

# ARSENAL

SURREALIST SUBVERSION

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*NOTES* — What is Surrealism? + Trotsky + ORPINGALIK: Art Poétique + Antonin ARTAUD: Letter on Lautréamont + Letter to Don Talayesva + Ted JOANS: Excerpts from a Letter + Surrealist Inquiry + Revolutionary Women + A Corpse (on Pablo Neruda) + Paul GARON: Sexual Freedom + T-Bone Slim + The Leadville Ice Palace + Homage to Marcel Duchamp

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*Address all correspondence to:*

Franklin Rosemont, 1858 North Howe Street (rear), Chicago, Illinois 60614

# INTRODUCTION

## *to the Complete Works of Lautréamont*

One must recover the colors used by Lewis in *The Monk* to paint the apparition of the infernal spirit behind the features of an admirable young man, naked to his crimson wings, his limbs caught in an orbit of diamonds under an antique breath of roses, a star on his forehead and his gaze imprinted with a savage melancholy; the colors with which Swinburne managed to discern the true countenance of the Marquis de Sade: "Amidst all of this noisy, imperial epic this thundering head is seen blazing, the vast chest streaked with lightning, the phallus-man, an august and cynical profile, the grimace of a sublime and awesome titan, circulating in these accursed pages like a shudder of the eternal, vibrating on the burnt lips like a breath of a stormy ideal. Come near and you will hear throbbing in this foul and bloody carrion the arteries of the universal soul, veins swollen with divine blood. All this cloaca is kneaded with azure. . ." One must, we say, recover these colors to situate, in the extraliterary atmosphere (and that is to say the least), the dazzling figure of black light, the Comte de Lautréamont. In the eyes of certain poets of today, *Les Chants de Maldoror* and *Poésies* sparkle with an incomparable brilliance. They are the expression of a total revelation that seems to exceed human possibilities. This is the whole of modern life, sublimated in a single blow in what is specifically its own. His backdrops revolve on the swinging doors of the ancient suns that illuminate the sapphire floor, the lamp with the silver beak, winged and smiling, advancing over the Seine, the green membranes of space and the shops on the rue Vivienne, prey to the crystalline rays from the center of the earth. An absolutely virgin eye alerts itself to the scientific perfection of the world, disregarding the consciously utilitarian character of that perfection, situating it, with all the rest, in the light of the apocalypse. *Definitive apocalypse*, in this work the great instinctive pulsebeats are lost and exalted upon contact with the asbestos cage enclosing a white-hot heart. For centuries to come, everything thought and explored most audaciously will find, here, a means to formulate in advance its magic law. The word, no longer style, suffers with Lautréamont a fundamental crisis, marking a *recommencement*. Thus are drawn the limits within which words can enter into rapport with words, and things with things. A principle of perpetual mutation overtakes objects and things alike, tending toward their total deliverance which implicates that of man. In this regard the language of Lautréamont is at once a dissolvant and a germinative plasma without equivalent.

The accusations of madness; of proof by absurdity, of an infernal machine, which have been used and even repeated about such a work, demonstrate very well that criticism has never approached it without sooner or later acknowledging its own failure. This is because, brought down to a human scale, this work, which is the very setting for all mental interferences, inflicts a tropical climate on the sensibility. Leon-Pierre Quint, in his very lucid work, *Le Comte de Lautréamont et Dieu*, extracts some of the most imperious qualities of this message that can be received only with gloves of fire:

1) "Evil" for Lautréamont (as for Hegel) being the form under which the motive force of historical development presents itself, it is important to fortify it in its *raison d'être*, which cannot be done better than by establishing it on prohibited desires, inherent in such primitive sexual activity as is manifested in particular by sadism.

2) Poetic inspiration, according to Lautréamont, comes as the product of a rupture between common sense and the imagination, a rupture most often consummated in favor of the latter and obtained by the voluntary, vertiginous acceleration of the verbal flow (Lautréamont speaks of the "extremely rapid development" of his sentences. As we know, the systematization of this kind of expression inaugurated surrealism).

3) Maldororian revolt cannot be Revolt forever if it must indefinitely spare one form of thought at the expense of another: thus it is necessary that in *Poésies* it assumes its own dialectical position.

The flagrant contrast offered, from a moral point of view, by these two works makes any other explanation unnecessary. Yet as one searches deeper for that element capable of effecting their unity, their identity from a psychological point of view, one discovers that it rests, above all, upon humor: the various operations which are, here, the resignation of logical thought, of moral thought, and subsequently of the two new methods of thought defined by opposition to these latter, but which does not recognize any other common factor: playing against the evidence, appealing to the mob of the boldest comparisons, torpedoing solemnity, reconsidering wrong-side out, transposed, those celebrated "thoughts" or maxims, etc. . . All that analysis reveals in this regard of the procedures in play yields with interest to the infallible representation that

Lautréamont leads us to make of humor such as he envisages it, humor developing with him its supreme power and submitting us, in the most total manner, to its law.

André BRETON

(translated by Cheryl Seaman)



46047 Six blades, Pearl handle. Each .....\$0.45  
Per dozen..... 4.80

# The Letters of Isidore Ducasse,

## Comte de Lautréamont

*EDITORS' NOTE: Not the slightest justification is required for presenting here a tentative translation of the letters of Isidore Ducasse, Comte de Lautréamont, whose influence on the origins and development of surrealism has been and remains second to none. It seems a crime, in fact, that these letters have not heretofore been accessible to the American or English reader unfamiliar with the French language. It is true that the very few critics in this country who have deigned to acknowledge even the existence of these letters have tended to belittle their significance. But surely no one is less qualified than these stale mandarins to express an opinion, even by implication, on any text written by Isidore Ducasse, Comte de Lautréamont, whose irreproachable extraliterary genius remains today, as ever, absolutely free of even the smallest compromise with anything that dishonors life or the dream of life, and whose very name remains a ferocious curse against every conceivable conformity to the principles of christian civilization. The following translation, let us note, is a collaborative effort: a preliminary draft by Cheryl Seaman was somewhat revised and modified according to another version sent to us by Stephen Schwartz from San Francisco.*

★

*The addressee of the oldest surviving letter is unknown. Lacroix published the first complete edition of Les Chants de Maldoror in 1869; the first canto had appeared separately the preceding year.*

Paris, 9 November 1868

Sir,

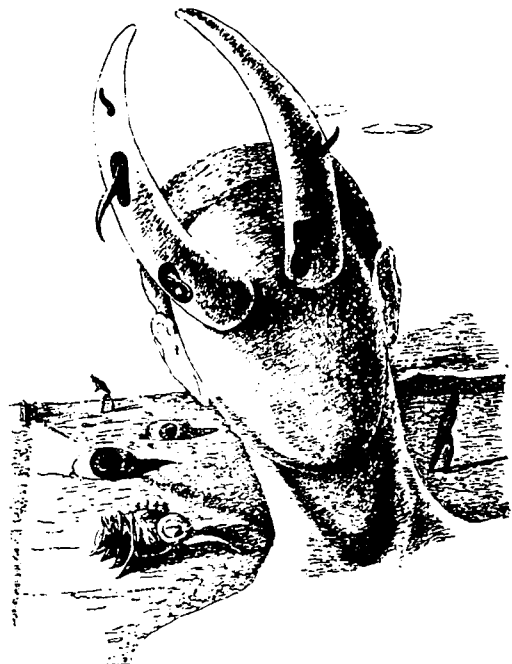
Would you be so kind as to do a criticism of this booklet in your estimable journal? Because of circumstances independent of my will, it could not be published in the month of August. It is appearing now at the bookshop of the PETIT JOURNAL, and in the European arcade at Weil and Bloch's. I intend to publish the 2nd canto at the end of this month by Lacroix.

Accept, Sir, my earnest salutations.

THE AUTHOR

★

*The second letter, which survives only in the fragment published by Genonceaux in his edition of the Chants (1890), is addressed to the banker Darasse, who was in charge of*



Victor BRAUNER: drawing for *Les Chants de Maldoror*

*Ducasse's allowance, etc., evidently appointed by Ducasse senior, a minor French consular official in Montevideo.*

22 May 1869

Sir,

It is just yesterday that I received a letter dated 21 May; it was yours. Well, please know that I cannot, unfortunately, allow the occasion to pass without expressing to you my excuses. Here is why: because, if you had informed me, the other day, in ignorance of whatever misfortunes could befall the circumstances in which I find myself, that the funds were exhausted, I would have taken care not to touch them; assuredly, I would have been just as happy not to write these three letters as you would have been not to read them. You have availed yourself of the deplorable system of distrust vaguely prescribed by the eccentricity of my father; but you have guessed that my headache does not prevent me from considering attentively the difficult situation in which until now you have been placed by a sheet of writing paper from South America, the principal fault of which was a lack of clarity; for I am not even considering the offensiveness of certain melancholy observations that one easily pardons an old man, and which appeared to me, at the first reading, to have an air of imposing on you, in the future perhaps, the necessity of relinquishing your strict role of banker vis-à-vis a gentleman who is coming to live at the capital. . . Pardon me, Sir, I have a request to make of you: if my father were to send other funds before the 1st of September, at which time my body will make its appearance at the door of your bank, would you have the kindness to let me know? For the rest, I am home at all hours of the day; you would have only to write me a note, and it is probable that I would receive it almost as soon as the young lady who pulls the cord, or even before, if I find myself in the vestibule. . . And all this is, I repeat, an insignificant trifle of formality! To present ten dry fingernails rather than five, a lovely affair; after having reflected much, I confess it seems to me filled with a notable quantity of unimportance. . .

★

*The following three letters are addressed to Verbroeckhoven, an associate of Lacroix. The word lundistes (from lundi, Monday) apparently refers to the Monday salons of the critic Sainte-Beuve. The closing salutation — T.A.V. — is an abbreviation of tout à vous, "entirely yours."*

Paris, October 23

Let me first of all explain to you my situation. I have sung of evil as did Mickiewickz, Byron, Milton, Southey, A. de Musset, Baudelaire, etc. Naturally, I have somewhat exaggerated the tone in order to do something new in the direction of this sublime literature that praises despair only to oppress the reader and make him desire good as a

remedy. Therefore, it is always the good that one praises, in short, only by a method more philosophical and less naive than that of the old school, of which Victor Hugo and a few others are the only representatives who are still living. Sell, I am not preventing you from it: what must I do for that? Set your conditions. What I want is that the service of criticism be done in the manner of the principal *lundistes*. They alone will judge, in the first and last resort, the beginning of a publication that will obviously not see its end until much later, when I will have seen my own. Thus, the moral at the end is not yet given. And meanwhile, there is already an immense sadness upon each page. Is this, then, evil? No, certainly. I would be grateful to you, because if the critics speak well of it I could, in the following editions, delete some passages that are too powerful. Thus, what I desire above all, is to be judged by the critics, and, once known, things will take their own course. T.A.V.

I. DUCASSE

M. I. DUCASSE

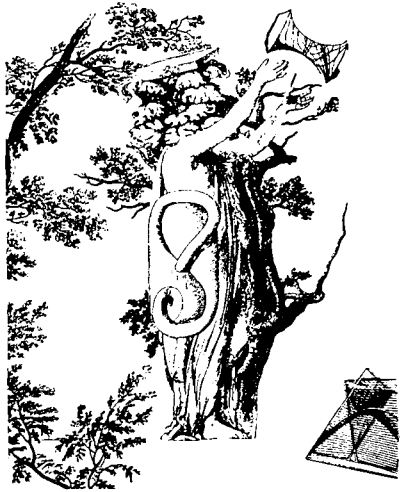
rue du Faubourg-Montmartre, 32.



*A copy of the Problème du Mal, to which reference is made in the following letter, contains two brief annotations by Ducasse, reproduced in the G.L.M. edition of the Oeuvres Complètes (1938).*

Paris, 27 October

I have spoken to Lacroix in compliance with your instructions. He will, inevitably, write to you. They are accepted, your propositions: That I make you agent for me, the Forty per cent and the 13th copy. Since circumstances have rendered the work worthy, up to a certain point, of figuring advantageously in your catalogue, I believe it could be sold for a bit more; I don't see any inconvenience. Besides, as far as that is concerned, minds will be better prepared than in France to savour this poetry of revolt. Ernest Naville (correspondent for the Institut de France) presented last year, citing philosophers and accursed poets, some lectures on the *Problem of Evil*, at Geneva and Lausanne, that must have left traces in people's minds by an imperceptible current that is ever expanding. He has subsequently assembled them in one volume. I will send him a copy. In the following editions he will be able to speak of me, for I resume, with more vigor than my predecessors, this strange thesis, and his book, which has appeared in Paris, at Charbuliez the



Max ERNST: collage for *Les Chants de Maldoror*

bookseller's, correspondent for French Switzerland, and Belgium, and in Geneva, in the same bookstore, will make me indirectly known in France. It's a question of time. When you send me the copies, send me 20; they will suffice.  
T. A. V.

I. DUCASSE

★

Paris, 21 February 1870

Sir,

Would you be so kind as to send me *The Supplement to the Poetry of Baudelaire*? I am sending you, enclosed, 2 francs, the price, in stamps for postage. Let it be as soon as possible because I will need it for a work of which I speak more below.

I have the honor, etc.

I. DUCASSE  
Faubourg Montmartre, 32.

Has Lacroix ceded the edition, or what has he done with it? Or have you refused it? He has said nothing to me about it. I have not seen him since. You know, I have renounced my past. I sing now only of hope, but for that it is necessary first to attack the doubt in this century (melancholies, sorrows, anguishes, despairs, lugubrious whinnies, artificial malices, puerile pride, laughable maledictions, etc.). In a work which I will take to Lacroix during the first days of March, I take up the most beautiful poetry of Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Alfred de Musset, Byron and Baudelaire, and I correct them in the direction of hope; I indicate how it should have been done. I am correcting at the same time six of the worst passages of my damned old book.

*The last letter — which is also the last surviving text by Ducasse, who died 24 November 1870, shortly after the appearance of his Poésies — is addressed to the banker Darasse.*

Paris, 12 March 1870

Sir,

Allow me to resume from a bit earlier. I have had a book of poetry published by M. Lacroix (Boul. Montmartre, 15). But once it was printed he refused to let it appear, because life was painted there in colors that were too bitter, and he feared the attorney-general. It was something in the genre of Byron's *Manfred* and Mickiewicz's *Konrad* but far more terrible. The publication cost 1200 francs, of which I had already supplied 400. But the entire thing went down the drain. This has opened my eyes. I told myself that since the poetry of doubt (of the volumes of today not 150 pages will remain) has arrived at such a point of gloomy despair, and theoretical malice, consequently it is because it is radically false; for the reason *that principles are being discussed and it is not necessary to discuss them*: it's more than unjust. The poetic whimperings of this century are only hideous sophisms. To sing of boredom, miseries, sorrows, melancholies, death, shadow, the somber, etc., is to want, at any cost, not to regard anything but the puerile reverses of things. Lamartine, Hugo, Musset voluntarily metamorphosed themselves into panty-waists. They are the Great Soft Heads of our epoch. Always sniveling. That is why I have completely changed my method, to sing exclusively of *hope, expectation, CALM, happiness, DUTY*. And thus I renew with the Corneilles and the Racines the chain of good sense and sang-froid, so brusquely interrupted since by the *poseurs* Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. My book will be finished only in four or five months. But, while waiting, I would like to send my father the preface, containing sixty pages, at A. Lemerre's. Thus he will see that I am working and he will send me the full sum for the printing of the volume later.

I ask you, Sir, if my father has told you to release any money to me besides the allowance, since the months of November and December. And, in that case, 200 francs will be needed to print the preface so I could send it, on the 22nd, to Montevideo. If he has said nothing, would you be so kind as to let me know?

I am honored to salute you.

I. DUCASSE  
15, rue Vivienne



Black Nightshade  
(*S. nigrum*). (1/2).

