimony to the centripetal power exerted upon (fe)male-nature by the male searchers and spies. The repression and subjugation of dynamic centrifugal nature also recalls the words of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, which described "woman" as the "enigmatic image of irresistibility and

¹³³ Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment (New York: Continuum, 1991), 54.

¹³⁴ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 51.

powerlessness. In this way she reflects for domination the pure lie that posits the subjection instead of the redemption of nature,"¹³⁵ of nature that is also man.

By taking this reflection one step further, and observing again her confined corpse-like body, one that resembles a police photograph of a murdered woman, Rose can now appreciate the significance of another cage that Duchamp built. Though its title, Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy? (fig. 41) assumes a more ironic, farcical tone, this literal birdcage also contains "inanimate" objects. Within this cage, are signs of his/her demise: a thermometer, like the phallic-shaped bayonet from the Bachelor Machine, is here a sign of malaise; the marble cubes, vestiges of a monument or tombstones, those of the Cemetery of Uniforms perhaps; a cuttle bone, like an ancient fossil, reminiscent of the empty Malic Moulds. The carnivalesque title further mocks the inanimate Rose, challenging her to exert a natural, but for her impossible, function.

Of course, this particular birdcage enframes only an idea of Rose. Here she is but a word, a concept. Standing on the outside of her final abode, Étant donnés...., looking at the "appearance" of her corpse-like body in the last cage that Duchamp built for her, Rose recognizes that here too she is but a spectral presence, a figment of the male imaginary. Represented at one and the same time as an inverted reflection of the bachelors' "centrifugal" complexity and as an image of their own deadened nullified selves, Rose is an "allegorical appearance" that represents the effect of "centripetal" machine ideology upon the male subject. Rose observes that this is not her story at all, that this is decidedly Duchamp's story of modernity, told from a resolutely male

¹³⁵ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 71.

perspective. This realized, where then does this leave Rose as the representative of "woman," indeed of women, in this story? It leaves her precisely where I have situated her, very much on the outside, as an observer of the male-constructed account and critique of modernity.

Only by freeing herself from her spectral role as man's other, and by assuming a corporeal female identity, can Rose begin to scrutinize, like the searchers and spies, the fiction inscribed into the Bachelor Machine, into the progressive and regressive stories of the enlightenment project. In so doing, Rose cannot but wonder why she has been hidden away "behind the closed door" in this way. Such a position deprives Rose of the possibility of representing women in the modern enlightenment project who, like their male counterparts, were active participants in the industrial machine. Indeed, Rose's ethereal, spectral "appearance" as a centrifugal principle does not convey how "machine ideology" also invaded the lives of millions of women.

Rose in no way demonstrates how women were subject, just as much as her male counterparts, to the uniformity, the standardization and to the confines of the "iron cage." Instead, Rose is made as a grand monument to the invisibility of women in the stories of modern development. A mere sign, she tautologically repeats those often inscribed fictions of "woman" as the "other" of the modern paradigm, as the "other" of science and technology. For this reason, Rose's "appearance" does not coincide with Duchamp's patatautological project of presenting oppositional elements as both either-or and neither-nor. Instead his gender games serve precisely to perpetuate the myth of women's exclusion from culture and to reinforce "the institutional organizations of knowledge

[that] operates to marginalise women, as well as to reinforce the gender inequalities in contemporary society."¹³⁶

Scrutinizing Duchamp's representation of modernity, Rose is unable to perceive how the various stages of mechanization and industrialization that led to the industrial revolutions included, or also were women's stories. Outside the cage that Duchamp built, Rose still has available to her only readymade representations of modernity. She must therefore make a concerted effort to search beyond representation in order to discern women's histories. As Janet Wolff reminds us,

one cannot resolve questions of women's relation to modernism purely at the level of representation. An adequate exploration of this issue... would need to be based on a social-historical exploration of women's actual participation in the social arrangements, institutions, and processes of city life.¹³⁷

Whether inside or outside her habitat, Rose, as we can clearly see, is nonetheless limited to the realm of representation. As such, she remains mute, unable to speculate upon, let alone convey how millions of women lived as inhabitants of the Bachelor Machine, on natural products, "on coal or other raw material..."¹³⁸ Rose, subject to the "appearances" constructed by representation, is unable to disclose how women, like their male counterparts, also suffered hard, relentless hours of underground labor in mines,¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Janet Wolff, Feminist Sentences,. 4

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ As we have seen, coal is the fuel of the First Industrial Revolution. These are words from Duchamp's notes for The Large Glass in The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 45.

¹³⁹ For a study of women's labor in the coal mining industry, see Angela John, By the Sweat of their Brow: Women, Workers at Victoria Coal Mines (London & Boston : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984).

how they were engaged as spinners and weavers in textile mills, or in other laborious work in factories.¹⁴⁰

Even though the stories of women's contributions to the growth of the industrial machine, and the advancement of science and technology, are themselves ethereal and, for the most part, invisible and unwritten,¹⁴¹ let us attempt to piece together certain historical fragments in order to more fully comprehend how Rose's representation can only serve to deflect, not reflect, women's stories. Even prior to the onset of industrialization, women were intimately involved in the labor force, as Bridget Hill reminds us:

Anyone concerned with working women in the eighteenth century cannot ignore the household and the economy, whatever one chooses to call it, that was based on it. For here was focused the work of the vast majority of women (as well as men) in the eighteenth century. [...] Women's work covered not merely active participation in the farm, trade, craft, or shop of their husbands, or work in a different and often subsidiary occupation, but all that the term 'housework' involved in the eighteenth century, as well as bearing and rearing children.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ See for example, Wanda F. Neff, Victorian Working Women (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929); Ivy Pinchbeck, Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850, [1930] (London: Cass, 1969; reprint, London: Virago, 1981); Sheila Rowbotham, Hidden from history: rediscovering women in history from the 17th century to the present (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975); Deborah, Simonton A History of European Women's Work: 1700 to the Present (London & New York: Routledge, 1998); Barbara S. Burnell, Technological Change and Women's Work Experience: Alternative Methodological Perspectives (Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey, 1993).

¹⁴¹ Though many historians, since the ground-breaking books by Wanda Neff and Ivy Pinchbeck of 1929 and 1930 respectively, have embarked on the daunting project of inscribing women's histories as workers, the general perception remains that women did not participate in the modern enterprise. A new research area for me as well, I will base my historical accounts on this classic work as well as on more recent studies cited above which are based predominantly on women's work in England.

¹⁴² Bridget Hill, Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England, 22, 27.

Domestic industry had been a significant source of employment for women prior to the eighteenth century. The opening phases of the cotton industry, one of the earliest technologies, employed primarily women and children within the home as spinners and weavers in rural areas, both on a full- and part-time basis. Even though “women’s trades” such as millinery, mantua-making and seamstressing were the kind of labor readily available to women, they also apprenticed, not only in clothing trades but as innholders, publicans, butchers, grocers, bricklayers, and blacksmiths.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, as Keith Snell underlines, “[t]he involvement of women in the apprenticed trades...is commonly omitted altogether.”¹⁴⁴

With the mechanization of industries and particularly at the onset of the first industrial revolution, women continued to be involved in factory production, both for waged and unwaged work, and inside and outside the home. The working conditions in the mills and factories were not particularly favorable. As a member of the British Parliament remarked in 1838:

Amongst other things I saw a cotton mill – a sight that froze my blood. The place was full of women, young, all of them, some large with child, and obliged to stand twelve hours each day. Their hours are from five in the morning to seven in the evening, two hours of that being for rest, so that they stand twelve clear hours. The heat was excessive in some of the rooms, the stink pestiferous, and in all an atmosphere of cotton flue. I

¹⁴³ Ibid., 88-9.

¹⁴⁴ For a more thorough study of these histories, see Bridget Hill’s chapters, “The Undermining of the Family Economy” and “Female Apprenticeship,” in Ibid. See also Chapters 5 and 6 of K.D.M. Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire], New York : Cambridge University Press, 1985).

nearly fainted. The young women were all pale, sallow, thin, yet generally fairly grown, all with bare feet – a strange sight in English eyes.¹⁴⁵

Such working conditions were “improved” by a series of Factory Acts which regulated working laws for women and children not just in the textile industry, but also as underground laborers in coal mines:

Beginning in 1825, Factory Acts, rudimentary at first but growing increasingly effective, regulated the employment of women and children, the hours and conditions of labor, and provided inspectors to enforce the new regulations.... The Coal Mines Act of 1842 forbade the underground employment of women and of boys under ten; the Factory Act of 1844 set a maximum working day for children under thirteen (six and a half hours) and women (twelve hours); and finally the Ten Hours Bill of 1847 gave workers an endurable working day.¹⁴⁶

These “improvements” in working conditions were not humanitarian acts to ameliorate the plight of men, women and children: they were further examples of instrumental reason, of “machine ideology.” As Eugen Weber points out, utilitarian economic imperatives produced such results: “The more poor there were - they argued - the fewer consumers there would be. Better wages would create more buyers, more demand, further employment. Less child labor must mean more work for adults; shorter hours would allow less unemployment.”¹⁴⁷

Weber’s comments are clearly linked to the notion of Fordism in America of the 1920s which heralded the beginnings of a consumer culture. Even earlier, however, industrial developments and new innovations intimately linked women, as technological

¹⁴⁵ Cited in Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work, and Family, 64.

¹⁴⁶ Eugen Weber, A Modern History of Europe, 500, 505.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 656.

subjects, to new inventions such as the sewing machine. They became the primary fabricators of “readymade” clothing and other goods. Indeed, these were the principal means of their participation in industry. In 1841, in the United States, Catherine Esther Beecher (1800-78) published a treatise on domestic economy and scientific housekeeping to offset the difficulty of finding domestic servants, the result of increasing employment of women in factories. In her book, she reports that over 10,000 women in New York lived by needle work in factories, working 12 to 14 hour days. Large numbers worked in other kinds of assembly-line work and, later, increasingly in offices as stenographers, secretaries and office clerks, as well as other professions.¹⁴⁸

Without attempting to provide a full historical account of women’s contribution to the labor force and to the development of the industrial machine, as well as their role as technological subjects,¹⁴⁹ I wish to offer these brief accounts as a counter image to Rose’s non-presence in the Bachelor Machine. Her representation in Étant donnés... in

¹⁴⁸ For an overview of how mechanization changed women’s condition in the household, her activities in agriculture and in industry, see Siegfried Giedion. Mechanization Takes Command. A Contribution to Anonymous History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).

¹⁴⁹ For further studies relating to women’s work in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Wanda F. Neff, Victorian Working Women (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929); Elizabeth Baker, Technology and Woman’s Work (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964); Sally Alexander, “Women’s work in the nineteenth century London: a study of the years 1820-1850” in The Rights and Wrongs of Women (London: Journeyman Press, London History Workshop Centre, 1983, c. 1976); Leonare Davidoff and Belinda Westover, eds. Our Work, Our Lives, Our Words: Women’s History and Women’s Work (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1986). For studies on American women’s participation in the development of modern industrial society, see Valerie Kincade Oppenheimer, The Female Force in the United States (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970); Mary Lindenstein Walshok, “Blue Collar Women” in The Technological Woman: Interfacing with Tomorrow, ed. by Jan Zimmerman (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1983), 181-188; and Harriet H. Robinson, “Early Factory Labor in New England” in Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings, ed. by Miriam Schnier (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

no way acknowledges working class women (hence the majority of women) in the countries involved in the First Industrial Revolution. She silences their presence as indispensable cogs in the industrial machine.

This said, Rose's role as the mechanical bride in the Bride's Domain might have us presume that Duchamp has acknowledged women's part in the story of progress. As a spontaneous combustion engine, as a dynamo, as electric light in the Bride's Domain, Rose signifies, as we have seen, the improvement of the mechanical Bachelor Machine and the advent of the Second Industrial Revolution.¹⁵⁰ However, to assert that Rose, as the mechanical bride, represents women as technological subjects would be to forget that Rose's habitat, the Bride's Domain, is a celestial, ethereal and "centrifugal" realm which represents the lost condition of the bachelors. Even as the mechanical bride, Rose is not cast as an active, desiring or working subject. She poses instead and, once again, as a reflection of the "male" dream. Not a subject desiring progress, she possesses "desire gears" that run on "love-gasoline" and serve to trigger and ignite the bachelors' desire. Rose operates as a "mirrorial return," as a self-reflective image of the bachelors: and of their dream of progress. Hence, even women's significant contributions to the Second Industrial Revolution are appropriated into a decidedly masculine story.

By isolating Rose in her enclosure, situating her as a "person behind a door," Duchamp removed her from the public realm where these significant historical events

¹⁵⁰ The Second Industrial Revolution in the late 19th century gave rise to new industries which were based on precision manufacturing and assembly-line production. There was a cluster of innovations, most notably automotive devices, electrical power and motors, and synthetic materials, as well as new commodities made for mass consumption.

were taking place. In her isolation, Rose reinscribes "the ideology of women's place in the domestic realm [that] permeated the whole of society,"¹⁵¹ a condition only enjoyed by a minority of women. As Janet Wolff reminds us, while "the material separation of work and home, which was the result of both the industrial revolution and the growth of suburbs, was clearly the precondition of the general process....[f]or many families and many occupations this separation did not always occur.... Working-class women, of course, continued to work."¹⁵² Millions over the centuries did so in the mills and factories, in offices and schools, as well as in domestic service. Indeed, most women appear to have worked a double shift both inside and outside the home.

Nor does Rose's position in her private realm in any way convey the stories of the majority of women from the middle and working class,¹⁵³ who continued to labor relentlessly in the monotonous, repetitive, often mind-numbing occupations operated by the Bachelor Machine. Because women (along with working class men) were excluded from institutions of power, they were, to a greater extent, limited to the confines of the "iron cage," to the rational Bachelor Machine construed by Duchamp as a uniquely male condition. On the other hand, middle class men of a certain status and education were able to escape the fetters of the Weberian cage:

¹⁵¹ Janet Wolff, Feminist Sentences, 13.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ "The real situation of women in the second half of the nineteenth century was more complex than one of straightforward confinement to the home. It varied from one social class to another, and even from one geographical region to another, depending on the local industry, the degree of industrialization, and numerous other factors. And although the solitary and independent life of the flaneur was not open to women, women clearly were active and visible in other ways in the public arena." Ibid., 45.

Women...were increasingly restricted to particular kinds of occupation - servicing rather than productive, and "women's trades" of teaching, dressmaking and retail - and excluded from the new financial institutions associated with business. At the same time the "public world" expanded, providing for men a multitude of additional activities and institutions - banks, political organizations, voluntary societies and cultural institutions.¹⁵⁴

As Wolff argues, "if the chief characteristic of modernity is the Weberian idea of increasing rationalization [that produces the 'iron cage'], then the major institutions affected by this process were the factory, the office, and the government departments." Even though, she continues, women have always worked in factories, the growth of bureaucracies "was also to some extent dependent on the development of a new female work force of clerks and secretaries."¹⁵⁵ In other words, the Weberian bureaucratic cage was one which few working women could escape.

Rose's spectral image nonetheless perpetuates the myth of women's absence from modern culture. Even today, women's histories remain, for the most part, untold. Not only have they been eclipsed in Duchamp's Bachelor Machine, they have also been evacuated from "traditional sociological texts" since, as Wolff reminds us, "the public institutions in which [women] did participate were rarely those accorded most importance by analysts of contemporary society."¹⁵⁶ In order to crack the false mirror of modernity, it is imperative, Wolff points out, "to look a little more closely at the assumption that women are excluded from culture, if this is to be more than a polemical

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 14.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 34.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

claim.”¹⁵⁷ Indeed, it should go without saying that women have always been inextricably integrated into their particular societal structures, as technological subjects. In ancient times, they were tool-makers and users; in agrarian cultures, they were agricultural and domestic tool users; in modern times, they were intimately connected with the various technologies of the new industries, that is, spinning and weaving in the textile mills, working the sewing machine in the needle trade, operating the various machines in assembly-line work, the typewriter, the cash register.

There is, nevertheless, a significant lack of studies and artworks that represent women as technological subjects. Without counter-representations, the spectral image of Rose tautologically persists to operate as a normative given. In an attempt to create such a counter-representation, let us assign Rose the role of an active “mechanical body.” By so doing, we shall see how problematic such a body is as a means to represent the diversity of experiences of women working as technological subjects.

Pamela M. D'ONofrio-Flores's account of the different phases of women's labor in countries such as Brazil offers an example of women's role as technological subjects in developing countries, :

It is generally expected in a developing country that the level of female participation in the work force will go through three phases. In the first one, during the beginning of industrialization, when the number of people employed in agriculture is still high and the number of commercial and manufacturing industries limited to the domestic circle still significant, the integration level of women in the work force is still large. During the second phase, economic development causes a large number of people to leave localized commerce and home production and at the same time there is a migration from rural to urban areas, which tends to cause the

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 70.

number of women participating in productive activities to decrease. Generally, together with the above described mechanisms, there is a continuous growth of female employment in the tertiary sector. Until this sector reaches a point where it is large enough to cover the departure of women from other sectors, the amount of female participation in the work force will continue to decline. The rate of female employment out of the domestic sphere will start to go up in a more advanced stage of development, as a result of the employment growth in the tertiary activity.¹⁵⁸

Such a statistical overview, like an "allegorical appearance," provides us with a glimpse of what constitutes millions of different stories and histories. One can only wonder how Rose's monolithic mechanical body could stand for or represent such diverse working experiences. She cannot. As a representation, she proves to be utterly reductive.

As a mechanical body, can Rose tell the stories of those women included in the Women and Work project of 1975? This was a collaborative exhibition by artist Mary Kelly, Margaret Harrison and Kay Hunt. Their project was to investigate the real effects of the legislation for working women in a Meal Box factory in London, England. An installation comprised of photographic panels, statistical tables, split screen films, as well as copies of official reports and legislation, Women and Work mapped "not a steady progress towards equality, but a calculated restructuring of the workforce and redefinition of skills whose effect was to segregate women more rigidly into low-paid, low-skill categories."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Translation by Felica R. Madierra and Paul I. Singer of a study by Pamela M. D'Onofrio-Flores, "Technology, Development, and Division of Labor by Sex," in Scientific-Technological Change and the Role of Women in Development, 18-20.

¹⁵⁹ Griselda Pollock, Vision and Difference (London: Routledge, 1988), 168.

Rrose's mechanical body cannot possibly convey the structural determination that confines women to certain occupations. Nor can she portray the myriads of different experiences of women of various ages, races and geographies. A mechanical body, or any body for that matter, operates like a centripetal force, a totalizing object that, one might say, collapses many experiences into the singular. As Anne Balsamo argues:

the body can never be constructed as a purely discursive [or representational] entity. In a related sense, it can never be reduced to a pure materialist object. Better to think of the dual 'natures' of the body in terms of its 'structural integrity' to use Evelyn Fox Keller's term. This is to assert that the material and the discursive are mutually determining and non-exclusive.¹⁶⁰

If Rrose's mechanical body does not take into account "the multiple forms of technological embodiment"¹⁶¹ and does not challenge the unitary, essentialist body nor the age-old hierarchic binary constructions, perhaps the cyborgian body can.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Anne Balsamo, "Forms of Technological Embodiment: Reading the Body in Contemporary Culture," *Feminist Theory and the Body* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 278.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Commonly used as a science fiction theme, meaning a fusion between human and machine, the term, "cyborg," was coined in 1960 by research scientist Manfred Clynes to describe the implications of advances in biomedical engineering, such as prosthetic limbs, heart pacemakers, drug-dispensing implants and synthetic body and organ implants. The notion of the cyborg which I present here refers, on the one hand, to the contemporary condition which intimately connects humans, in their daily lives at work and at home, to electr(on)ic circuitry, making the technology literally an extension of the human body. On the other, this term is used metaphorically as a concept that collapses binary categories. These notions of the cyborg are directly related to the writings of biologist and socialist feminist, Donna J. Haraway, in "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s," *Feminism/Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 1990). A variation of this essay entitled, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," is included in her *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 149-181. My quotations are from the former version.

Morphing into a cyborg, a cousin it could be argued of the mechanical body, Rose might effectively challenge such readymade givens, at least if one takes Donna Haraway's theories to heart. In her influential essay, "The Cyborg Manifesto," Haraway presents the cyborg as "a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as science fiction." At the same time, the cyborg is "[a]n ironic dream...a rhetorical strategy and a political method"¹⁶³ that wages a border war upon dualistic structures such as nature and culture, organic and machine, private and public, man and woman. Let us see how.

Contrary to the mechanical bride, the cyborg "was not born in a garden." As Haraway notes, "the certainty of what counts as nature - a source of insight and a promise of innocence - is undermined, probably fatally"¹⁶⁴ by the cyborg. Neither is a cyborg "centrifugally" innocent. The cyborg "has no origin story in the western sense": skipping "the step of original unity, of identification with nature," the cyborg has no centrifugal mother. It is "suspicious of the reproductive matrix and of most birthing."¹⁶⁵

The cyborg, according to Haraway, was engendered from the war machine, from male apocalyptic power. It is "the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism, not to mention state socialism." For this reason, the cyborg "does not expect its father [Adam, the agent of earthly transformation] to save it through a restoration of

¹⁶³ Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs," 191.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 222, 194.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 192, 223.

the garden....The cyborg would not recognize the Garden of Eden; it is not made of mud and cannot dream of returning to dust."¹⁶⁶

Significantly, "[t]he cyborg is a creature inhabiting a postgender world." It "does not seek unitary identity [nor does it] generate antagonistic dualisms without end...."¹⁶⁷

Haraway emphasizes that "the cyborg imagery can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves." Contrary to the mechanical bride which, as we have seen, is but a specular reflection of the male bachelors, Haraway's cyborg "is about transgressed boundaries, potent fusions."¹⁶⁸

Unlike Rrose's mechanical body, the cyborg was not engendered from mythic notions. It is not a spectral body that reflects a unitary identity of woman as the "other" of Man. A hybrid in multiple ways, the cyborg is both "a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction."¹⁶⁹ Reality consists of our cyborgian condition in postmodern society which has itself broken down the age-old distinctions between nature and culture, private and public, man and woman. It has done so by creating a new "homework economy" on a global level. Haraway explains:

In the prototypical Silicon Valley, many women's lives have been structured around employment in electronics-dependent jobs, and their intimate realities include serial heterosexual monogamy, negotiating child care, distance from extended kin or most other forms of traditional community, a high likelihood of loneliness and extreme economic

¹⁶⁶ My emphasis. Ibid., 193, 192.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 223.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 191.

vulnerability as they age. The ethnic and racial diversity of women in Silicon Valley structures a microcosm of conflicting differences in culture, family, religion, education and language.¹⁷⁰

The "New Industrial Revolution" as she calls it (commonly referred to as the "post-industrial revolution") has redefined work "as both literally female and feminized, whether performed by men or women." Haraway explains that to be "feminized" means

to be made extremely vulnerable; able to be disassembled, reassembled, exploited as reserve labor force; seen less as workers than as servers; subjected to time arrangements on and off the paid job that makes a mockery of a limited work day; leading an existence that always borders on being obscene, out of place and reducible to sex.¹⁷¹

Significantly, the "New Industrial Revolution" is producing a "new worldwide working class, as well as new sexualities and ethnicities." The new cyborg condition in this transgendered world, obviously dismantles another significant dichotomy, the spectre of which lies hidden within the whole enlightenment project, and within the Bachelor Machine -- that of the "primitive and civilized." Rose's body stands for "woman" as the other of man, but she also stands for white woman since "the category "woman" negate[s] all nonwhite women."¹⁷² If Rose's mechanical body stands for the civilizing process of the enlightenment project, she also represents a resolutely Eurocentric culture as the first principle. The cyborg condition, according to Haraway, dismantles the enclosure and the boundaries that inscribe the notions of inside and outside, of "us" and "them." As she writes:

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 208.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid., 207, 205, 197.

I do not know of any other time in history when there was greater need for political unity to confront effectively the dominations of race, gender, sexuality, and class. I also do not know of any other time when the kind of unity we might help build could have been possible. None of "us" have any longer the symbolic or material capability of dictating the shape of reality to any of "them." Or at least "we" cannot claim innocence from practising such dominations.¹⁷³

Though the cyborg condition is most evidently not a utopian one, the cyborg nonetheless challenges unitary identity and ancient dichotomies, spawning a network of conflicting and unstable systems. Paradoxically, such "networking," as Haraway reminds us, "is both a feminist practice and a multinational corporate strategy - weaving is for oppositional cyborgs."¹⁷⁴ Familiar with networking and weaving, the new cyborg condition is one to which many women have been accustomed since it has been part of their stories for a long while.

While this "feminized" condition is the offspring of the centripetal father, it is nonetheless a specular inversion of the one-point perspective of the male Bachelor Machine, of the enlightenment project that built Rose's cage. Can one say then that the contemporary cyborgian condition is the fruit of the "marriage" between the Bachelors and the mechanical bride, their hybrid offspring?

Such a hybrid creature, if one accepts Haraway's description, is very much akin to the qualities of Duchamp's "allegory on/of forgetting." Similar to his centrifugal allegory, the cyborg embodies, as Haraway notes, "a dream not of a common language,

¹⁷³ Ibid., 199.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 212.

but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia."¹⁷⁵ The cyborg provides, says Haraway, a means to bypass "the production of universal, totalizing theory." As we know, Duchamp's patatautological enterprise allegedly has a similar purpose.

In several other ways, Haraway's notion of the cyborg operates like a specular inversion of Duchamp's own project. Where the "allegorical appearance" of Rose was engendered from the feminized, centrifugal "allegory on/of forgetting," the centrifugal cyborg, the "offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism," was engendered from a centripetal power. There is another specular inversion. Where Duchamp's Bachelor Machine representing the regressive aspects of the modern Enlightenment myth of progress, the cyborg permits one to see the positive or "progressive" aspect of the regressively feminized "New Industrial Revolution." She explains that

taking responsibility for the social relations of science and technology means refusing an anti-science metaphysics, a demonology of technology, and so means embracing the skillful task of reconstructing the boundaries of daily life in partial connection with others, in communication with all of our parts. It is not just that science and technology are possible means of great human satisfaction, as well as a matrix of complex dominations....It means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, spaces, stories.¹⁷⁶

The cyborg, both fictive and real, is, one might suppose, like the revitalization of the centrifugal. At the same time, the cyborg keeps in constant view its centripetal matrix, militarism and patriarchal capitalism, of which it is an "illegitimate offspring."

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 223.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

In this way, the cyborg offers a counter concept to those "theories of industrialization and of the rise and development of capitalism" which Janet Wolff states, "deal with the structures and processes of contemporary industrial society (as well as its institutions and ideologies), without engaging with the alleged complicity between 'masculinity' and 'objectivity', between men and abstract thought, between patriarchy and the dominance of an ideology of neutral, disinterested science."¹⁷⁷

Like the cyborgian condition, this infiltration of "centrifugal" does not necessarily produce an "improved" science. However, as Sandra Harding notes in her study of feminism and science from an anti-Enlightenment perspective, "I am suggesting that the knowing subject of feminist empiricism inadvertently but inevitably is in tension with Enlightenment assumptions. A woman scientist cannot be the Enlightenment's transhistorical, unitary individual, and the present feminist environment makes it difficult for women scientists to avoid stumbling upon this fact."¹⁷⁸

Indeed, Rose's spectral image as such a transhistorical, unitary individual as mother goddess, as nature, as body and thus as the "other" of Enlightenment, serves as a potent agent to be negotiated. Even though, as Donna Haraway's cyborg makes clear, we are not at the dawning of a new utopian world, at least we are conscious of the mythic figures that inscribed "woman," and other disenfranchised people as "other." It is certain that as a feminized homework economy, the "New Industrial Revolution" does not

¹⁷⁷ Janet Woff, Feminist Sentences, 78.

¹⁷⁸ Sandra Harding, "Feminism, Science and the Anti-Enlightenment Critiques" in Feminism/Postmodernism, 93.

produce a just society, rid of instrumentality and human exploitation. At least the cyborg condition is a global network that inscribes women and men of all classes and races into culture. In this regard, Haraway's eloquent statement can stand as a fitting inversion of Duchamp's "allegorical appearance": "although both are bound in the spiral dance, I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess."¹⁷⁹

Perversions of the Patatautological Enterprise

Looking through the peepholes at Rose's corpse-like body, one can say that Duchamp did "kill" the goddess and did morph this ancient figure into a mechanical body. One could also say that by inscribing a centrifugal "allegory on/of forgetting," that celebrates heteroglossia, Duchamp constructed, through his patatautological enterprise, a cyborgian condition. However, as hard as I look at Rose's garden, at her body, I still see there only an "allegorical appearance" that stabilizes and unifies the cyborgian, heteroglot network of signs. I cannot but identify Duchamp as the centripetal "matrix." In the guise of the searcher and spy, of the agent of earthly transformation, of the civilizer, Duchamp simultaneously assigned only a "spectral" image to Rose. The sightline provided by the peepholes, like the one-point perspective of the Bachelor Machine, in fact, deprives me of any view of the cyborgian, heteroglot network of signs. I see only how Duchamp's "allegorical appearance" maintains the borders between nature and

¹⁷⁹ Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s," 223.

culture, between man and woman, between us and them. He makes of Rose, to reiterate, a transhistorical figure who cannot testify to women's many stories.

From my perspective as the second viewer, I recognize how such erasures and such borders create blind spots that pervert any patatautological enterprise. In no way does Rose's role in Duchamp's specular inversions disclose a dialogic stratagem that

stems from a rebellion against the constraints of transcendental and monological systems...[and functions as] a principle of radical otherness....As a principle of exotopy: far from aspiring to the telos of a synthesis or a resolution, as could be said to be the case in dialectical systems, the function of dialogism is to sustain and think through the radical exteriority or heterogeneity of one voice with regard to any other.¹⁸⁰

As discussed in my first dialogue, Duchamp's patatautological enterprise consists of presenting antithetical elements as specular inversions of each other, exhibiting them as polar opposites that operate as both either-or and neither-nor. In this regard, I have linked his patatautological project to his notion of numbers:

For me the number three is important, but simply from the numerical, not the esoteric, point of view: one is unity, two is double, duality, and three is the rest. When you've come to the word three, you have three million - it's the same thing as three.¹⁸¹

The number three, I have emphasized earlier, does not signify the "three" of the synthesis or of any, even temporary, resolution. For Duchamp, it functions as the 'other' of the unity or duality inscribed into the readymade object, word, idea or construct. The number three is a sign of all that is multiple, open, fluid; it represents an element which

¹⁸⁰ Paul de Man, "Dialogue and Dialogism," The Resistance to Theory, 108, 109.

¹⁸¹ Pierre Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, trans. Ron Padgett (New York: Viking Press, 1971), 46-7.

is never completely containable or definable; it epitomizes all that is beyond a totalizing grasp. It is centrifugal, even, one might argue, cyborgian. Defying tautological repetitions of unity and duality, it would also be "patatautological."

By assigning gender roles to his specular inversions, however, Duchamp undermines his patatautological project. Duchamp/Rose inscribe woman as "the number three," as the "centrifugal," but this "patatautological" role does not operate as the other of unity (the number one) nor of duality (the number two). Let me elaborate.

To begin with, Rose resolutely reinscribes the female principle as the number one: as the generic "Woman," as that great fantasy. In such a monolithic role as "woman," Rose reasserts the notion of an original gender identity with fixed qualities. Such a role inscribes Rose, as we have seen, as a "spectral" illusion, as an empty signifier, and emphatically as Duchamp's own self-reflection. In other words, in a counter-patatautological move, Duchamp finally inscribes monolithic "man" as the sole and unique presence in Étant donnés...

One can gain insights into the phenomenon of the monolithic "woman" as man's spectral "other" by briefly considering Edward Said's study of Orientalism.¹⁸² As Said makes manifestly clear, the "Orient" was constructed by and for the West as a spectral or imaginary other. The exotic East, barbaric, uncivilized and forbidden, provides an image to the Westerner of what the West is not. Indeed, as Said writes, "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of

¹⁸² Edward Said, Orientalism (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

surrogate and even underground self."¹⁸³ Like the "Orient" which is the fictional other of the West, the category of "woman" operates as man's imaginary other. Rose's spectral image is a concept, just as much as "The Orient is an idea." Like the many tautological repetitions of the imaginary "woman," so too does the Orient have "a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West."¹⁸⁴ Just as the West's concept of the "Orient" is unitary and monolithic, so too is Duchamp's Rose the one, the unitary woman. Rose, this totalizing concept, can inevitably only serve to undermine Duchamp's patatautological premise.