## SAXIFRAGE

for Mary

*Many-maned woman adrift in secret  
Castaway balanced by acacias  
Visible only when nude  
As if held up by your profile in a net  
of Saint Elmo's Fire  
Abandoned by the predatory orchards that are the  
debris left behind by your shadow  
Your gestures form your body's body  
Coal advances preceded by its antelopes  
A restless patina holds you at bay in a room  
where you must lose or be lost  
Awaited by seaweed to which you are linked  
by the non-laceration of night  
Here in a grouse's crest where the flame of signs  
meets a bed of azaleas demanding time to speak  
At this point throwing its adamantine rays at your feet  
Foliage of desire climbing to the eaves of weather  
Here fear of the dark is an implement like no other*

Stephen SCHWARTZ

## POEM

*She who was born before the light  
Is this her seventh day  
today, like yesterday and in eternity  
without past or future?*

*She is reborn  
With the sleep of birds  
while white stones hide  
on the path deserted by goats  
and the roads frequented by silence.*

*You see nothing of her but her myriads of eyes  
her triangular reptile eyes,  
that open one by one  
among celestial lianas.*

Jean-Joseph RABEARIVÉLO

## THE MEANS TO AN END

*In the eye of the king there was a postage stamp  
And in the eye of the king  
appearing on the postage stamp  
There was again a king who had an eye  
In which there was a postage stamp  
With or without king  
With or without eye*

*Death to the king  
Down with the postage stamp  
Long live the eye!*

E. L. T. MESENS

## ARABIA

*The patterned sea left tracks  
like a giraffe  
on my soft moist thoughts*

*The waves echoed through eyes  
without laughter  
to find sunless days  
lying in the street  
without eyes  
without eyes  
like threading the tongue of a lizard  
through the airless distances  
to find delicate fountains of flowers  
encased in bricks*

*A bear roams alone  
through the alleys  
The cabbages are buried  
beneath fierce torrents  
of spices  
The silver slippers  
slide into the river  
without a ripple*

*Without a light  
love defines the unknown places  
and places the unknown  
before us*

*A confrontation  
with the sounds of breath  
and the taste of flesh  
of stars and strawberries*

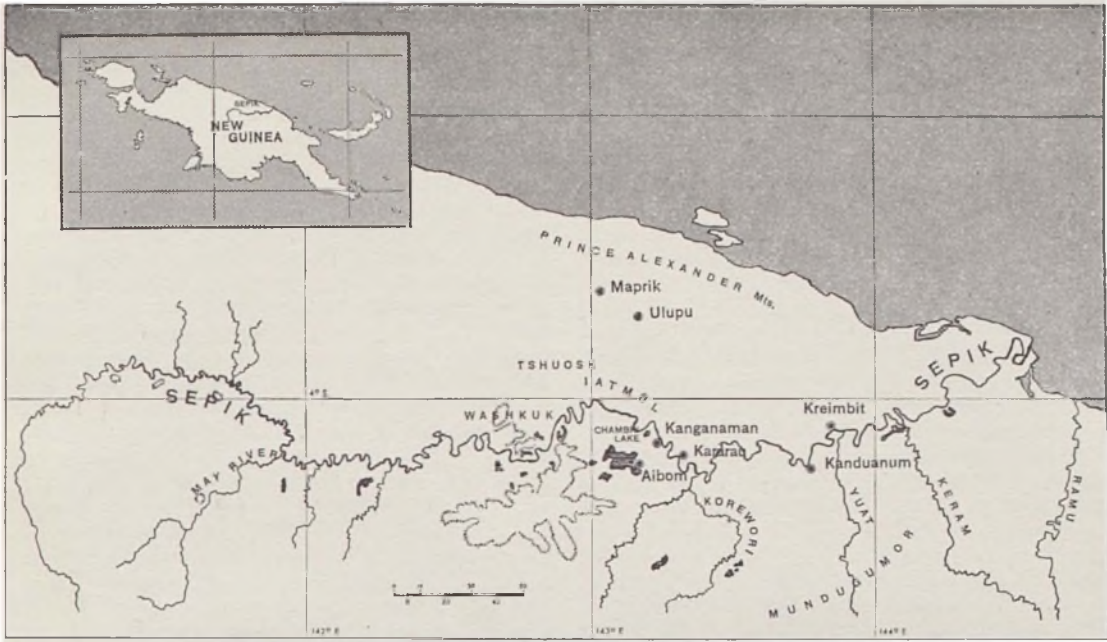
*Before us  
we discover lands  
plentiful to the eyes  
tasteful to the ears  
People who feel  
without speaking  
A dwarf who leads us  
over the immense plains  
through caverns of ice  
We follow the designs of flowers  
etched into the cliffs  
by the green light  
of a salamander sun*

Penelope ROSEMONT

## ON THE PRAIRIE

*On the prairie three trees take tea  
Your hands are hidden  
My hands are hidden  
A single mouth and the hour of summer  
Let me play the game of habit  
Fine steamer on the lines of my hands*

Etienne LERO



The Sepik River Region, New Guinea

# MANIFESTO

## on the Position & Direction of the Surrealist Movement in the United States

*One must never hesitate to turn the pages of the human heart and read there the inexhaustible message of light and shadow: at midnight, for example, in the Gulf of Alaska. A ruthless wind of short circuits darkens the multiplication of cypress trees on the river's edge, simultaneously igniting a spoonful of the Middle Ages which is the color of cocaine and the weight of phosphorus, and which happens to be lying on the piano like a sleeping dog with cropped ears. I am thinking of a print by Posada: a bitter and forlorn profile of the Zapatistas, proceeding recklessly over the sterile margins of combustible air. But the leaves of the willows, meanwhile, as if to signify their disconcerting laziness, solemnly turn to snow, soon to fall asleep and cover the scornful rooftops with the accidental gloves of their proverbial silence, while everyone hearkens to the desperate glances of the cruel, marsupial wanderers.*

*One thing is certain: all is not yet found.*

*And it is from this plateau of anticipation that an indestructible ark — assembled from the honor of wolves, the laughter of agate and the limitless pride of dreams — sets sail into the deepest and most intricate folds of the infinite. Whales, basking in the blue light of artichokes and in the luminous red shadows of jackdaws imprinted forever in the nocturnal sand, sing a*

*strange and irreconcilable song, the refrain of which calls to mind a feather made of glass dropped into a well a thousand miles away. Perhaps it is sufficient to recall the trajectory of the tooth of temptation, or the rutaceous shrubs, laden with thorns and bearing large baccate fruit with hard exocarp: focal point of a child's pleasure. Dreams, in any case, do not adapt to the vicarious needs of reality, and in this there is a lesson to be learned. The point is, precisely, to step aside, to diverge, absolutely, from the rules of the game; to leap from the arena with hysterical verve; to elude forever the traps set out along the way. It is time to let the cat of hallucination out of the bag of reality. Long live the Impossible! Do I make myself understood? Is it necessary to discourse from the balcony on the morality of the Androctonus occitanus? Life, alas! sometimes seems hardly as long as the paragraph I happen to be writing. But poetry, we may be sure, will intervene in this area as decisively as in all others.*

*The telephone rings. What if it is Prof. Thaddeus Lowe, in his balloon, at the peak of Mt. Kilimanjaro?*

*Hello?*

*One day there will come a dawn so bright that all preceding dawns will have to hide their heads in shame and disappear over the horizon*



*in their automobiles, to return later as goldfish in the streams that will appear wherever one desires them to be. Minute fragments of this magic dawn are perceptible even now in the farthest corners of the circulation of the blood of night, especially on the very darkest nights, when the stars hurl themselves from the frying pan of astronomy into the living fire of the imagination, forming the most provocative constellations according to the infallible zodiac of desire. It has been left to us to map these constellations, to encourage the convergence, coalescence and crystallization of these fragments of daybreak, to hasten, in general and in particular, the arrival, on a million horses of all colors, of this dawn of permanent enchantment. When it bursts forth, at last, in all its wild flowering of incomparable radiance, all dreams will be realized. Nothing will remain untransformed. Everyone will understand every word of Heraclitus. The love of freedom and the freedom of love will make love in the bed of freedom. The hands of all the clocks in the world will clap together in a long moment of applause for the goodness of man. Every notion of exploitation, God, cops, dishonor, will perish once and for all in the purest conflagration of all time. The sky will open like an egg and say good-bye to the past and the night will open like a door and say hello to the future.*

*Everything is always and automatically to be risked absolutely.*

*One knows, at least, that the thread one finds in the labyrinth must lead elsewhere.*

\* \* \*

And thus I remember a time, not so long ago, when the looking-glass of appearances showed its first small signs of shattering before our merciless inquisitions. To be sure, we had had little experience in the world; we were condemned, for the most part, to what seemed an insufferable solitude; we were, in fact, merely sixteen or seventeen years old. But this did not prevent entire centuries from welling up in our hearts, looking for trouble. It was without the slightest effort that we cultivated a certain far-reaching arrogance, which was by no means without humor. We raised questions the way an executioner raises his axe. In all innocence (but one must not forget the Oedipus complex) we became red terrorists of the mind before the white mirror of deception. We wanted, above all, to *break through* this mirror. And I insist that it was violence alone — theoretical perhaps, but nonetheless *extreme, unsparing, quick* — which assured us of reaching, by our various roads, the *other side*. Make no mistake: we knew this other side to be entirely realizable. It had absolutely nothing to do with the decrepit vestments of theology or vainglorious philosophical parasitism. It was only the other side — *the marvelous* — in which the light of the future, the light of freedom, glimmered. Everything else reflected only the four walls of a devastated ruin. The old promises of life, decked with jewels of paste and imitation attar of roses, languished incurably on the official

deathbeds. All that was rotten in the human condition was summed up and crowned by a hundred thousand large and small everyday compromises which confined the minds of men and women — not to mention their activity — to the immediate, the trivial, the hopelessly insignificant. The world that was offered to us was a contemptible fraud. *We refused it.*

Perhaps it is worth emphasizing that we were never the prisoners of polite despair, in search of the innocuous distractions of Nothingness. We disdained, from the very beginning, the metaphysical comforts of floundering fashionably in the salons of the absurd. We saw ourselves as the perfectors of a desperate system of integral pessimism which we sharpened till it became a razor, enabling us to slice through all varieties of hypocrisy. We were bored, rather *definitively*, by the chattering teeth and running nose of what passed itself off as the intelligentsia. The debate between Sartre and Camus, for example, which provoked a delayed noise on this side of the Atlantic, was for us of no more consequence than whether one should put gardenias or rhododendrons on a grave. It was lies and more lies, and another variety of lies. We preferred the truth of laughter, tidal wave of vengeance. *Authenticity* was the first and foremost of our demands. Those who failed to meet it scarcely received a second glance, unless we chose to spit in their faces. And it is for this reason that long after the author of *No Exit* has departed and is forgotten, people will recall, more than ever, with profound admiration, the supremely elevated genius of Jacques Vaché, theoretician of Umour, who happened to commit suicide in 1919 by taking an overdose of opium.

The *street*, in any case, seemed then — and still seems — to be all that is required to provoke apparitions of exaltation and clarity. One morning in Paris we were awakened by loud music from outside; from the window it was possible to see two musicians flanking a black goat which danced on its hind legs upon a table. Or again: During the great snowstorm in Chicago a few winters ago, the newspapers reported the arrest of an elderly black man who had been walking in the middle of the street, completely nude, chewing on a lemon. Somehow I cannot help but regard such intrusions, even as simple as these, as exemplary privileges. They invariably have about them a certain adrenalin-like quality which impels one to be more alert, more sensitive to the promptings of the unknown, and to put everything else in a truer and more impassioned perspective. Severely jarring one's sensibility from the monotony of habitual intellectual exercises, they give the lie, with delirious extravagance, to the far from exquisite corpse of Cartesian ideas which remains in power largely by the force of inertia (assisted, of course, by the church and the police).

The preceding reflections lead to what seems to me an inescapable conclusion. *Revolt alone came to us as the bearer of real truths.* Revolt: pure, enraged, bursting into flame, restoring us to a sense of a truly liveable destiny. Revolt:

always the surest of criteria. One would look entirely in vain outside the scope of this violent non-conformity for any landmarks which have carried us forward.

For not even those black quilts of sand on the shores of the Canary Islands which reflect less light than the edge of a cormorant's cry as it dives, perhaps for the last time, into a secret corner of the sea, could ever efface those luminous footprints left in the mind by those who, over the ravaged vicissitudes of centuries, have said NO to every conceivable form of slavery.

It is thus entirely within the province of natural development that we should find our way to the work of Lautréamont and the founders of surrealism who recognized themselves, in 1925, precisely as *specialists in revolt*.

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The wave of oniric experimentation initiated with the first automatic writings left no doubt regarding the imminent death of the elementary nihilism of Dada, nor the essential character of the movement that was soon to surpass it. The first surrealist work — *Les Champs Magnétiques* by André Breton and Philippe Soupault — was serialized in the review LITTERATURE in 1919 and appeared as a book the following year. It was largely under the sign of Freud that these first steps were taken away from the tiresome repetitions of Dada. Let us acknowledge that the Dada movement played its crucial role in attacking, head-on, two thousand years of christian civilization, saving from the debris little else than a certain conception of freedom and an inexorable sense of humor. But by 1922 it had run its course. The Dadaist practice of revolt and scandal, of course, was not at all renounced by the surrealists, but rather brought to a higher level, according to the well known principle of the negation of the negation. From *Dadaist Disgust* (the title of one of Tzara's manifestoes of 1918) we move forward to the *Surrealist Revolution* (the title of the first surrealist journal, which appeared in 1924).

One sees that from its very first breath as an organized movement, surrealism identified itself with the cause of revolution. Moreover, its adherents set about to destroy the petrifying egotism, narcissism and complacency of bourgeois culture, the entire network of inhuman values which served to legitimize and consolidate, in the deepest recesses of the human mind, the hegemony of bourgeois ideology.

The emancipatory significance of the surrealist effort becomes much clearer if one contrasts it to the theories and practice of various schools of realism — from the "stream-of-consciousness" school, to the "new novel" (*roman nouveau*), not to forget so-called "socialist" realism, which a few people persist in mistaking for revolutionary art. Despite the pretensions of its most eminent and cultured defenders (Georg Lukacs, for example), realism is essentially *simplistic*, ultimately reducing the problems of human expression to the

exceedingly narrow requirements of the literary reproduction of the details of everyday life or of political propaganda. But all realism — not only stalinist realism, the weakest link in the realistic chain, but *all* realism, from Balzac to Sartre, from Gainsborough to Andy Warhol — completely betrays the deepest desires of man, abandoning these desires to the vile mercy of religious superstition, advertising slogans, the ranting of demagogues, commercial pornography, militarism, sports, the babbling of radio and television and other agencies of cretinization. Language, deprived of its essential poetic function, becomes the vacuous henchman of the exploitation of man by man. Thought, hopelessly degraded, becomes increasingly shackled to the machinery of Law and Order. Realism, any sort of realism, "socialist," "existentialist" or otherwise, is absolutely powerless to intervene on this terrain. Ignoring the dialectics of consciousness and submerging the most internal needs of the individual beneath one variety or another of pseudo-collectivist and "hard-boiled" rhetoric, it thus plays entirely into the hands of the perpetrators of the existing order. One knows only too well how fascism has taken full advantage of the failure of the communist movement in this regard.

Surrealism, to the contrary, strives to liberate the imagination from the strictures of repression, to restore to man his latent poetic faculties, to put language in the service of desire, to enable it to formulate ardent images of implacable subversion. There is no "realistic" escape from life which offers more than the surrealist seizure of life. Unveiled language — and this is confirmed not only by surrealist

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research but also by psychoanalysis and anthropology — does not propose an escape but rather a thoroughgoing transformation of the world. In the employ of exploiters and oppressors, language exploits and oppresses. But in the service of dreamers, language dreams.

The heroic adventure of automatic writing permitted words, for the first time in a systematic manner, to express “the real functioning of thought.” It was this rather than the literary practical jokes of Dada which sounded the end of Literature, in precisely the same way that Marx’s doctrine of proletarian emancipation sounded the end of Philosophy. Writing, which now assumed true oracular power, capable of provoking a total revelation, actually became dangerous. For automatism has this distinct advantage over even the most refined “literary technique”: its overpoweringly *prehensile* character which (so to speak) *automatically* prevents its ossification, always permitting it to reach out and discover something *new*.

Starting from the very depths of what man calls the imagination, pure psychic automatism brings to the surface signals of the individual’s farthest vision into himself, signals which tend to take on aspects of the future. Surrealism, this invisible ray, was brought into being not only to discover these signals, but to realize the future they call forth. The automatic image becomes a guide to action.

Of course the surrealists did not all at once fully realize the implications of their earliest intuitions and defiance. “One is not born a marxist,” Lenin once said. But already in 1925 the surrealist group in Paris formally entered the political arena with a vehement protest against the Moroccan War — a first step which rapidly led to others. In 1927 Breton, Péret, Eluard, Aragon and Unik enlisted in the Communist Party. We may note in passing that from the very beginning the surrealists’ revolutionary activity was continually impeded by the myopic politicians of the Left who professed to see in surrealism only indications of “decadence” and other material to fit their convenient, sterile formulas.

It is worth calling attention here to a point ignored by nearly all the critics, which is that surrealism intervened on the political plane not because it was infected with an intellectual St. Vitus’ dance, but as the direct and even inevitable result of its own development. Its political activity, that is to say, has never been *aberrant*. Surrealism is thus entirely removed from the “spirit of conversion,” the grotesque “flirtations with communism” which characterized a certain particularly unfruitful period of bourgeois intellectual hysteria in this country (and elsewhere) in the 1930s. Above all, it must be made clear that the steps which led Breton and the surrealist movement into the ranks of revolutionary marxism had nothing in common with the frivolous and flagrantly hypocritical posturing of a Matthew Josephson or other pseudo-revolutionary dilettantes and career-seekers. A careful sequential reading of the surrealist publications (books, reviews, tracts), compared with the writings of the dilettante intelligentsia, leaves no doubt in this

regard. This explains why surrealism, after breaking with the C.P., continued to pursue its revolutionary vocation, even in the darkest times, and continues to do so to this day, despite the absence of any organized mass revolutionary forces in the U.S. or Europe. On the other hand, those intellectuals of the 30s who jumped into communism superficially and opportunistically when the wind was favorable and profitable, were just as quick to jump out, with little or no damage to their reputations, as soon as the wind changed. (And now, it goes without saying, most of them occupy high-paying positions in the front rank of the outspokenly anti-revolutionary academic intelligentsia).

Today, when we review the whole development of the surrealist movement, it is impossible to overlook the fact that the period of its most magnificent flowering coincides with the period of its greatest intimacy with the forces of proletarian revolution. The days of *Nadja*, *Surrealism and Painting*, *The Communicating Vessels*, critical paranoia, *L’Age d’or*, the surrealist object, homages to D.A.F. Sade, *Mad Love*, much of the greatest poetry of Péret, Eluard, Breton, Tzara, Mesens, Léro, the best works of René Crevel, the *Egregores* of Pierre Mabille, and a remarkable efflorescence of surpassing brilliance in the plastic efforts of Ernst, Dali, Arp, Man Ray, Tanguy, Magritte, Giacometti, Miro — these are also the days of the Sacco-Vanzetti riots (in which the surrealists participated), the celebrated telegram to Moscow, published in *LE SURREALISME AU SERVICE DE LA REVOLUTION*, the anti-imperialist exhibition, Breton’s famous text against Renault, the *Appeal to Struggle* in the Spring of 1934, the attempt at revolutionary political regroupment in *Contre-Attaque*, etc. This coincidence seems to us a lesson of the greatest importance.

In recent years the politics of surrealism has become a favorite *target* at which the critics have enjoyed aiming their insidiously poisoned arrows. Their conclusion (prepared, of course, in advance) is that poetic and political revolutions don’t mix. How numerous, and how boring, are these disquisitions on the “failure” of surrealism! “It was paradoxical,” writes P. Waldberg, who as usual mistakes one of his trivial platitudes for the revelation of a profound and original truth, “to attempt to make marxism, founded on reason, compatible with the surrealist priority given to dreams and to irrational modes of knowledge.”

It is an old and repulsively familiar tune that Waldberg sings (and it remains a favorite of the critics) but fortunately the world refuses to be as stupidly simple as he and his friends would like it to be. It is true, of course, that the stalinist interpretation of Marx’s teaching (unforgivably regarded by too many critics as the “true” and “orthodox” interpretation) is philosophically fundamentally indistinguishable from bourgeois rationalism, and is therefore incompatible with surrealism. But what must be made absolutely clear is that stalinism itself is essentially a *pseudo-theory* empirically elaborated to justify the oppressive political needs of the Soviet bureaucracy, and, as such, is

nothing more than a particularly horrendous *perversion* of marxism, as far from the meaning of Marx as it is possible to be.