As for his concept of the number two, Duchamp, by essentializing gender difference, retains a dualistic structure that compromises any patatautological aim. Indeed, by tautologically repeating ancient and modern narratives of "man's" estrangement from female-nature, Duchamp/Rose's specular inversions regressively, perhaps even aggressively, reassert a hierarchic dualism. Their respective positions posit the male principle as the privileged center and "woman" as sign. Furthermore, the spectral body of Rose serves at one and the same time to erase women's identities and to create a secondary "other." The blank mirror of "woman" provided by Rose's spectral body is nonetheless one with which women must identify and negotiate.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 3. By the same token, Said, not unlike Duchamp, bases his study of Orientalism on a gendered premise, the polarized categories, West and East, being resolutely masculine. For an enlightening study and a deconstruction of the "potentially unified, and paradigmatically male, colonial subject outlined in Said's Orientalism," see Reina Lewis, Gendering Orientalism: Race, Fertility and Representation (London & New York: Routledge, 1996).

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 5.

A similar hierarchical imbalance is embedded in the construction of "race" which also operates as a mirror in which the nonwhite person, for example, must identify or misrecognize him/herself. The eloquent words of Frantz Fanon reflects the insidious presence of the racist construction in the making of one's self-image:

The black man...does not know at what moment his inferiority comes into being through the other. And then the occasion arose when I had to meet the white man's eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me. The real world challenged my claims. In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third-person consciousness. The body is surrounded by an atmosphere of certain uncertainty....A slow composition of my self as a body in the middle of a spatial and temporal world - such seems to be the schema. It does not impose itself on me; it is, rather, a definite structuring of the self and the world - definitive because it creates a real dialectic between my body and the world.¹⁸⁵

One can readily see how Rose's body also creates such a dialectic between the representation of "woman" and the material experiences of women. Furthermore, as a monolithic white body, she stands for the universal, generic woman who erases women of other ethnicities. By repeating hierarchical gender categories, Duchamp reiterates ancient dualisms, drawing borders between "man" and "woman," between "us" and "them." By so doing, his specular inversions do not provide a means by which one can "[think] through the radical exteriority or heterogeneity of [women's voices and experiences] with regard to [men's]."¹⁸⁶ Once again, his specular games pervert the gender balance required of a genuine patatautological position.

¹⁸⁵ Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks (London: Pluto Press, 1986), 111.

¹⁸⁶ Paul de Man, "Dialogue and Dialogism," 109.

Perhaps even more regressively perverse is the inscription of the "number three" or the "centrifugal" into his specular games. Here Duchamp ironically compromises his patatautological enterprise by the very concept which is meant to dismantle tautological truth statements. Even though the "number three" signifies, for him, a transcendence of one (unity), of two (dualism), and is represented, as I have illustrated, by the "centrifugal" element in his "allegory on/of forgetting," he has also ascribed this quality to the female principle. Here lies another blind spot.

In both allegories, "woman" as a "centrifugal" principle is inscribed as the ethereal, the boundless, the formless, as openness and as the sublime. This centrifugal force, as we have seen, is indeed the specular inversion of the unitary as it also is of dualistic categories and, in this capacity, is akin to the cyborgian condition. Such a notion of the centrifugal also relates to the words of the feminist scholar, Susan Suleiman, who also speaks of a means to transcend unitary and dualistic inscriptions. One desires, she says, "to get beyond, not only the number one - the number that determines unity of body or of self - but also to get beyond the number two, which determines difference, antagonism and exchange..." Beyond the "number two," she argues, there is only "endless complication" and a "dizzying accumulation of narratives."¹⁸⁷ Similarly, the "centrifugal" illuminating gas, that female "light" that

¹⁸⁷ Susan Suleiman, "(Re)Writing the Body: The Politics and Poetics of Female Eroticism," in The Female Body in Western Culture, ed. Susan Suleiman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 24.

ignites the bachelors desire for the "Bride's Domain" also causes "dizziness" and a "loss of awareness of position."¹⁸⁸

Suleiman's notion of a location beyond the number one and two refers to Jacques Derrida's words about "a 'dream' of the innumerable,...a desire to escape the combinatory...to invent incalculable choreographies."¹⁸⁹ Derrida's "dream of the innumerable," quite ostensibly, relates to Duchamp's concept of the "number three" which is also unquantifiable: "When you've come to the word three, you have three million - it's the same thing as three."¹⁹⁰ For simplicity's sake, I shall continue to refer to this notion of the "innumerable" (Derrida) or the number three (Duchamp) as the "centrifugal."

Inscribing the female principle as the "centrifugal" is problematic precisely because it tautologically and ironically reverts back to unity and duality. The centrifugal serves precisely to reinscribe "woman" as a monolithic other and as a self-reflection of what man is not. Let me explain this by addressing the observations of Nancy Harstock. Harstock has convincingly argued that such a "centrifugal" (not her term) quality is not progressively transcendent of reductive categories. In her discussion, she cites Albert

¹⁸⁸ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 50.

¹⁸⁹ Jacques Derrida and Christi V. McDonald, "Choreographies," Diacritics 12/2 (1982), 76. Suleiman's words and their relation to Derrida's constitute an argument made by Susan Bordo regarding the problems with such notions of "dance." I shall be taking up Bordo's argument below. See Suleiman's "Feminism, Postmodernism, and Gender-Scepticism" in Feminism/Postmodernism (London & New York: Routledge, 1990), 143.

¹⁹⁰ Pierre Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, 46-7.

Memmi's, "The Colonizer and the Colonized."¹⁹¹ Memmi's analysis of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized has parallels with the categorization of "woman," she argues. Memmi notes that the colonized is inscribed as the mysterious and opaque, as chaotic, as having the "mark of the plural." By so reifying the "Other" as the "centrifugal," the colonizer constructs an inverted mirror of what the colonized is "not": "the philosophical and historical creation of a devalued 'Other' was the necessary precondition for the creation of the transcendental rational subject outside of time and space, the subject who is the speaker in Enlightenment philosophy."¹⁹²

Duchamp, as we have seen, inscribed the "centrifugal" woman as the mysterious, chaotic, boundless, as the incommensurable, and as a means by which the enlightenment subject constructed a unified identity that transcended the female condition. A monolithic characteristic, the "centrifugal" disguises and hides women's identities and plural histories altogether. Furthermore, by representing the "centrifugal" as the other of the unified, rational male subject, Duchamp tautologically reasserts dualistic categories. By continuing to construct a monolithic "centrifugal" woman as man's "other," even the inscription of "the centrifugal" (the number three), operates as a specular perversion that reverts to ancient normative readymade givens and tautologically reasserts hierarchic dualism.

¹⁹¹ Albert Memmi, The Colonizer and the Colonized (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967).

¹⁹² Nancy Harstock, "Foucault on Power: A Theory for Women?" in Feminism/Postmodernism, ed Linda J. Nicholson (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 160.

Standing outside the frame and field of vision of Duchamp/Rrose's self-reflecting mirror, I am able to recognize how the numbers one, two and three tautologically repeat ancient inscriptions and epistemologies, turning specular inversions into specular perversions. This is not yet, however, where the greatest insight lies.

Blindness and Insight

This greater, more significant, insight can only come into view once I have overcome my own particular blind spot. Indeed, even from my privileged location outside the mirror's frame, I am still subject to the blindness caused by specularly and objectification.

Standing, watching the male voyeur gazing through the peepholes, it is easy to succumb to a similar pitfall of objectifying Duchamp as my "other" in my mirror. It is all too tempting to read Étant donnés... as a reflection of a monolithic male imaginary. I have a strong impulse to reify "man" in a further specular enterprise.

Indeed, inspecting Étant donnés... from my position as the second viewer, I am strongly compelled to view Duchamp as the generic man and especially to continue to cast this artist as my object of vision, and his oeuvre as one more inscription of readymade male discourse. Then I think back to his elaborate gendered construction. I reflect upon the gender parody and illusions implicit and explicit in this artist's specular game and, particularly, the blind spots; and slowly, with some effort, I refocus.

I try to re-vision the manner in which one objectifies one's "other" in one's mental mirror and the self-reflective tautology implicit in such specularly. I begin to

contemplate ways and strategies which would permit me to escape the dualistic subject-object stronghold. Cautiously, I start to envisage a position where a subject no longer faces an object (that is, an object seen as the "other," and inevitably as one's specular reflection), but rather where one recognizes and acknowledges another subject, another subjectivity, another subjective discourse. At the entrance of Étant donnés..., I gaze at Duchamp looking through the peepholes, and I try to lose sight of this artist as the male protagonist, as the agent of culture, as the generic man, as the universal subject. By so doing, I begin to recognize Duchamp's multiple personae, his fluid identities and to see how his allegories evoke a network of ever-changing discourses.

In this acceptance of fluidity and heteroglossia, I recognize my own seduction by the notion of the "centrifugal" and recognize the danger that lies therein. To accept the "centrifugal" as an acknowledgment of diversity, multiplicity, of heteroglossia or multiple voices is one thing. However, in elevating the "centrifugal," one must be aware of what Susan Bordo calls the "dream of everywhere." Like Derrida's "innumerable choreographies," Bordo refers to "metaphors of dance."¹⁹³

The "dream of everywhere" locates one "nowhere," as Bordo would have it. Such a non-location, though transcending the subject-object stronghold, may lead to a different kind of illusion. Bordo's words are pertinent here:

To deny the unity and stability of identity is one thing. The epistemological fantasy of becoming multiplicity - the dream of limitless

¹⁹³ Susan Bordo "Feminism, Postmodernism, and Gender-Scepticism." in Feminism/Postmodernism (London & New York: Routledge, 1990), 143.

multiple embodiments, allowing one to dance from place to place and self to self is another.¹⁹⁴

In effect, "[t]hrough reality itself may be relentlessly plural and heterogenous, human understanding and interest cannot be." Despite the desire to recognize the heterogeneity, plurality, the realm of the "centrifugal," one always stops, positions oneself and speaks from a particular location. "We always 'see' from points of view that are invested with our social, political, and personal interests, inescapably 'centric' in one way or another, even in the desire to do justice to heterogeneity."¹⁹⁵

With these words in mind, I think back to the heterogeneous voices and multiple perspectives at play in Duchamp's heteroglossic "allegory on/of forgetting." If the "allegory on/of forgetting" operates as a means to dismantle the hegemony of the absolute, of "Truth," at the same time as it erases Duchamp's subject position, it can come to represent what Susan Bordo calls the postmodernist "dream of everywhere." Such a realization prompts me to wonder whether Duchamp was not aware of the dangers of such "non-locatedness."

By constructing his "allegorical appearance" Étant donné..., Duchamp effectively stops the "dizziness" caused by the "dance of everywhere" and prevents the "loss of awareness of position."¹⁹⁶ By fixing the moving, "dancing" or "centrifugal" signs into an "instantaneous state of rest," and by fixing himself in front of the peepholes, one could

¹⁹⁴ [Bordo's emphasis]. Ibid., 145.

¹⁹⁵ [Bordo's emphasis]. Ibid., 140.

¹⁹⁶ Marcel Duchamp, The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 50.

say, he acknowledges (to use Bordo's words) that "the dream of everywhere" is to be situated "nowhere."

Taking a position is situating oneself within a frame of reference. It is, by necessity, a "centripetal" operation which restricts one's field of vision and risks blind spots and inadvertent perversions. If Duchamp was blind to the tautological nature of his gendered games, he seems to have been well aware of the inevitability of speaking tautologically. In his dialogue with Pierre Cabanne, he disclosed that nothing, except physiology, escapes the tautological stronghold: "everything" [including his "allegorical appearance?"] is tautology, except black coffee because the senses are in control! The eyes see the black coffee, the senses are in control, it's a truth; but the rest is always tautology."¹⁹⁷

At the same time, by so vigorously engaging the viewer-reader-interlocutor's "eyes" and physical body within the framework of Étant donné..., Duchamp, I am prompted to believe, may have been attempting to bypass the inevitability of the tautology. Indeed, by creating a dialogical space in which an array of interlocutors' "givens" collide with his, he set up the conditions by which they might dismantle his "appearance" of a closed, tautological truth statement, making evident, one can say, the ephemerality of the readymade statement.

One can then recognize that the dialogic space Duchamp constructed in the alcove of Étant donné... is a centrifugal space, one operating like the "number three."

¹⁹⁷ Pierre Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, 107.

Such a dialogic space bears a comparison to what Homi K. Bhabha has theorized as the "Third Space." Bhabha points out that

the pact of communication between two subjectivities is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You designated in the statement. The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot 'in itself' be conscious. What this unconscious relation introduces is an ambivalence in the act of interpretation.¹⁹⁸

The Third Space is not the space of a mirror in which my perception of Rose, for example, would be the same as Duchamp's, nor for that matter of any other interlocutor. Says Homi Bhabha, "[t]he intervention of the Third Space, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys the mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is continuously revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code."¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Homi K. Bhabha, "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences," The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, ed. Bill Ashcroft, et al. (London and New York: Routledge), 208. Homi Bhabha's notion of "The Third Space" is founded on a distinction between cultural diversity and cultural difference. In this regard, one can draw further parallels between culture and gender construction. Culture [like gender], states Homi Bhabha, is not an epistemological object; it is not an object of empirical knowledge founded on a pre-given origin or essence. He reminds us that the idea of an ethnic group, of a given culture, is based on naturalized myths of a cultural origin "kept alive in the national tradition of the people." As Homi Bhabha reminds us, cultures [like the category "woman"] are "never unitary in themselves." Fixed, homogeneous, stereotypical cultural [or gender] identities are constructs which obscure the reality of subjects in process, of cultural [gender] identities in flux. As a result, interaction never occurs between fixed subjects, between unitary cultural identities. The Third Space offers the conceptual framework for understanding how one continuously "negotiates and translates cultural identities in a discontinuous intertextual temporality of cultural difference."

¹⁹⁹ See *Ibid.*

Homi Bhabha's words can come to articulate the kind of dialogic space that Duchamp created, whether willingly or not, in the alcove of Étant donnés.... This is the dialogic space that I have attempted to animate in my three dialogues with Duchamp. Whether one employs Bakhtinian terms relating to the collision of centrifugal and centripetal forces, or Homi Bhabha's notion of the Third Space, what my dialogues with Duchamp's Étant donnés... make clear is that one always encounters a "given" from a locatedness in culture. The mediated positions of the interlocutor inevitably opens up even what is constructed as a closed, tautological statement, in this case, the epistemological object of the "woman behind a door."

EPILOGUE

Leaving the Dialogic Space

Duchamp's patatautological games, and the blindness and insight that they contain, do not exist a priori. Rather they issue forth from my own interaction with Duchamp's Étant donnés..., from the dialogic space I have occupied. In these three dialogues, I have provided different contexts for Duchamp's givens, each producing diverse readings. If by so doing, I disclose the relativity of perspectives, the open-endedness of the dialogic process, and the impossibility of articulating a definitive meaning, I do not wish to elevate the notion of the "centrifugal." Nor are my three dialogues a display of jouissance in open-endedness where one can endlessly re-contextualize signs until one "no longer retain[s a perception of the other's] individuality [and where there is a] loss of awareness of position."¹ Rather these three dialogues most definitively implicate me as a mediated subject and reflect my own "social, political, and personal interests."²

If one could say that these three dialogues are a reflection of my negotiations with Duchamp's set of givens, they then also exhibit the anatomy of the dialogic process: how, as an interlocutor, one becomes integrated into a "centrifugal" system of signs and how, by exerting a "centripetal" force, one continually discovers new positions from which to speak. By so carefully setting up the conditions for such dialogues, Duchamp

¹ Duchamp here refers to the effect of the illuminating gas upon the Bachelors. The Writings of Marcel Duchamp. 50.

² Susan Bordo, "Feminism, Postmodernism, and Gender-Scepticism," in Feminism/Postmodernism (London & New York: Routledge, 1990), 140.

has provided the means to "exhibit" such a process. We can recognize how one locates oneself within a discursive framework: how one formulates and articulates ideas and positions concerning, for example, nature, culture and gender. At the same time, Duchamp's "patatautological" allegories provide one with a continuous view of the heteroglot signs, and by extension, of the heterogeneous and pluralistic nature of "reality." This is not to forget that such a "recognition" of this patatautological enterprise is an effect of my own dialogic process.

By confronting Duchamp's sign systems, I evidently construct my own "allegorical appearance" which discloses how my ideas, my set of readymade givens, intertwine and collide with those of the artist's. As such, it exhibits my perception of Duchamp's various roles (as artist, writer, patatautologist and as Rrose Sélavy), as well as my conception of the allegories and the cultural histories and gender issues I see inscribed in them. My "allegorical appearance" is a self-reflecting mirror through which I, as a transforming subject, formulate my position about the nature of our signifying processes and about tautological repetitions of gendered histories and epistemologies.

My recognition of the need to take a position, to articulate my locatedness in culture was evidently triggered by my perception of Duchamp's provocative gesture. The urgency to make an intervention into such representational practices is further strengthened by recent reception of Étant donnés.... Contrary to earlier reactions to Duchamp's provocation, several of which I have cited, today's response is, to say the least, a cause for concern. The "shock" value which I contend Duchamp intentionally inscribed into his last museum piece has been neutralized, diluted, deemed

unproblematic.³ That Étant donnés... has itself become a cliché, a tautological repetition without substance, brings to mind the relevance of earlier warnings regarding the culture industry's inevitable recuperation of avant-garde stances into aimless gestures.⁴

If my third dialogue or “allegory of reading” is an intervention that exposes the blindness and insights exhibited in Duchamp's Étant donnés..., it is most certainly also one that takes a position with regard to blindness without insight: that is, to blindness that no longer sees how the display of a headless, naked woman, deprived of the means of returning the gaze, is a field of contestation. This said, my dialogues, as interventions that disclose my position and locatedness within cultural practices, are most certainly not without their own blind spots. I take heart in such blind spots, however. Indeed, if detected, they could provide counter-measures to offset recent banalizations of the faceless “woman” incarcerated behind the closed door with peepholes. Such blind spots might serve as points of departure for meaningful dialogues and interventions into representational and discursive practices that unfortunately continue, in varying degrees, to construct restrictive structures for half the world's population.

³ See Introduction, Footnote 1; and Dialogue 3, Footnote 4.

⁴ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” Dialectic of Enlightenment, 120-167. See also Peter Bürger, Theory of the Avant-Garde (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); and Andreas Huyssen, After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986).

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

BY MARCEL DUCHAMP

Duchamp, Marcel. "Approximation démontable" [1966]. Manual of Instructions for Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau. 2° le gaz d'éclairage... Facsimile reproduction of Duchamp's loose-leaf notes and photographs for the dismantling and reconstruction of the multi-media installation. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1987.

_____. "The Creative Act." Lecture at the Convention of the American Federation of Arts in Houston in 1957, published in Art News 56/4 (Summer 1957): 28-29; also in The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, 138-140. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

_____. "The Green Box" [1934]. Notes for The Large Glass. In The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, 26-71. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

_____ (alias Rose Sélavy). "Men Before the Mirror." In The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, 188-189. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

_____ and V. Halberstadt. L'Opposition et les cases conjuguées sont réconciliées / Opposition and Sister Squares Reconciled. Limited edition on chess. Text in French, English and German. Paris and Brussels: Editions de l'Echiquier, 1932. Portion published in Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution (Paris), 2 (October 1930): 18-19; and Marchand du Sel. Réunis et présentés par Michel Sanouillet. Paris: Le Terrain Vague, 1958.

_____. Marcel Duchamp, Notes [1980]. Arrangement and Translation by Paul Matisse. Boston: G.K. Hall & Company, 1983.

_____. Unpublished letter to Jehan Mayoux (March 8, 1956).

_____. The Writings of Marcel Duchamp. ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

INTERVIEWS

Ashton, Dore. "Interview with Marcel Duchamp." Studio International 171 (June 1966): 144-47.

Cabanne, Pierre. Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp [1967, in French]. Translated by Ron Padgett. New York: Viking Press, 1971.

Hahn, Otto. "Entretien: Marcel Duchamp." L'Express (Paris) 684 (July 23, 1964): 22-23.

Kuh, Katharine. "Marcel Duchamp." In The Artist's Voice: Talks with Seventeen Artists, 81-93. New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1962.

Sweeney, James J. "The Great Trouble with Art in this Country" [1946]. In The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, ed Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, 123-126. New York: De Capo Press, 1973.

_____. "Regions Which Are Not Ruled by Time and Space..." Edited version of "A Conversation with Marcel Duchamp," A Television Interview, NBC, January 1956. In The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, 127-137. New York: De Capo Press, 1973.

WORKS CITED: ON DUCHAMP (GENERAL)

Adcock, Craig. "Duchamp's Eroticism: A Mathematical Analysis." In Marcel Duchamp: Artist of the Century, ed. Rudolf E. Kuenzli and Francis M. Naumann, 149-167. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989.

_____. Marcel Duchamp's Notes from the Large Glass. An N-Dimensional Analysis. Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1983.

Antin, David. "Duchamp and Language." In Marcel Duchamp, eds. Anne d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine, 99-116. New York: The Museum of Modern Art. Philadelphia: Musuem of Art, 1973.

Asselin, Olivier. "Le mystère de la chambre jaune. Quelques notes sur la dernière oeuvre de Marcel Duchamp." La recherche photographique (Dossier "Fait divers") 16 (Printemps, 1994): 36-45.

Blau-Duplessis, Rachel. "Sub Rosa: Marcel Duchamp and the Female Spectator." In The Pink Guitar: Writing as Feminist Practice, 68-82. New York & London: Routledge, 1990.

Bois, Yve-Alain. "La mariée nue: du nouveau sur Marcel Duchamp." VH 101 (Paris) 3 (Autumn 1970): 62-69.

Butor, Michel. "Reproduction Interdite" Critique (Paris) 334 (March 1975): 269-83.

Carrouges, Michel. Les machines célibataires. Paris: Arcanes, 1954.

Clair, Jean. "Duchamp, Léonard, la tradition maniériste." In Marcel Duchamp: Tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition?, 117-56. Paris: UGÉ, Collection "10/18", 1979.

_____. "Marcel Duchamp et la tradition des perspectiveurs," and "Sexe et Topologie." In Marcel Duchamp. Abécédaire, 52-59, 124-159. Paris: Centre National d'art et de Culture George Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1977.

_____. Marcel Duchamp. Catalogue raisonné. Paris, Centre National d'art et de culture. Georges Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1977.

_____. Marcel Duchamp et la photographie. Paris: Chêne, 1977.

_____. Marcel Duchamp ou le Grand Fictif. Paris: Editions Galilée, 1975.

_____. Marcel Duchamp: Tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition? [Colloquium of 1977]. ed. Jean Clair. Paris: UGÉ Collection "10/18", 1979.

_____. "Opticeries," October 5 (Summer 1978): 101-112.

Damisch, Hubert. "La Défense Duchamp" [Colloquium of 1977]. In Marcel Duchamp: Tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition?, 65-115. Paris: UGÉ Collection "10/18", 1979.

de Duve, Thierry, ed. The Definitively Marcel Duchamp [Colloquium of 1987]. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991.

_____. Résonances du readymade. Duchamp entre avant-garde et tradition. Paris: Jacqueline Chambon, 1989.

Gervais, André. "Connections: Of Art and Arrhe" [Colloquium of 1987]. In The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp. ed. Thierry de Duve, 397-427. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991.

_____. "De l'anrais Duchamp de l'infratexte." La Nouvelle Barre du Jour (May 1981): 56-77.

_____. "Du raide y m'aide en sa lecture, d'écriture: trois exemples." La Nouvelle Barre du Jour 82 (October 1979): 36-60.

_____. La raie alitée d'effets. Apropos of Marcel Duchamp. Montreal: Hurtubise HMH, Coll. "Brèches," 1984.

_____. "Signed Sign MD: Autographique Portrait of an Artist en rhymes." Parachute (Summer 1978): 18-23.

_____. "For a Portrait of Marcel Duchamp: 'The Dedications Speak'." Translated by Lou-Andrea Savoir with Sarah S. Kilborne. Toutfait: The Marcel Duchamp Studies Online Journal 1/1 (December 1999), <http://www.toutfait.com/Articles/articles.html>.

Golding, John. Marcel Duchamp: The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even. London: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 1973.

Gough-Cooper, Jennifer and Jacques Caumont, eds. Ephemerides on and about Marcel Duchamp and Rose Sélavy. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993.

Hamilton, Richard. "Duchamp." Art International (Lugano), 7/10 (January 1964): 22-28.

Harmoncourt, Anne (d') and Walter Hopps, "Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections On a New Work by Marcel Duchamp." Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin 64, 299-300 (April-September 1969): 4-58.

Harmoncourt, Anne (d') and K. McShine, eds. Marcel Duchamp. New York: The Museum of Modern Art. Philadelphia: Musuem of Art, 1973; reprint, 1989.

Hassold, Chris. "The Possibilities of Chance: A Comparative Study of Stéphane Mallarmé and Marcel Duchamp." Ph.D diss., Florida State University, 1972.

Henderson, Linda Dalrymple. Duchamp in Context: Science and Technology in "The Large Glass" and Other Related Works. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

_____. The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.

Henderson, Linda Dalrymple. "X Rays and the Quest for Invisible Reality in the Art of Kupka, Duchamp, and the Cubists." Art Journal 47 (Winter 1988): 323-340.

James, Carol P. "Reading Art through Duchamp's 'Glass' and Derrida's Glas." Sub-stance 31 (1981): 105-28.

Jones, Amelia. "The Ambivalence of Male Masquerade: Duchamp as Rose Sélavy." In The Body Imaged, ed. Kathleen Adler & Marcia Pointon, 21-31. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

_____. Postmodernism and the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Judovitz, Dalia. "Rendezvous with Marcel Duchamp: Given." In Marcel Duchamp. Artist of the Century, ed. Rudolf E. Kuenzli and Francis M. Naumann, 184-203. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989.

_____. Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Klein, Mason. "Toward a Phenomenology of the Self: Marcel Duchamp's Étant donnés." Ph.D diss., City University of New York, 1994.

Krauss, Rosalind E. The Optical Unconscious. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993.

_____. "Where's Poppa?" In The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, ed. De Duve, Thierry, 433-462. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991.

Kuenzli, Rudolph E. and Francis Naumann, eds. Marcel Duchamp. Artist of the Century. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989.

Lebel, Robert. "Le 'Chef d'oeuvre inconnu' de Marcel Duchamp," L'Oeil Paris 167 (March 1970): 8-13.

_____. Marcel Duchamp. Paris: Belfond, 1985.

_____. Sur Marcel Duchamp. Paris: Trianon Press, 1959.

Linde, Ulf. Marcel Duchamp. Stockholm: Galerie Buren, 1963.

Lyotard, Jean-François. "Étant Donnés. Inventaire du dernier nu." In Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire, ed. Jean Clair, 87-109. Paris: Centre National d'art et de Culture George Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1977.

_____. Les Transformateurs Duchamp. Paris: Editions Galilée, 1977.

McEvelley, Thomas. "empyrrhical thinking (and why kant can't)." Artforum (October 1968): 120-127.

McShine, Kynaston. "La Vie en Rose." In Marcel Duchamp, ed. Anne d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine, 125-135. New York: The Museum of Modern Art. Philadelphia: Musuem of Art, 1973.

Moure, Gloria. Marcel Duchamp. London: Thames and Hudson, 1988.

Mussman, Toby. "Anémic Cinéma." Art and Artists (London) 1, 4 (July 1966).

Naumann, Francis M. "The Bachelor's Quest." Art in America 89/9 (September 1993): 77-80.

_____. "Marcel Duchamp: A Reconciliation of Opposites." In Marcel Duchamp. Artist of the Century, ed. Rudolf E. Kuenzli and Francis M. Naumann, 20-40. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989; also In The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, ed. Thierry de Duve, 41-69. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991.

Nesbit, Molly. "The Language of Industry." In The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, ed. Thierry de Duve, 351-385. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991.

Paz, Octavio. Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare. Translated by Rachel Phillips. New York: Viking Press, 1978.

_____. "* Water Writes Always in * Plural." In Marcel Duchamp, ed. Anne d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine, 143-158. New York: The Museum of Modern Art. Philadelphia: Musuem of Art, 1973; reprint, 1989.

Philadelphia Museum. The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection. Introduction by Henry Clifford.. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1954.

Restany, Pierre. "Des machines célibataires aux machines inutiles." XXe Siècle (June 1974): 132-40.

Schwarz, Arturo. The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp. London: Thames and Hudson, 1969. Revised editions, 1970, 1996.

_____. The Large Glass and Related Works. Milan: Galleria Schwarz, 1967.

Schwarz, Arturo, ed. Marcel Duchamp: Notes and Projects for the "Large Glass". New York: Abrams, 1969.

Steefel, Lawrence D. Jr. "Marcel Duchamp and the Machine." In Marcel Duchamp, ed. Anne d'hamoncourt & Kynaston McShine, 69-80. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1989.

Steefel, Lawrence D. Jr.. "The Position of La Mariée Mise à Nu par Ses Célibataires, Même (1915-23) in the Stylistic and Iconographic Development of the Art of Marcel Duchamp." Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1960.

Suquet, Jean. Miroir de la mariée. Paris: Flammarion, 1974.

_____. "Possible." In The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp. [Colloquium of 1987], ed. Thierry de Duve, 113-131. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991.

Tashjian, Dickran. "'Vous pour Moi?': Marcel Duchamp and Transgender Coupling." Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation, ed. Whitney Chadwick, 42-5. Cambridge: Mass, 1998.

Tomkins, Calvin. The World of Marcel Duchamp, 1887-1968. Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life Books, 1966.

_____. Duchamp: A Biography. New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1996.

WORKS CITED: ON "ÉTANT DONNÉES..." (IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER)

Duchamp, Marcel. "Approximation démontable" [1966]. Manual of Instructions for Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage... Facsimile reproduction of Duchamp's loose-leaf notes and photographs for the dismantling and reconstruction of the multi-media installation. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1987.

Harmoncourt, Anne (d') and Walter Hopps, "Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections On a New Work by Marcel Duchamp." Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin 64, 299-300 (April-September 1969): 4-58.

Schwarz, Arturo. The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp. London: Thames and Hudson, 1969. Revised editions, 1970, 1996.

Lebel, Robert. "Le 'Chef d'oeuvre inconnu' de Marcel Duchamp." L'Oeil Paris 167 (March 1970): 8-13.

Golding, John. Marcel Duchamp: The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even. London: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 1973.

Paz, Octavio. "'* Water Writes Always in * Plural'" in Marcel Duchamp. ed. Anne d'Harmoncourt and Kynaston McShine, 143-159. New York: The Museum of Modern Art. Philadelphia: Museum of Art, 1973; reprint, 1989. Also in Octavio Paz. Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare. Translated by Rachel Phillips. New York: Viking Press, 1978.

Suquet, Jean. Miroir de la mariée. Paris: Flammarion, 1974.

Lyotard, Jean-François. "Étant Donnés. Inventaire du dernier nu." In Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire. ed. Jean Clair, 87-109. Paris: Centre National d'art et de Culture George Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1977.

_____. Les Transformateurs Duchamp. Paris: Editions Galilée, 1977.

Gervais, André. La raie alitée d'effets. A propos of Marcel Duchamp. Montreal: Hurtubise HMH, Coll. "Brèches," 1984.

Suquet, Jean. "Possible." In The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp. [Colloquium of 1987], ed. Thierry de Duve, 113-131. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991.

Judovitz, Dalia. "Rendezvous with Marcel Duchamp: Given." In Marcel Duchamp, Artist of the Century, ed. Rudolf E. Kuenzli and Francis M. Naumann, 184-203. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989.

Blau-Duplessis, Rachel. "Sub Rosa: Marcel Duchamp and the Female Spectator." In The Pink Guitar: Writing as Feminist Practice, 68-82. New York & London: Routledge, 1990.

Krauss, Rosalind. "Where's Poppa?" In The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, ed. De Duve, Thierry, 433-462. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991.

Asselin, Olivier. "Le mystère de la chambre jaune. Quelques notes sur la dernière oeuvre de Marcel Duchamp." La recherche photographique (Dossier "Fait divers") 16 (Printemps, 1994): 36-45.

Jones, Amelia. "Re-placing Duchamp's Eroticism: 'Seeing' Étant donnés from a Feminist Perspective." Postmodernism and the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Klein, Mason. "Toward a Phenomenology of the Self: Marcel Duchamp's Étant donnés." Ph.D diss., City University of New York, 1994.

Daubner, Ernestine. "Etant Donnés: Rrose/Duchamp in a Mirror." Revue d'art canadien/Canadian Art Review (RACAR) XXII, 1-2 (1995): 87-97.

Tomkins, Calvin. Duchamp: A Biography. New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1996.

Daubner, Ernestine. "Arte, Cultura, Naturaleza." Relaciones (Montevideo, Uruguay) (April 1998): 5-7. Translated by Hilia Moreira, University of Uruguay, (April 1998): 5-7. Original Text: "Art, Culture and the Estrangement from Nature." Published proceedings of the VI International Congress of the International Association for Semiotic Studies: Semiotics Bridging Nature and Culture. Guadalajara, México, July, 13-18, 1997. On CD-Rom.

Daubner, Ernestine. "Interactive Strategies and Dialogical Allegories: Encountering David Rokeby's Transforming Mirrors Through Marcel Duchamp's Open Windows and Closed Doors." [1999]: <http://www.interlog.com/~drokeby/>

Association Française d'Action Artistique. Fonds Étant donnés:
http://www.afaa.asso.fr/18_12_2.htm

Fresh Widow 3000:
<http://www.val.net/~tim/etant-donnes.htm>

OTHER WORKS CITED

Adam, Alison. Artificial Knowing: Gender and the Thinking Machine. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.

Adorno, Theodor W. Negative Dialectics. New York: Continuum, 1987.

Adorno, Theodor W. and Max Horkheimer. Dialectic of Enlightenment. New York: Continuum, 1991.

Alexander, Sally. "Women's work in the nineteenth century London: a study of the years 1820-1850." In The Rights and Wrongs of Women, ed. J. Mitchell and A. Oakley. London : Journeyman Press : London History Workshop Centre, 1976, 1983.

Amada Cruz, Elizabeth, A.T. Smith, and Amelia Jones. Cindy Sherman : Retrospective. Exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, July 9 to October 4. New York : Thames & Hudson, 1997.

Arato, Andrew and Eike Gebhardt, eds. The Essential Frankfurt School Reader. New York: Continuum, 1992..

Aristotle. "Biological Treatises: History of Animals." In Great Books of the Western World, 9. Translated by D. W. Thompson. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica.

_____. "De Generatione Animalium." In The Works of Aristotle. ed. J.A. Smith and W.D. Ross. Translated by A Platt. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910.

_____. "Politics." In Great Books of the Western World 9. Translated by D. W. Thompson. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952.

Baker, Elizabeth. Technology and Woman's Work. New York: Columbia University Press, 1964.

Bakhtin, Mikhail M. The Dialogic Imagination. ed. Michael Holquist. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

Bal, Mieke. "Sexuality, Sin and Sorrow." In The Female Body in Western Culture, ed. Susan Suleiman, 317-338. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Balsamo, Anne. "Forms of Technological Embodiment: Reading the Body in Contemporary Culture." In Feminist Theory and the Body, 278-289. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Barber, Elizabeth Wayland. Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years. Women, Cloth, and Society in Early Times. New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994.

Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." In Image Music Text. Translated by Stephen Heath, 142-149. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.

_____. Le plaisir du texte. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1973.

Benjamin, Walter. The Origin of German Tragic Drama. Translated by John Osborne. London: New Left Books, 1977.

Berman, Ruth. "From Aristotle's Dualism to Materialist Dialectics: Feminist Transformation of Science and Society." In Gender/Body/Knowledge/ Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing, ed. Alison M. Jaggar and Susan R. Bordo, 224-255. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990.

Bhabha, Homi K. "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences." In The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, ed. Bill Ashcroft, et al., 207-209. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.

Bluestone, Natalie Harris. Women and the Ideal Society: Plato's Republic and Modern Myths of Gender. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1987.

Bolen, Jean, Shinoda. Goddesses in Everywoman: A New Psychology of Women. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984.

Bordo, Susan. "Feminism, Postmodernism, and Gender-Scepticism." In Feminism/Postmodernism, ed. Linda J. Nicholson, 133-156. New York and London, 1990.

Broude, Norma. Impressionism: A Feminist Reading. New York: Rizzoli, 1991.

Bryson, Norman. Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.

Buck-Morss, Susan. The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt Institute. New York: Macmillan Free Press, 1977.

Bürger, Peter. Theory of the Avant-Garde. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Burke, Carolyn. "Rethinking the Maternal." In The Future of Difference, eds. Hester Eisenstein and Alice Jardin, 107-114. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990.

Burke, Edmund. Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757), ed. J.T. Boulton. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958.

Burnell, Barbara S. Technological Change and Women's Work Experience: Alternative Methodological Perspectives. Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey, 1993.

Butler, Judith. Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'. New York and London: Routledge, 1993.

_____. Gender Trouble: Feminism and the the Subversion of Identity. New York: Routledge, 1990.

_____. "Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory, and Psychoanalytic Discourse." In Feminism/Postmodernism, ed. Linda J. Nicholson, 324-340. New York and London, 1990.

Cantarella, Eva. "Dangling Virgins: Myth, Ritual, and the Place of Women in Ancient Greece." In The Female Body in Western Culture. Contemporary Perspectives, ed. by Susan Rubin Suleiman, 57-67. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Chicago, Judy. The Dinner Party: A Symbol of Our Heritage. New York: Anchor Press, 1979.

Cowie, Elizabeth. "Woman as Sign." In The Woman in Question, ed. by Parveen Adams and Elizabeth Cowie, 117-133. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1990.

Davidoff, Leonore and Belinda Westover, eds. Our Work, Our Lives, Our Words: Women's History and Women's Work. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1986.

Davin, Anna. "Feminism and Labour History." People's History and Socialist Theory, ed. Raphael Samuel, 176-181. London: Routledge & Kegan, 1981.

de Lauretis, Theresa. Technologies of Gender. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Deleuze, Gilles. Difference & Repetition. Translated by Paul Patton. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

- De Man, Paul. Allegories of Reading. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.
- _____. Blindness and Insight. Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- _____. The Resistance to Theory. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
- Derrida, Jacques and Christie V. McDonald. "Choreographies." Diacritics 12/2 (1982): 66-76.
- Derrida, Jacques. Dissemination Translated by Barbara Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- _____. Positions. Translated and Annotated by Alan Bass, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981.
- _____. The Truth in Painting. Translated by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1987.
- _____. Writing and Difference. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.
- Descartes, René. "La Dioptrique" Oeuvres philosophiques (1618-1637). Tome I. ed. Ferdinand Alquié. Paris: Garnier, 1963-73.
- _____. The Philosophical Works of Descartes. Translated and edited by Norman Kemp Smith. New York: The Modern Library, 1958.
- Descartes, René. The Philosophical Works of Descartes. Translated by E.S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.
- Doane, Mary Ann. "Woman's Stake: Filming and the Female Body." In Feminism and Film Theory, ed. Constance Penley, 217-220. New York and London, 1988.
- D'Onofrio-Flores, Pamela M. "Technology, Development, and Division of Labor by Sex." In Scientific-Technological Change and the Role of Women in Development, ed. Pamela M. D'Onofrio-Flores and Sheila M. Pfafflin. Published for the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), 13-28. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982.
- Fanon, Frantz. Black Skin, White Masks. London: Pluto Press, 1986.
- Foster, Hal. Compulsive Beauty. Cambridge: The MIT Press, October Books, 1993.

Foucault, Michel. "What is an Author?" In Language, Counter-memory, Practice, ed. D.F. Bouchard. Translated by D.F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. Truth and Method. London: Sheed & Ward, 1975.

Giedion, Siegfried. Mechanization Takes Command. New York: Oxford University Press, 1955.

Griffin, Susan. Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her. New York: Harper and Row, 1978.

Gross, Elizabeth. "The Body of Signification." In Abjection, Melancholia and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva, ed. by John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin, 80-103. London and New York: Routledge, 1990.

Habermas, Jürgen. The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity. Translated by F. G. Lawrence. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1992.

Haraway, Donna J. "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s." In Feminism/Postmodernism, ed. Linda J. Nicholson, 190-233. New York: Routledge, 1990.

_____. Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Harding, Sandra. "Feminism, Science and the Anti-Enlightenment Critiques." In Feminism/Postmodernism, ed. Linda J. Nicholson, 83-106. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Harstock, Nancy. "Foucault on Power: A Theory for Women?" In Feminism/Postmodernism, ed. Linda J. Nicholson, 157-175. New York and London: Routledge, 1990.

Harvey, David. The Condition of Postmodernity. London: Basil Blackwell, 1989.

Heather-Bigg, Ada. "The Wife's Contribution to the Family Income." Economic Journal 4 (1894): 51-58.

Hill, Bridget. Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England. New York & Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd. 1989.

- Hobsbawm, Eric J. The Age of Empire. 1875-1914. London: Cardinal, 1989.
- _____. The Age of Revolution 1789-1848. London: Cardinal, 1988.
- Huyssen, Andreas. After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986.
- Irigaray, Luce. An Ethics of Sexual Difference. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- _____. The Sex Which Is Not One. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- _____. Speculum of the Other Woman. Translated by Gillian Gill. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Ivins, William M. Jr. On the Rationalization of Sight. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art Papers, no. 8, limited edition of 500 copies; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1973.
- Jaggar, Alison M. and Susan R. Bordo, eds. Gender/Body/Knowledge. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1986.
- Jauss, Hans Robert. Toward an Aesthetic of Reception, Translated by Timothy Bahti; Introduction by Paul de Man. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982, 1989.
- Jay, Martin. The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-1950. Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1973.
- _____. "Scopic Regimes of Modernity." Force Fields, 114-133. New York and London: Routledge, 1993.
- John, Angela V. By the sweat of their brow : women workers at Victorian coal mines. London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984.
- Jones, Amelia. Body Art Performing the Subject. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- _____. "'Presence' in Absentia." Art Journal 56/4 (Winter 1997): 11-18.
- Jordanova, Ludmilla J. "Natural Facts: A Historical Perspective on Science and Sexuality." In Nature, Culture and Gender. ed. Carol MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern, 42-69. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

- Kant, Immanuel. "Analytic of the Sublime." Critique of Judgement. Translated by J. C. Meredith, 82-105. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1911.
- _____. Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime (1764). Translated by J.H. Goldthwait. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960.
- Kirby, Vicki. "Corporeal Habits: Addressing Essentialism Differently." Hypatia 6 (1991): 4-24.
- Klingender, F.D. Art and the Industrial Revolution. Chatham: W & J Mackay & Co., 1968
- Kristeva, Julia. Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art. Translated by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.
- _____. Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection. Translated by Leon. S. Roudiez. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1982.
- _____. Recherches pour un sémanalyse. Paris: Seuil, 1969.
- Landes, David. The Unbound Prometheus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Lewis, Reina. Gendering Orientalism: Race, Feminity and Representation. London & New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Lippard, Lucy R. From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976.
- Lloyd, Genevieve. The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984, 1993.
- MacCormack, Carol and Marilyn Strathern, eds. Nature, Culture and Gender. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- Macpherson, C. B. The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962.
- Memmi, Albert. The Colonizer and the Colonized. Boston: Beacon Press, 1967.

- Merchant, Carolyn. The Death of Nature. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980.
- _____. Earthcare: Women and the Environment. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Miles, Margaret R. "The Virgin's One Bare Breast: Female Nudity and Religious Meaning in Tuscan Early Renaissance Culture." In The Female Body in Western Culture. Contemporary Perspectives, ed. Susan Rubin Suleiman, 193-208. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986.
- Minh-ha, Trinh T. Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.
- Moi, Toril, ed. The Kristeva Reader. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.
- Moore, Suzanne. "Here's Looking at You, Kid!" In The Female Gaze. London: Women's Press, 1988.
- Mulvey, Laura. "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' Inspired by Duel in the Sun." Framework 15/16/17 (1981): 12-15.
- _____. Fetishism and Curiosity. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996.
- _____. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." Visual and Other Pleasures. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989, 14-28.
- Mumford, Lewis. Technics and Civilization. San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1963.
- Nead, Lynda. The Female Nude. Art, Obscenity and Sexuality. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Neff, Wanda F. Victorian Working Women. New York: Columbia University Press, 1929.
- Nelson, Ted. Literary Machines (9.3.1). Sausalito: Mindful Press, 1965.
- Nochlin, Linda. Women, Art and Power and Other Essays. New York: Harper Collins, 1988.
- Oppenheimer, Valerie Kincade. The Female Force in the United States. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970.

Orgel, Stephen, ed. The Philosophy of Images. 2 Volumes. Facsimile of George Richardson. Iconology: or A Collection of Emblematical Figures (1779). Translation of Cesare Ripa. Iconologia (1593). New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1979.

Ortner, Sherry. "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" In Woman, Culture and Society, ed. Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, 67-78. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974.

Penley, Constance, ed. Feminism and Film Theory. New York and London, 1988.

Pinchbeck, Ivy. Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850. [1930]. London: Cass, 1969; reprint, London: Virago, 1981.

Plato. "'The Allegory of the Cave' (The Republic: Book VII)." In Great Dialogues of Plato, ed. Eric H. Warmington and Philip G. Rouse. Translated by W.H.D. Rouse, 312-341. New York and Toronto: The New American Library, 1956.

Pollock, Griselda. Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art. London and New York: Routledge, 1988.

Price, Janet and Margrit Shildrick, eds. Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Robinson, Harriet H. "Early Factory Labor in New England." In Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings, 49-58. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

Rorty, Richard. Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

Rose, Jacqueline. "Julia Kristeva - Take Two," Sexuality in the Field of Vision, 141-164. London and New York: Verso, 1991.

Rowbotham, Sheila. Hidden from history: rediscovering women in history from the 17th century to the present. New York : Pantheon Books, 1975.

Said, Edward. Orientalism. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Sayer, Karen. Women of the fields: Representations of Rural Women in the Nineteenth Century. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995.

Sayre, Henry M. The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde since 1970. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Schjeldahl, Peter. Cindy Sherman. New York : Pantheon Book, c 1984

Simonton, Deborah. A History of European Women's Work: 1700 to the Present. London & New York: Routledge, 1998.

Snell, K.D.M. Annals of the Labouring Poor. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Solomon-Godeau, Abigail. "Conscientious Objectification: Lynn Hersham's Paranoid Mirror." In Paranoid Mirror. Seattle Art Museum, c. 1995.

Sorrell, Roger D. St. Francis of Assisi and Nature: Tradition and Innovation in Western Christian Attitudes toward the Environment. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Sprinkle, Annie. "Some of My Performances In Retrospect." Art Journal 56/4 (Winter 1997): 68-70.

Stacey, Jackie. "Desparately Seeking Difference." The Female Gaze, ed. Lorraine Gamman and Margaret Marshment, 112-129. Seattle, 1989.

Suleiman, Susan Rubin. "(Re)Writing the Body: The Politics and Poetics of Female Eroticism." In The Female Body in Western Culture, ed. Susan Suleimanm, 7-29. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

_____. Subversive Intent. Gender, Politics, and the Avant-garde. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990.

Tadesse, Zenebeworke. "Women and Technology in Peripheral Countries." In Scientific-Technological Change and the Role of Women in Devolpment, ed. Pamela M. D'Onofrio-Flores and Sheila M. Pfafflin. Published for the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), 77-111. Boulder, Colarado: Westview Press, 1982.

Tickner, Lisa. "Feminism, Art History, and Sexual Difference." Genders 3 (Fall 1988): 99.

Tilly Louise A. and Joan W. Scott. Women, Work, and Family. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978.

Walshok, Mary Lindenstein. "Blue Collar Women." In The Technological Woman: Interfacing with Tomorrow, 181-88. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1983.

Weber, Eugen. A Modern History of Europe. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971.

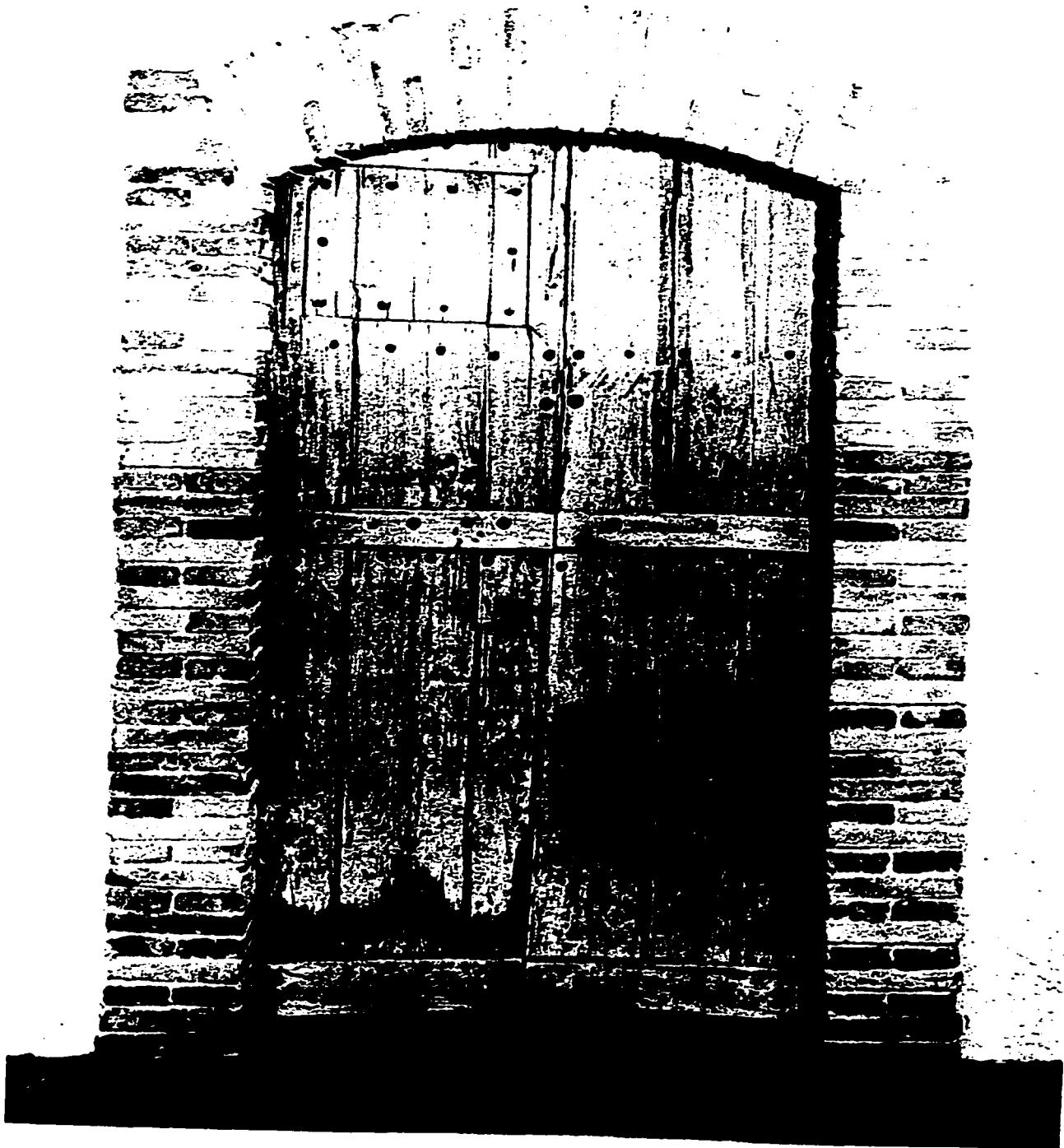
Weiser, Artur. The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development. Translated by D.M. Barton. New York: Associated Press, 1961.

Wilshire, Donna. "The Uses of Myth, Image, and the Female Body in Re-visioning Knowledge." In Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing, 92-115. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990.

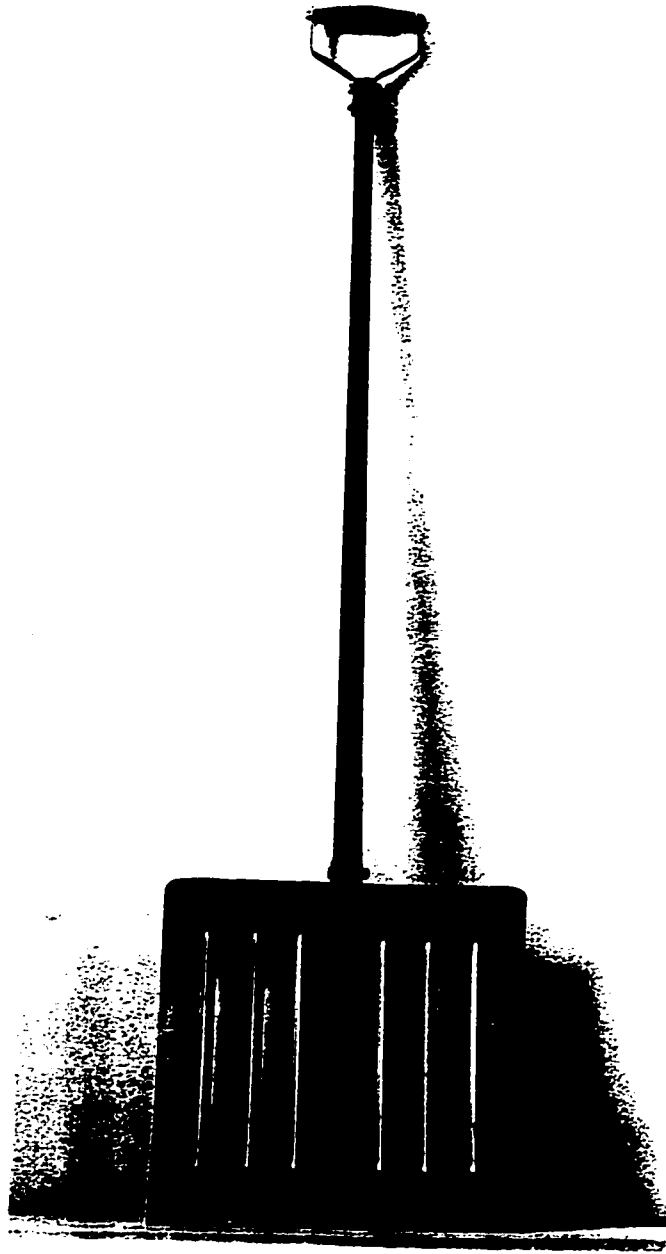
Wolff, Janet. Feminist Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. "Vindication of the Rights of Men." In The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, 7 vols. London: Pickering, 1989.

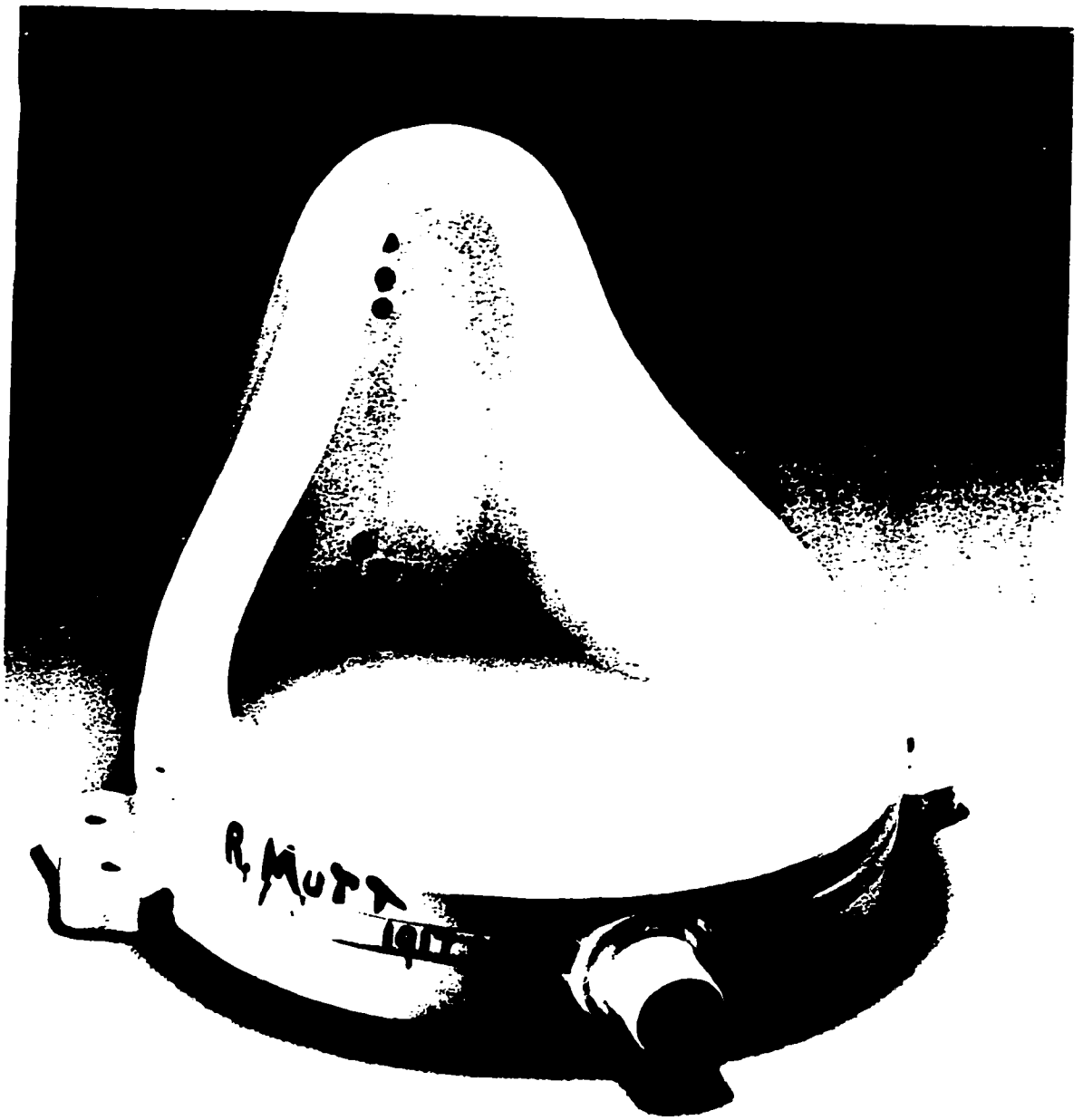
Zaw, Susan Khin. "'Appealing to the head and Heart': Wollstonecraft and Burke on Taste, Morals and Human Nature." In Femininity and Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Art and Culture, ed. Gill Perry and Michael Rossington, 123-141. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994.



1. Door of Etant donnés: 1. La chute d'eau, 2. Le gaz d'éclairage (Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas), 1946-66. Mixed media assemblage.



2. In Advance of the Broken Arm, 1915. Readymade.



3. Fountain. 1917. Readymade.

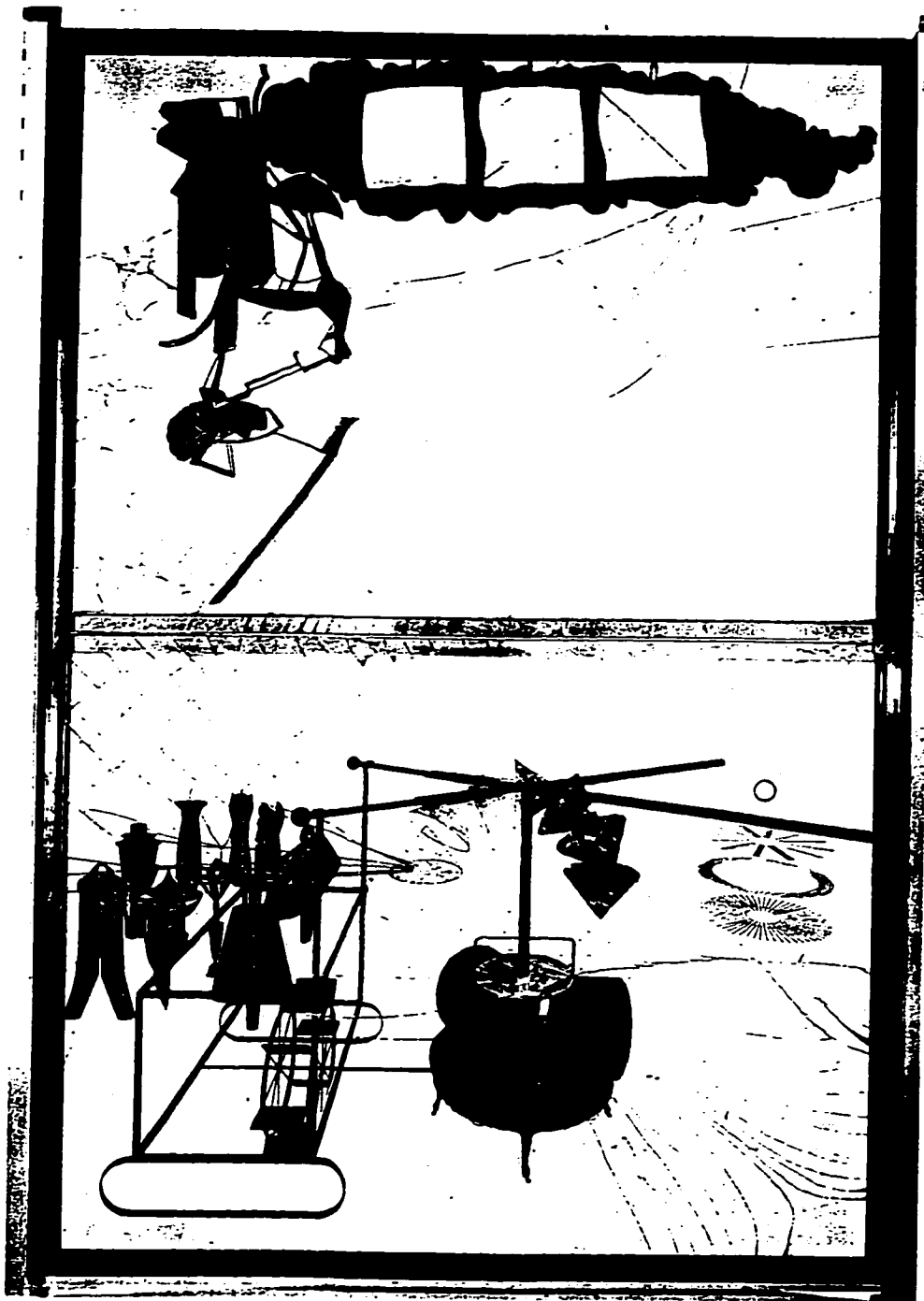


L.H.O.O.Q.

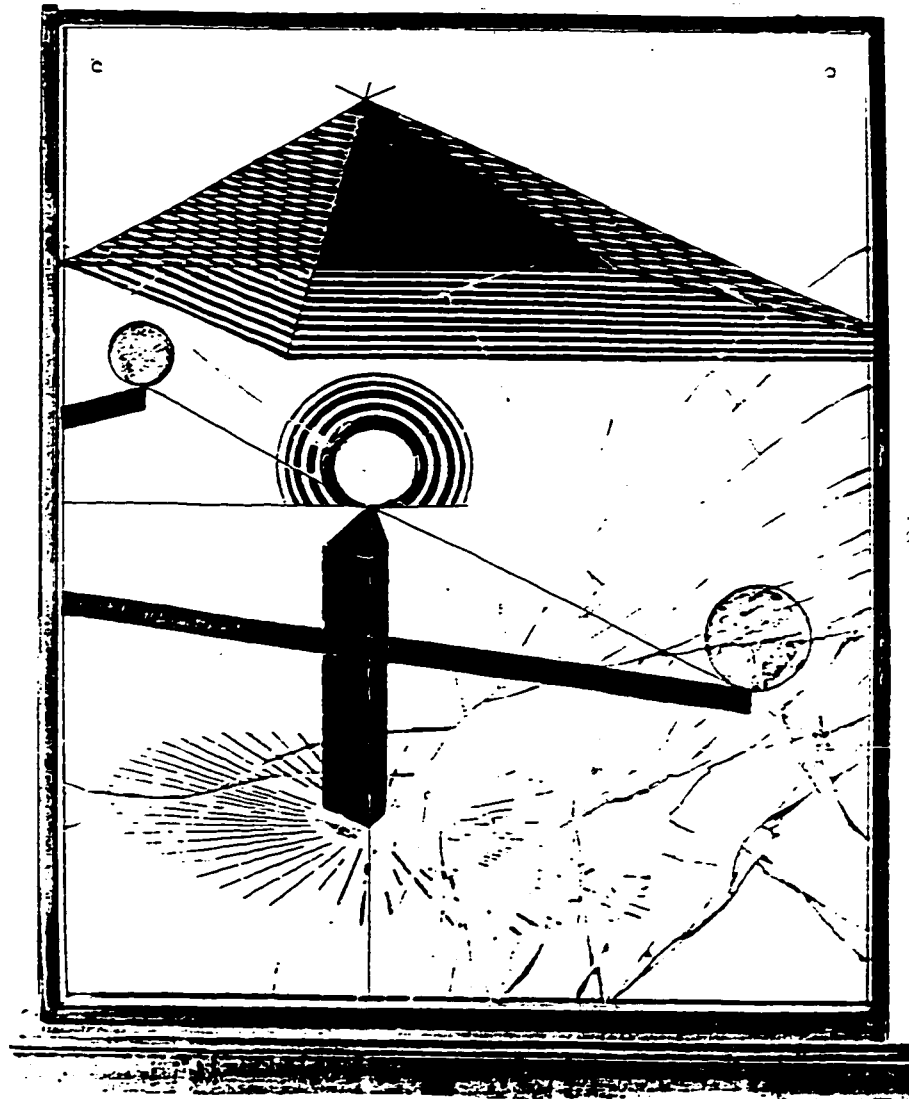
4. L.H.O.O.Q., 1919. Rectified Readymade.