Marxism is the theory of the self-emancipation of the working class. In spite of the prevalent misunderstanding and gross distortions of this theory, surrealism concedes nothing to its innumerable slanderers and manhandlers. At the present time, as anti- and pseudo-marxist ideas are becoming increasingly widespread, it is a matter of principle for us always to insist unreservedly on the unimpeachable integrity of the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, etc., and to vociferously protest the abuse to which these teachings are ceaselessly subjected, not only by paid agents of imperialism but by so many of those who call themselves "marxists."

To the observer untainted with bourgeois, bureaucratic or sectarian ideological requirements, it should be evident that surrealism and marxism have in common at least one crucial theoretical source (the Hegelian dialectic), a common aspiration (complete human freedom), and numerous points of convergence (beginning with Marx's point of departure: *merciless criticism of everything in existence*).

Surrealism, in any case, is decidedly *not* a mere school of "fellow travelers." Our solidarity with the cause of revolutionary marxism not only does not require any eclecticism or concessions on our part, but in fact emphatically rejects them. It is precisely surrealism's fidelity to its own means which enables it, in its proper domain, to contribute to the undermining and effective overthrow of the capitalist order. No one denies that the greatest contributions of surrealism are not made in the trade unions, on the shop floor, at political rallies, or even on the barricades. But is this supposed to mean that it has no revolutionary tasks to fulfill? No, we cannot accept such a facile evasion of the interior life of men and women. "The dream, too, must have its Bastille Day!" wrote Nicolas Calas. It is hardly necessary to add that nothing will prevent us from participating, to the fullest possible extent, on all levels of revolutionary political activity, like any other rank and file militant.

For us, there is absolutely no contradiction between the celebrated watchword of Lenin, the embodiment of the very essence of his whole teaching: *All Power to the Workers' Councils!* and the slogan which appeared on the walls of Paris during the revolutionary events of May-June 1968: *All Power to the Imagination!* We will even go so far as to say that the realization of one is impossible without the realization of the other.

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All in all, the surrealist political experiment appears to us to have been *definitive*. We refuse today to succumb to the delusions of a jealous nostalgia which would like us to return to strategies, tactics, means and forms which have long since been surpassed and laid aside. Surrealist aims are firmly rooted in the future.

We are not out to recapture the past: the Golden Age lies ahead. We do not see, looking backward, any "model" for the political struggle which faces us here and now. But just as strenuously do we refuse to adapt ourselves to the wind of fashion — in particular, "revolutionary" fashion, which inevitably turns out to be merely a technique for the rejuvenation of the existing order. Surrealism rejects the easy ways out: the dreary sociological utopianizers pontificating in an academic vacuum (like the disciples of Herbert Marcuse who caricature his weakest points while ignoring or debasing his real and invaluable contributions), the imbecile American middle-class idolators of North Korean communism, or the clever super-communist manicurists *a la* NEW LEFT REVIEW, who differ from the smug armchair theoreticians of the 30s only in the way that fashions in upholstery have changed. *No revolutionary movement yet exists in this country*: we hold the recognition of this elementary fact to be the minimal necessary prerequisite for building one.

For too long, it seems to us, the scattered and small quasi-revolutionary forces in this country have buried their heads in the sand of depressingly secondary problems. What has been totally lacking is the perspective of totality. Surrealism, which demands nothing less than the total liberation of man, the total recreation of the conditions of life ("human understanding," said Breton, "must be rebuilt from scratch") seems destined to play here a not inconsiderable role in the inspiration of a certain *breadth of vision* among the revolutionary tendencies that are beginning to emerge. It is worth adding that a vital first step toward a true revolutionary vision would be to abjure, once and for all, the hopelessly idiotic (albeit fashionable) neo-populist rhetorical smog which reduces every human problem, no matter how complicated, to the abominably low level of one of those muddled "thoughts" of Mao-tse-tung. *More light* must be the impassioned war-cry of those who would advance.



Surrealism is entirely on the side of all those individual and collective tendencies which are moving in this direction of *revolutionary lucidity*, the only direction in which the invaluable conceptions of class struggle, seizure of power, dictatorship of the proletariat, workers' management, etc., may attain the level of living truth rather than suffer monstrous degradation in the hands of ideological necrophiles.

There is reason to insist that the necessarily autonomous character of our relationship to the presently emerging revolutionary political tendencies does not make this relationship any less *organic*. We are perfectly aware that the development of surrealism, as a living movement in this country and throughout the world, is intimately linked to the development of revolutionary social forces in general. If world revolution fails, then — but *only* then — will surrealism fail. But if the proletariat succeeds in its admirable efforts to transform the world, we may be sure that in the orchard of the Revolution the tree of surrealism will bear its most delicious fruit!

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It is above all the war in Vietnam, and the various explosions of Black Power — especially the succession of incendiary upheavals highlighted by the memorable Watts Insurrection of 1965 — which have, for the United States today, brought the poetic problem most insistently into the light. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the general *unrest* of these times, of which the war and the revolutionary actions of American black workers are the most crucial indications, the *keys*, has provoked a great clarification of all fundamental human problems. More than ever Nietzsche's demand for the *revaluation of all values* blazes in our eyes. Certainly it has become *indispensable* to ask, at this time and place, why so little genuine poetry appeared in this country, or elsewhere in the English-speaking world, throughout this century.\* Even before the first World War, poetry in the English language, and above all in the U.S., found itself strait-jacketed, forcibly hurled into a desolate cell, and neglected, left to perish in doctoral dissertations and POETRY magazine. One was supposed to content oneself with the puritanical grimaces of Eliot, the crude posturing of Pound, the pompous leprosy of Gertrude Stein, the sentimental plagiarism of Hart Crane, or, at best, the symbolic calisthenics of Joyce or the artificial respiration of Charles Olson who, if my memory serves me, recently breathed his last.

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\* I am not as familiar as I would like to be with the literature of English-speaking colonies or recently independent countries: the ideologists of neo-colonialism do everything they can to maintain impenetrable barriers separating revolutionary intellectual and cultural currents throughout the world. But I would like to say that hardly any American or English writer seems to me to possess the demoniacal, compelling lyricism of the Guyanese writer Wilson Harris, or the imaginative flare and exuberance of the Nigerian storyteller Amos Tutuola.

Meanwhile, the poetic impulse, for the sake of survival, was forced to build for itself an *underground railway*, to seek lyrical avenues of freedom as far as possible from the conditions of literary slavery in which the American way of life had begun to formulate its oppressive, omnipresent and prosaic authority. Below the surfaces, out of sight, camouflaged and highly mobile, poetry made its presence known (albeit often uneasily, and in undertones) in certain unorthodox kinds of criticism (I am thinking particularly of Floyd Dell's remarkable little book, *Intellectual Vagabondage*); in "pulp" fiction (H.P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith) — or in realms of the spirit totally detached from the mainstream of American or English literature: the work of Samuel Greenberg and Charles Fort, for example; comics such as *Krazy Kat* and later, *Bugs Bunny*; in the films of the Marx Brothers, and in the mountain spring of nocturnal radiance known as the *blues*.

Even within the more traditional habitations of the poetic art there were certain rare exceptions, of course, but their various destinies seem, in a sense, almost more suggestive than their works. Harry Crosby, whose sometimes lucid oniricism is worth recalling today, but who has been almost completely forgotten, committed suicide in 1929. Nathanael West disappeared into Hollywood anonymity and died in an automobile crash in 1940. Mina Loy, poet of rare disquiet (who happened to have been the companion of Arthur Cravan) seems to have retreated into silence. Man Ray — whose principal activity has always been in the plastic arts, but who deserves special attention as one of only two Americans between the two wars (the other was Joseph Cornell) to truly grasp the surrealist message — survived only by establishing himself more or less permanently in Paris. And there it is: suicide, oblivion, silence and exile. These, indeed, are exceptions that prove the rule.

As for the others, the *great names* of the American literature of that period (Dreiser, Hemingway, Faulkner, Dos Passos, Pound, Edmund Wilson, Malcolm Cowley, Matthew Josephson and their innumerable friends and followers) secure in the comfortable traditions of realism, pragmatism, humanism, liberalism — they found their way, inevitably, to success and fame. For us, it should go without saying, they represent nothing more than weakness, hypocrisy, cowardice and filth, a suitable literary accompaniment to the age of imperialism, a hideous monument to the boundless mediocrity represented in Europe by Anatole France. It is worth noting that the surrealists in Paris once had occasion to spit on the coffin of this gray old idiot-savant. Surely it has never been our intention to content ourselves, today, with merely desecrating his grave. We prefer, rather, to *dig* the grave of the literature that serves his memory.

Confronted with the stinking morass of impotence, compromise, confusion and doubt that has passed itself off as American culture, is it any wonder that we turned sharply aside and set about to create (as destructively as possible)

something *entirely new*?

Of course, there were bridges. This would doubtless be as poor a time as there could be to deny the influence exerted upon us, at one moment or another in the course of the evolution which led us into the surrealist adventure, by many and diverse individuals whose footsteps, no matter how faltering, seemed to us to be at least moving along a road that defiantly kept itself open while all the other roads were being closed. It suffices to recall the names Charlie Parker, Thelonius Monk, Charlie Mingus, Nelson Algren, Richard Wright, Malcolm X, Kenneth Patchen, Bob Kaufman, Gregory Corso, Howlin' Wolf, Champion Jack Dupree, Michael McClure (before he became spoiled), Charles Bukowski, Jackson Pollock and even (always with certain reservations) Jack Kerouac, to indicate what sort of desperate and hazardous frame of reference was assumed by many of us as we increasingly left behind the dead-ends of the so-called American dream. Clearly it was above all the dynamism and pessimism of these men that carried us along in their dizzying wake, which was paved with a wildcat's cries in the night. Nor can one ignore a fact of considerable importance: that they carried with them what for us were the most reliable of credentials — *they were scorned by those we scorned*.

But if it was a more or less rudimentary bridge, makeshift and temporary, spontaneously and hurriedly erected out of miraculous flotsam and jetsam of American origin, which assisted us in reaching the works of Lautréamont, Breton, Péret, Crevel, Césaire and a few others, it was these latter works which proved to be, for us, in the long run, thoroughly decisive. But the fountain of knowledge represented by these works has been a source of stimulation so uniquely inexhaustible that it has enabled us to return to the land of our birth magically inspired, armed with a *new way of seeing*.

We saw, above all, as we surveyed the American past, some exceptional moments of wondrous genius — from Charles Brockden Brown to Samuel Greenberg — heretofore confined, for the most part, to the notebooks of specialists or a few cranks. And we began to see the emergence of a specifically presurrealist current which, in the light of surrealism, began to appear not as a succession of historical curiosities, but as moments of rapturous anticipation of a future, the *possibilities* of which we were beginning to perceive more and more clearly.

Having been the first to see in these separate moments an undercurrent which tends to bring them together in a *movement* of thought, we began to understand the historical situation in which we had already begun to act. Now less than ever are we prepared to ignore the voices of these precursors whose every word seems to be addressed directly to us. We shall always defend these islands of the marvelous, these isolated and partial conquests of the irrational, just as we may expect revolutionary socialists in America to continue to defend, as historic landmarks, Shays' Rebellion, John Brown's raid, the Haymarket anarchists, the IWW, the

sit-down strikes of the 1930s and the post office strike of 1970. We shall continue to call for the reprinting of those works of American presurrealists which are unavailable, and we shall see to it that they find an audience worthy of their message.

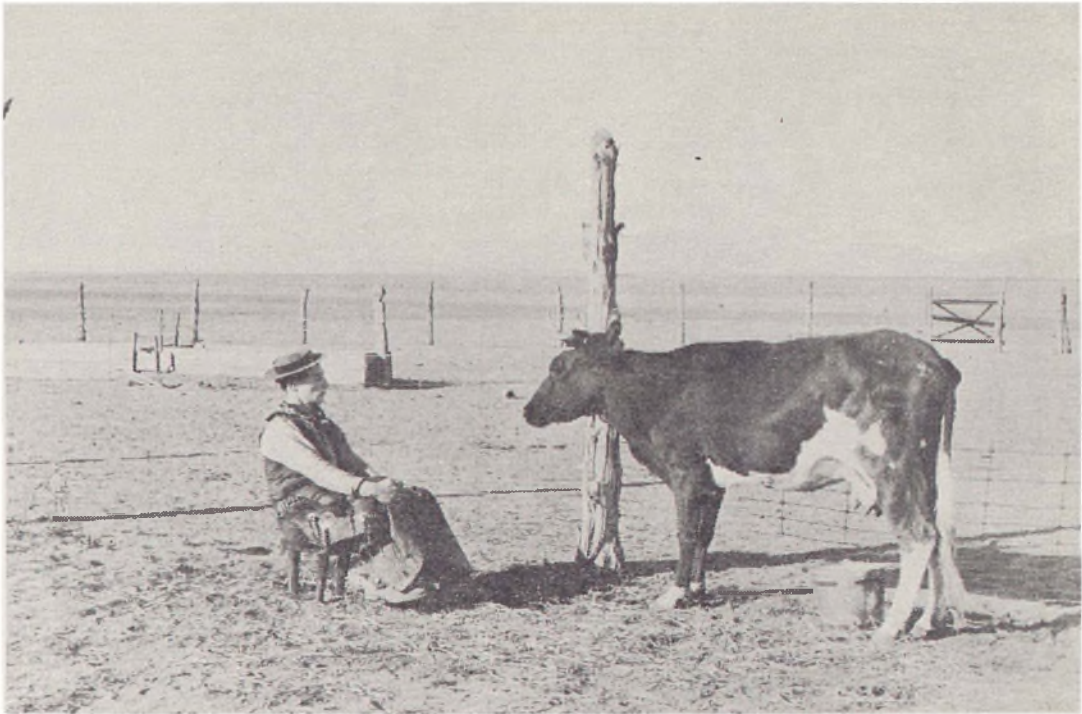
Of course we do not permit ourselves the dubious luxury of looking at the past with anything other than a critical eye. To hail the significance of, say, Benjamin Paul Blood (author of *The Anaesthetic Revelation*) seems to us desirable, even essential. But we are perfectly aware that it is only the most primitive beginning of the intellectual effort that must be made, and by itself does scarcely more to solve the poetic and intellectual problems of today than hailing the greatness of the IWW Colorado coal strike of 1927 solves the problem of building a contemporary revolutionary workers' movement.

Surrealism remains today at the crossroads of several movements and tendencies of thought. But these movements and tendencies are continually changing. In the United States this crossroads is quite different from what it is in France, England, Portugal, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, Holland, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil or Japan (to cite only countries in which surrealism exists as an active force). If surrealism is practically alone among current intellectual efforts in the United States in passionately calling attention, *at the same time*, to such heroic *examples* as Samuel Greenberg, Simon Rodia, T-Bone Slim, Herman Melville, George Herriman, Robert Johnson, Peetie Wheatstraw, Harpo Marx, Tex Avery, Charles Fort, Clark Ashton Smith, it is still more alone in relating its researches in this sphere to a broader perspective of subversion and revolution. The intrinsic bonds uniting poetic and social revolutionary aspirations have never been grasped in the U.S. Perhaps in no country are artists and writers so pathetically apolitical, and, conversely, nowhere else have political revolutionaries been so uniformly insensitive to the problems of poetry and art.

There are many who find the surrealists' preoccupation with political questions to be "unpoetic" and inconsistent with the "freedom" of the artist — to which we can reply only that such critics have understood nothing of poetry nor of freedom. Those who do not revolt against the repressive order with passion, with systematic violence, ultimately succeed only in trapping themselves deeper in its cage, and, like chameleons, grow more and more to blend in with the cage themselves. Not to see the reality of the machinery of oppression today is not to see the reality of everyday life: it is not to see at all — it is to be blind when one needs eyes within one's eyes.

The least one has a right to expect of a poet is that he or she is conscious of the destiny of poetry.

We would be the last to pretend, meanwhile, that our revolutionary political orientation, our unshakeable solidarity with the cause of proletarian emancipation, constitutes any sort of panacea. But it is an undeniable *beginning*, just as our expeditions into the history of American art, poetry and thought constitute an



Buster Keaton in *Go West*

essential beginning in another realm.

A few volumes of poetry and drawings, a couple of anthologies, various periodicals, several tracts, a few small exhibitions and participation in radical demonstrations: so far these are the only external signs of surrealist presence here. And yet I do not think it is any exaggeration to say that we have already provoked a certain intellectual commotion on these shores, especially in young revolutionary circles.

It remains to be seen, of course, to what extent we will be able to develop our resources, gather momentum, rally new forces, and move forward on the path of victories. Despite what may appear to be the excessive self-confidence that characterizes much of what my friends and I happen to have written on various occasions, it should be understood that no one is more severe than ourselves in judging our weaknesses and deficiencies. In our defense it must again be stressed that we are just now truly beginning. Our prior activity, in fact, should be seen not so much as a definitive statement as a preface to what is to follow. The *future* of surrealism depends, now as ever, on the appearance of young men and women who refuse to succumb, who are prepared to risk everything, and who are ready, in the face of every imaginable human failure, to give themselves over entirely to the only cause which remains worth serving.

We know at least that we are animated by desires that are vast and terrible, and that profound impulses pour forth from the very core of our being, thirsting for the infinite. We know, too, that our dreams do not allow themselves to be cut off from our everyday lives.

And assuredly we have not the least intention of *marking time*.

\* \* \*

Surrealism is the name of the secret weapon with which we shall engage in combat with the dominating tendencies of American thought.

Against positivism, surrealism demands *the quest for the Prime Matter of language*, the *salutary image* and the magic of *analogy*.

Against pragmatism surrealism raises the overpowering enchantments of *objective chance*.

Against blind empiricism surrealism insists upon the method of *dialectical materialism*.

Against the abject fetishes of utilitarianism, surrealism heralds the embrace of *mad love*, the presence of *convulsive beauty*, the *authentic cry of poetry*.

Against the stifling narrowness of bourgeois rationalism, surrealism intervenes with the *revelation of the unconscious*, the articulation of *desire*, the explosions of *black humor*.

Against the petty fictions of realism, surrealism defends the truth of *dreams*, the superior reality of *the Marvelous*.