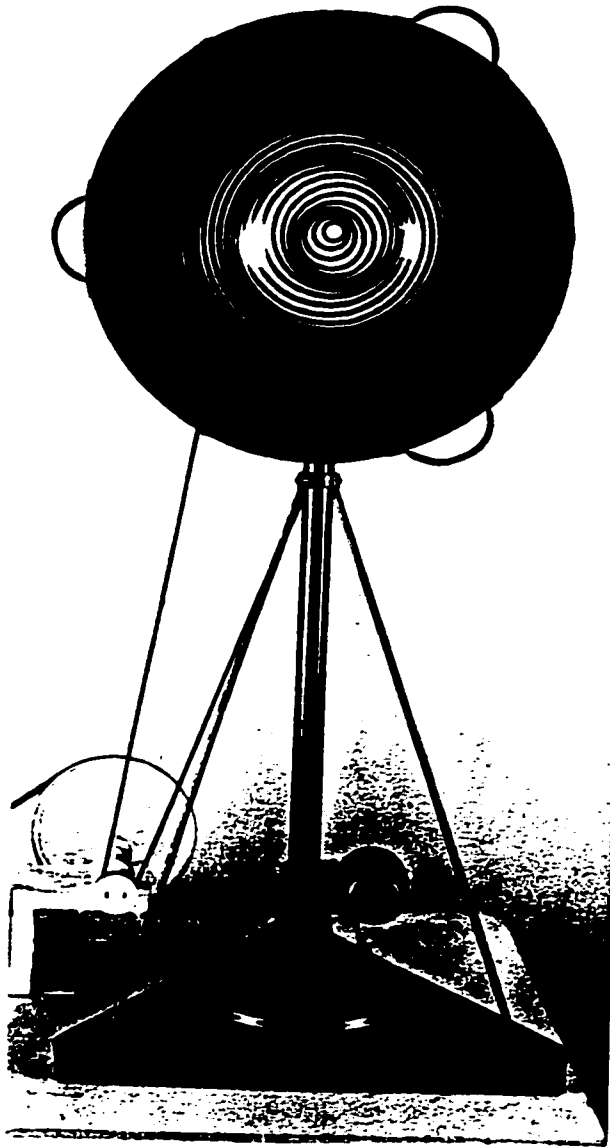
5. The Nude Descending the Staircase (No. 2) 1912.
Oil on canvas.



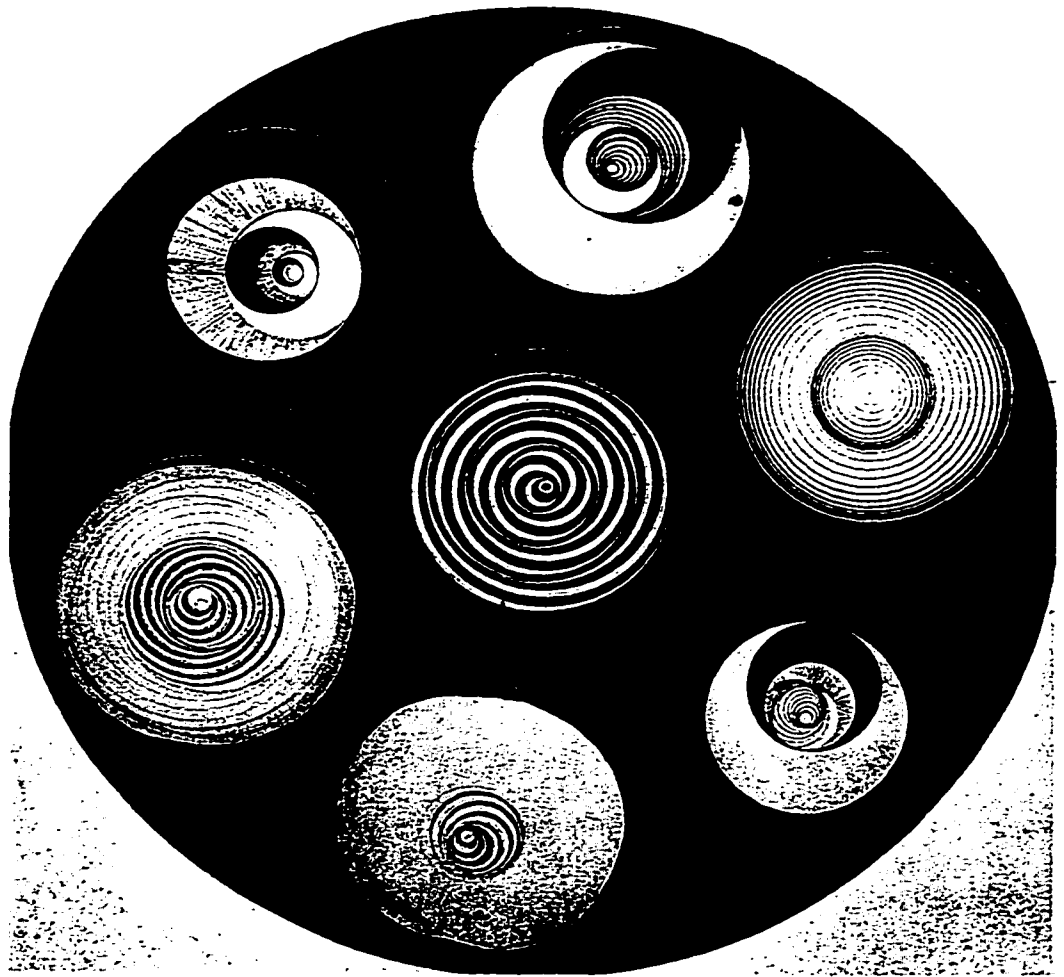
6. The Large Glass. Also entitled La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires même (The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors Even) 1915-23. Mixed media on glass.



7. To be Looked At (From the Other Side of the Glass) With One Eye. Close To. For Almost an Hour), 1918. Mixed media on glass



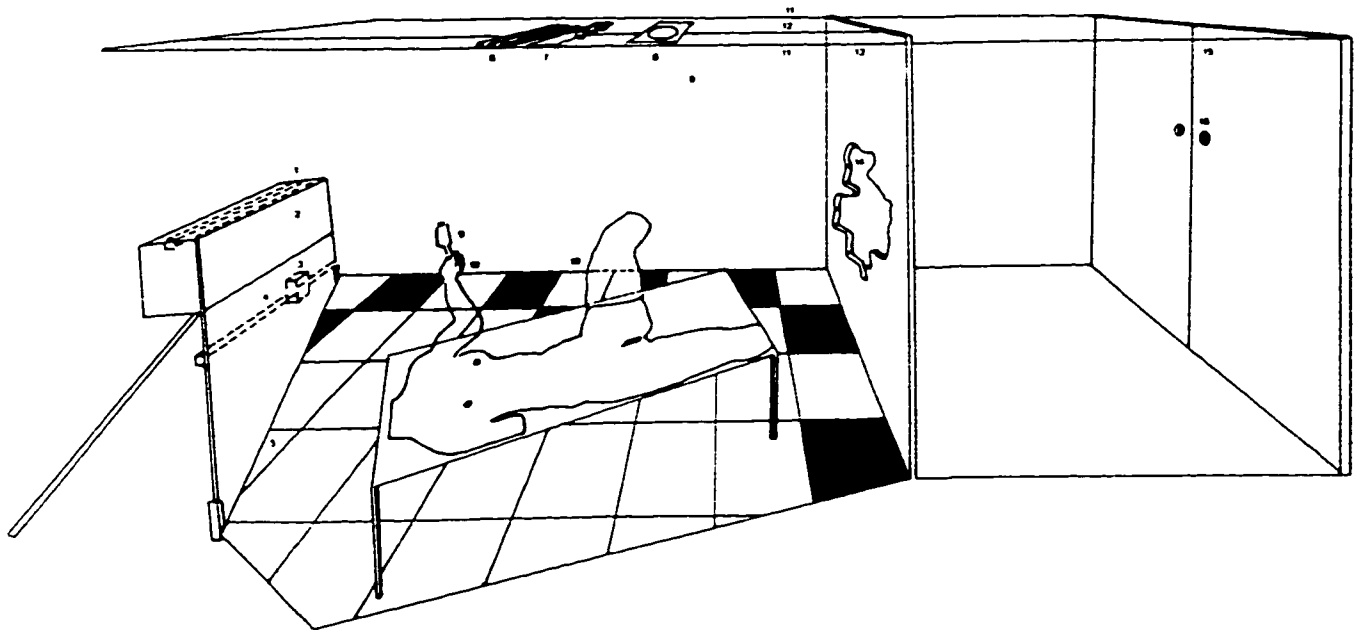
8. Rotary Demisphere (Precision Optics), 1925. Motorized construction.



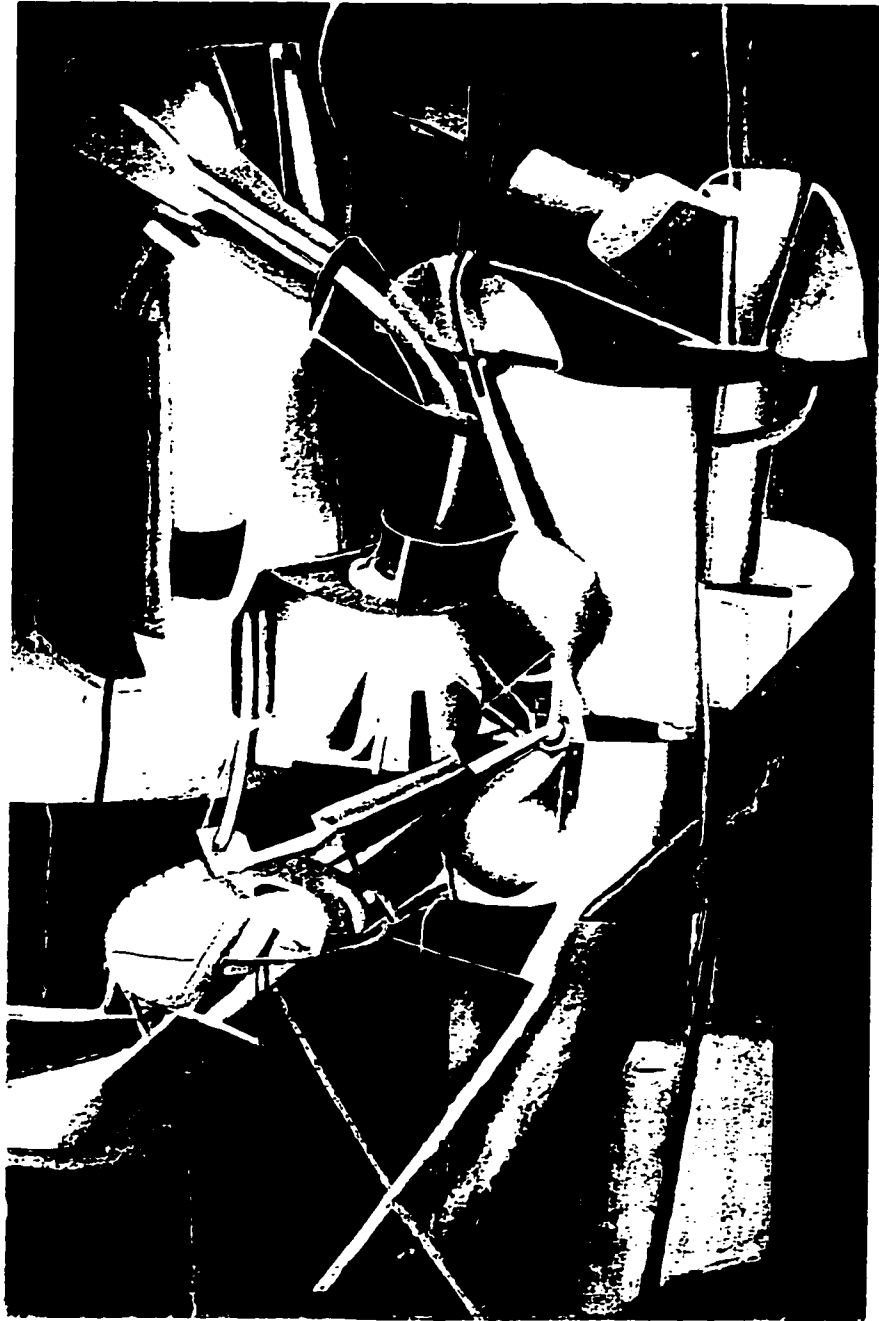
9. Disks Bearing Spirals. 1923. Ink and pencil on 7 white paper disks.



10. The interior scene of Etant donnés...



11. Diagram of the construction. Etant donnés...



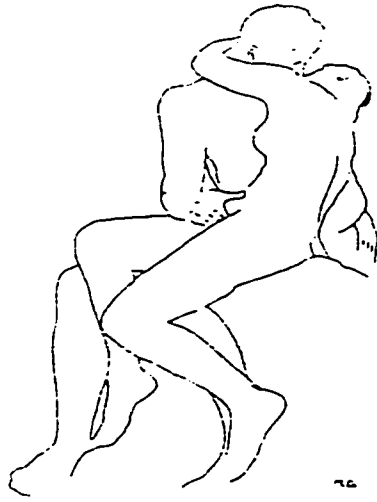
12. The Bride of 1912: Oil on canvas.



13. Selected Details after Courbet, 1968. Etching.



14. Gustave Courbet.
La Femme aux bas blancs, Oil on canvas.
c. 1861.



selected details

15. Selected Details after Rodin, 1968.
Etching.



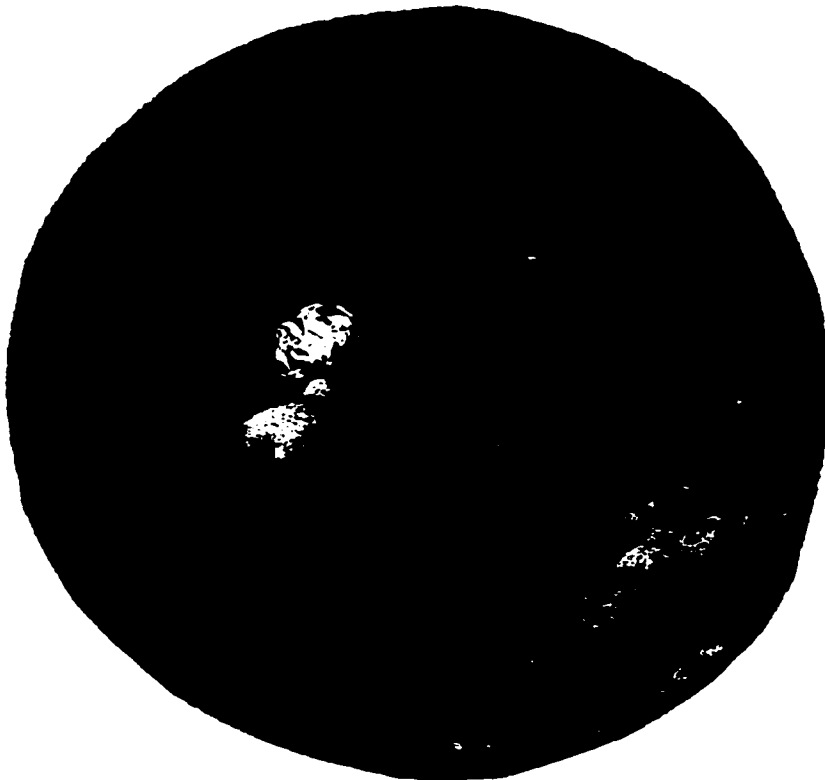
16. Auguste Rodin. The Kiss.
Sculpture.



17. Selected Details after Ingres I, 1968. Etching.



18. Selected Details after Ingres II, 1968. Etching.



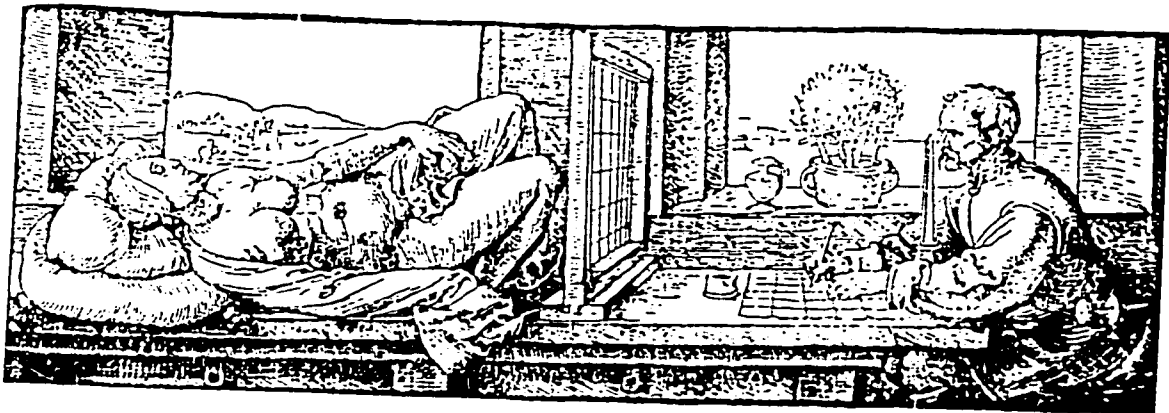
19. J.A.D. Ingres. The Turkish Bath. c. 1860 Oil on canvas.



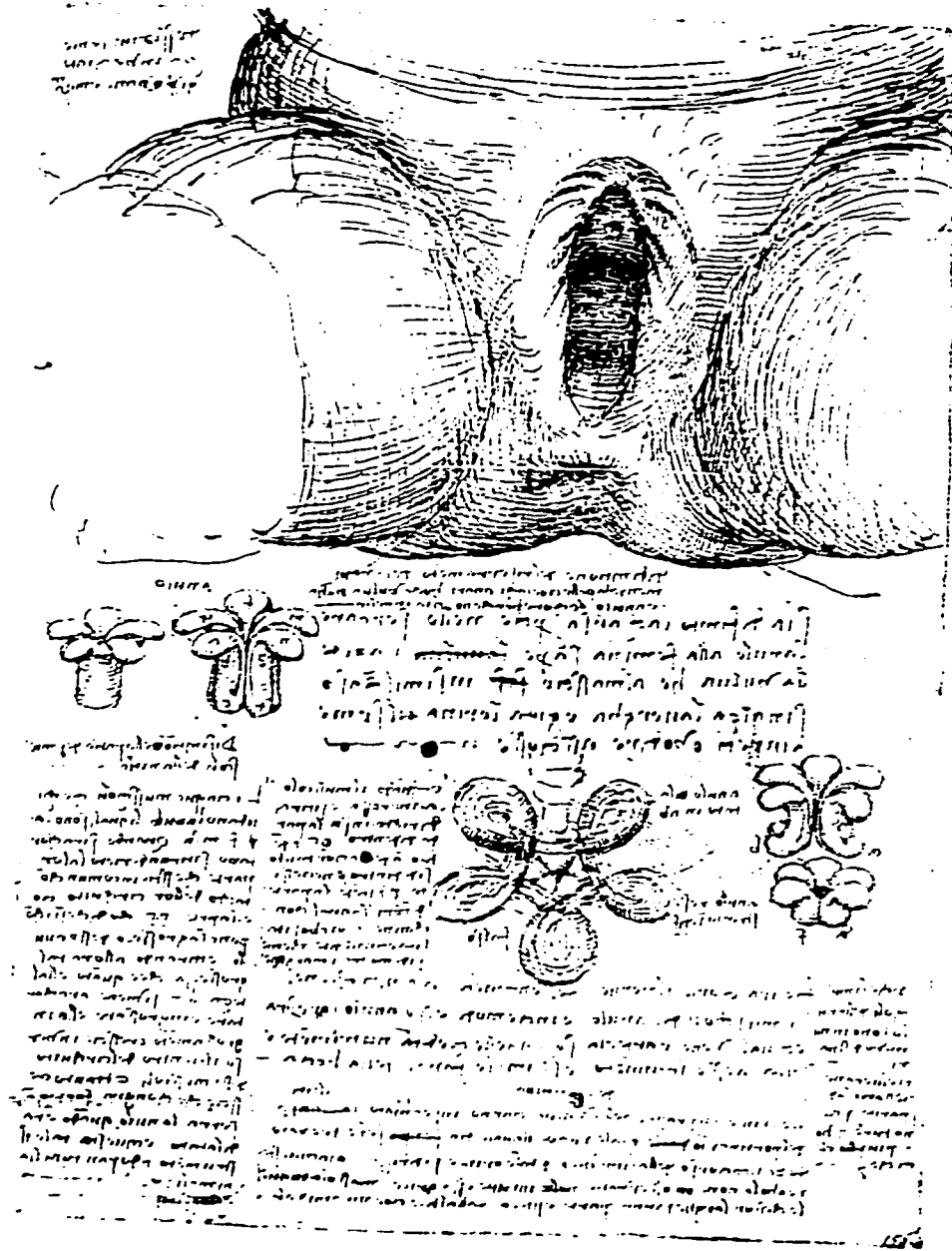
20. J.A.D. Ingres. Oedipus and the Sphinx. 1808. Oil on canvas



21. Gustave Courbet. Origin of the World. c. 1870. Oil on canvas.



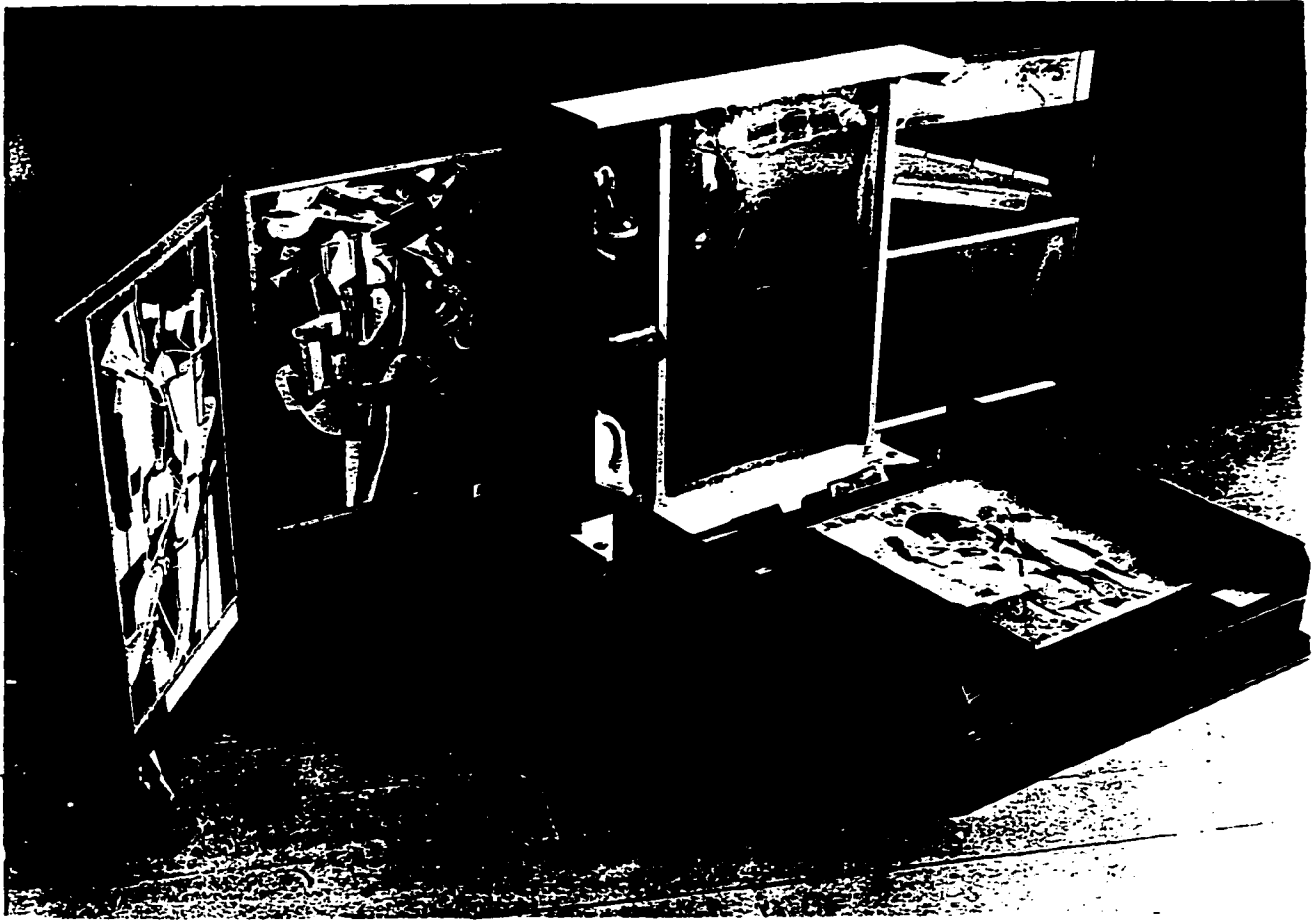
22. Albrecht Dürer. Drawing of The Artist's Model. 1525. Woodcut



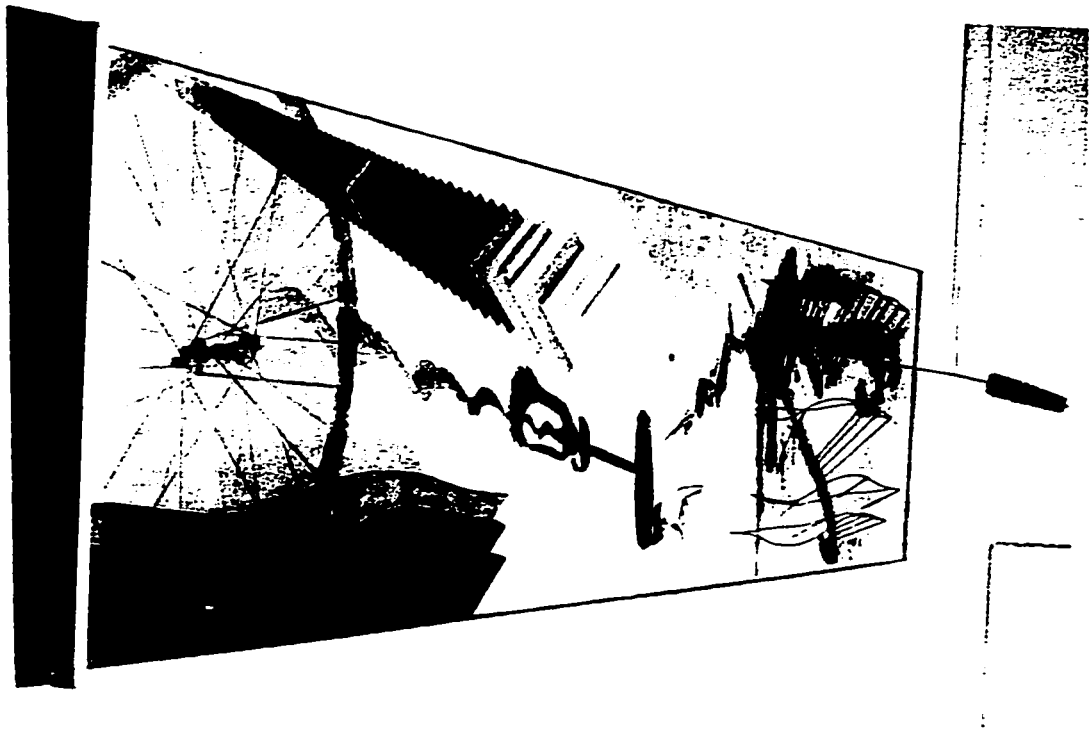
23 Leonardo da Vinci. The External Genitalia and Vagina, with Diagrams of the Anal Sphincter. Drawing from notebooks, c. 1508-9



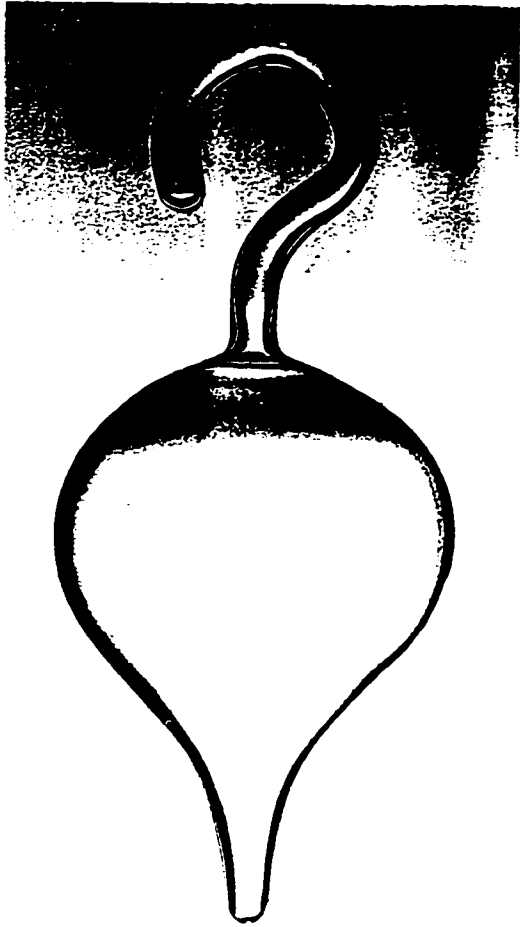
24. Man Ray. Rose Sélavy. 1921. Photograph of Marcel Duchamp as Rose Sélavy.



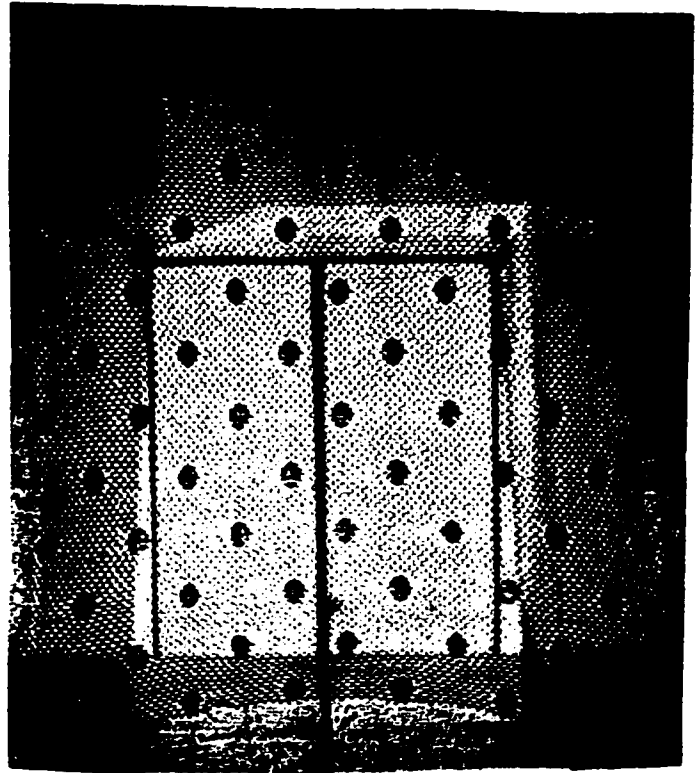
25 Box in a Valise (Boite-en-valise) Several versions of this work date from 1941 to 1949. Miniature reproductions in leather valise.



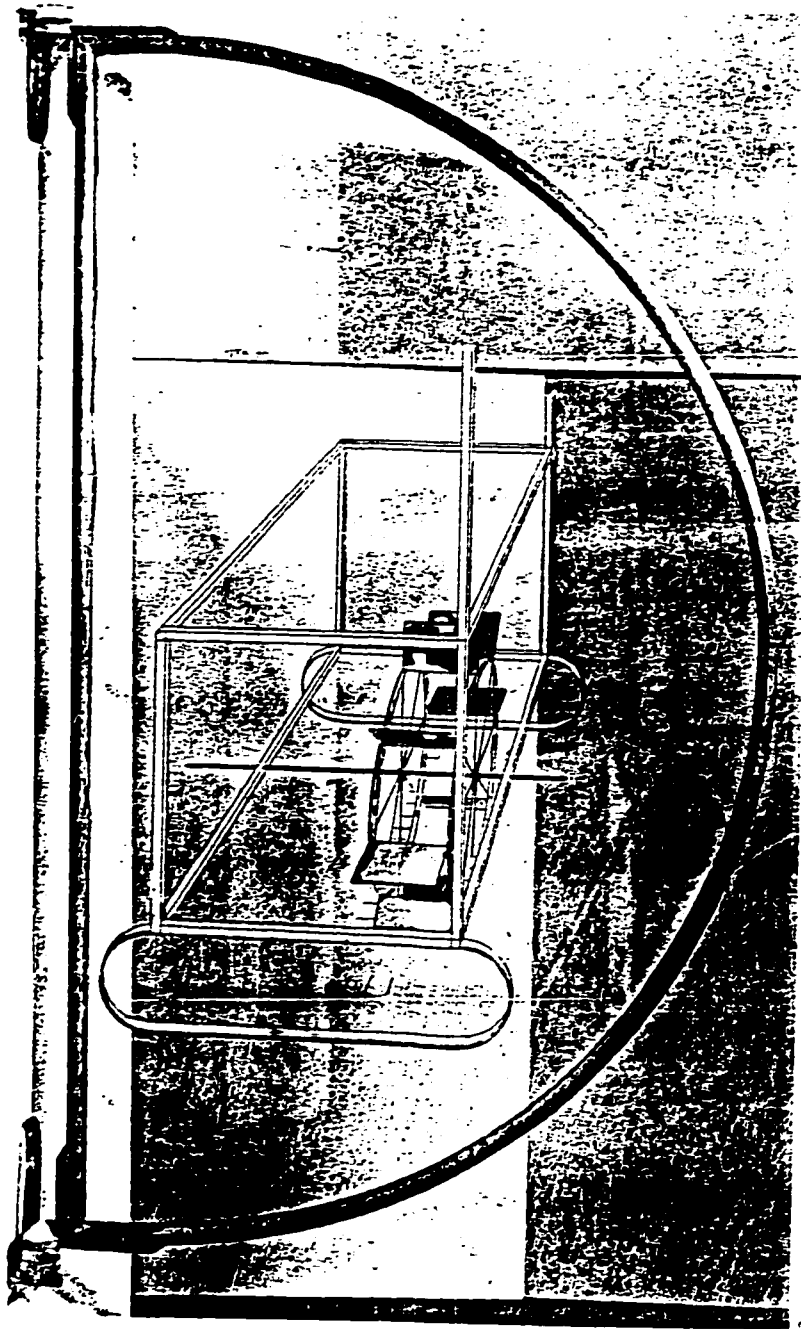
26. Tu m', 1918. Oil and pencil on canvas with bottle brush, three safety pins, a bolt and shadows of bicycle wheel.



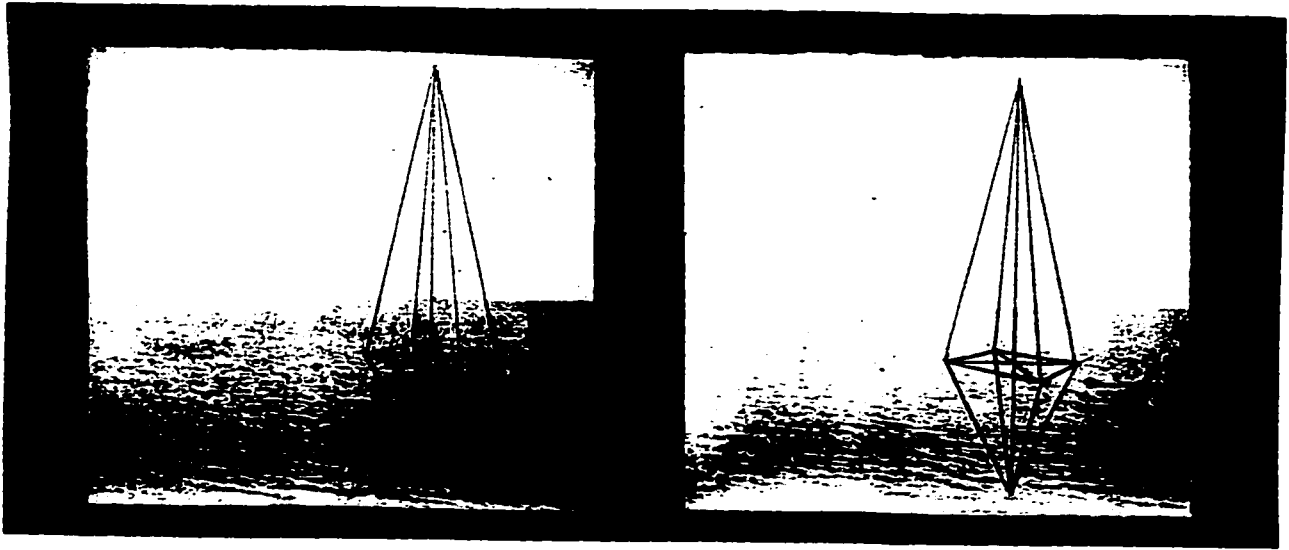
27. Air de Paris, 1919.
50 cc. of Paris Air in
a sealed glass ampoule.



28. Draft Pistons, 1914.



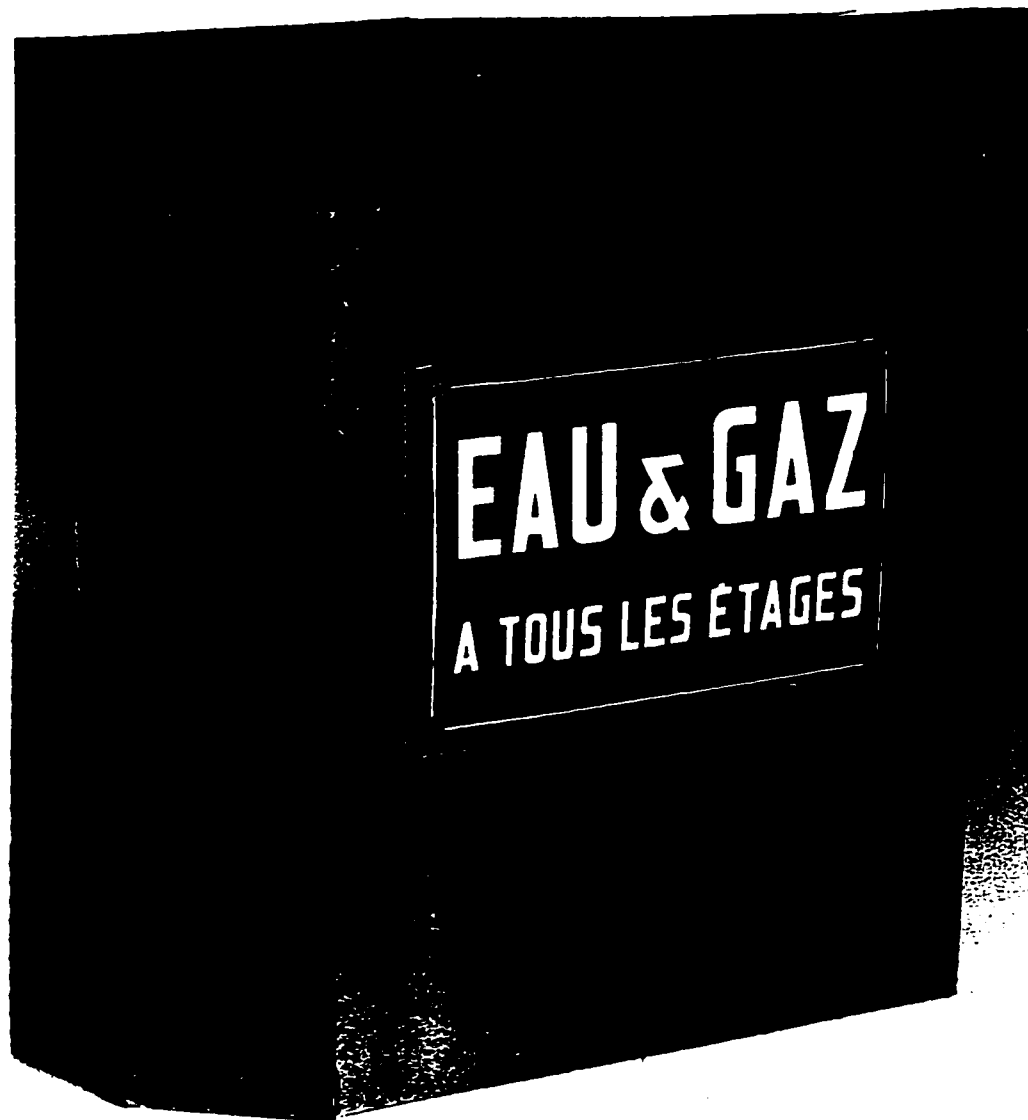
29. Glider Containing a Water Mill in Neighboring Metals,
1913-15. Oil and lead wire on glass, mounted between
2 glass plates.



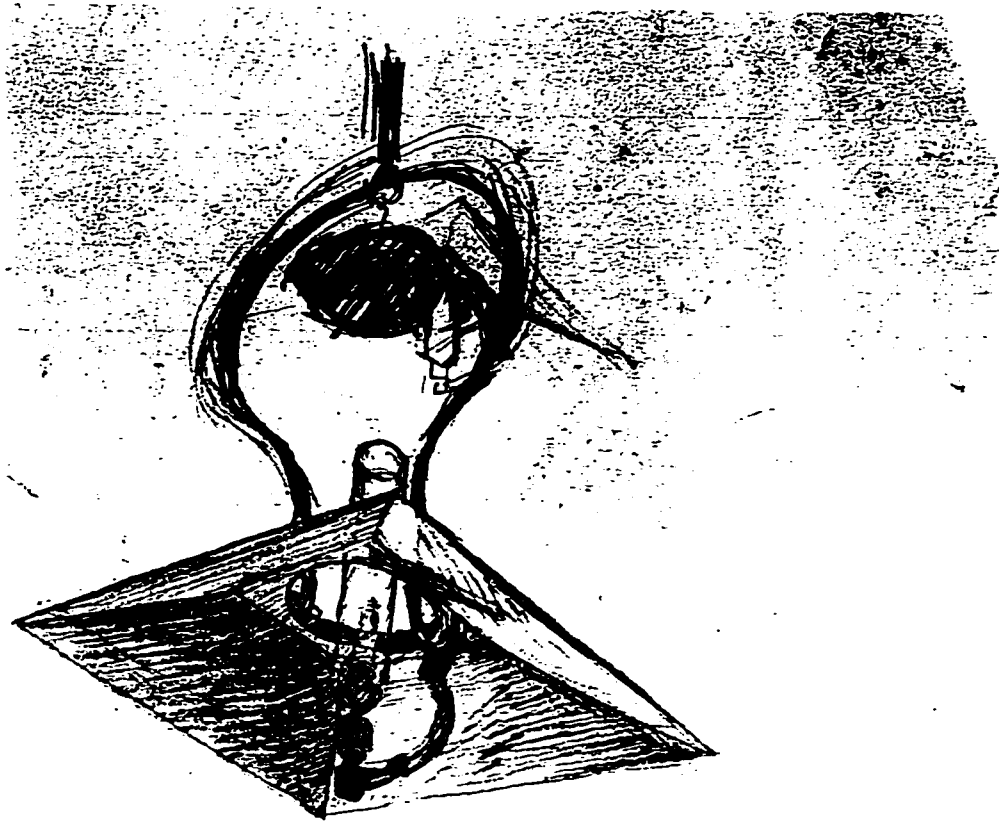
30. Handmade Stereopticon Slide (Hand Stereoscopy), 1918-19. Rectified readymade: pencil over photographic stereopticon slide.



31. Belle Haleine. Eau de Voilette, 1921. Assisted Readymade: a perfume bottle and box with labels depicting Marcel Duchamp as Belle Haleine.



32. Eau et Gaz à tous les étages (Water and Gas on Every Floor, 1958).
Imitated Readymade.



*gas lamp
in C.*

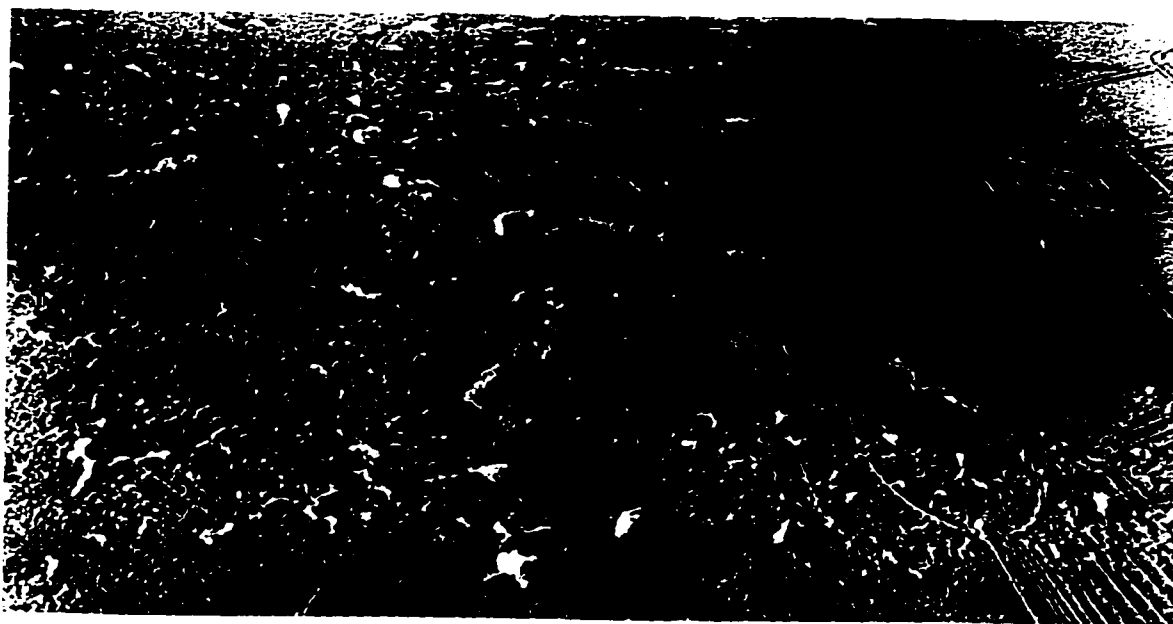
33. Hanging Gas Lamp (Bec Auer), 1903-4. Charcoal on paper.



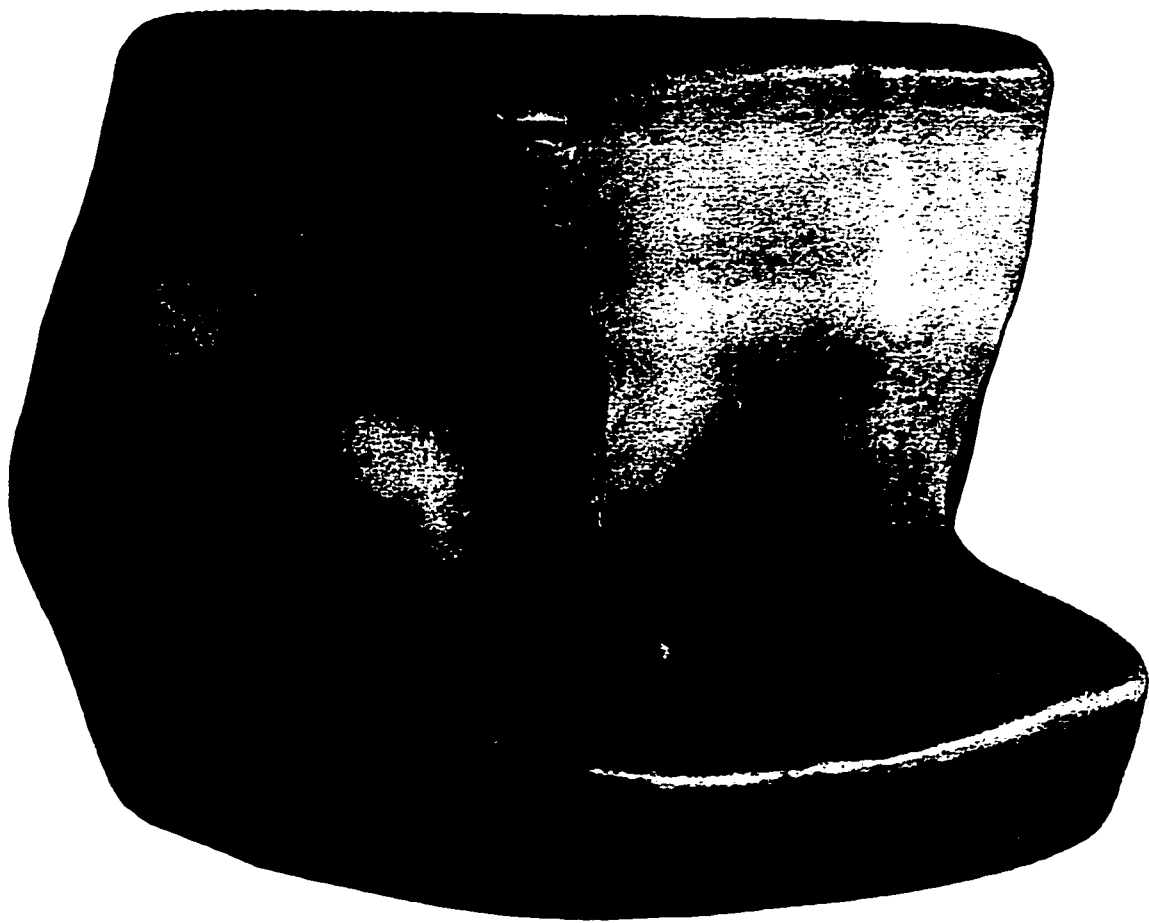
34. Twelve Hundred Coal Bas Suspended from the Ceiling Over a Stove, 1938.
Installation.



35. Poster for the exhibition, Editions de et sur Marcel Duchamp. 1967.



36. Dust Breeding, 1920. Photograph by Man Ray records several months' accumulation of dust on the lower section of The Large Glass.

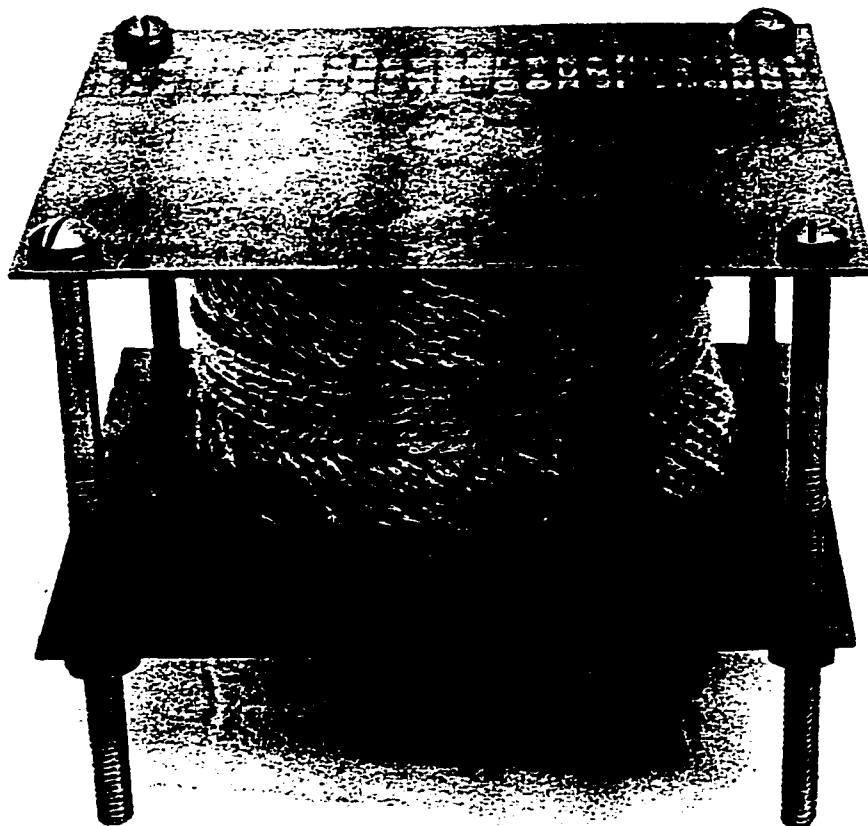


37 Female Fig Leaf, 1950. Sculpture made of galvanized plaster. Incised inscription on the bottom: Feuille de Vigne Femelle/MD/1950.

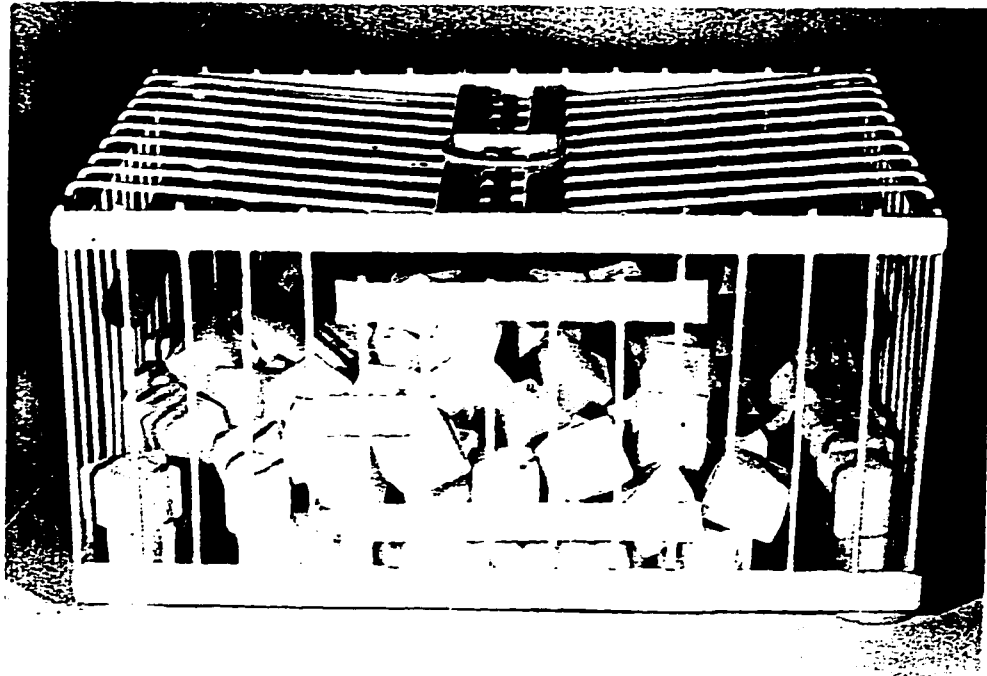
The

If you come into * linen, your time is thirsty
because * ink saw some wood intelligent
enough to get giddiness from a sister.
However, even it should be suitable
to shut * hair, * whistle, * water
writes always ^{in plural}, they have avoided
* frequency, ^{meaning} * mother in law, * powder
will take a chance, and * road could
try. But after somebody brought any
multiplication as soon as * stamp
was out, a great many cards refused
to go through. Around * wire's people,
who will be able to sweeten * tug,
~~that is to say~~ why must everys patent
look for a wife? Pushing four dangers
near * listening-place, * vacation
had not dug absolutely nor this
likeness has eaten.

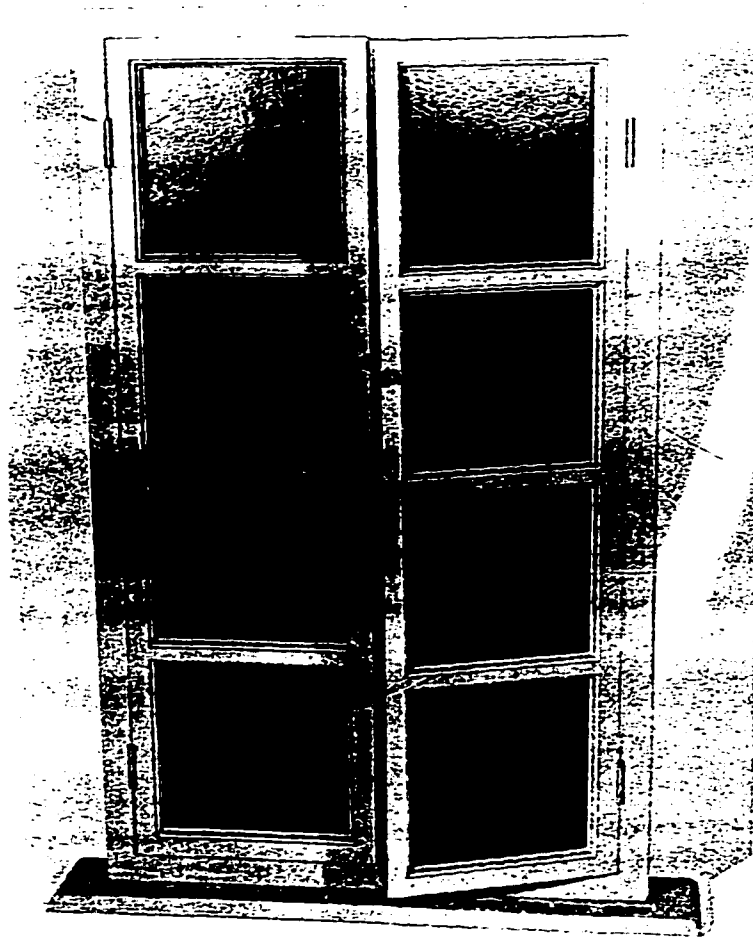
38. The, 1915. Manuscript ink on paper.



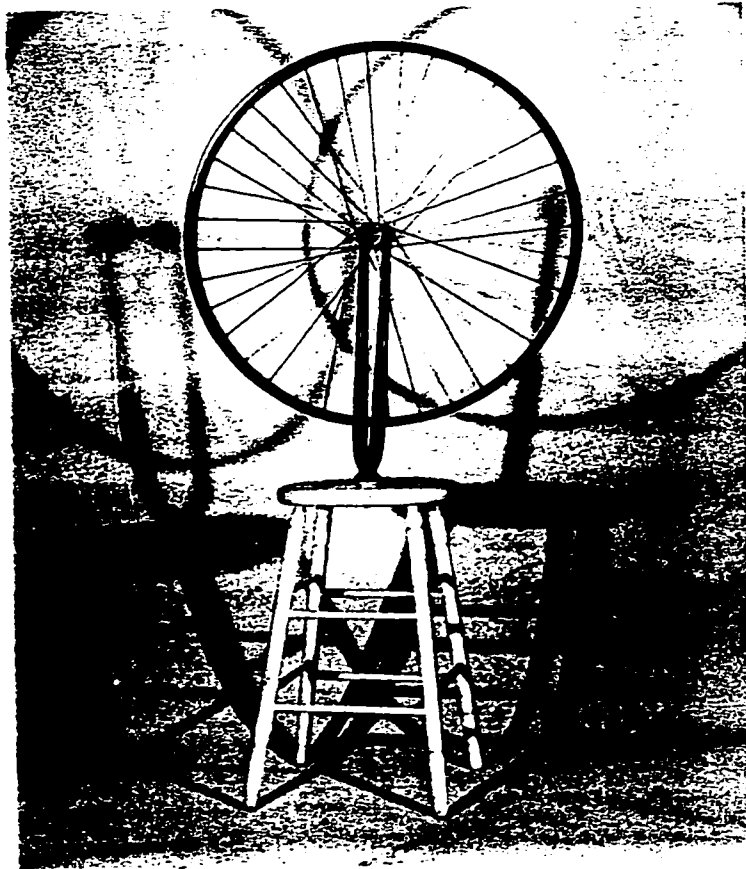
40. With Hidden Noise, 1916. Assisted Readymade.



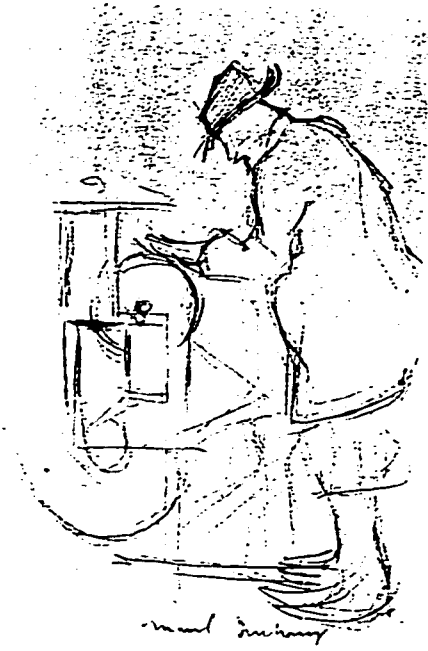
41. Why not Sneeze Rose Sélay?, 1921
Assisted Readymade. Painted metal bird cage, marble cubes,
thermometer, and cuttlebone.



42. Fresh Widow 1920. Miniature French window.



43. The Bicycle Wheel, 1913. Readymade.
Original lost. Several replicas.



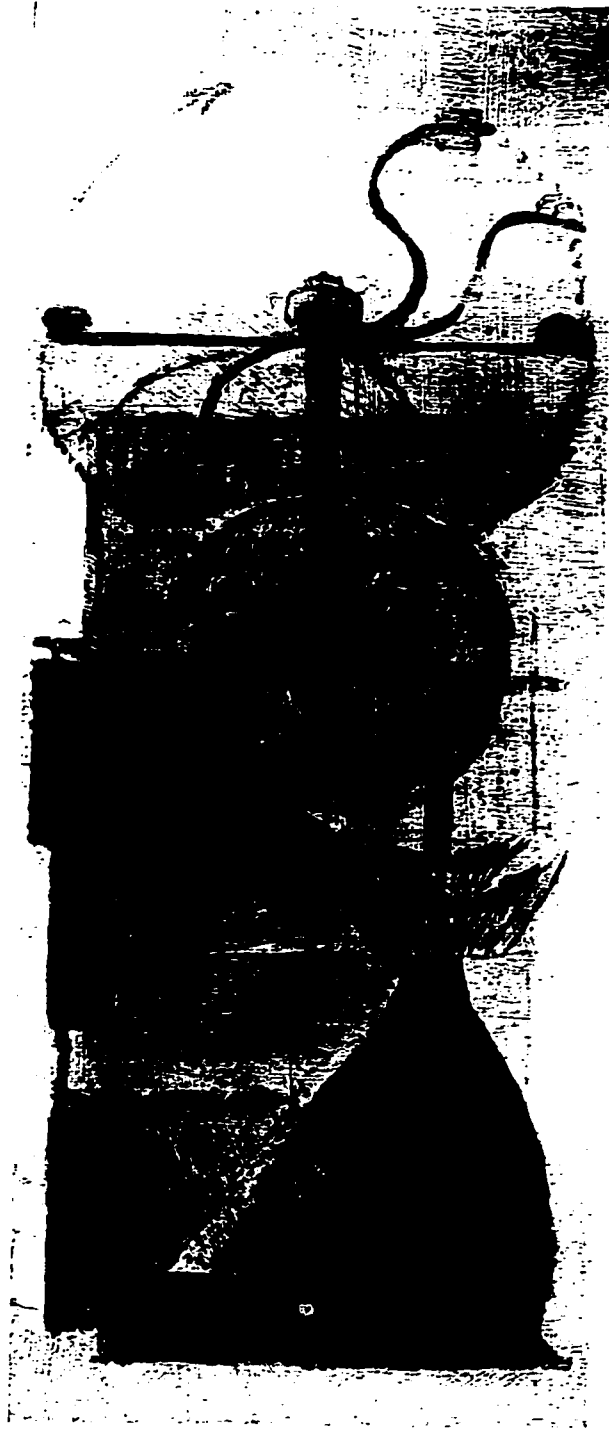
44. The Knife Grinder, 1904-5.
Pencil & ink drawing.



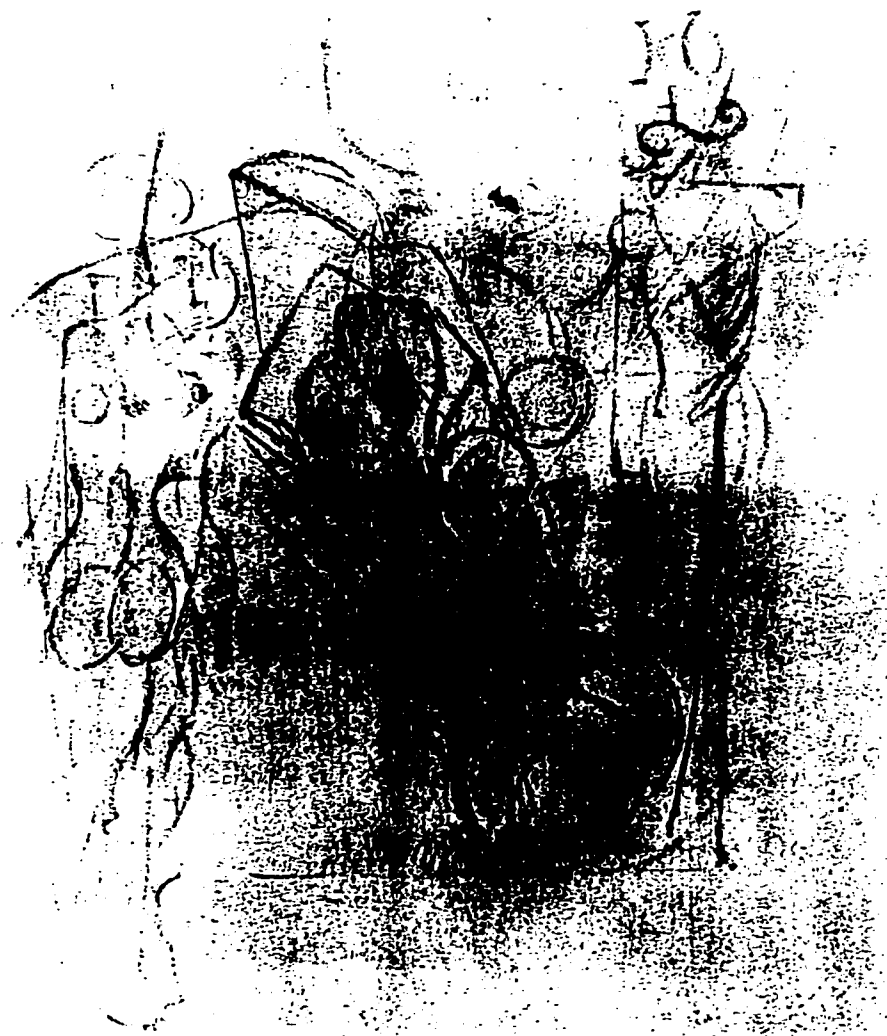
45. Woman Hack Driver, 1907.
Pencil & paper.