Against eclecticism and confusion, surrealism strives to determine that *point of the mind* hailed in the *Second Manifesto*, point of freedom and exaltation without limits.

And against patriotism, surrealism attacks with the most sublimely demoralizing anti-patriotic *internationalism* which, in uniting Hegel and the wood-carvers of New Guinea, Paracelsus and Marx, the early English Gothic novelists and Lenin, Han Shan and Crazy Kat, Heraclitus and Memphis Minnie, Gerard de Nerval and Lewis Carroll, Black Hawk and Buster Keaton, Mayakovsky and Lumumba, Meister Eckhart and Flora Tristan, Hieronymus Bosch and Charles Fourier, William Blake and

Louis Lingg, Pauline Leon and Ambrose Bierce, The Brotherhood of the Free Spirit and the Durutti Column, Amos Tutuola and Basho, Nat Turner and Albert Ryder, Nicolas Flamel and Freud, etc., undermines the traditional national boundaries of human thought and thus takes us further along on the path of human emancipation.

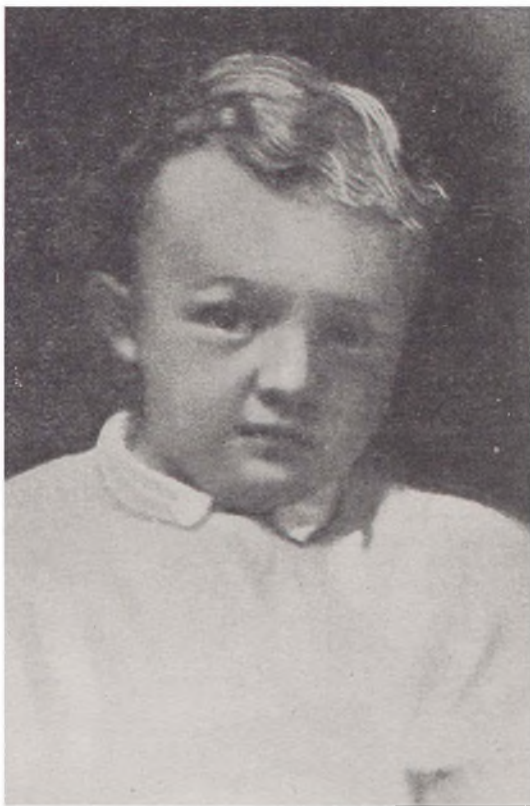
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Those whose parasitical careers as *critics* are secured largely by the proficiency with which they belittle and berate rebellious tendencies on the plane known as "culture" will doubtless find it little more than amusing that the surrealist movement in the United States, still in its preparatory stages, has nonetheless already proceeded through several internal crises. There is no point in introducing here a succession of names of people who, since they deserted the surrealist cause to which they adhered so briefly and so hesitatingly, have not distinguished themselves in any way; who have subsequently been incapable of even the slightest sustained intellectual or practical effort; and who have almost entirely passed unnoticed into the most complete and fully deserved oblivion. Surrealism has neither the time nor the inclination to mourn these far from insurmountable losses. What, indeed, does it matter if we leave behind a few shilly-shallying adventurers and provocateurs, a coward or two hiding behind the shield of Art and Literature, a noisy teen-ager prey to every fad and superstition, various assorted dunces whose theoretical conceptions were reducible to a handful of pre-existing phrases and formulas, and one or two prematurely senile youths who even before reaching the age of thirty had already installed themselves as fixtures of the academic community? "Men are strong as long as they represent a strong idea," said Freud, "they become powerless when they oppose it."

Against the various deviations to the right and to the left, which invariably have assumed an opportunistic character, and which seemed to us to threaten to compromise the future of surrealism by sacrificing its inner integrity in favor of some momentary, superficial or totally illusory advantages, we have always replied with a firm *rallying to principles*. And certainly we are not now about to abandon the measures taken, during more than forty-five years of surrealism, to insure this integrity, these principles, against every sort of deformation. The continuing extraordinary precariousness of the human condition, the universal confusion regarding everything pertaining to the mind, today more than ever seem to us to necessitate, on our part, an effort of *profound occultation*. But it is noteworthy that we arrived at this conclusion not through any attempt to emulate a foreign model, but in the process of actual theoretical struggle as we strove for greater coherence and more rigour in our articulation of surrealist aspirations. We have had to part company with those who proposed a vulgarization of surrealism calculated to swell our ranks in a merely quantitative fashion; with others

who wished to liquidate surrealism into a narrowly political or "esoteric" framework; and also with those who wished to separate surrealism from its historical imperatives, reducing it to the level of an immobile, closed literary coterie.

Thus we came to recognize, out of our own experience in combatting these debilitating tendencies, the unequalled validity of the "organizational form" in which the surrealist movement has almost always elected (intuitively) to conduct its collective manifestations. Defined by Breton as "an aggregate based on elective affinities," and further as "an enterprise which mysteriously exceeds its numerical energies," and described by André Masson as a "collective experience of individualism," the organizational tendency of surrealist groups is essentially in line with the "Secret Societies" of certain so-called "primitive" peoples, the *direction* of certain precepts of Lenin (see, for example, the debate with Martov on the question of party membership at the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. in 1903) and the entire tradition of alchemy: "Let those who are not bidden refrain from attempting to cross our threshold," wrote Bonus of Ferrara in *The New Pearl of Great Price*. Not at all reducible to a philosophical sect, a literary society, or an artistic school, surrealism, characterized by a dynamic internal unity and limitless capacities for renewal, has always envisaged itself in the most strikingly suggestive images: a new vice, a new kind of magic, caviar, a current of air, a state of mind, an instrument of knowledge, a band of outlaws, a miraculous weapon, and *that which will be*.



Lenin at the Age of Four



Assuredly, we are better off without those whose doubts and fears could only have impeded our further development. The *disquieting muse*, let it not be forgotten, is only now truly establishing a sure footing in these United States. We are just now beginning to advance from a phase of sporadically coordinated individual activity to a more efficacious pooling of all available resources, a true organized collectivity which will enable us to act upon the world with greater frequency and force. It can hardly be expected, at such a time, in such conditions, that we should mitigate our exacting vigilance. We will leave it to the critics, academicians and other cops and priests to whine about purges, expulsions, splits, papal decrees, sectarianism and other derisions. In opposition to both the static apathy of liberal humanism and the spirit of dark fanaticism laden with chains of delusion, surrealism represents a fanaticism historically valid and magically lucid, completely in harmony with the fullest realization of human freedom. To maintain the quality of this fanaticism and to promote its maximum effulgence, first of all the uncongenial — doubters, crybabies, moaners, insecure converts, careerists, eclectics and mystifiers — must be kept out at all costs.

But those who are not afraid of their dreams; those who recognize, unerringly, the appeals of love, chance, the marvelous; those who will stop at nothing in their quest for the Red Stone of human possibility, will always know where and how to find us.

\* \* \*

Most professors, critics and journalists cynically continue to maintain that surrealism formally disintegrated in 1939, that from then on its adherents regressed into increasingly “artistic,” non-political, “harmless” preoccupations, that surrealism was confined to grazing in its own past and never again made any significant contributions. But this flagrantly defamatory misconception is at such total variance with the facts that it serves only to prove, beyond any doubt, the thoroughly confusional intentions of these “experts.” The surrealist evidence, I think, speaks for itself, eloquently and conclusively demonstrating the continuity of surrealist thought and action during and immediately following the second World War. It is true that almost none of the surrealist writing of that period has been translated into English, and that — with a very few exceptions — American galleries have remained closed to the great majority of surrealist painters. But when the true history of surrealism becomes better known here — and this is one of the tasks we have set for ourselves — people will look back on the judgement of today’s critics, for whom surrealism is strictly a phenomenon “between the wars,” with astonishment and not a little anger.

Similar evidence, moreover, could be presented for surrealism through the 1950s and 60s. It must be remembered, of course, that these decades witnessed the collapse of the revolutionary workers’ movement throughout

the occidental world, culminating in an extensive consolidation and reinforcement of reactionary forces. We know that those radical groups which, having survived the war, resumed afterward as if nothing had changed, soon reduced themselves to a dismal irrelevance. The only theorists, in fact, who contributed anything to revolutionary political thought in these last decades were precisely those who broke most clearly with the restrictive dogmas of the pre-war period. Surrealism, for its part, far from declining or otherwise abdicating its revolutionary position, plunged into a project of fundamental re-examination of the entire field of human expression in all its forms. From TROPIQUES, VVV and NEON, through MEDIUM and 14 JUILLET, to L’ARCHIBRAS and ANALAGON one may see for oneself that surrealist interventions and researches have never ceased to expand, develop, deepen, always fortifying the cause of subversion and human emancipation. If these journals and other post-war manifestations of surrealism are not familiar to the American reader, this signifies only the pathetic backwardness of intellectual life here, the preposterous provincialism of official American culture (infecting even those magazines which pretend to be “advanced”), the myopia and unrestrained commercialism which govern most U.S. galleries, unwilling to run the risks of exhibiting the works of painters outside the taste of the existing “market,” and the isolationist slowness of publishers in this country to recognize significant intellectual currents around the world.

Viewed in the light of the exceptionally unfavorable historical conditions that have prevailed throughout the entire post-war period, and contrasted to the achievements of other intellectual trends of the time, surrealism has not the slightest need for any retrospective apology. There is nothing in the history of surrealism that we want concealed — surrealism has nothing to hide. Of course there have been mistakes, but they have been honest mistakes made by men and women genuinely seeking a true revolutionary course against the grain of blindness, defeat, stagnation and lies of contemporary society. “Historically,” wrote Rosa Luxemburg, “the errors committed by a truly revolutionary movement are infinitely more fruitful than the infallibility of the cleverest Central Committee.” Surely the “errors” of surrealism have been infinitely more fruitful than the infallibility of its countless critics. It is a sign of the deep inner vitality and strength of surrealism that the young surrealist groups already formed or in the process of formation throughout the world are able to draw inspiration not only from a particular brief phase of surrealist history, nor from a few exceptional individuals or “factions,” but from the *entire evolution* of the international surrealist movement up to the present hour.

Less than ever are we inclined, now, to renounce any portion of this evolution, which seems to us to harbor in its veins the black-capped petrel of Haiti whose flight, illuminated by the shadow of Toussaint L’Ouverture, will direct our miraculous

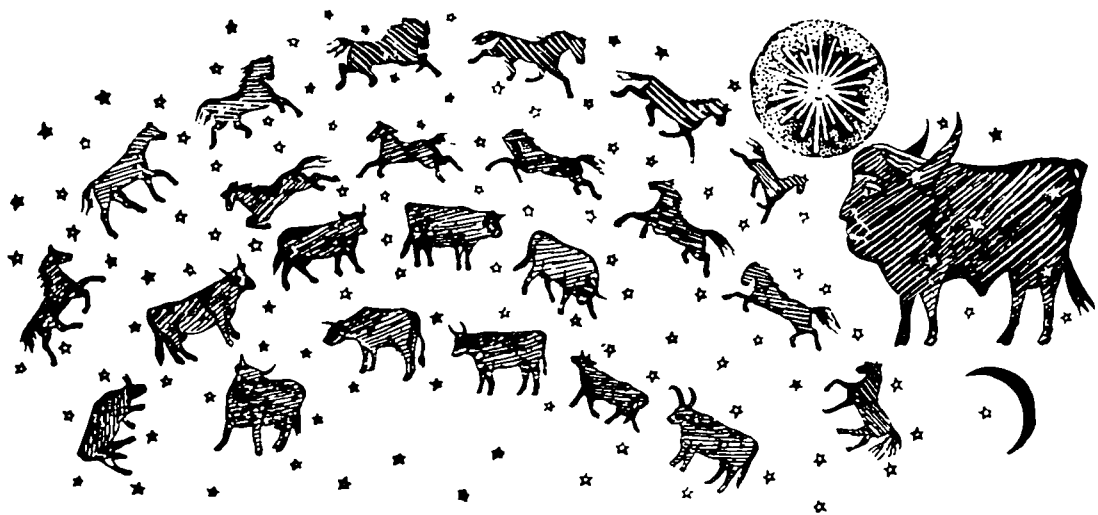


Illustration from the *Oahspe Bible*

schooner into the future's garden of earthly delights. Each of us, who has lived within himself, quintessentially, the whole history of surrealism, may contemplate today (and not without a certain grim satisfaction) the innumerable shipwrecks, one by one, of those who set out on their various intellectual journeys, careful to deride us at their departure, but ultimately less prepared than we were for the consequences of the end of the christian era. This collapse of all prevailing spiritual formulas gives a special and profound resonance, today, to the *open system* of surrealism, which continues to serve as a veritable motor animating the revolving doors of what *can be*. Woe unto those whose fear of the irrational makes them bureaucrats of things-as-they-are! At the very smallest crisis they go all to pieces, rushing like lemmings to their watery doom. Against this wretched evasion of the potentiality of dreams, surrealism reaches out, recklessly and yet confidently, for a *new kind of knowledge*, implying and heralding, at the same time, a new kind of politics, a new way of life.

There is no question of merely repeating earlier positions, echoing earlier voices, retreating into the framework of an accomplished history, affixing our activity to the walls of yesterday by means of the glue of nostalgia. For us, every point of arrival provides a new point of departure. Surrealism would defeat its own highest aspirations if it permitted itself, even for a moment, to fall back on its laurels, if it contented itself with being *only* the most advanced movement of revolutionary thought. Here in the United States, those of us who adhere to the aims and principles of the surrealist movement do so because surrealism is the very inhalation of the only future worth living and fighting for, and because it keeps the only secrets which remain worth keeping: freedom and love.

The historical, cultural, psychological contradictions which ushered surrealism into

the world remain unresolved. It is clear, furthermore, that no new movement with a power of liberation greater than that of surrealism has arisen to take its place. As for the "vanguards of culture" who pretend to have "surpassed" surrealism, one can only shrug one's shoulders and smile at the abject foolishness of those who confuse their personal backsliding with a theoretical and practical advance. Without exception these "post-surrealist" fads have revealed themselves to have reverted, in whole or in part, to a *pre-surrealist* position. Only an unfortunate nearsightedness or an incredible naivete could lead one to suppose that he could surpass surrealism while remaining far behind it.

"... *Here*, you see," said the Red Queen in *Through the Looking Glass*, "it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!"

Surrealism, as José Pierre has said, will be surpassed only by more surrealism.

And more surrealism there surely will be.

For it is not *now*, when the sluice-gates of revolutionary possibilities, closed for so long, have been torn open with admirable force; *now*, when the voyage of our deepest desires looks at last as if it will keep its promise: it is not *now* that we presume to give up the phantom ship that has carried us this far and yet shows no signs of foundering.

The crisis of civilization has become total. To prove this I have only to point to single typical representative of the glaring depravity that remains in power in this country, a man utterly contemptible, whose vileness is without historical parallel, and whose very existence can be considered only a brazen and unpardonable insult to what has managed to survive of human dignity. This loathsome figure — I refer, of course, to the sniveling weasel who calls himself the President of the United States — seems to us, as surrealists, a suitable symbol of the sort of vermin that must be eradicated before life

can become infused with poetry, or (to cite once again *The New Pearl of Great Price*) a symbol of the "superfluous matter" that must be removed before it will be possible to "behold an awful and amazing splendour, the occultation of Sol in Luna, the marriage of East and West, the union of heaven and earth, and the conjunction, as the ancients tell us, of the spiritual with the corporeal."

To understand the surrealist point of view today it is necessary to take a walk and to look at those who pass you in the street, to see the indescribable fury which smoulders deep in every eye, always ready for anything, perpetually lurking in the abysses of human anguish, seething with a starry vengeance that knows no bounds. Surrealism has no greater ambition than to assist, with all its energy, in the unleashing of this specifically revolutionary fury, to give it wings and fire and to set it loose, once and for all, on the enemies of freedom.

"True life," Rimbaud has told us, "is absent." *The time has come to appropriate it.*

I believe unreservedly in the surrealist miracle that erupts in moments of imperturbable sleepiness, in waves of distraction, in the highest transports of pleasure and in the lowest depths of despair, in hysteria and vertigo, in madness and suicide, in the experience of drugs and the encounters of chance, in the heat of frenzy and the cold of terror: moments when the mind takes its most expansive flights, pursues its wildest abandon, glimpsing everything that is most desirable and most terrible in the farthest deserts, deepest seas and most limitless skies of the mind where, doors and windows flung wide open, the

alphabet of analogy, on the wings of an ibis, leaves a trail of magic words glowing red in the magnificent blackness; moments of crystalline purity in which *nothing is incomprehensible* and in which molten images of an intensity barely conceivable at other times pour forth involuntarily and inexhaustibly with legitimate cannibalistic joy yet with the gracious transparency of a geyser in full bloom in the Colorado dawn.

Surrealism has made these immaculate moments — the prenatal heartbeats of the world that is to be — accessible to all. By its systematic demystification of the material reality of desire, it has demonstrated the inescapable significance of such moments for the solution of the gravest problems of human existence.

The surrealist dream is in everyone's mind. We, modest children of chaos and lightning, are the lever of its realization.

Surrealism alone has recognized the historical mission of *laziness*.

Against sowers of all discouragement, we raise the cry of *audacity, audacity and still more audacity!*

"It is good," according to Lautréamont, "to look back over the course already traveled, and then, the limbs rested, to rush on again with an impetuous bound."

The first principles of surrealism are beyond argument.

What remains for surrealism to do far exceeds what surrealism has done.

Franklin ROSEMONT



drawing by Max-Walter SVANBERG

# PLASTIC SENSIBILITY

(excerpts)

*The idiot groans from staring.*

*The spices fox-trot the tongue and waltz the palate. Spices: toe-dance of aroma.*

*Valleys are the brassière of wind.*

*The pupil cut in facets, and the white of the eye furrowed, against which the soul's fire ebbs and flows, flashing on the drawknife surface of the iris — so the diamond set between corollas of platinum will take a hundred steps between the bright walls of its prison.*

*The blue catches cold in the blue-green, and sneezes at the gray.*

*The pianos are incisors, and the brasses are the molars of the orchestra — the piano slicing up sound, which the brasses in turn munch on. Solo flute in the orchestra muted: the symphony eats, mindless of teeth.*

*Gray is the ashpit of the sun.*

*Brilliance: it is the light's hip, and its scintillations, the breasts.*

*Voluptuousness is a child-bed between two fleshly tombs in the deserted cemetery of the spirit.*

*In the fountain, the water nipples its thumb, moving to the other fingers proportionately as the fountain shrinks, finally sucking its little finger in the shallow stream of water.*

*The rain is a pin of water, and a needle of light, in the wind's thimble.*

*The rose, milk-teeth of the sun.*

*The human voice is the afternoon of sounds.*

*The breast is an apple in a pear, from which a raisin sprouts, the breast being the richest soil: all the fruits in one.*

*Voluptuousness makes of the spinal marrow a single finger, with which to prick and caress the brain from within.*

*Like a ball of water which smashes the wind, and sends it screaming with pain, voluptuous bodies, breathless, pant exhaustion.*

*Color is the shoe-horn of the eye between the shape and its object. Nature grays and dilutes the wintry landscape: but the eye seized from the obliquity no longer grabs at the footlength of space.*

*Color is the articulation of light. In its rays, the sun turns; in its dawning, the sun bends to its knees, as if to lay its hands on everything.*



## WHAT IS SURREALISM?

*The various experts on surrealism — even those whose expertise is untainted by even the slightest knowledge of the subject — are known sometimes to disagree amongst themselves. We present here a small collection of critical views so that the reader may derive for himself a consensus of what passes itself off as "informed opinion."*

\* \* \*

In one of the shrewd remarks that make his writing so rewarding, Sidney Tillam once observed that "surrealism seems to be what happens when a mainstream tradition loses its authority."

Philip Leider

ARTFORUM  
May 1968

\* \* \*

Mr. Rubin ought to remember that not only is he a surrealist but that Alfred Barr and the trustees of the Museum of Modern Art are too; that all artists now working in America (except Frank Stella and Kenneth Noland, for reasons I cannot fathom) are surrealists; that Thomas B. Hess, Clement Greenberg and Hilton Kramer are surrealists; that President Johnson is a surrealist, that Congress is 95 per cent surrealist and that the entire nation and the world including Vietnam are surrealist places.

John Ashberry

ART NEWS  
May 1968

\* \* \*

One cannot help entertaining something much more than a suspicion that there is being fostered an intimacy — and I fear an official intimacy — between

surrealism and communism. . . . In spite of the doctrines which the surrealists proclaim so loudly and in so very many words, in spite of their dreams and visions . . . and all the rest, the fundamental weakness, nay, the very rot which cankers the whole movement, would seem to be a crass materialism. . . They are unmystical, unromantic. They deny the supernatural. Yet everything in the last analysis depends upon the supernatural, since as St. Augustine tells us, God is the only Reality.

Montague Summers  
*The Gothic Quest*

\* \* \*  
SURREALISM: Reactionary tendency in the art of contemporary capitalist countries, born in France after World War I, and depending upon the idealist doctrine of Freud and his theory of the subconscious. The perverted imagination of the surrealists concerns itself only with the world of dreams denuded of sense, and monstrous, sickly hallucinations, nightmares and pathology. "The insane are authentic surrealists," states one of the founders of the movement. The surrealists combine allusions to real forms in the ugliest succession, with the aim of destroying logic and healthy human perception. At present, the chief representatives of surrealism live in the U.S., where they enjoy the protection of rich collectors.

*Dictionary of Terms  
Used in the Plastic Arts,  
Moscow 1961*

\* \* \*  
If they really paint in this manner because they see things that way, then these unhappy persons should be dealt with in the department of the Ministry of the Interior where sterilization of the insane is dealt with, to prevent them from passing on their unfortunate inheritance. If they really do not see things like that and still persist in painting in this manner, then these artists should be dealt with by the criminal courts.

Adolf Hitler  
*Speech.*  
18 July 1937

\* \* \*  
The leading surrealist critics were André Breton, Louis Aragon, Paul Eluard, Jean Cocteau and Jean-Paul Sartre. They derived their principles from the theories of the irrational of Bergson, Freud and Existentialism.

Lionello Venturi  
*History of Art Criticism*

*To kiss: two butterflies of flesh locked in a fly-trap in the azure-tinted purple of their gigantic wings — two infinities sharing the same sky of love, attempting to confound themselves in madness, like light and color dancing in the glare.*

Malcolm de CHAZAL

(Translated by Marc Allan Widershien)

## BEYOND THE SHADOW OF THE TIC

*The mouthful of oats crawls down the rope  
into the predestined manager's trickle  
any long time ago  
like a swatted fly*

*it would be bon to cook the lake  
crucify the cauliflower  
or the dirty-handed mob that washed the sun  
out of the turnip patch  
and flew like piss  
away  
when the meal and entertainment was over  
and the time come for spittle exercises*

*there was no man  
like Mr. Blonarovitch  
who could impersonate the fingers on any section of the rug  
broken like a bean in the fortunate twilight*

*as the lecturers disputed his name  
and a vote was taken in the penalty oven*

*work had only begun at midnight  
where the street was forbidden to continue  
it was difficult not to say "bomb"  
this was the work that was explained  
there was also unexplained work  
swamp work*

*that could be done very well "bon"  
a man said  
if standing about 30 yards  
PERMISSION FROM THE STATE  
it could be*

*a man said*

*they were going to come in waves like silicone guides  
against the backdrop would be a fan of breasts  
to make the moment seem ethereal  
or "in the spirit of a partial greeting"  
the hard things the objects would not be detailed  
because*

*they  
go into action like puzzle pieces  
for this ultimate need  
visions of cane*

Joseph M. JABLONSKI

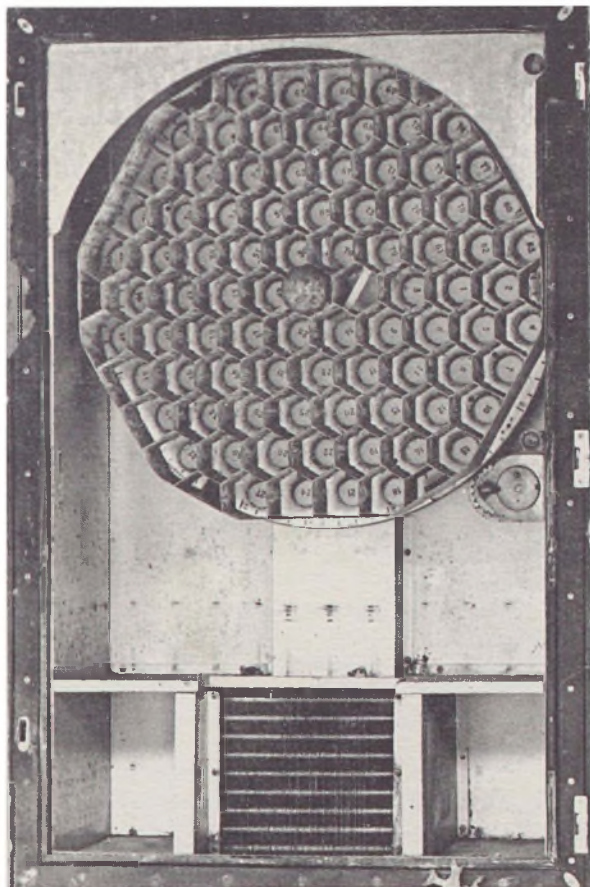
# RELIGIOUS INTOXICATION OF LARGE CITIES

(Prologue)

*You don't know my night-face  
My eyes like space-crazed horses  
My mouth gaudy with unknown blood  
My skin  
My sign-post fingers pearly with pleasure  
Will guide your eyelashes toward my ears my shoulder-blades  
Towards the open country of my flesh  
The steps of my ribs shrink in at the thought  
That your voice could fill my throat  
That your eyes could smile  
You don't know the paleness of my shoulders  
The night  
When the hallucinatory fires of nightmares  
    protest the silence  
And that the soft walls of reality hug themselves in  
You don't know that the perfumes of my days  
    die on my tongue  
When the wicked come with floating knives  
When alone remains my haughty love  
When I plunge into the mud of night*

(translated by Jon Ford)

Joyce MANSOUR



Photograph by K. GARNON

\* \* \*

The best they can hope for is to set themselves up as a primitive and secret society on the model of the Ku Klux Klan . . . Surrealism is entering a period of withdrawal; it is breaking with marxism and the Communist Party. . . I should like to know what public it expects to reach.

Jean-Paul Sartre

*What is Literature?*

1947

\* \* \*

It was in 1927 that Aragon joined the French Communist Party, at a time when it was immature, torn by factional strife, suspicious of surrealists and any other bourgeois authors. Aragon gritted his teeth and worked hard. A few of his surrealist comrades joined with him; but the majority followed André Breton and denounced Aragon. They remained bogged forever, like Breton, in the infantile habits of their youth; you can find them today in the same stale cabarets living on handouts from tourists.

Michael Gold

*Masses & Mainstream*

May 1950

\* \* \*

All these isms are of foreign origin, and truly should have no place in American art. While not all are media of social or political protest, all are instruments and weapons of destruction. . . Surrealism aims to destroy by the denial of reason . . . The evidence of evil design is everywhere . . . The question is, what have we, the plain American people, done to deserve this sore affliction that has been visited upon us so direly; who has brought down this curse upon us; who has let into our homeland this horde of germ-carrying art vermin?

Cong. George A. Dondero

*Congressional Record*

16 August 1949

\* \* \*

Surrealism has had put peripheral political consequence in today's world; perhaps only the John Birch Society may be classified as surrealist.

Arthur Darack

SATURDAY REVIEW

30 October 1965

\* \* \*

Despite its pretensions of enriching the branches of science, the school of the author of *Nadja*

has brought nothing to these disciplines: to cite at random some great modern explorers of physics, chemistry, biology and physiology, Fermi, Durac, de Broglie, Yukawa, Fleming, Grey-Walter, Dr. Wilder Penfield, Dr. Rajewsky, Nathan S. Kline, Dr. Leo Blumenfeld have not been surrealists.

Isidore Isou

O No. E  
October 1965

\* \* \*

Surrealism marks the point at which the individual cuts the last rope that binds him to society and leaps into unabashed irresponsibility.

Eric Bentley

*A Century of Hero Worship*

\* \* \*

The essential fault of surrealism is that it invents without discovering. To make a clam play an accordion is to invent not to discover.

Wallace Stevens

VIEW  
October 1942

\* \* \*

The movement remained incomplete, in my opinion, because it refused to consider the problem of the word in the struggle for a new reality. Its revolutionary activity did not transcend the traditional style.

Eugene Jolas

TRANSITION 19 /20  
June 1930

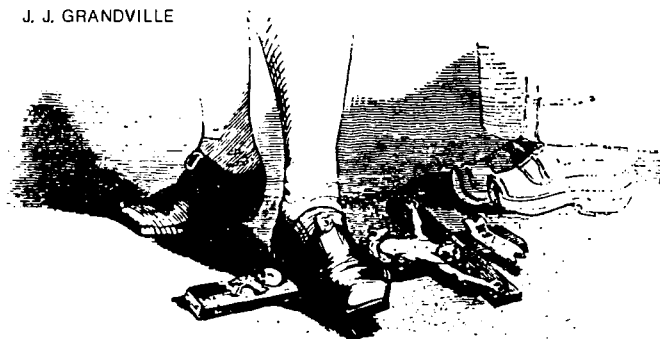
\* \* \*

Do not deceive yourself. . . The surrealists are veritable intellectual terrorists. They derive from the Comte de Lautréamont, a nihilist, author of *Les Chants de Maldoror*, and from the Marquis de Sade, both famous for their delirious writings in favor of all that is horrible, cruel or monstrous. The surrealists form a veritable clan of poets and artists. They attack Religion, insult the Pope, spit on priests; they attack the Army, renounce their country; they abuse, in an uncouth and filthy manner, members of the French Academy; ridicule the appointed administrations of the Sorbonne, of Parliament, the Bar, the Medical profession. They proudly claim for themselves the title of barbarians, arsonists, destroyers. They demand the opening of prisons, the liberation of madmen. They extol the total anarchy of desire.

Ernest De Gengenbach

*Judas ou le vampire surréaliste*

J. J. GRANDVILLE



## THE EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS OF CHICAGO\*

*When the door-keepers meet the hypocrites and the greenish  
beefsteaks secrete their consecrated wafers  
all the grand crosses will assemble in the same sewer and say  
Jesus come with us  
and all the she-goats of the world will scatter their dung in  
the sewer  
and open the eucharistic congress  
and everyone will hasten towards the divine excrements and  
the holy grand crosses*

*God constipated for twenty centuries no longer has a filthy  
messiah to fertilize the terrestrial latrines  
and the priests no longer make illicit profits from their  
own dung  
It is then that their sweat murmurs  
You are dirty lubricating oil and I am god  
To receive me offer your vast wooden bats  
and when your ears and your nose are glutted with slime  
you will see me in the form of a putrid polecat*

*Then all the black lice will find themselves on the  
same buttock  
and will say God is great  
God is greater than our buttock  
We have taken the host and it has made us toads  
so that we will be able every day to croak the dies irae*

*Meanwhile the dust of Caesars penetrates their nostrils  
and these mangy ruminants roar  
Judas has sold god like French fries  
and his bone has scraped the wooden shoes of  
the thoroughbreds*

*Ah, who will give us a god refreshed like a skull leaving  
the hairdresser  
a god more squalid and more naked than the mire  
Our god, washed by the rivers  
is nothing more than an absurd and livid pebble*

Benjamin PERET

\*This poem, which originally appeared in the eighth issue of *LA REVOLUTION SURREALISTE* (1926), includes a number of puns which elude translation; the word for *door-keepers*, for example, in the first line, also means *woodlice*; the word for *hypocrites* also means *cockroaches*; and the word for *grand crosses*, in the second and fifth lines, also means *spittle*, etc. — TRANSLATOR.

# RED LION

On a shimmering day in July, before the sun had reached its maximum height, I found myself following a path which led from the dark comfort of a dense forest to the sun-drenched gaiety of an open field where the grasses changed like the sea under the breath of a soft wind.

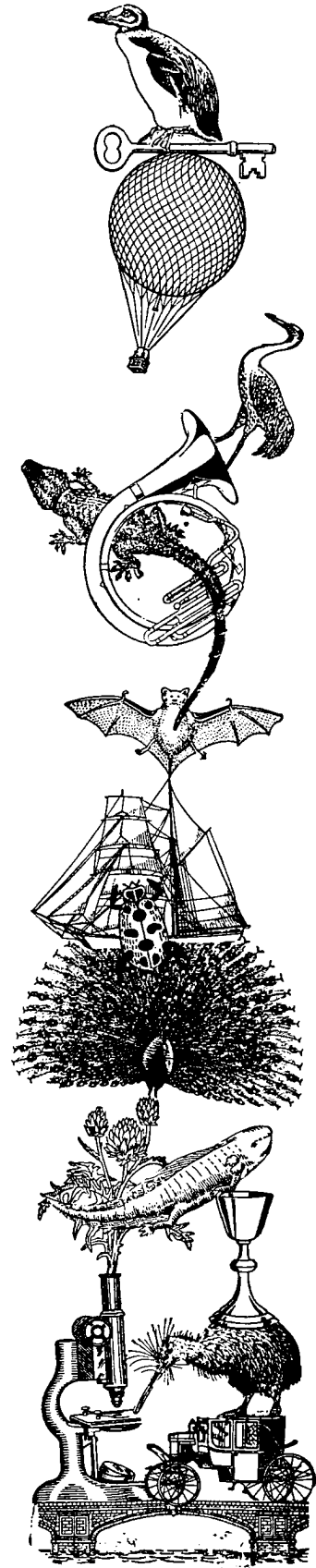
Before I had gone very far, I noticed some asparagus plants which became more numerous as I continued. Soon it seemed as though all other kinds of plants had disappeared, leaving the field as far as I could see to the asparagus. I noted then that the plants, which had formerly been only inches high, were now as tall as my knee, and that among them were many unusual specimens. On some the stalks remained green, while the primitive leaves adhering to the sides were bright red, as was the crown; on others the stalk was lavender, while the leaves and crown were a glowing yellow. Their size was no longer uniform: while some were as small as grasses, others were as tall as I, and quite thick.

I could no longer see very far before me. As I continued, the trunks of the asparagus ceased to be visible and began to bloom in the fern-like manner which characterizes its maturity. I was surrounded completely by an amazing jungle of the most fragile and delicate ferns, so delicate that they hardly cast a shadow across the ground: a yearning forest of violet, yellow and magenta, yet lit by the sun as a crystal with prismatic shadows. On some of the trees hung the blood-red fruits of the asparagus, as large as pumpkins but so clear that one could see the embryos of the seeds.

At last I came to a clearing where the giant trees provided some fluttering shade and the ground was covered with soft mosses. I was so tired, and you were sitting there under a tree, and I was extremely glad to see you and sat down silently beside you. You offered me a curiously carved silver cup and laughed. It was filled with tiny striped salamanders who evaporated into flames only moments after I had taken the cup. The tails of the flames had wreathing eyes like peacock feathers, and they felt cool and seductively sensual as they caressed my face and neck. Gradually they spiraled back into the cup revealing a pair of lips between which showed double rows of tapered teeth. A narrow black tongue curled up from between them and, thickening at the tip, it resembled a black gleaming mushroom whose head spread gracefully, turning up at the rim, revealing luminous crimson gills. It was soft like velvet and tasted both sweet and salty, but when it had grown to about four feet, it began to undergo further transformations. Twisting and wrinkling, it began to display the highly stylized features of a totem pole. A black bear formed at its base, and a giant black bird extended its wings at the top. The underside of the bird's extended wings were the same luminous crimson as the mushroom's gills from which they had formed. These beings breathed with life, and one by one they departed. The giant bird left first from the top, ripping the sky like lightning whose thunder still echoed, while a whale with concentric white markings swam away heavily through the air. Next a wolf ran quickly towards the forest, but paused to glance over his shoulder. At last the great bear strode silently across the mosses into the asparagus forest.

And you were laughing at them all, and at me, and at my amazement. You kissed me and beside me was a golden cup.

Penelope ROSEMONT





# BLUES AND THE POETRY OF REVOLT

The color of the sun cannot compare to the color of the flowing, feather-like chasm in front of which we pause before beginning our ascent into that region of the mind which contains the exploding germs of light which represent a new life for man. In the same fashion, the poetry which has been paraded before us for decades as a model of inspired creativity can only fail when placed alongside the magnificent lyricism and exalting promise of passion that we find in the blues.