46. Sundays, 1909. Conté pencil,
brush and 'splatter' on paper.

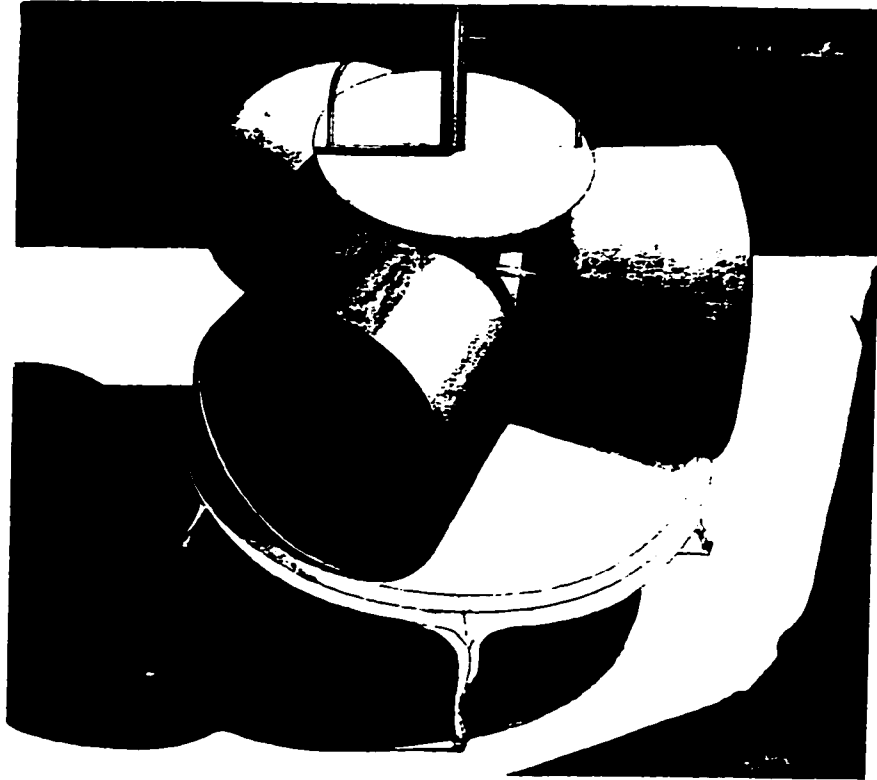


47. Coffee Mill, 1911 (oil on cardboard)



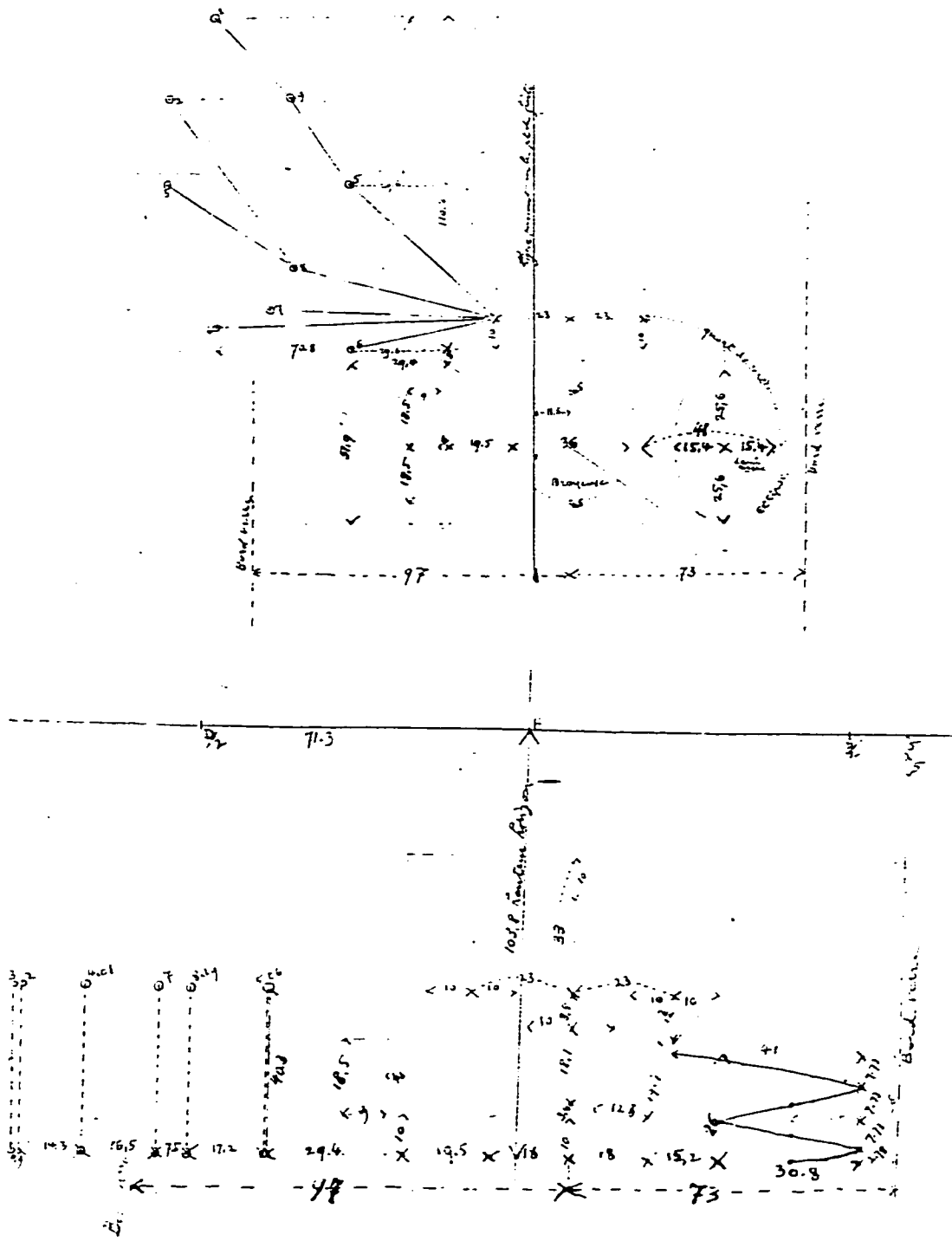
*Two figures, or more like (study)
March 1912*

48. 2 Persons and a Car (study). 1912.
Charcoal on paper.

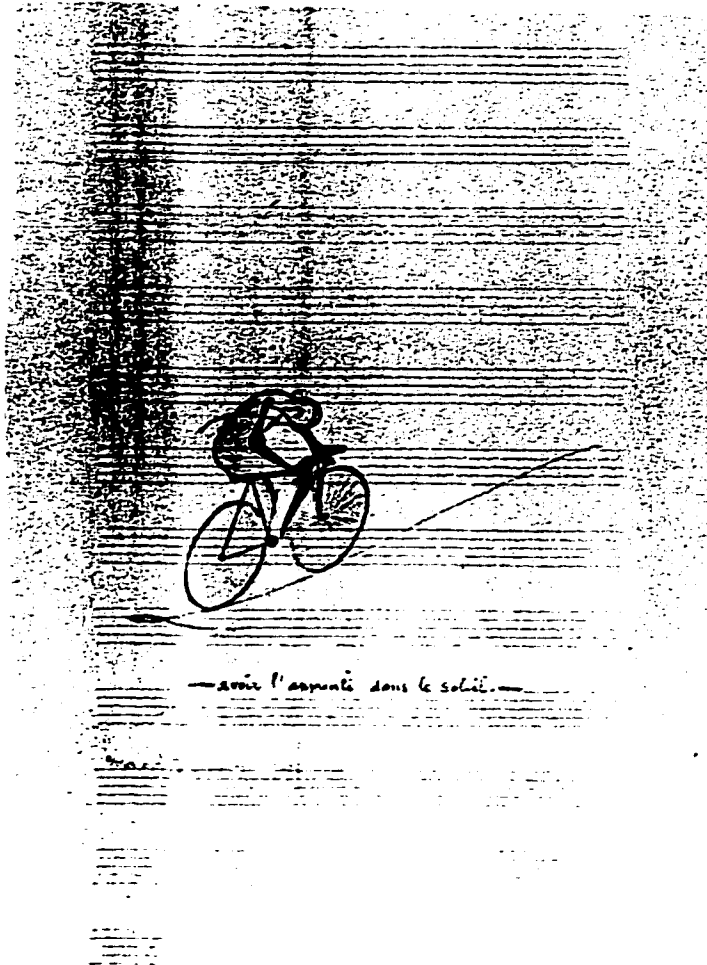


49

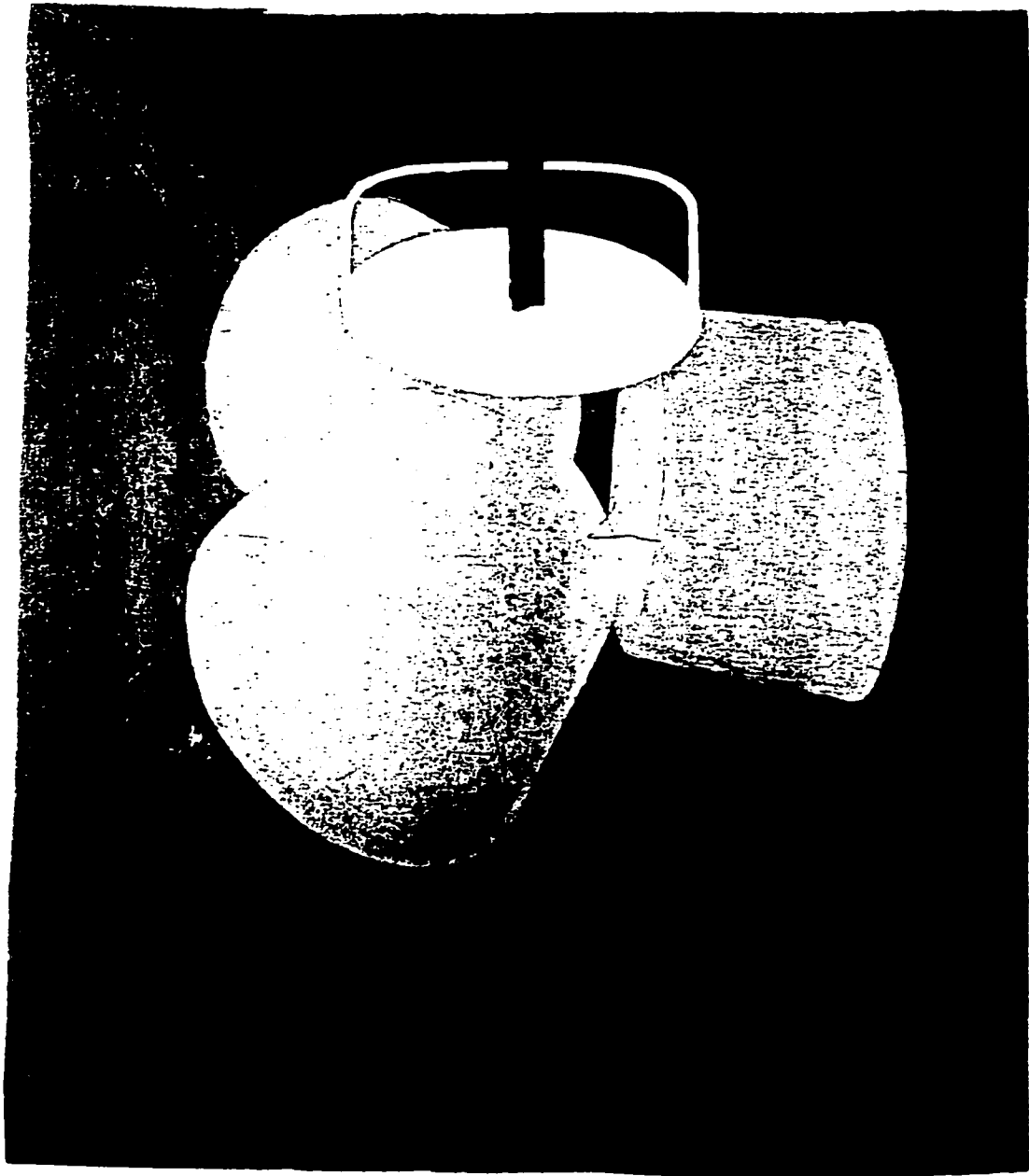
Chocolate Grinder, no. 1, 1913. Oil on canvas



50. Bachelor Apparatus, 1. Plan and 2. Elevation, 1913.
 Red, blue, black ink and pencil on paper, cut into
 2 pieces and later rejoined.



53. To Have the Apprentice in the Sun, 1914.
India ink and pencil on music paper.



54. Study for "The Chocolate Grinder. No. 2." 1914
Oil, colored pencils and ink on irregular canvas fragment.



55. Chocolate Grinder, no. 2, 1914.
Oil and thread on canvas.

P · B · T
THE BLIND MAN

33 WEST 67th STREET, NEW YORK



BROYEUSE DE CHOCOLAT

Marcel Duchamp

MAY, 1917

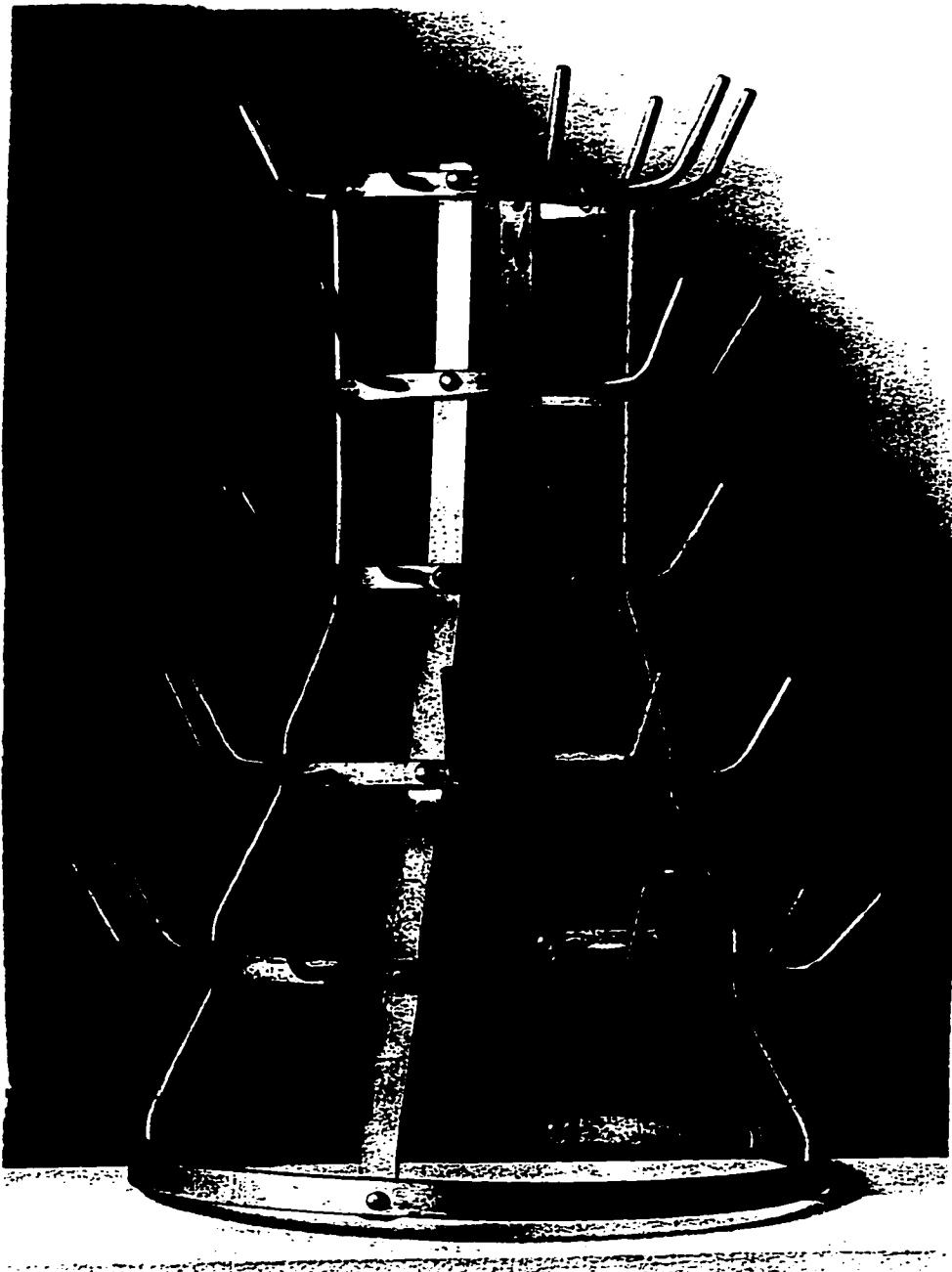
No. 2

Price 15 Cents

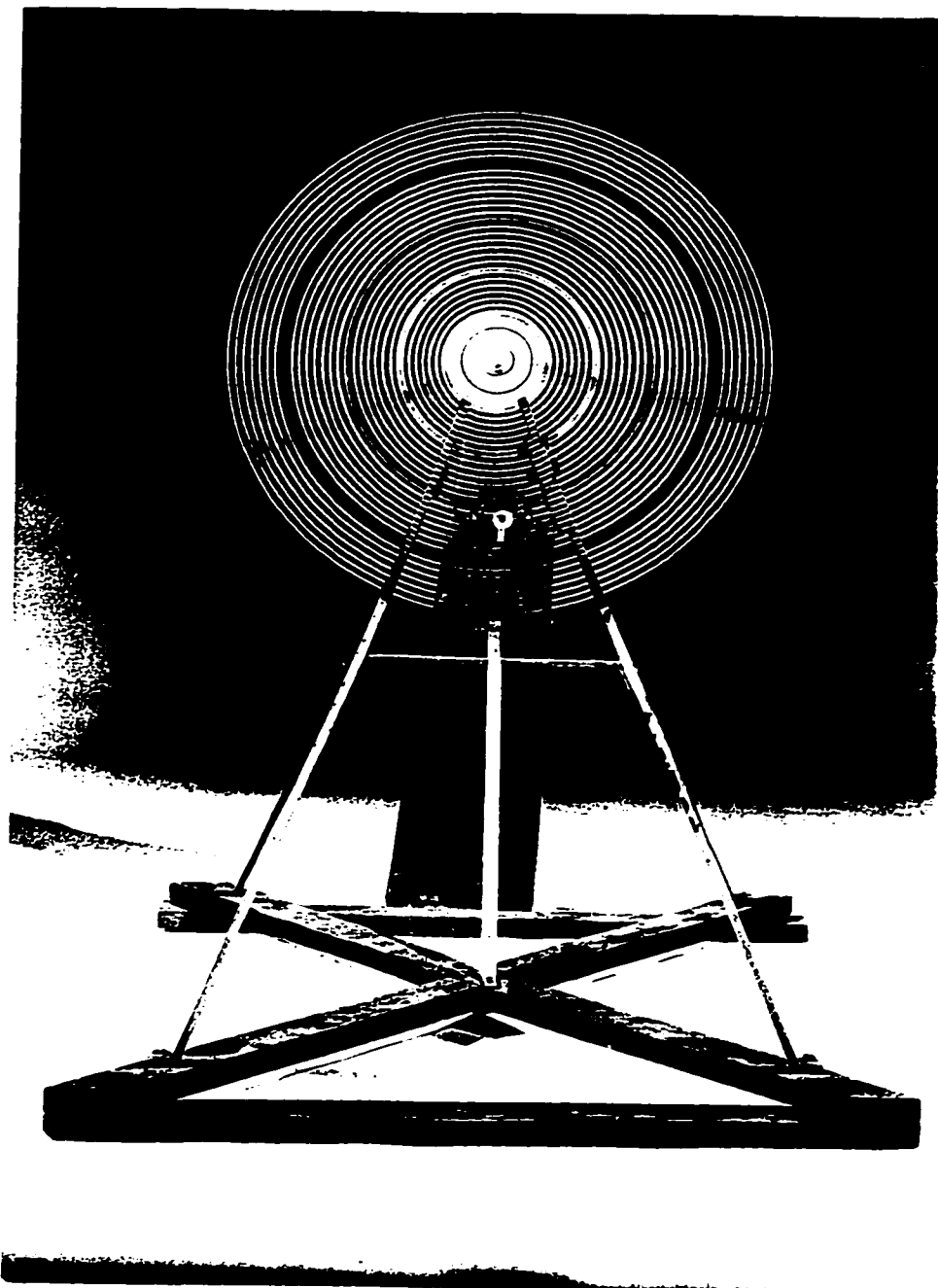
56. Cover for Blind Man no. 2. New York, 1917.
Chocolate grinder.



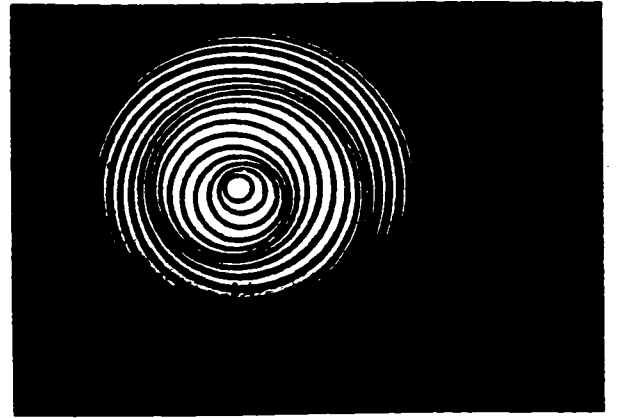
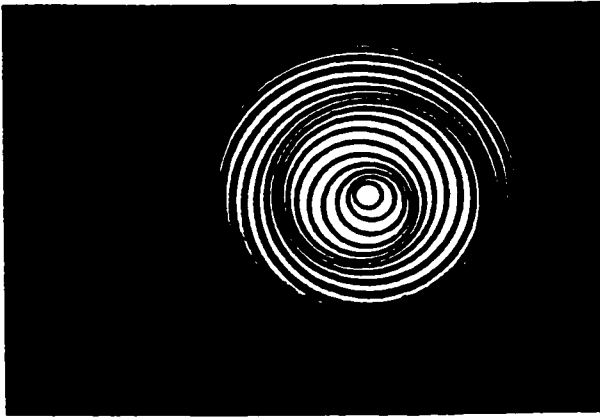
57. Sieves, 1914.
Colored pencil, pencil and ink on paper.



58. Bottlerack. 1914 Readymade galvanized iron bottle dryer. Original lost. Several replicas.



59. Rotary Glass Plates (Precision Optics) 1920
Motorized construction. five painted glass plates, wood
and metal braces, turning on a metal axis, electrically operated



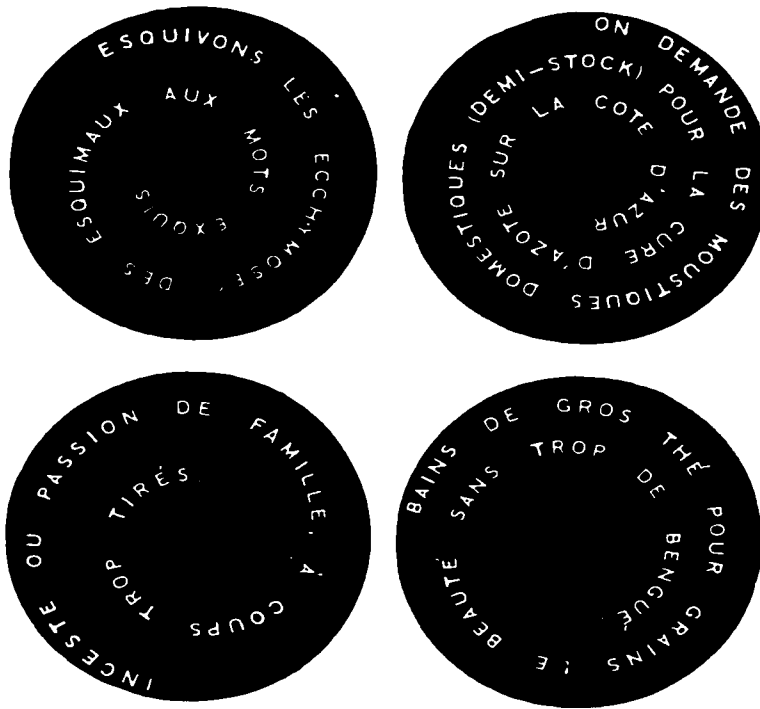
60. Frames from an incompletd stereoscopic film, 1920.



61. Oculist Witnesses, 1920. Pencil on reverse of carbon paper.



62. Photograph of Teeny Duchamp in front of the door which was used in the installation, Étant donnés.... Original setting in Cadaqués.



63. Disks Inscribed With Puns, 1926 (white letters pasted on eight black cardboard disks. 8 of the 9 disks used (one has been lost) in Duchamp's film Anémic Cinéma of 1926 where they alternated with 10 disks with optical patterns).



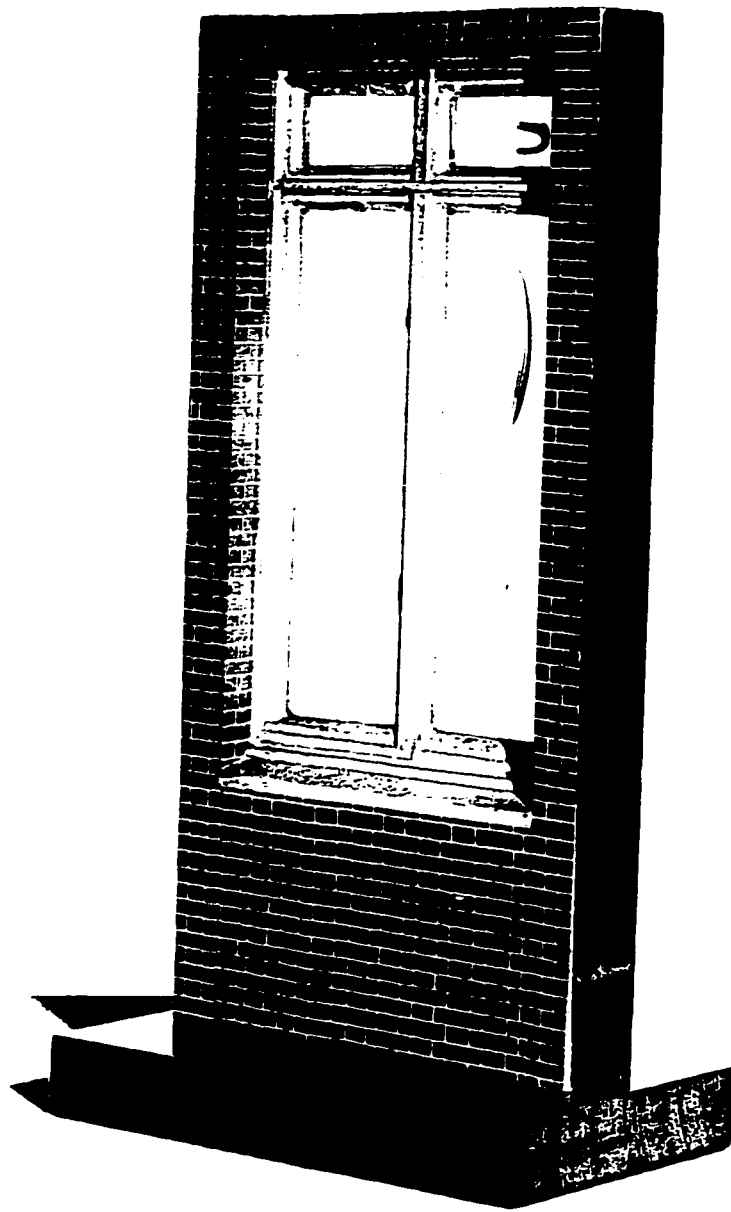
64. Rotoreliefs (Optical Disks), 1935 (set of 6 cardboard disks, printed by offset lithography on both sides. An extension of the Rotating Spiral Disks in Anémic Cinéma).



65. Door, 11 rue Larrey. 1927. Construction: Wooden door made by a carpenter following Duchamp's specifications.



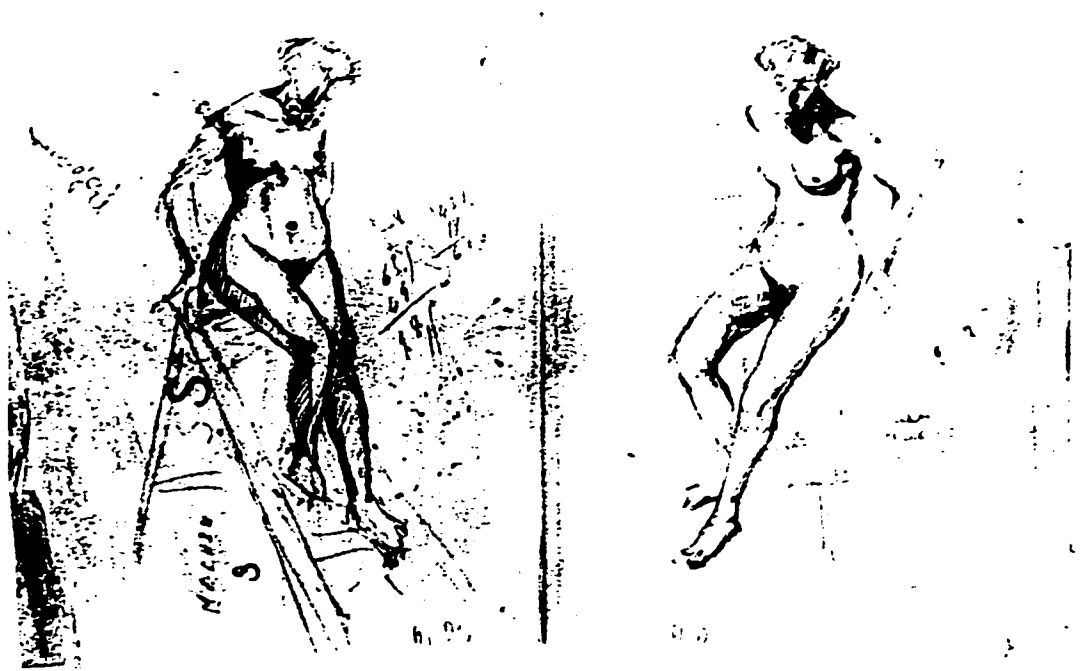
66. Door for Gradiva. 1937. Plexiglas construction. Replica of 1968 after destroyed original.



67. The Brawl at Austerlitz. 1921. Miniature window. oil on wood and glass.



68. Photograph of the interior view of the door, included in the Manual of Instructions. (Two views)



69. Nudes on a Ladder. 1907-8. Pencil on Paper.
Two versions.



70. Two Standing Nudes, 1907. Ink on Paper.



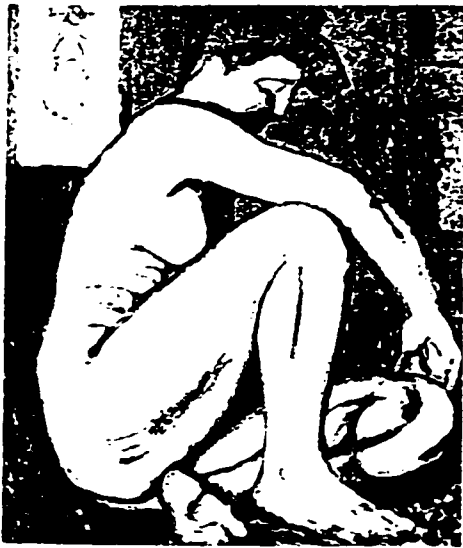
71. Nude with Black Stockings, 1910. Oil on Canvas.



72. Two Nudes, 1910. Oil on Canvas.



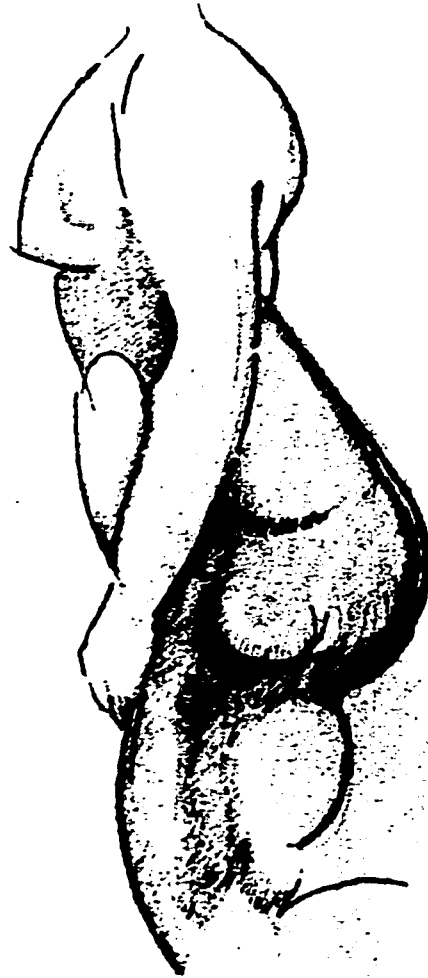
73. Standing Nude, 1910. Gouache on Cardboard.



74. Red Nude. 1910.
Oil on Canvas

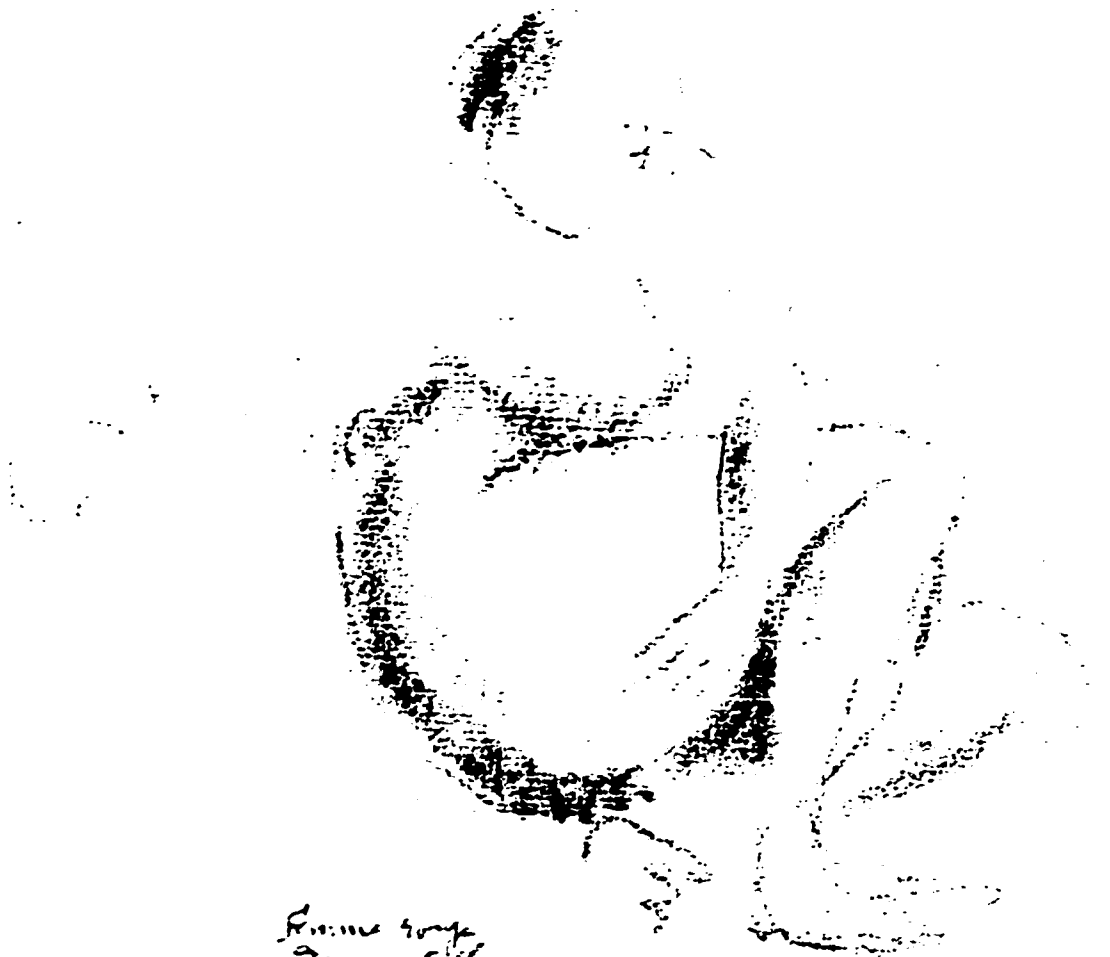


75. Nude on Nude. 1910-11.
Oil on Board.



*See the drawing
of the same
figure in the
book 'The Nude'*

76. Study of Kneeling Nude. 1910. India Ink and Pencil on Paper.



*From the group
from the collection
of the artist
in the collection*

77. Red Woman in a Painting 1910-11, Pencil on Paper.



78. Standing Nude, 1911.
India Ink and Charcoal
on Paper.



79. Nude Descending a Staircase,
No. 1, 1911,



80. Two Nudes: One Strong and One Swift,
1912. Pencil on Paper.



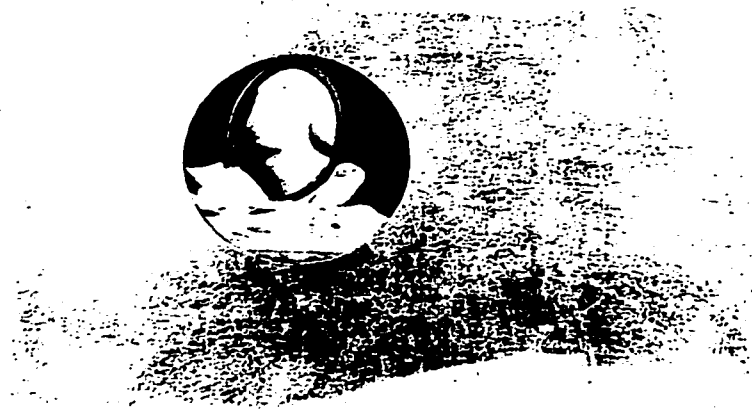
81. Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 3,
1916. Watercolor, Ink, Pencil and
Pastel over Photographic Base.



82. Rose Sélavy on the rue Surréaliste. Mannequin from the "Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme" at the Galerie Beaux-arts, Paris, January 1938.



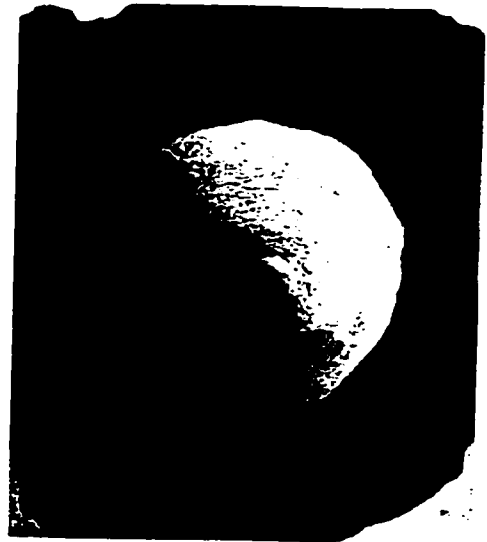
83. Lazy Hardware, 1945. Mannequin in window display at Gotham Book Mart, New York, for André Breton's Arcane 17.



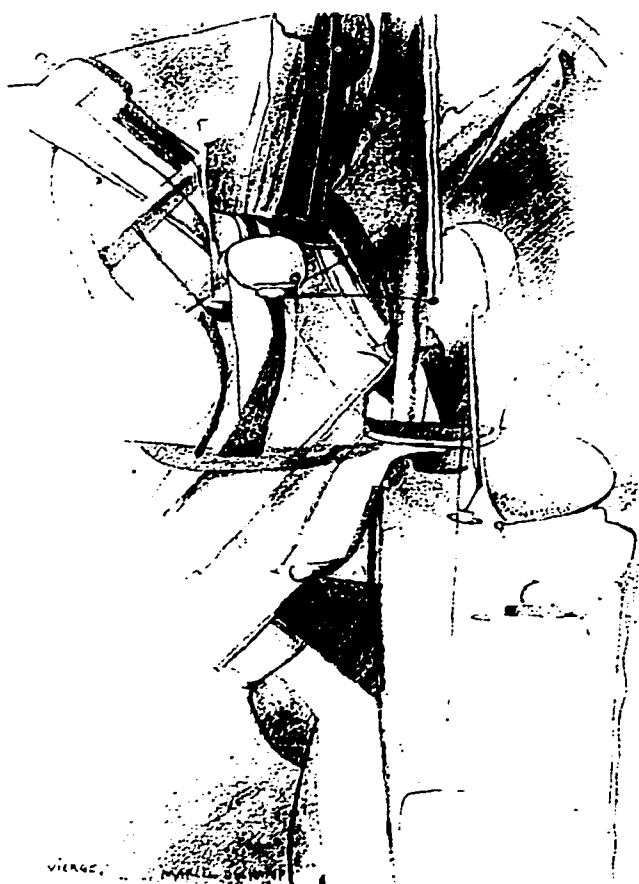
84. A la manière de Delvaux (In the Manner of Delvaux), 1942. Collage and tinfoil and photograph on cardboard.



85. Plaster Model for Prière de Toucher, 1947. A plaster breast mounted on velvet in a wood and glass box.



86. Prière de Toucher (Please Touch), 1947. Rubber breasts mounted on a velvet-covered cardboard



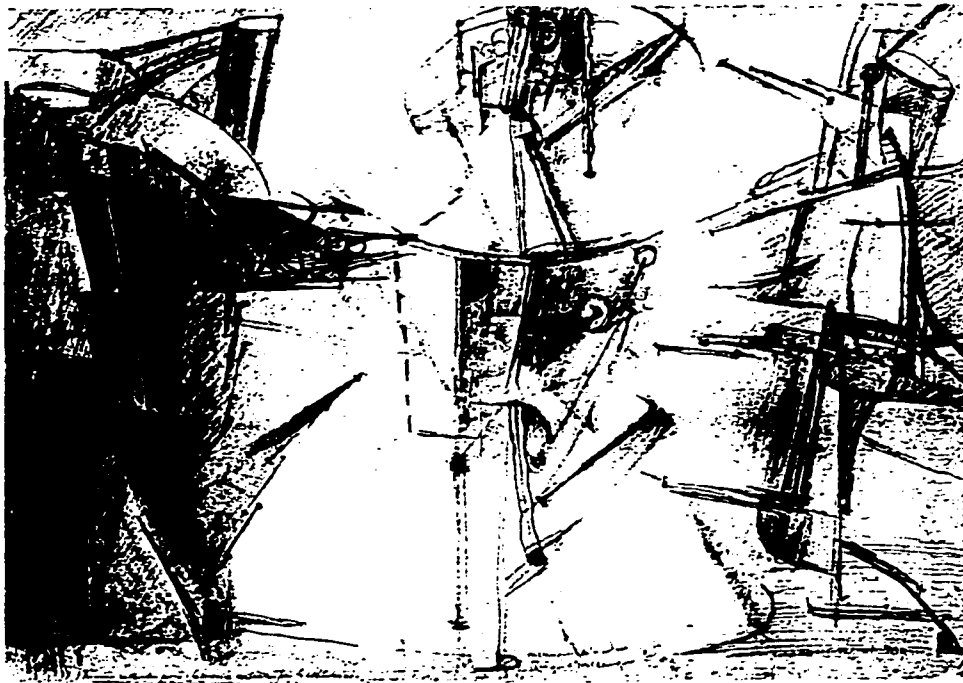
87. The Virgin. No. 1, 1912. Drawing.



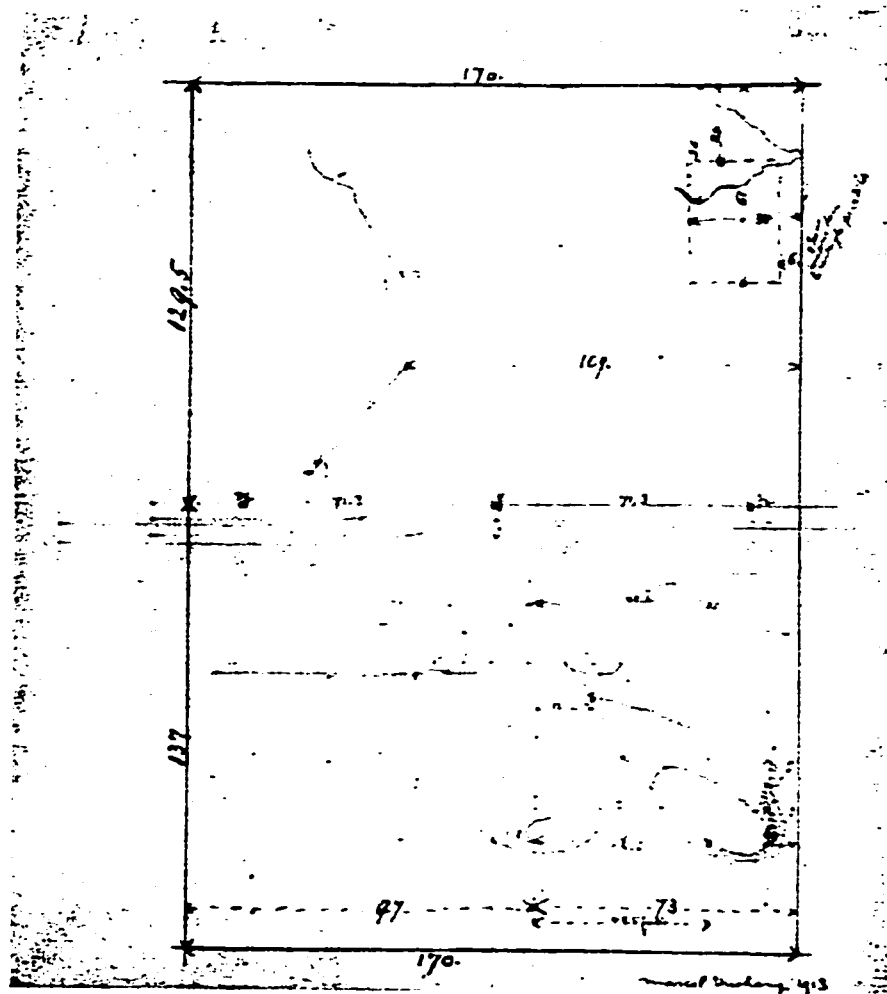
88. The Virgin. No. 2, 1912.
Watercolor



89. The Passage from the Virgin to Bride, 1912. Oil on canvas.



90. The Bride Stripped Bare by the Bachelors, 1912. Drawing



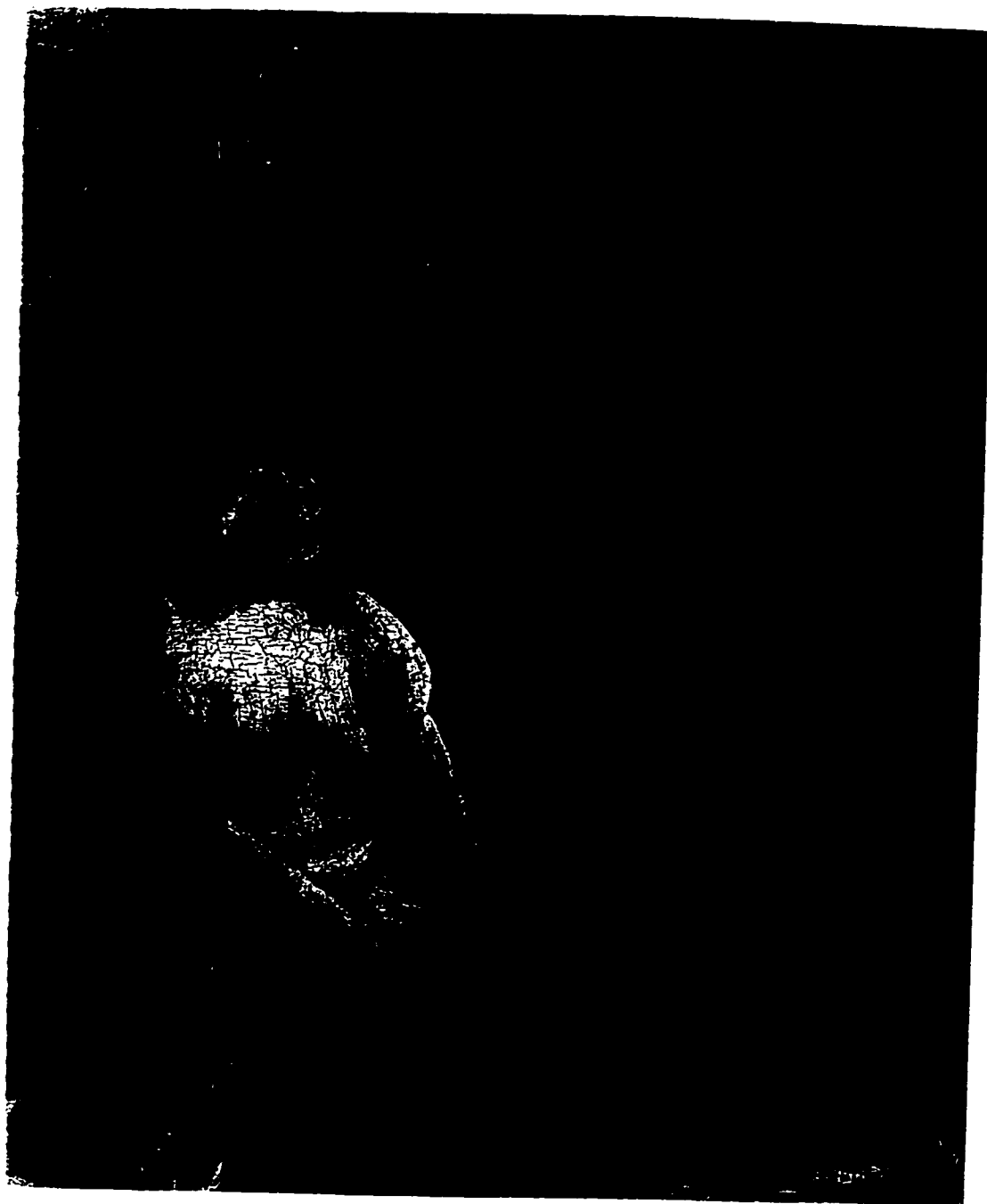
91 The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even, 1913
(pencil on tracing cloth).



92. Paradise, 1910-11. Oil on Canvas.



93. The Bush. 1910-11. Oil on Canvas.



94. Baptism, 1845. Oil on Canvas.



95. Draft of The Japanese Apple Tree. 1911.
Oil on Canvas.



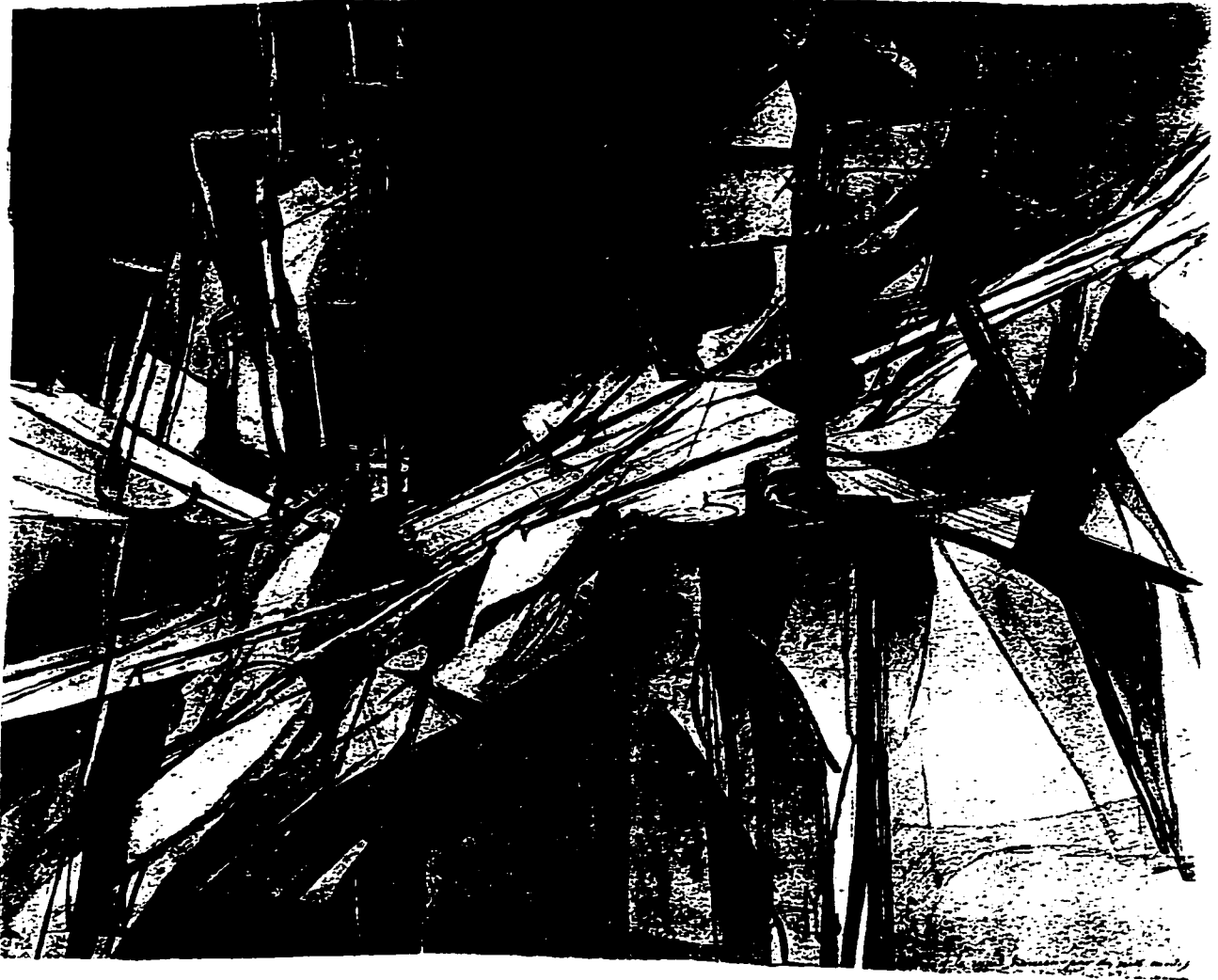
96. Young Man and Girl in Spring. 1911.
Oil on Canvas.



rasée
L.H.O.O.Q.

marcel Duchamp

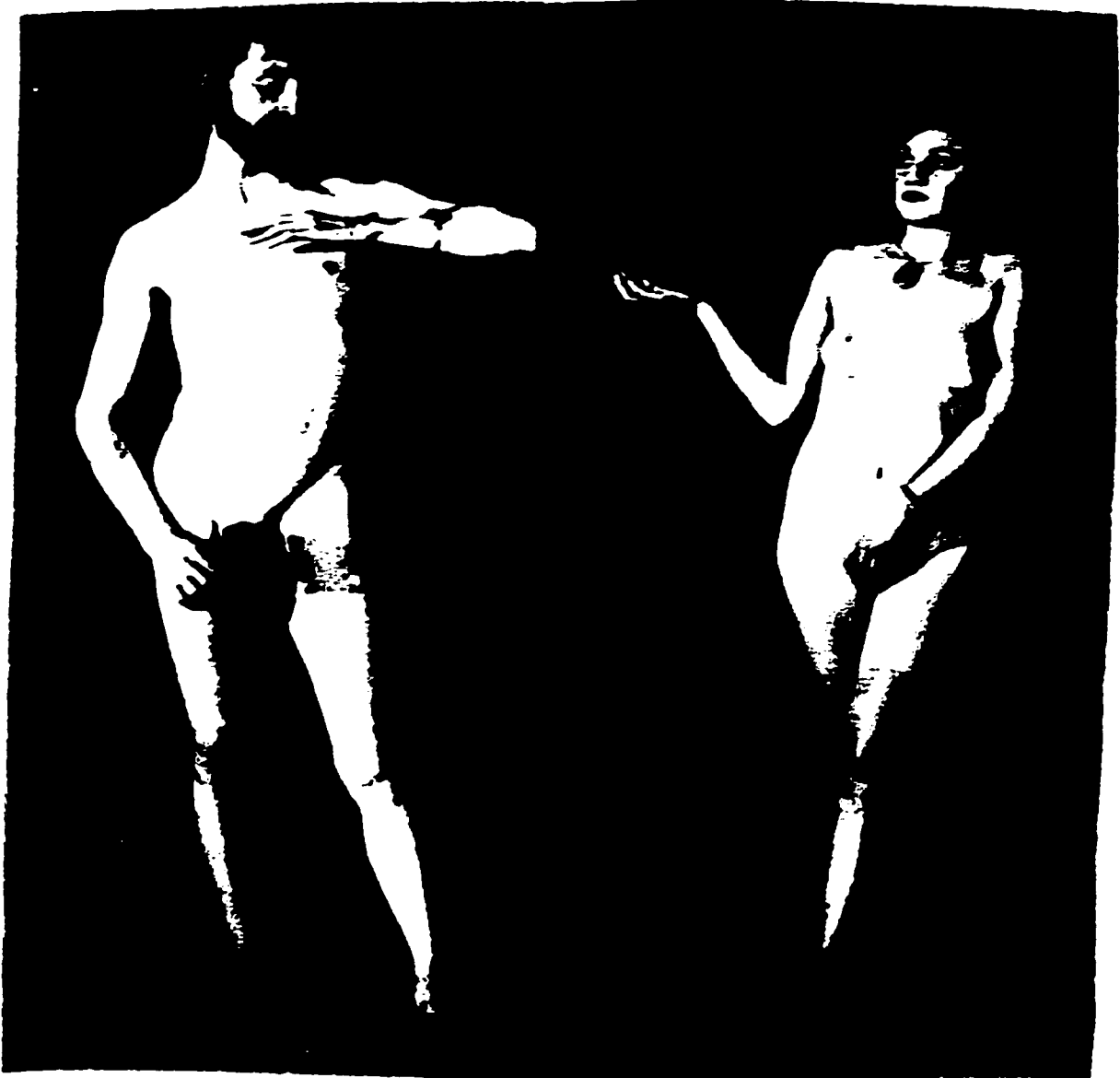
97. L.H.O.O.Q. Shaved, 1965. Readymade: Playing Card Mounted on Folded Paper. Inscribed lower right, in ink "rasée L.H.O.O.Q. Marcel Duchamp."



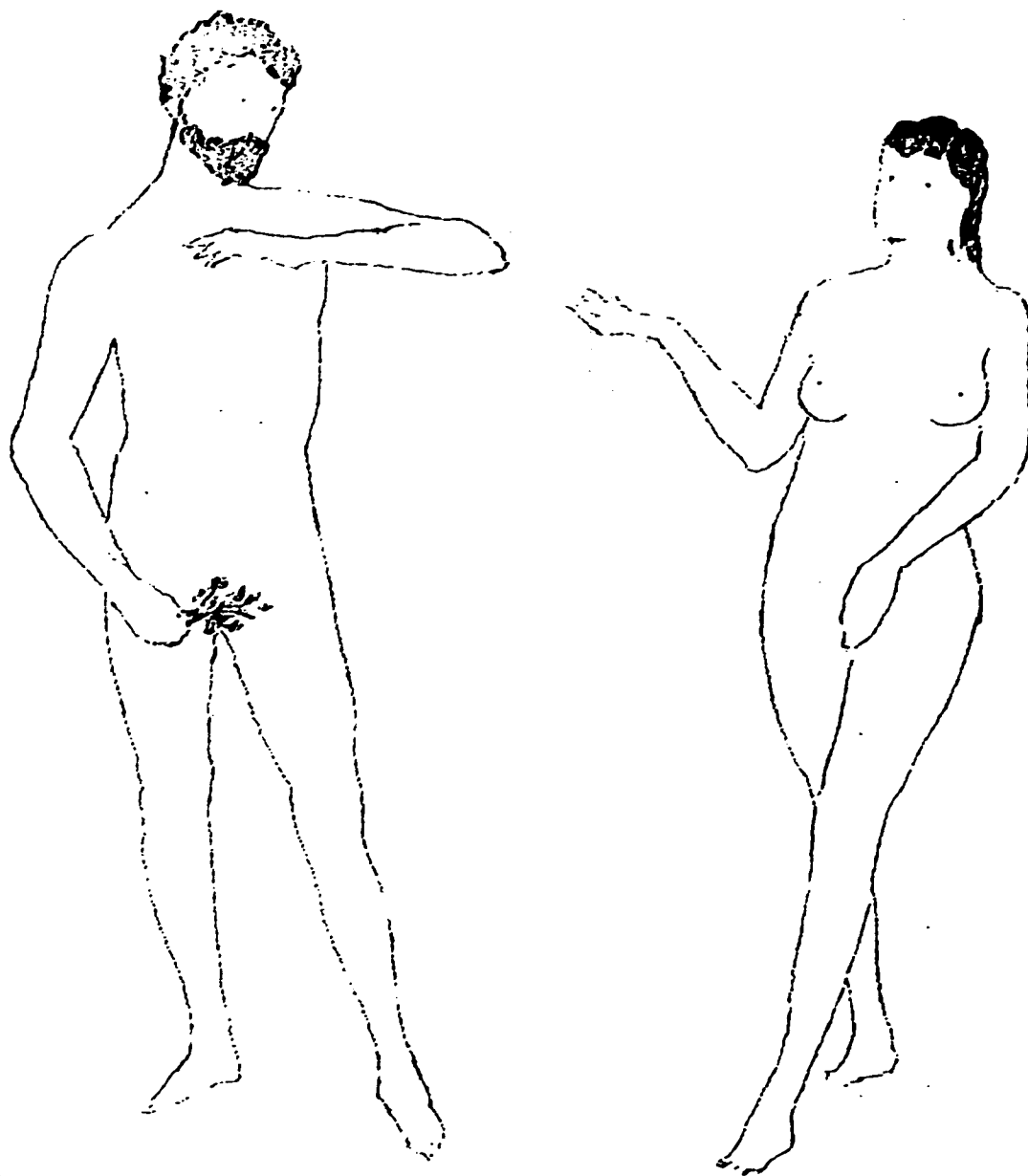
99. The King and Queen Traversed by Swift Nudes at High Speed, 1912.
(Watercolor and Gouache on Paper.)



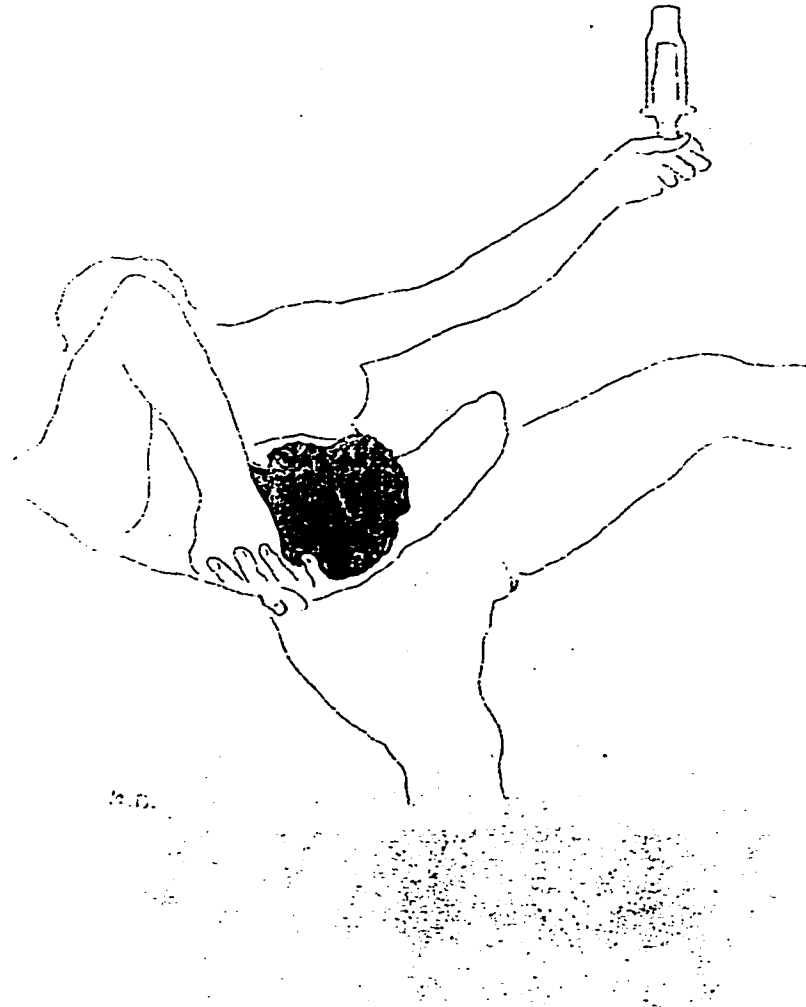
100. The King and Queen Surrounded by Swift Nudes, 1912. Oil on Canvas.