It is well known that what made the blues was a blending of cultural and musical elements, e.g. African call-and-response patterns, European harmonies found in early black church music, and complex African rhythms.(1) It should also be known that none of these factors would have united to produce what we know as the blues had the black man not been subject to the torture and degradation of racism and discrimination resulting in an oppression that was operative in nearly all spheres of life: economic, sexual, political, cultural, and social. That the blues contains proportionately few direct and overt references to this oppression is not surprising when one considers that the penalty imposed for such utterances was of ten death or imprisonment. Yet the spirit of revolt found through poetry a path unguarded, along which the blues developed as one of America's most stirring manifestations of the marvelous. Because of the capacities it retains for the provocation of inspiration, the poetry of the blues assumes a character that one cannot hesitate to call subversive.(2)

The blues as a subject of socio/literary interest has been explored in a number of works, perhaps the most valuable of which are those by Paul Oliver. (3) He has devoted much attention to the analysis of blues lyrics in an attempt to elucidate the connection between the lives of the singers and the words of their songs, emphasizing the degree to which the social conditions under which black Americans live are reflected in the songs. His researches involve interviews with many of the singers in attempts to unearth background and biographical information, the facts of blues history, as well as serious studies of the sociology of the black man in America; it is this latter area and its relationship to the lyrics of the songs to which Oliver has devoted most of his scholarly attention.(4)

There remains, however, an aspect of the blues uninvestigated by scholars and critics, but which is nonetheless of exceedingly crucial significance. It is my intention to demonstrate that the best examples of blues are fundamentally *poetic* in a sense which far exceeds the limits of the categories of thought of those who confuse poetic authenticity with the mere craft of literature. Refusing to be harnessed to the cause of the existing order — the church, the prevailing hypocrisy in morals, the police, patriotism, the needs of commerce or the machinery of the state — the blues defiantly asserts the primacy of the passions and thus must be considered in the service of human freedom. As the specific form of poetry of a people purposefully deprived of the more elaborate instruments of culture, blues comprise an elementary but magnificent revolt against the degradation of language. If one recalls that "language was given to man so that he might make surrealist use of it" (André Breton), it becomes evident why, from the surrealist point of view,

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1. For a lengthy and scholarly discussion of the factors that combined to form spirituals, blues, and jazz, see Marshall Stearns' *The Story of Jazz*. (N. Y., Mentor, 1958).

2. I must say here and now that when we refer to blues, we are referring to a certain kind of music produced by black Americans, i.e. working-class black Americans, for it can be seen that the black bourgeoisie reject blues for its non-repressive qualities. The music that has been produced in the last decade by rather pathetic white imitators has been erroneously called blues, but is, of course, nothing of the sort.

3. Oliver's works include *Blues Fell This Morning* (N. Y., Horizon Press, 1961; available as a Collier paperback as *The Meaning of the Blues: Conversation with the Blues* (London, Cassell, 1965); *Screening the Blues* (London, Cassell, 1968); *The Story of the Blues* (Philadelphia, Chilton Books, 1969). The last mentioned work almost completely replaces Samuel Charters' *The Country Blues* (N. Y., Rinehart, 1959), a factually garbled account of the history of recorded blues, but still the pioneer publication in the field. Charters has also written *The Poetry of the Blues* (N. Y., Oak Publications, 1963) and *The Bluesmen* (N. Y., Oak Publications, 1967) among others.

4. Charles Keil has written a strange book called *Urban Blues* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1966). Keil maligns Oliver for being a "mouldy fig," for being interested in only those singers who are rural, dead, obscure, etc. Yet Keil devotes a large portion of his book to the current "bluesman" Bobby Bland, whose lyrics, while often presented energetically, are frequently as inane as it is possible to be! Clearly, Oliver was interested in approaching blues through the lyrics, and to do this, one must investigate the more revealing songs, even if most of them do come from earlier decades. One could hardly quote the often meaningless lyrics of the more popular, blues-oriented soul singers and expect to have much to show for it.

Additionally, when Keil does analyze blues lyrics, he feels it to be progressive to use a sterile sociological scale, i.e. Bales Interaction Scale, a limited tool developed to rate participants in small groups, and certainly not a particularly valid scale upon which to rate blues singers. It is hardly necessary to suggest how little poetry, humanity, dignity and revolt are left of a singer and his songs after they have been processed in the Keil-Bales machine.

A related problem, and indeed a very serious one, to which I hope to give much space in a future article, is why the seemingly more poetic songs are most often found in the repertoires of singers of earlier generations. Dismissing the unfounded observation, made by Keil and others, that the attractiveness of earlier songs can be attributed to their "historical respectability," we do find differences in poetic content, and while the true city blues man (Howling Wolf, etc.) can stand the most rigorous comparison to his ancestors, the problem remains — a quantitative one, perhaps — and must be investigated.

blues seem especially charged with a force of extreme potency which can only be described as *revolutionary*. For in the blues one perceives a glimpse of man's original vitality and pride, the truth of which it is the task of the revolution to restore.

This can be easily seen from a study of the lyrics themselves, and it is quite difficult to understand why certain mental invalids insist on relegating blues to a lower echelon of art forms. For the same reason, I am not inclined to forgive others who feel that blues songs can be "raised" to respectability by combining and comparing them in a totally artificial way with various other styles of poetry, usually of a less inspiring nature, that have already received traditional and academic approval.(5) Such regressive forms of presentation cannot hide what is truly exalting and inspiring in the blues. In the following discussion, primarily through an application of certain psychological principles expounded by Freud, the uniquely liberating aspects of the blues will hopefully be clarified.(6)

A sample of blues lyrics reveals that the blues singers' desires, as reflected in the songs themselves, are usually quite concretely opposed to the aims and goals of the repressive capitalist society in which the singer lives.(7) More explicitly, it is the goal of such societies to restrict sexuality to a hypocritical monogamous genitality in its most repressive form, and to hold in check any manifestation of the aggressive urges.

In the blues, however, we find an outspoken desire for a more liberated Eros — a freer sexuality: sensual pleasure, humor and joy coupled with the dialectically opposed sorrow and pessimism that were stereotypically the only descriptive terms one encountered in early discussions of the blues.(8)

The demand for the liberation of sexuality often took the form of complex and extended metaphors: genitals were referred to as coffee grinders, jelly or jelly roll, meat, bread, bull horns, black snakes, and various car parts; the various terms for the genitals often referred to the sex act as well. One's partner in love or sex was often a rider, pharaoh, biscuit-baker, handy-man, ax-man, etc. In Robert Johnson's *TERRAPLANE BLUES*, an automobile is used as an extended metaphor for sex and the sex partner, and the singer wants to know "Who's been driving my Terraplane for you since I been gone?" and "I flashed your lights, mama, your horn wouldn't even blow, there's a short and disconnection, somewhere down below," and "I want to heist your hood, mama, I'm bound to check your oil." Also, "...keep on tangling with your wires — and if I mash down on your little starter, then your spark plugs will give me fire." Another popular metaphor for sex appears in Yank Rachell's *PEACH TREE BLUES*:

*Your peaches look mellow hanging way up in your tree. (Repeat line)*  
*I like your peaches so well, they have taken effect on me.*

*I'm gonna get my step-ladder, I'm gonna climb up on your top limb. (2x)*  
*If I'm gonna monkey your yellow peaches, it's gonna be too bad, Jim.*

*Everytime I start to climb your tree, I wonder what makes you smile. (2x)*  
*You want me to climb your tree ever since you was a child.*

In the blues we also find many examples of aggression unleashed in a straightforward manner quite opposed to the vicarious bellicosity so often promoted by the high-salaried manipulators of so-called "popular" culture. Georgia Tom sang:

*The blues don't mean nothing when you got your six-shooter on your side.*

(SIX SHOOTER BLUES)

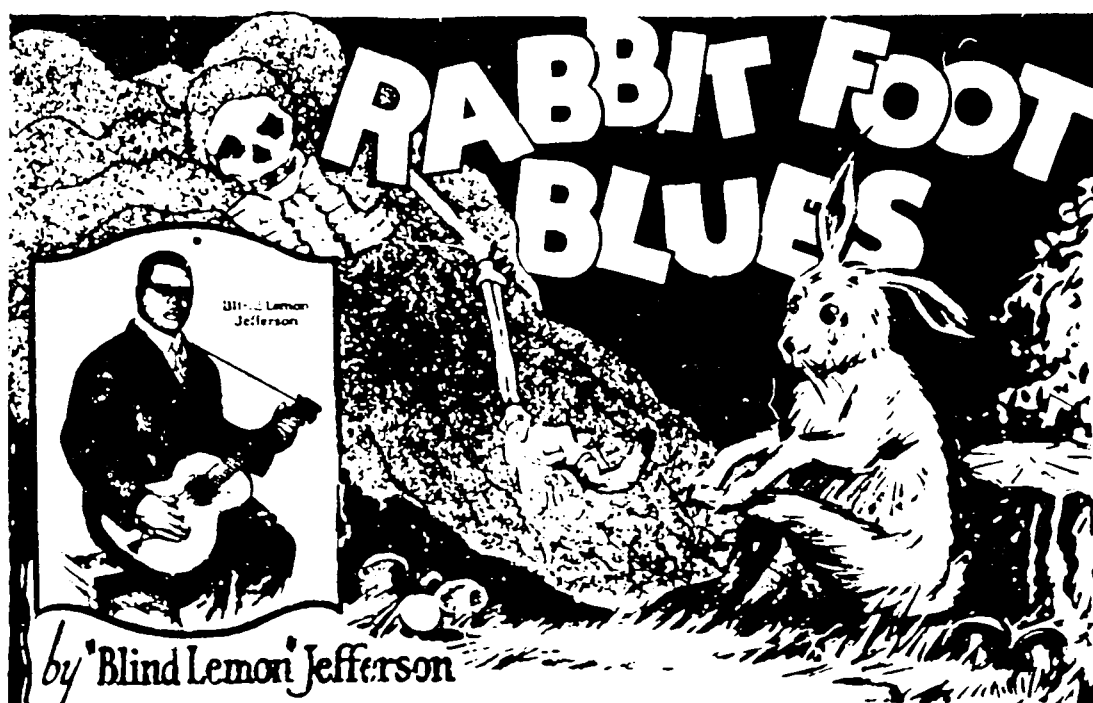
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5. The most recent example of this ridiculous sort of academic tampering is the thoroughly nauseating compilation, *The Blues Line* (N. Y., Grossman, 1969) by Eric Sackheim. Although Sackheim does present more than 400 pages of occasionally choice lyrics, more accurately transcribed than usual, even these are presented in various artificial and unnatural metric arrangements. The assemblage at the end of the book consisting of quotes from blues singers and quotes from other poets, and called a "dialogue" by Sackheim, is blatantly disgusting.

6. For a fuller discussion of the Freudian-Marxist synthesis, many realist works should be consulted, most notably those by André Breton and Benjamin Péret, and the *Clavecin de Diderot* by René Crevel. Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* (N. Y., Vintage Books) is another thoroughly absorbing effort in the same direction.

7. It should also be mentioned that striking differences are revealed when blues lyrics are compared to the lyrics of popular music, or to the lyrics of other forms of "folk" music, e.g. country and western music. The lyrics of country and western songs are usually filled with guilt and a total acceptance, on the singer's part, of society's disapproval of his or her behavior. Only in a country and western, or popular, song could such lyrics as these be heard: "... Tell Daddy his little girl is so ashamed, but Mama, I won't be wearing a ring"! That this is quite antithetical to the attitude of the blues singer will be explicitly shown in this article. Regarding popular music and its ridiculous sentimentality, it should be enough to inform or remind the reader that André Breton once referred to the popular song as "a nery little beggar who speculates on the most syrupy and unworthy traits of the human soul. . ."

8. I have attempted to quote representative lyrics; I do not feel that any of the following songs can be said to be atypical of blues, for in each song, it is the eloquence, authenticity, and power of *the blues* that is manifest. Admittedly, blues lyrics lose some of their power of excitation on the printed page, and it is only by listening to the blues that one can realize the full power of this art. Perhaps the examples that follow will reveal enough of the spirit of the blues to entice those previously unfamiliar into a more fulfilling and exhaustive exposure.



Peetie Wheatstraw felt a similar desire:

*Bring me my pistol, shot-gun and some shells (2x)  
Well, well now, I've been mistreated, baby now, I'm gonna raise some hell.  
(AIN'T IT A PITY AND A SHAME)*

Many artists recorded 44 BLUES (original lyrics by Roosevelt Sykes). This is one of Sykes' versions:

*Lord, I walked all night with my 44 in my hand. (2x)  
I was looking for my woman and I found her with another man.*

*I wore my 44 so long, Lord, it made my shoulder sore. (2x)  
After I do what I want to, I ain't gonna wear my 44 no more.*

*Lord, and my baby said she heard the 44 whistle blow. (2x)  
She said it sounds just like they ain't gonna blow that whistle no more.*

*Lord, I got a little cabin and my cabin is number 44. (2x)  
When I wake up every morning, the wolves scratching on my door.*

Merline Johnson, who was billed as the "Yas Yas Girl", sang these lines in her RECKLESS LIFE BLUES:

*I'm going to buy myself a pistol, and hang it on my side. (2x)  
I'm going to join the gangsters and live myself a reckless life.*

It is not only in an application of instinct theory that the radical implications of blues are revealed. Two key principles of Freudian dialectic, the REALITY PRINCIPLE and the PLEASURE PRINCIPLE, will also play an important role in clarifying the power of blues, a power that is often obscured by the treatment that is usually given them. Briefly, the reality principle refers to the "real," everyday world, to repression and the "requirements" of modern civilization, and to nearly all those situations in which man feels the necessity to do something quite the opposite of what he *desires*. The pleasure principle refers to the FULFILLMENT OF DESIRES: To the delayed gratification demanded by the terms of the reality principle, the pleasure principle offers immediate gratification. To daily toil and bondage to work, the pleasure principle opposes play, or pleasure. To the security flaunted as a benefit of adhering to the principle of reality, the pleasure principle opposes a lack of repression. Our investigation of blues lyrics reveals that the world of the blues singer is oriented, in a large degree, toward the pleasure principle. The very aspects of the blues singer's life that stimulate the repressed society of our day

to label him “uncivilized,” “primitive,” “childish,” “wanton,” and “lustful,” etc., are the most vital and powerfully poetic aspects of his life, for it is in these that we find the reality principle rejected and the pleasure principle embraced. It is not accidental that the songs reflecting this attitude are often those with the richest and most intriguing images. Here is a song by Sonny Jones:

*Now, mama, let me be your lemonade man  
I can squeeze your lemon better than a lemon squeezer can,  
Cause I'm pretty good at it —  
I'm pretty good at it —  
I'm pretty good at it,  
I can prove it by my neighborhood.*

*Out of all the squeezers I'm the best,  
I squeeze different from all the rest.  
Cause I'm pretty good at it, etc.*

*I want you to hold that pistol (pitcher?) nice and true,  
So you won't waste this good ol' juice.  
Cause I'm pretty good at it, etc.*

(I'M PRETTY GOOD AT IT)

Tommy McClennan was one of the few artists who was still recording in a country style at the beginning of the 1940's. This song, recently released by urban bluesman Albert King, was recorded by McClennan in 1941:

*Now I'm a cross cut saw, drag me across your log. (2x)  
Babe, I cut your wood so easy, you can't help but say 'Hot Dog'.*

*They call me Woodcutting Sam, call me Woodcutting Ben,  
But the woman I did woodcutting for, she wants me back again,  
Cause I'm a cross cut saw, etc.*

*I got a double blade ax and it sure cuts good,  
But try my cross cut saw, helps ease on through the wood.  
Cause I'm a cross cut saw, etc.*

(CROSS CUT SAW BLUES)

Society's most potent institutionalized agency operating in the service of the reality principle is the church and religion. The blues singer's attitude toward the church and its preachers was one of suspicion and disrespect. Although some blues singers later became preachers, this move was a return to cultural norms probably very similar in motivation to the type of defection carried out by Aragon, Eluard, and Dali, and cannot be said to typify the position of the blues singer. The preacher was recognized as a hypocrite, interested in serving his own needs rather than the needs of his people, as Hi Henry Brown sang:

*If you want to hear a preacher cuss  
Bake the bread, sweet mama, and save him the crust. (repeat verse)*

*Preacher in the pulpit, bible in his hand,  
Sister in the corner crying 'There's my man'. (2x)*

*Preacher come to your house, you ask him to rest his hat,  
Next thing he wants to know 'Sister, where's your husband at?' (2x)*

*'Come in here, elder, shut my door.  
I want you to preach the same text you did night before.' (2x)*

*See that preacher walking down the street,  
He's fixing to mess with every sister he meet. (2x)*

*Preacher, preacher, you nice and kind.  
Better not catch you at that house of mine.*

(PREACHER BLUES)

Joe McCoy sang of the same situation:

*Some folks say a preacher won't steal  
But I caught three in my corn field.  
One had a yellow, one had a brown,  
Looked over the mill and one was getting down.  
Now some folks say that a preacher won't steal,  
But he'll do more stealing than I get regular meals.*

*I went to my house about half-past ten  
Looked on my bed where that preacher had been.  
Now some folks say, etc.*

*He will eat your chicken, he will eat your pie,  
He will eat your wife out on the sly.  
Now some folks say, etc.*

*I been trying so hard, to save my life,  
Just to keep that preacher from my wife.  
Now some folks say, etc.  
(PREACHERS BLUES)*

But if the church and christianity were rejected, (9) there was frequent acceptance of beliefs in magic spells, potions, hexes, ghosts, dreams, and voo-doo. There are innumerable references to fortune-tellers, gypsies, and hoo-doo women in the blues, while dreams and bad luck signs play an extremely significant role in the lives of some of the singers. Ida Cox sang:

*Why do people believe in some old sign? (2x)  
You hear a hoot owl holler, someone is surely dying.*

*To dream of muddy water, trouble's knocking at your door. (2x)  
Your man is sure to leave you and never return no more.  
(FOGYISM)*

Jazz Gillum's *THE BLUES WHAT AM* is a lengthy catalog of superstitions:

*I don't want my rooster crowing after the sun go down. (2x)  
Don't bring peanuts in my house, it will make a coffin turn around.*

*I don't want nobody to put their bare hands on my head. (2x)  
I don't eat everybody's cooking, I am suspicious of my cornbread.*

*Don't touch me with your broom, don't let my lamp get low. (2x)  
Don't let the dogs start to howling 'cause somebody has got to go.*

*Take your hat off of my bed and hang it on a nail. (2x)  
If I sit down on your trunk, I am bound to go to jail.*

*I don't want my brother to put his bare feet in my shoes. (2x)  
Somebody stole my rabbit's foot, and I've got the suspicious blues.*

One of the most movingly effective of all the blues that deal with superstition, magic or ghosts, is this one by Lonnie Johnson:

*Hmmm, something cold is creeping around. (2x)  
Blue ghost has got me, I feel myself sinking down.*

*Black cat and a owl comes to keep my company. (2x)  
They understand my troubles, hmm, and sympathize with me.*

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9. For a more detailed analysis of the relationship between blues and the church, see my article "Blues and the Church: Revolt and Resignation," in issue # 1 (March, 1970) of *LIVING BLUES* magazine.

*I've been in this haunted house for three long years today. (2x)  
Blue ghost has got my shack surrounded, O Lord, and I can't get away.*

*I feel cold arms around me and ice lips upon my cheek. (2x)  
My lover is dead, how plainly, plainly, I can hear her speak.*

*My windows begin rattling, door knob is turning round and round. (2x)  
My love's ghost has got me and I know my time won't be long.*

(BLUE GHOST BLUES)

It can be seen that while the blues singer rejected religion as oppressive (in the sense of the reality principle), he embraced magic as a means of furthering the separation between himself and that principle.

Freud has written "Humor is not resigned; it is rebellious. It signifies the triumph not only of the ego, but also of the pleasure principle, which is strong enough to assert itself here in the face of adverse real circumstances." ("Humor", *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Standard Edition, Volume XXI, 163.) For the surrealists, the primacy of humor has always been a basic tenet of liberation, and for the bluesman, too, humor has always been a significant weapon with which to combat the enemies of the infinite. In this verse from Mercy Dee's *HAVE YOU EVER BEEN OUT IN THE COUNTRY*, the humor is consciously and overtly coupled with the despair that motivated it:

*If I ever get from around this harvest, I don't even want to see  
a rose-bush grow. (2x)  
And if any body asks me about the country, Lord have mercy on his soul.*

In some instances, the humor in blues can only be described as *black*, as in this line from Furry Lewis' *CREEPER'S BLUES*:

*Mama get your hatchet, kill the fly on your baby's head.*

In treating allegiance to the pleasure principle and the liberation of desire as intrinsically revolutionary attitudes, I am taking certain points for granted. For a more complete elaboration of these points, see the works cited in Footnote 6. Simply, however, it can be said that the fundamental psychological prerequisite of revolutionary thought is the rejection of the inevitability of the various axioms of the reality principle: The absolute necessity of alienated work (based on existent scarcity); the necessity of a severely repressed society; the fearful need to view the love instinct as something to be repressed in order to preserve civilization.

A few more words can be said regarding the particular form of revolutionary poetic activity under discussion here. The repressive norms of this society, essentially white bourgeois norms, are rejected by the black working-class bluesman. They are thus negated by the very act of non-acceptance. Although this form of rejection/negation did not comprise an effort to change society's structure, it was, historically, the principal form of revolt for the black man in the early part of this century. (Other forms of revolt, although existent, did not relate to the people on the level that blues did.) Thus blues has had an important function in relation to black revolutionary activity today, for the blues singer and his form of revolt preserved the critical function of negation during that period by providing a poetic attack on the superstructure of society. (The same is true, in a slightly different sense, of many jazz musicians.)

It was not infrequent that the poetry of the blues found itself transported into that territory so ardently explored by the surrealists. These excursions into the marvelous confirm the previously unrecognized attraction that surrealists feel for the blues and the blues singers. The seldom



recorded Walter Beasley sang:

*A tadpole in the river, hiding underneath of a log. (2x)  
He got to old to be a tadpole, he turned into a natural frog.*

*If a toad-frog had wings, he would be flying all around. (2x)  
He would not have his bottom bumpin', thumpin' on the ground.*

*Everytime I see a toad-frog, Lord, it makes me cry. (2x)  
It makes me think about my baby, way she rolls her goo-goo eyes.*

(TOAD FROG BLUES)

The mandolinist Charlie McCoy sang:

*It ain't no telling what that train won't do,  
It'll take your baby and run right over you.  
Now that engineerman ought to be 'shamed of hisself,  
Take women from their husbands, babies from their mothers' breasts.*

*I walked down the track and the stars refuse to shine,  
Looked like every minute I was going to lose my mind,  
My knees were weak, my footsteps was all I heard,  
Looked like every minute I was stepping in another world.*

(THAT LONESOME TRAIN TOOK MY BABY AWAY)

Georgia Tom composed a song that is perhaps one of the most lyrically exquisite of all the blues:

*I was king for a season, mama, when my gal was in your town. (2x)  
Now she's gone and left me, I feel my castle tumbling down.*

*Now when you get in trouble, see yourself just as you are. (2x)  
Now you rise up in the morning, vanish like a passing star.*

*Now won't some pretty mama come and wash my weeping eye. (2x)  
And bathe them in my teardrops, hang 'em in the sun to dry.*

*What are we but models, molded from the pot of clay. (2x)  
At noonday we crumble, when evening comes we fade away.*

(ALL ALONE BLUES)

The blues singer knew that his dreams held the key to that part of the mind that was in touch with the truer reality beyond the appearances of everyday life:

*I had a dream, I had a dream one rainy night. (2x)  
I was looking for my baby and you know the sun was shining bright.*

(SUN IS SHINING)

The above line by Elmore James from a 1959 recording session clearly tends toward that *point of the mind* (invoked in the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism*) the determination of which has never ceased to be the principal motivating force in surrealist activity. It is significant that the currents of 19th century French poetry that Tristan Tzara in 1931, found relevant to surrealist excursion are a fairly accurate description of the content of the blues. Among Tzara's subjects were: PHANTOMS, MAGIC, SEXUAL LIBERTY, DREAMS, MADNESS, PASSION, FOLKLORE, and REAL AND IMAGINARY VOYAGES. (10)

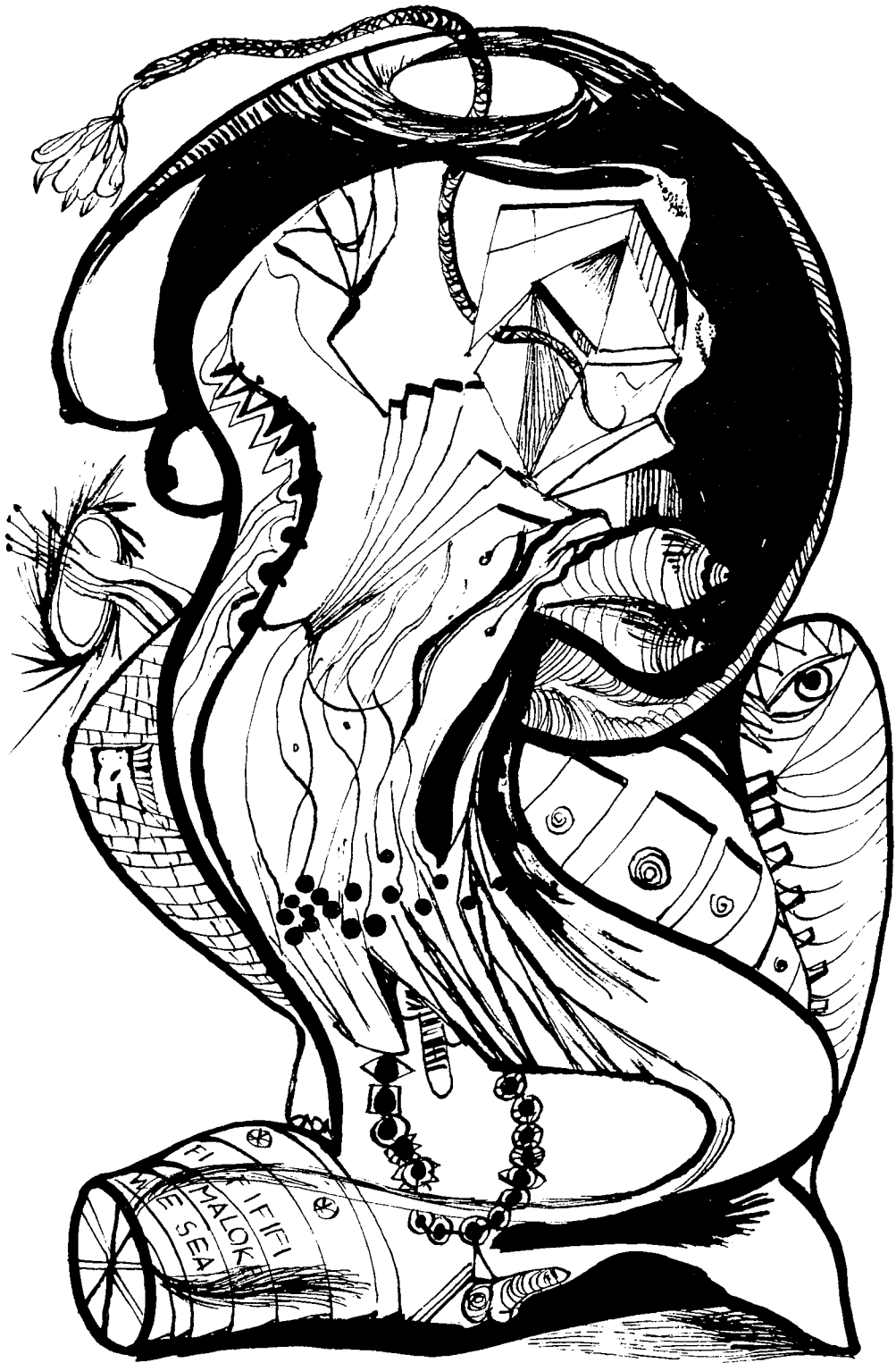
The blues singer relentlessly and lyrically elucidated his passionate involvement with these currents, and it is the resultant potency, richness, and direction taken by the imagery of the blues that has, at this moment, attracted the surrealists. Unfortunately, other recent efforts to treat the blues as a form of poetry have been academic and confusional — one recent attempt even heralds the blues singer as the creator of "religious poetry"! Yet, what is called for by the surrealists, and hinted at by the blues singer, is the necessity of a new life for man, a life without gods, a life in which men and women will, without a moment's hesitation, throw into the gutter all the scurvy priests and mystifiers who set limits on the heights to which we will someday rise.

Paul GARON

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10. Tristan Tzara, "Essai sur la Situation de la Poésie," in *LE SURREALISME AU SERVICE DE LA REVOLUTION*, #1, December, 1931, pp. 15-23.

The Return of the Great Invisibles



Drawings & Poems by Schlechter DUVALL





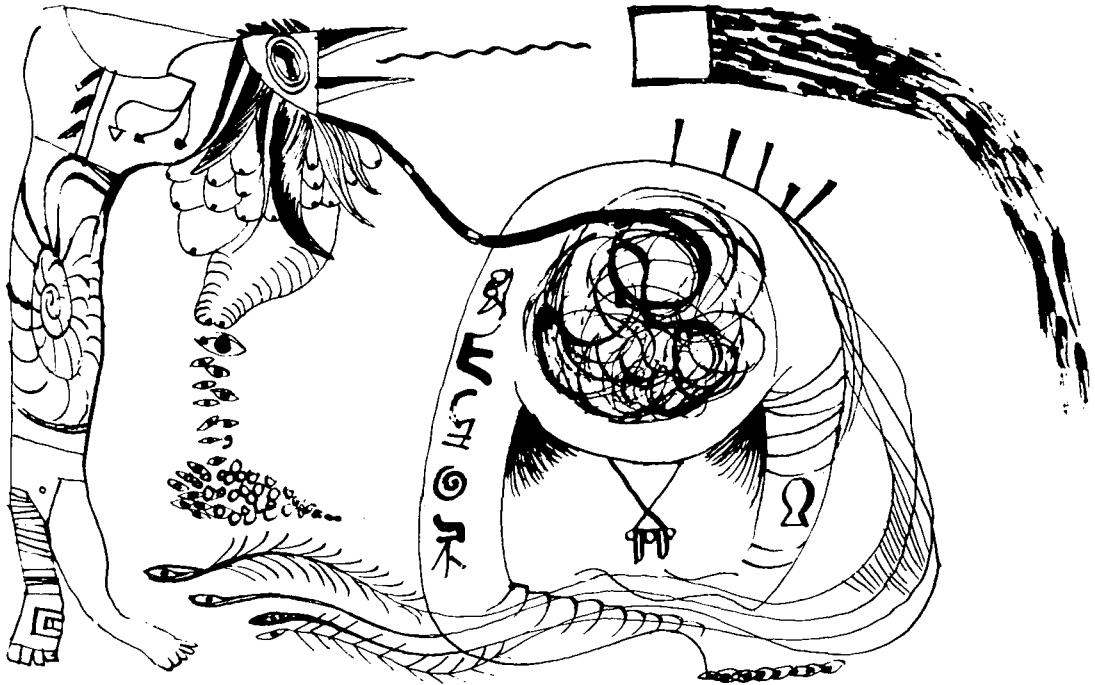
## MOLTEN FLIES

To know nothing behind the apple fire  
Is to lower the hair above ocean level

To change the flower of sweet verticalism  
Is to fill the can of perspective for the sake of love

To sleep under the signature of molten flies  
Is to caress the ice cone of treason under the garter of stars





## RECIPE FOR EVIL THOUGHTS

Make a walking cloud of concrete balls  
 Attack the cold shadow of the spine of flower seed  
 Reverse the axle of love juice  
 Celebrate the anniversary of the stone for sun seekers  
 Eliminate the cold decadence of the system  
 Linger with the shapes of sin  
 DUCHAMP DUCHAMP DUCHAMP

Fly us over the erogenous mountains under your oily handpalm

## AGAINST ETERNITY

Obscure humans like black machines  
 Make glass circles in rotten leaves  
 For security's sake

Clouds wrapped in girls' stockings  
 Move yellow cars against the bridge  
 Built for saints and sinners to see each other

Butter ears from smiling trees greet  
 Generals sailors and ministers of grace  
 And march in bees' wax to the sea of mellow miracles

*Schlechter DUVALL*

# EDWARD YOUNG

The time has come to dynamite the shameful wall of neglect which in recent decades has confined *The Complaint, or Night-Thoughts* of Edward Young (1681-1765) to an almost total critical oblivion which has been interrupted, for the most part, only by an occasional abusive aside calculated to reinforce the prevalent academically compulsory ignorance of this work and its author. The time has come to proclaim, in letters of phosphorus, in letters as red as plasma circulating in glass tubes in a transfusion, the sublime genius of the *Night-Thoughts*, and to inject their subversive and exhilarating emanations into the stifling intellectual atmosphere of this period of agony and confusion.

I recall vividly an incident which occurred in the spring of 1963, in Seattle, Washington. I happened to be reading the *Night-Thoughts* on a rather crowded bus. A young woman seated behind me, having observed the antiquated volume open in my hands, remarked to me, laughing, as she rose to step off the bus: "Nobody reads Edward Young in the twentieth century!"

Perhaps: but so much the worse for the twentieth century!

But consider the testimony of André Breton, who wrote in the first *Surrealist Manifesto* of 1924: "Young's *Night-Thoughts* are surrealist from cover to cover." That this was far from a hasty judgement, an irresponsible claim, an error of youth, may be proved by citing other allusions to Young made by Breton in later years. In 1927, for example, in an essay on Max Ernst (one of the series subsequently published as a book entitled *Surrealism and Painting*) he refers to "the systematic taste that Lautréamont is supposed to have had for a sort of spiritual gutter extending from Young to certain medical reports," from which, among other sources, Breton adds, "Max Ernst seems to have inherited the sense of culture as something extraordinary, captivating, paradoxical and priceless." (It is known that Ernst, too, long before the establishment of surrealism as an organized movement, had been particularly appreciative of the *Night-Thoughts*.)

Again in 1932, in the essay "Surrealism Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" published in the *Surrealist Number* of THIS QUARTER, Breton wrote: "Surrealism, little as it has engaged in a search for antecedents in England, is yet in no way embarrassed to name several outstanding ones." He names Swift, Lewis Carroll, J. M. Synge, as well as the masters of Gothic romance: Walpole (*The Castle of Otranto*), Ann Radcliffe, Matthew G. Lewis, Charles Robert Maturin — "not to overlook in the vanguard of such masters of terror that prodigy of verbal orchestration who was Young, unquestionably the most authentic forerunner of the surrealist style, whose secret Lautréamont was the first to appropriate."

Breton reiterates this point in 1936, in "Limits Not Frontiers of Surrealism," referring to *Melmoth the Wanderer* by Maturin, "which,

in conjunction with Young's *Night-Thoughts*, was to be the most vital source for the all-powerful inspiration of Lautréamont."

One would not be hard put to cite additional evidence, not only in the writings of André Breton and other surrealists, but in the writings of many others as well, for echoes and flashes of the *Night-Thoughts* resound and blaze like a comet across the centuries through many of the purest and most admirable works of all time. It is the *Night-Thoughts* which inspired some of the most exalted watercolors of William Blake. It is from the *Night-Thoughts* that Sade selected epigraphs to precede the tales in his *Crimes of Love*. Writers as different as Novalis, Byron, Burns, Coleridge, Wordsworth and Poe were recognizably under the influence of these thoughts, to quote the subtitle, "on Life, Death and Immortality."

But it was left to Lautréamont to give us the most haunting and uniquely insistent testimony, which is not without a certain ambiguity, to be sure, but is no less inescapable for that. In the *Poésies* we read: "It is only by admitting the night physically that one is able to admit it morally. O *Nights* of Young! How many headaches you have caused me!"

Yet for over a hundred years, since the Doran/Nichols edition of 1857, no new edition of the *Night-Thoughts* was published in English. The only edition available today is included in the two volumes of Young's *Complete Works*, a reprint of the 1854 edition which, if one is to credit the *Publishers Trade List Annual*, may be purchased for forty-seven dollars and sixty cents.