101. Photograph of Marcel Duchamp and Brogna Perlmutter posing as Adam and Eve in a performance presented in Picabia's Ciné Sketch, c. December 1924, during the short run of the ballet "Relâche."



102. Selected Details After Cranach and 'Relâche', 1967. Etching.



103. The Bec Auer. 1968. Etching.



Etant donné: Maria, la chute d'eau et le gaz d'éclairage.
Marcel Duchamp
06.1917

104. Etant donné...: Maria, la chute d'eau et le gaz d'éclairage (Given: Maria, the Waterfall, and the Lighting Gas), 1917. Drawing. First study for the installation.



105. Etant donné le gaz d'éclairage et la chute d'eau (Given the Illuminating Gas and the Waterfall), 1948-49. Relief sculpture. Painted leather over plaster relief, mounted on velvet.



106. Photograph of the female figure in Etant donnés... as a brunette. Included in the Manual of Instructions.

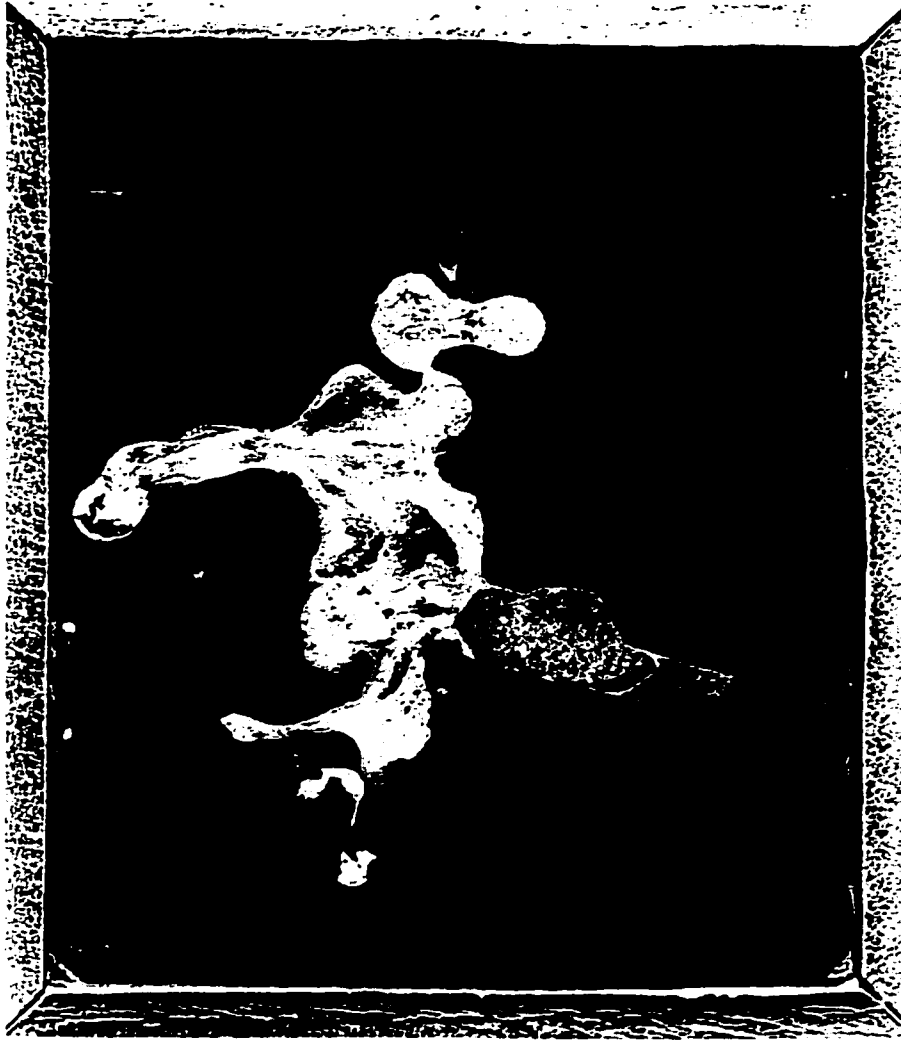


108. Photograph of Duchamp with shaved head.
Two views.



109.

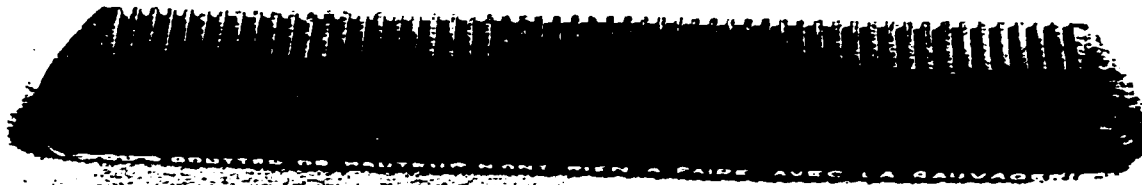
Tifs, 1948. Pencil drawing with hair.



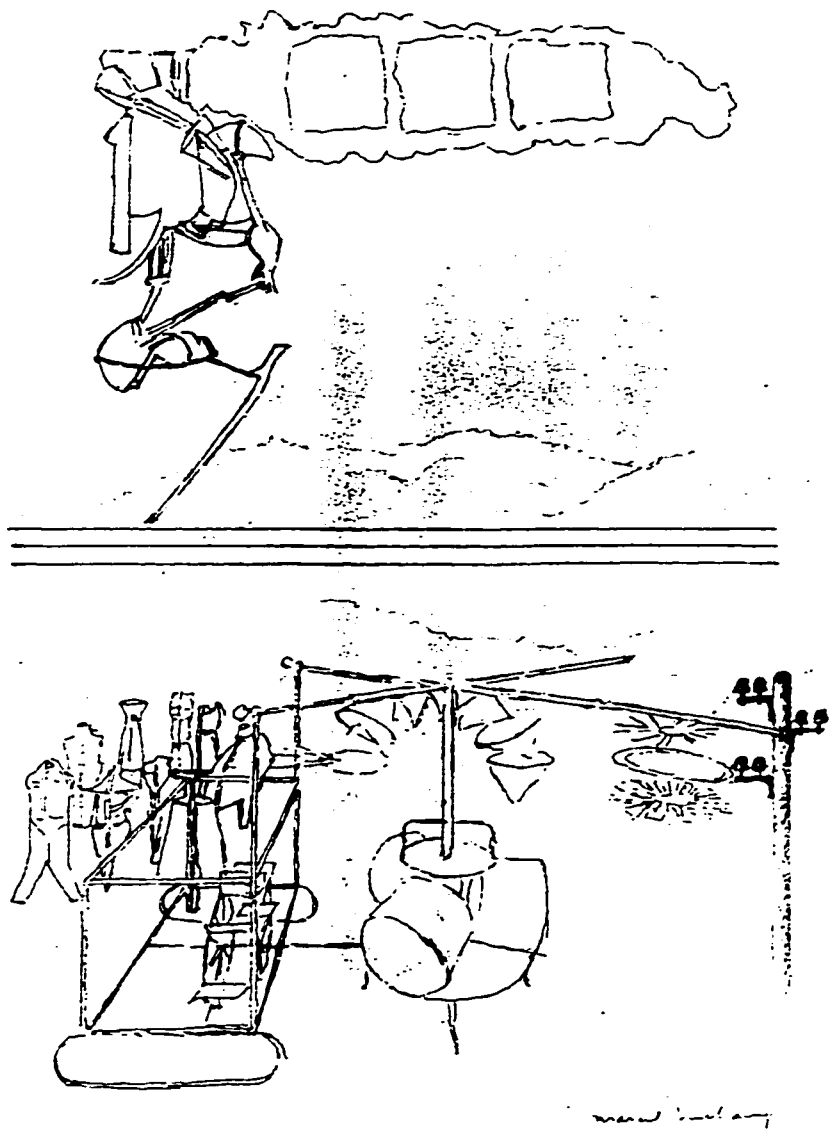
110. Paysage Fautif (Wayward Landscape), 1946.
Seminal fluid on Astralon, backed with black
satin.



111. Objet-Dard (Dart-Object). 1951. Sculpture: galvanized plaster.



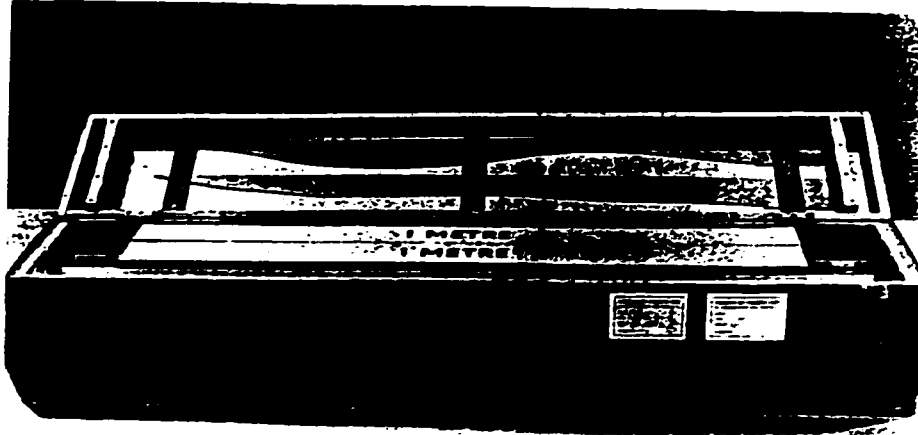
112. Comb, 1916. Readymade: steel dog comb. Original extant. Several Replicas. Inscribed along the edge in white: "3 ou 4 GOUTTES DE HAUTEUR N'ONT RIEN A FAIRE AVEC LA SAUVAGERIE."



113. Cols alités (Bedridden Hills). 1959.
Pen and pencil on paper reproducing The Large Glass and hills of Etant donnés....



114. Photograph of the armature of the female figure in Etant donnés....
Included in th Manual of Instructions.



115. Three Standard Stoppages, 1913-14.
Assemblage: three threads glued to three painted canvas strips, each mounted on a glass panel; three wood slats shaped along one edge to match the curves of the threads. The whole is fitted in a wooden box. Printed in gold letters on leather labels, glued at the end of each canvas strip: 3 STOPPAGES ETALON/1913-14.

Approximation démontable, exécution sub 46 et 1966 à NY.

(pour approximation j'entends une range d'ad libitum dans le département de Tr. montage)

Titre: ÉTANT DONNÉS 10 LA CHUTE D'EAU

2. Le GAZ D'ÉCLAIRAGE...


manuel Duchamp 1966

ORDRE DES 15 opérations de montage général

le modèle carton auto pour le placement des briques et de la porte:

le linoléum quadrillé et le clouer au sol le second lino (plus petit) et le clouer à l'axe du premier

suivant le modèle carton, placer le paysage fait vertical (angle de 90° ou 92° avec le plan quadrillé).

le paysage  par derrière avec des vis dans le sol... 2 barres bois

la partie arrière du paysage:

lampe fluorescente en haut, devant éclairer le ciel par réflexion et transparence.

les nuages (ad lib) attachés sur le ciel ou sur le verre dépoli qui pourront être modifiés dans le réglage de finitif ouvrant les côtés du paysage.

- ne pas oublier le long carton léger bleu environ 20 cm large et légèrement courbé à placer au bas du ciel vertical, à plat. (voir photo)

- Fermer cette grande boîte cloisonnée à l'extérieur en l'attachant (vis) à la partie supérieure arrière du paysage (photo) et sceller hermétiquement avec tape.

sur arrière:

moteur
disque à trous
boîte biscuit avec la lampe fluorescente dans dedans.

la grosse barre qui soutient tous ces éléments est mobile et simplement placée sur deux supports à gauche et à droite du centre du derrière du paysage (ajustable au réglage définitif).



117. Landscape at Blainville, 1902. Oil on canvas.



118. Laundry Barge, 1910. Oil on cardboard



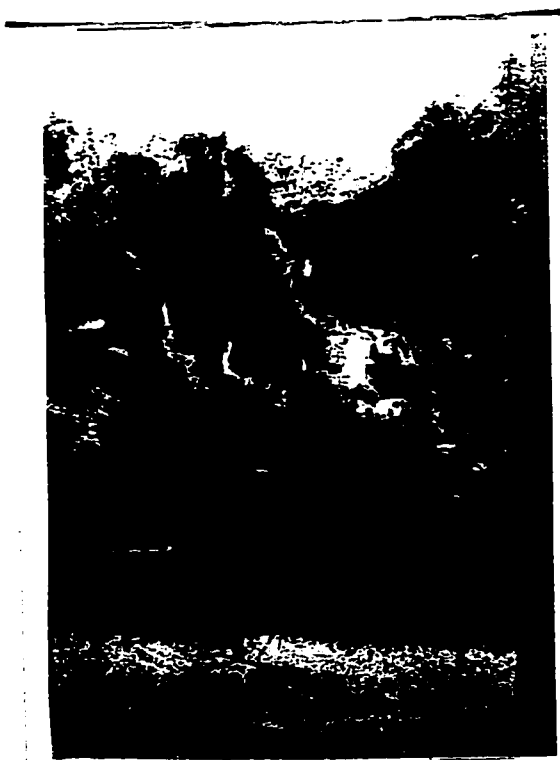
119. Landscape, 1911. Oil on canvas



120. Pharmacy, 1914, Rectified Readymade:
Gouache red and green marks added on
a commercial print.



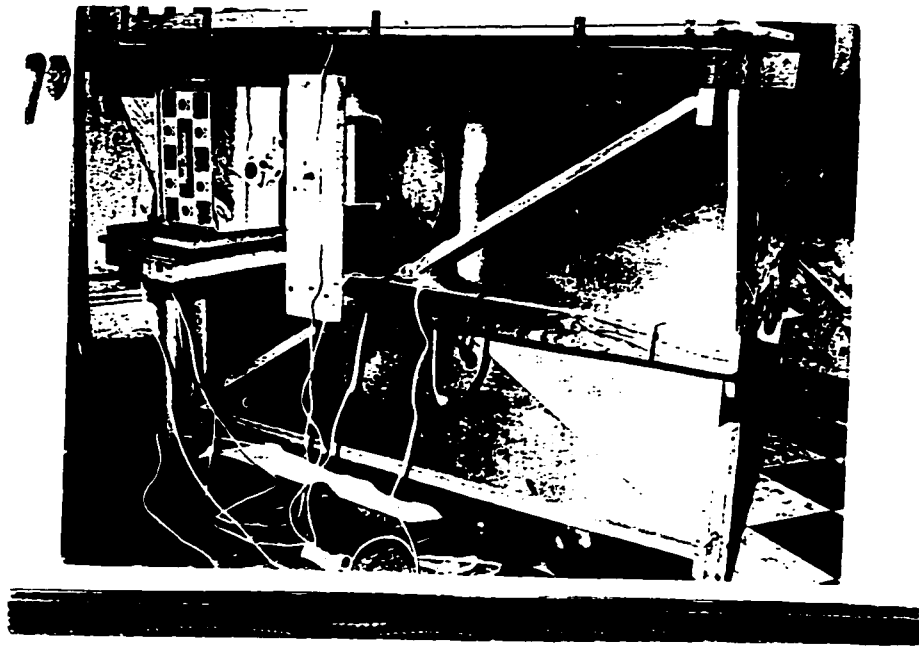
121. Moonlight on the Bay at Basswood, August 1953 Ink, pencil, crayon, talcum powder and chocolate on blue blotting paper



122. Two photographs of landscape, enlarged for the tableau in Etant donnés.... Included in the Manual of Instructions.



123. Two altered photographs of landscape, employed for the tableau in Etant donnés. Included in the Manual of Instructions.



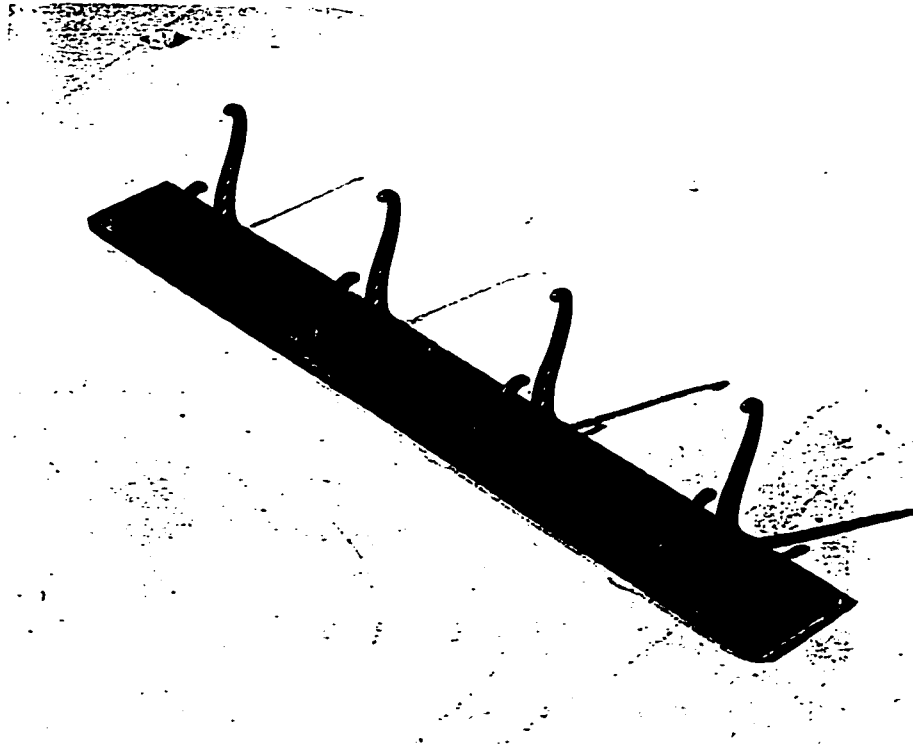
124. Photograph of the motorized apparatus which creates the illusion of the flowing waterfall. Included in the Manual of Instructions.



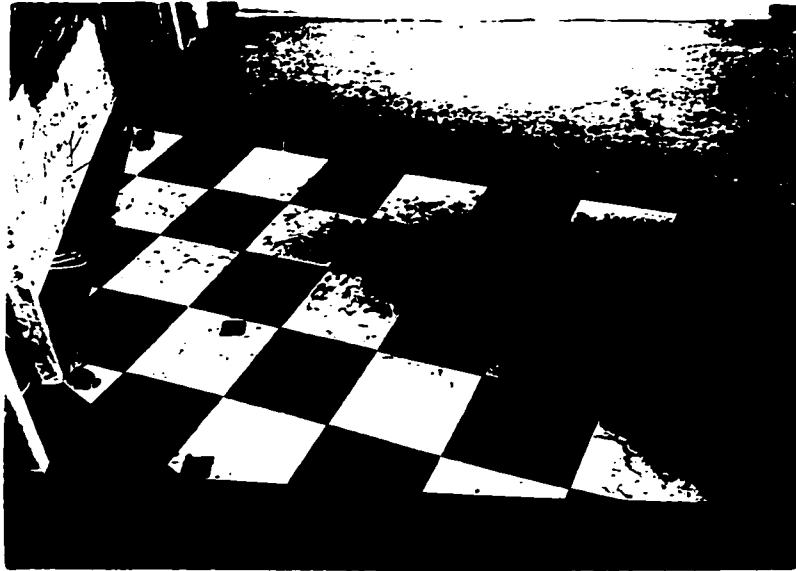
125. Torture Morte, 1959. Painted plaster of a foot with flies, on paper mounted on wood.



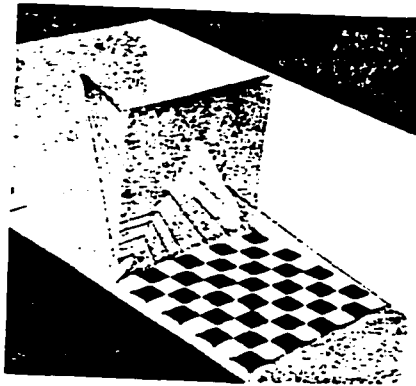
126. Sculpture Morte, 1959. Marzipan relief sculpture of vegetables and insects on paper, mounted on masonite).



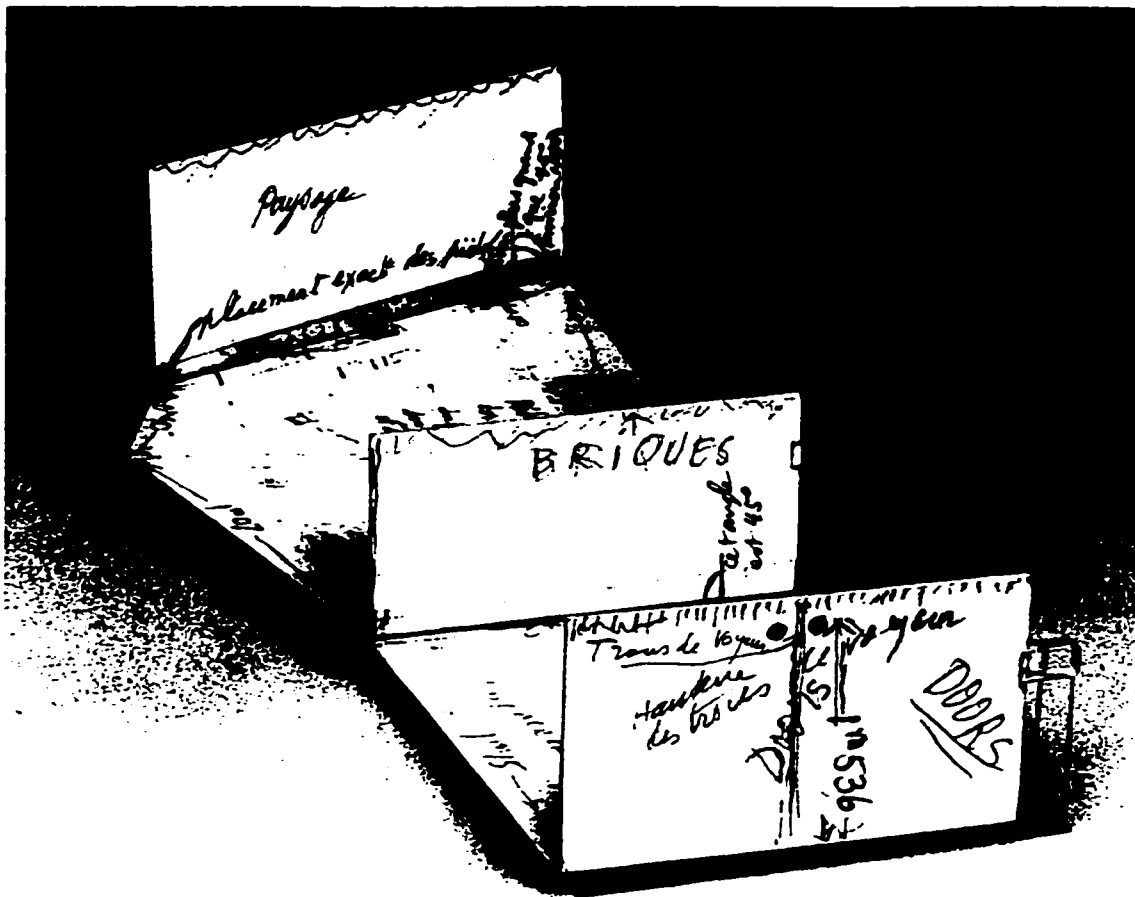
127. Trébuchet (Trap), 1917. Readymade: coat rack, wood and metal. Original lost. Several replicas.



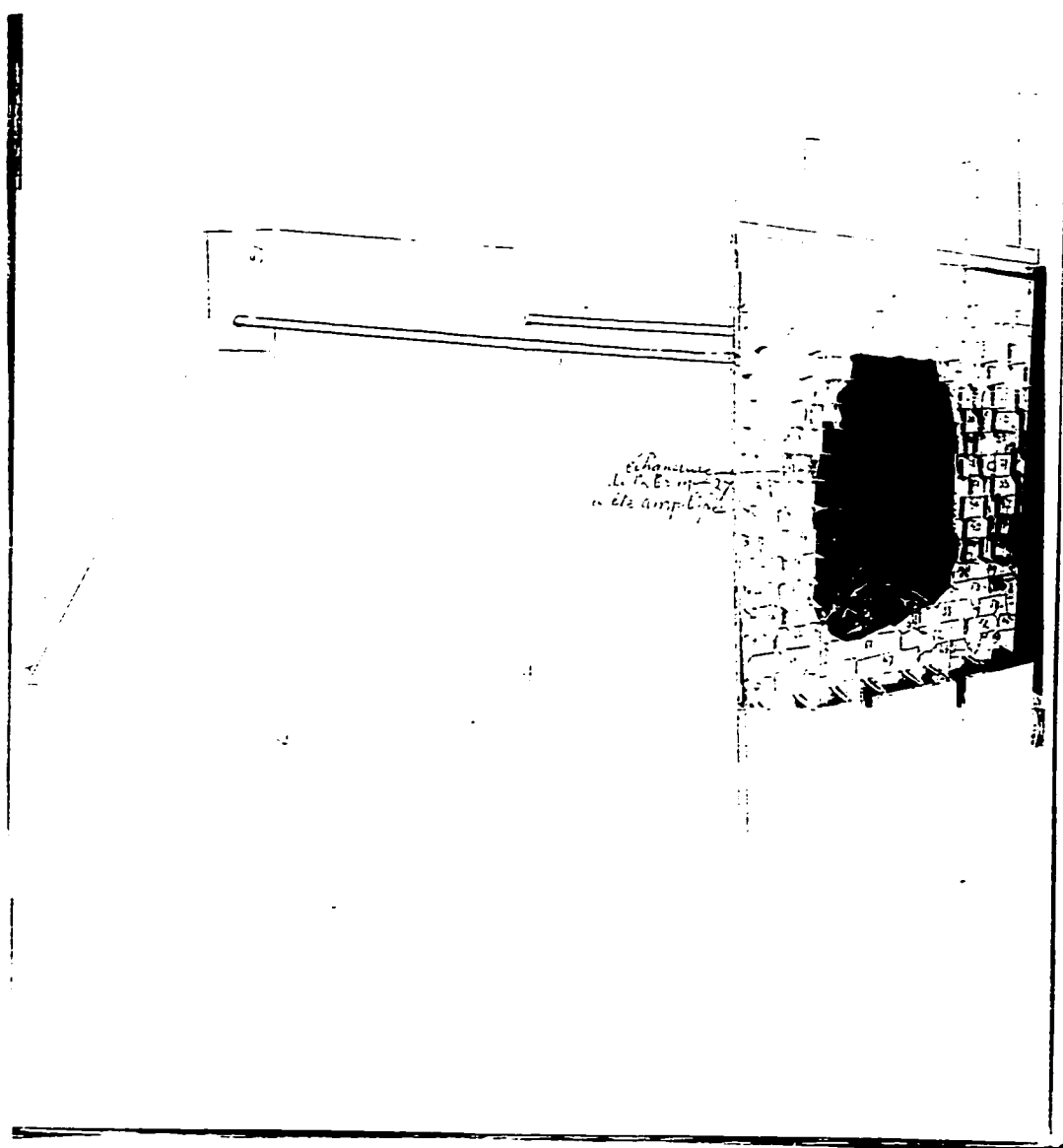
128. Photograph of the checkered linoleum floor plan of Etant donnés....
Included in the Manual of Instructions.



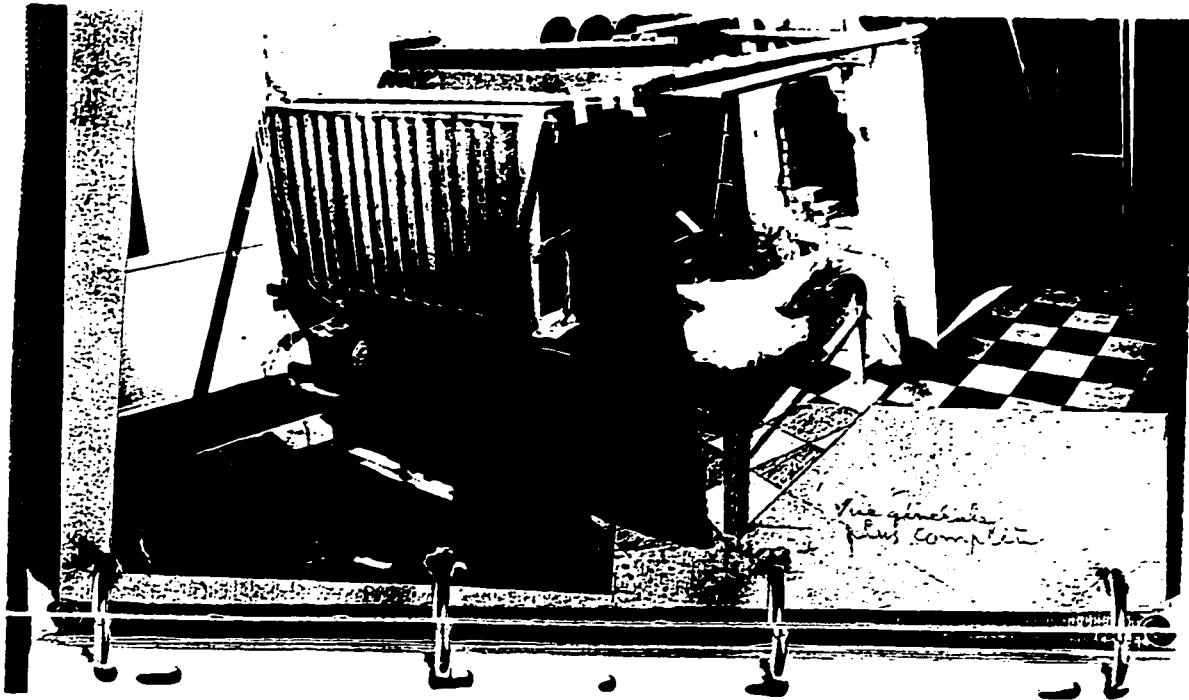
129. Illustration of Albertian perspective by William M. Ivins, Jr.
Image of two chambers.



130. Cardboard model of Etant donnés.... Inserted into the Manual of Instruction.



131. Photograph of the numbered bricks for interior faced with opening. Included in the Manual of Instruction.



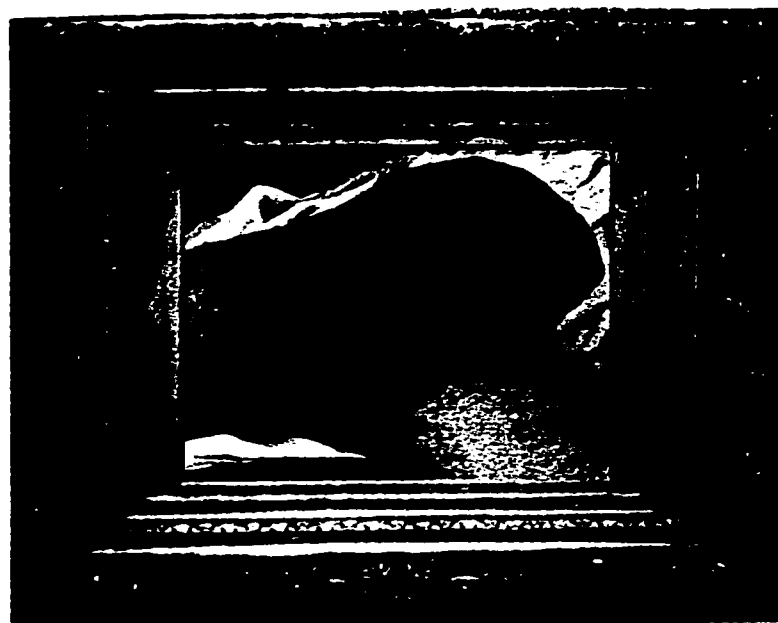
132. Photograph of interior installation seen from rear, included in the Manual of Instruction.



134. Louis-Ernest Barrias. Nature Unveiling Herself before Science. 1899. Sculpture made for the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers in France and subsequently placed in the medical faculty in Paris.



135. Figures of French 18th century recumbent wax figures used for medical studies.



136. Orlan. L'Origine de la Guerre (Origin of War). 1989
Computer-manipulated photograph.



137. Carolee Schneemann. Interior Scroll. 1975, 1977.
Photograph of performance



138.

Cindy Sherman. Untitled No. 216, 1989. Color photograph of artist.