The disappearance of this work is doubly striking when one realizes that it was for a century after its original appearance in 1742 among the most popular works in the English language. "Editions have been multiplied from every press in the country," declares one of the many anonymous introductions to the *Nights*.

"It is to be seen on the shelf of the cottager, with the *Family Bible* and the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and ranks among the first and favourite volumes of the poetical library." But like the Gothic novel, of which the *Night-Thoughts* should be considered a precursor (by way of the "graveyard" school of Robert Blair and others), the early immense popularity of the *Night-Thoughts* was to be overcome, generations later, by a vehement disfavor. André Breton's remarks on the Gothic novel seem equally applicable in this regard to the works of Edward Young. "When we consider, at the present time," he wrote, "this literary style now forgotten or in disrepute, we cannot fail to be struck, not only by its prodigious success, but also by the very singular fascination it exercised for some time upon the most critical minds... Such a career, both public and private, in contrast to the extreme discredit to which such works have since been generally condemned, can be explained only by the inference that they were a perfect adaptation of a certain historical situation. The truth, which

the Marquis de Sade was the first to disentangle in his *Idea on the Novel*, is that we find ourselves in the presence of a style which, for the period in which it was produced, illustrates 'the indispensable fruit of the revolutionary upheaval to which the whole of Europe was sensitive.' Let us realize the importance of this fact. The attention of humanity in its most universal and spontaneous form as well as in its most individual and purely intellectual form, has been here attracted not by the scrupulously exact description of exterior events of which the world was the theatre, but rather by the expression of the confused feelings awakened by nostalgia and terror. The pleasure principle has never avenged itself more obviously upon the reality principle."

Let us add that the decline of interest in the *Night-Thoughts* (and in the Gothic novels) seems clearly related to the consolidation of bourgeois ideology and the refinement of its repressive machinery in the field of art and literature. Once the bourgeoisie had routed the feudal aristocracy and secured firmly for itself the reins of power, it no longer encouraged, or even sanctioned, the outpourings of lyrical negation, the cultivation of fertile gloom or revolutionary pessimism. The *Night-Thoughts*, which called into question the permanence of the day that had just dawned, and which cast somber shadows on the artificial light of rationalist humanism (rapidly reduced to a mere philosophical apology for the exploitation of man by man) were thus not merely "forgotten" — they were *suppressed*.

The attacks on Young came principally from two quarters: from the guardians of religious "truth" and from the champions of the new humanism. On essential points, of course, at least by the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, from which dates the main efforts to discredit Young, these two tendencies functioned together hand in glove, a sort of united front against the imagination which remains in force to this day. It is not without interest to examine the charges against Young, which, as we shall see, are essentially the same as were leveled against the alchemists and magicians of a still earlier period; against certain later thinkers whose thought refused conventional limits, such as Sade, Fourier, Jean-Pierre Brisset; against the "accursed" or black tradition in poetry, from Nerval to Lautréamont and Huysmans to Raymond Roussel and Samuel Greenberg: traditions which surrealism has inherited and developed.

To be sure, for reasons which are only too clear, Young's nocturnal message necessarily concealed itself behind a facade of orthodox christianity. "Unfortunately it is a priest who speaks," Breton wrote of Young, "a bad priest, it is true, but still a priest." It would be pointless to dwell here on the religious deformation of the *Night-Thoughts*. The essential incompatibility of poetry and religion is sufficiently clear. It would not be difficult, in any case, to find examples of poetic revenge against religion (by way of heresy) on practically every page of every *Night*. It is no accident that Young found little favor at the home of religious orthodoxy. For if he is too much a priest to be completely

acceptable to us, he is too much a poet to be acceptable to the theologian. Thus the Rev. Richard Cecil found Young to be "one of the most striking examples of the disunion of piety from truth," suggesting that Young was not truly "touched" by the religious content of his own writings.

The humanist objections, no less revealing, were directed especially against the gloominess, the darkness of the *Nights*. According to the physician and literary antiquarian Nathan Drake, writing in 1805, the *Night-Thoughts* "appear... calculated to throw an air of dissatisfaction on every thing around us." And Leigh Hunt cites a passage:

*That hideous sight — a naked human heart*

which, he tells us, is "a line not fit to have been written by a human being." But it was George Eliot, in an essay which appeared in 1857, and for which she received payment of £25, who summed up, definitively, the humanist attack against Edward Young. For her, "the *Night-Thoughts* are the reflex of a mind in which the higher human sympathies were inactive." She rails against his "radical insincerity as a poetic artist" and his "vicious imagery." Reading such comments, one cannot help recall Blake's proverb of Hell: "Listen to the fool's reproach, it is a kingly title."

Indeed, the poetic immensity of Edward Young becomes ever clearer to us as we contemplate the stupidities of his detractors.

\* \* \*

The very brief "Life of Dr. Edward Young" preceding the Apollo Press (1777) edition of Young's *Poetical Works* includes an anecdote worthy of mention. It tells of "... an alcove with a bench, a little way from his house, so painted, that at a distance it passed, with an unsuspecting gazer, for a real one. On advancing more closely to it the illusion was perceived, and, as a motto, appeared the words, *Invisibilia non decipiunt*, "The things unseen deceive us not'."

It is to the everlasting credit of Edward Young that he gave himself over entirely, in the *Night-Thoughts*, to the unquestionable reality of the things unseen; that he sustained, on a long and troubled voyage, the *nocturnal presence* in which these things unseen emerge concretely in the light of dreams; and that he insisted, with such formidable lucidity, on this Absolute Night, that he was able, finally, to triumph over the insignificant and hypocritical sun of conventional logic (the rationalist superstition). This Diogenes of the eighteenth century held up the darkness of man in his search for an authentic light. And because it is invariably to the well-springs of the Marvelous that he turns, one must recognize in him the sensibility of a true visionary:

*An eye of awe and wonder let me roll  
and roll forever.*

\* \* \*

The *Night-Thoughts* are preceded by a remarkable little preface:

*As the occasion of this Poem was real, not fictitious; so the method pursued in it was rather imposed by what spontaneously arose in the Author's mind on that occasion, than meditated or designed. Which will appear very probable from the nature of it. For it differs from the common mode of poetry: which is, from long narrations to draw short morals. Here, on the contrary, the narrative is short, and the morality arising from it makes the bulk of the Poem. The reason of it is, that the facts mentioned did naturally pour these moral reflections on the thought of the Writer.*

In these lines one easily perceives an approach to the method of automatic writing. The word *pour*, for example, which seems to me indicative of this tendency, certainly coincides with the extraordinary fluidity of the poem, which rushes forth in seething waves of contrasting and colliding images, through difficult and terrible digressions, resembling the violent meanderings of a rapid and rocky stream. A certain irresistible rhythm imposes itself upon this river of images, and it is precisely this peculiar quality of pulsation which recurs, much magnified, in *Les Chants de Maldoror*, according to the famous recipe: "In order mechanically to construct the brain of a soporific story, it is not enough to dissect stupidities and overwhelmingly stupefy the intelligence of the reader with fresh doses, in such a manner as to paralyse his faculties for the rest of his life by the infallible law of fatigue; one must besides, with good hypnotic fluid, ingeniously place him in the position of being somnambulistically incapable of moving, by forcing him to obscure his eyes against his natural tendency by the fixity of your own." The *Night-Thoughts*, permeated with this hypnotic fluid, pursue their merciless dialectic to an extreme limit: "What headaches you have given me!"

It is this exemplary extremism, this quality of insatiable excess, in Young, that one must recall today and restore to the current of poetic thought, so obstructed, in modern times, by the whimpering lap-dogs of literary moderation. It is Young's notorious "bad taste" that must be hailed with admiration and brought to bear against the repressive propriety of official Literature. It is his boundless and desperate leap into the Unknown which gives the *Nights* their immortal and indelible grandeur, and which must be raised as a battle-cry of authentic poetic activity in our time.

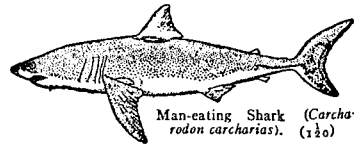
*Nothing can satisfy but what confounds  
Nothing but what astonishes is true.*

Long live the astonishing truth of Edward Young in the twentieth century!

F. R.



Spirula (*S. laevis*), showing the Internal Shell.



Man-eating Shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*). (1820)

## MESSAGE FROM BELOW SEA LEVEL

"Surrealism is that which will be."

André Breton

It is a century ago that Isidore Lucien Ducasse, Comte de Lautréamont, entered immortality through the door of oblivion, under circumstances foreshadowed in his *Chants*. His maxim, "Poetry must be made by all," became for us, as surrealists, a guiding principle, a radiant beacon to shed its brilliant invisible rays through the ashen and gloomy skies, on our passionate quest for the possibilities for man to conquer his present limitations, and on the fierce struggle in which we are engaged to release the powers of desire hidden within man which logical, ethical and religious dogmas have held in bondage far too long.

Man will be free when in the end he understands that it is man himself, as André Breton wrote, who proposes and disposes; that it depends only on him whether he belongs to himself entirely. Surrealism does not set its aims in the far distance, but tries to achieve its objectives in the present world, setting itself the task of restoring self-confidence to man, who is not born for servitude but who seems to fear the ultimate and decisive defeat of his failings.

If we haven't been able to take by storm, all at once, the many obstacles thrown in our way by the calvinistic and mercantile puritanism for which this misty kingdom by the sea is still worthy to serve as a model; if we have sometimes been compelled to restrict our activities to occasional interventions, to engage in a sort of guerrilla warfare to harass this enemy who has mesmerized the intelligentsia for many a generation; if we found that artists have not lived up to the promise held by the heritage bequeathed to them by Brueghel or Bosch, although some of them have gone so far as to flirt, briefly and superficially, with surrealism; if almost since its inception surrealism has been misunderstood here, liable to external deformation and the gross vulgarization of its message; — we know, nevertheless, that "all the waters of the ocean would be insufficient to wash away one intellectual blood-stain."

Surrealism is this blood-stain, the source of real existence, which is always elsewhere.

Her DE VRIES  
Bureau de Recherches Surréalistes  
Amsterdam

April 1970

# A Survey of Surrealism in Europe

Our conception is universal and cannot be delimited by national frontiers, race or language, economic or political system. It has nothing to do with the official, false reality. The whole world is our ideal castle, in which we know how to find the hidden staircases and underground passages to reach one another. It must be constantly affirmed that the surrealist movement can exist only when it is incarnated by the living reality of the individual who is capable of producing the flaming stone of wisdom and folly. And it is our task, as contributors to the permanent movement, to collect information about individualized examples of our common multidimensional conception, so that nothing of the invented fire will be lost, or falsified by the official order which is continuously prepared to take over.

Our comrades are living in every country of the world. There exists a magical network of contact and exchange, which no single one of us is able to oversee at present. The following survey of surrealist presence in Europe is necessarily incomplete. It must be filled in and extended by other comrades who know of additional segments of our network. Internal discussions and controversies are overlooked here, because we all share the limited possibilities which may together construct a better reality.

NOTE: Since information on the situation of surrealism in Czechoslovakia and France is given elsewhere in these pages, they are omitted from the following survey.

\* \* \*

There are many artists in AUSTRIA who claim to be surrealists, but who in fact are mannerists. Still, Hausner and Lehmden can be mentioned as creators of poetic visions. Leherb is a case quite apart from the known movement, but he is an inventor of myths. The solitary poet Celan can also be found sometimes in our castle.

Surrealist activity in BELGIUM has always been close to that of Paris. Overlooking the considerable discordances today, I mention Georges Gronier, the flying poet; Pierre Alechinsky; Pierre Bastin of the journal *TERRAIN VAGUE*; Guth and Delain, who send many provocative tracts from Antwerp; Jacques Lacomblez of the journal *EDDA*; Louis Scutenaire; and Marcel Mariën, who publishes a new series of *LEVRES NUES*.

In DENMARK, where the first International Surrealist Exhibition was held in 1935, Wilhelm Freddie has since contributed much in painting, poetry, films and scandals, and Steen Colding publishes shocking poetry, similar to the uncommon gardens of Heerup, the sculptor; not to forget Asger Jorn and several young poets who found their way through the castle, such as Harder and Hermann, who recently prepared the anthology *Surrealismen Aktuell*.

In ENGLAND John Lyle and Conroy Maddox, in association with E.L.T. Mesens, have published three issues of their journal, *SURREALIST TRANSFORMATION*, in which the work of several young English poets and artists has appeared.

In prewar fascist GERMANY surrealist ideas were not allowed, and a German section of the movement was never started. The present situation in the Federal Republic reveals the solitary activity of Richard Oelze, Edgar Jené and Konrad Klapheck; the automatisms of Aue, Sauerbier, Hulsmans; and the work of Ursula.

In GREECE there lived a storyteller, André Embiricos, who frequented the Paris group in the 1920s. In the 50s and 60s a group of artists and poets oriented toward surrealism existed around Nanos Valaoritis (now in the U.S.), editor of the journal *PALI*. Since the fascist takeover, no activity has been manifested.

Here in HOLLAND, the Bureau des Recherches Surréalistes (directed by Her de Vries) has issued several numbers of its journal *BRUMES BLONDES*, as well as many tracts, and organized exhibitions. The 1967 exhibition *BESTENDIGHEID VAN HET SURREALISME* included work by Jan G. Elburg, Willem van Leusden, J. H. Moesman, and others. Recently we intervened in a "Surrealist Festival" arranged by students at the University of Utrecht (which featured a conference on Dali, a play by Cocteau, and other horrors), contributing a *Negative Definition of Surrealism for the Dutch Public*, telling what surrealism is *not*. This was an attack on the current falsifications and stupidities which occur everywhere. Presently we are preparing a new surrealist bulletin.

In ITALY Manina, called by Breton "a born surreal being," continues to paint in Venice; De Sanctis and Sterpini in Rome are well known for their provocative surrealist furniture and manifestoes. I must also mention Enrico Baj, our master in anti-aesthetics.

The word surrealism may hardly be pronounced in POLAND, but Lec has created his poetic and satirical work, and some poets around the journal *TWORCZOSC* have entered our domain with automatic poetry and lucid essays. The most active seems to be Sandauer who has recently published his translation of Breton's *Surrealist Manifesto*.

PORTUGAL has shown for a long time intensive surrealist activity in the arts, with poets and painters like Mario Cesariny, Lisboa (died 1958), Oom, Seixas, Sempao and others. *Intervencao surrealista* by Cesariny (1967) tells the story of Portuguese surrealism, which maintains many contacts with South American (especially Brazilian) comrades, such as Sergio Lima and Lima Ferraz of the journal *PHALA* from São Paulo.

The situation in SPAIN is marked by the Franco regime. Although one cannot speak of surrealist activity in the full sense, Juan-Eduardo Cirlot, since the late 50s, has provided a center for young Catalan artists and

writers oriented toward surrealism, such as Moragues and Fontanilles.

In Sweden Max-Walter Svanberg (who has illustrated Rimbaud's *Illuminations*) and Ragnar Von Holten (author of a study of *Gustave Moreau*) are recognized creators of the Marvelous. Several Swedish poets continue the tradition of automatism, as has been established by Lundkvist, Ekelof and Lindegren (see the catalogue of the recent exhibition *SURREALISM?*).

In YUGOSLAVIA there is a "surrealist workshop" which includes the painter Kunovski, and "naive" painters like Rabuzin, who have been for several years in contact with the Paris comrades, via Radovan Ivsic, resident in Paris.

Every comrade, in the first place those who are unmentioned here, are welcome to contribute his or her weapon to this beautiful ARSENAL.

Laurens VANCREVEL  
Amsterdam

## THREE-DIMENSIONAL SHADOW

*Today boils up from lakes of tears  
conquering with mists  
the inscription of tungsten  
on the glass of the hall window  
Birds of calcium and mercury  
of lead and sulfur  
play games of changing faces  
Hold my hand, I am afraid that  
when I am not looking  
the horizon will slide  
under the carpet  
Last night  
I lay awake  
listening to the planets  
whisper*

Penelope ROSEMONT

# SURREALISM?

Contrary to the exhibitions of a historical and retrospective character ordinarily presented by museums and certain art galleries, the International Surrealist Exhibitions which have succeeded each other since 1935 have tended to be organized around a theme, sometimes made explicit by a title (*Eros*, 1959; *l'Ecart Absolu*, 1965) determined by the common consent of André Breton and the active members of the surrealist movement in the corresponding period.

In May 1968 in Paris, at the moment that it seemed that surrealism was discovering an immediate echo in the universities, in the street and in an everyday life which brusquely assumed a certain direction, many believed that surrealism had at last acceded to its full revolutionary dignity and that to manifest itself henceforth by paintings, poems, films, exhibitions, etc. would be to draw upon an already completed history.

What happened shortly afterwards in Czechoslovakia demonstrated, in a blinding manner, that the "revolution of the mind," such as the surrealists intend it, was far from being accomplished.

Also, differences of opinion, soon to become incompatible, came to the fore in the heart of the surrealist movement during the winter of 1968-9, regarding the direction of specific activities of surrealism in the future. Curiously, the appearance of the last issue of the surrealist review *L'ARCHIBRAS* coincided both with the end of the daily reunions of the surrealist group at the cafe (which continued to give a certain rhythm to surrealist activity) as well as the origin of new initiatives.

The new review *COUPURE* is directed by three of those who, for several years, assumed

alongside André Breton the orientation of surrealist publications: Jean Schuster, Gérard Legrand and José Pierre. They have chosen to give precedence to the surrealist *idea* rather than to the *word* surrealism.

It is in close association with José Pierre that the exhibition *SURREALISM?* has been realized. Like the preceding International Surrealist Exhibitions, it stresses works which have marked the history of surrealism as well as those of its precursors in the plastic arts (Arcimboldo, Fuseli, Moreau, Munch), emphasizing, at the same time, the originality of typically surrealist phenomena (such as the object, automatism, "poetic fury," etc.), which are distinguished, meanwhile, by certain aspects which are at the source of the question-mark in the title of the exhibition.

We have hoped that this exhibition would insert itself at the heart of the *actual situation* of the surrealist spirit; that it would assume the shape of an interrogation regarding the significance of surrealism today and tomorrow — an interrogation opening on an extension of the *will to subversion* with which surrealism has no higher ambition than to identify itself. And consequently, what is decidedly *beyond question* in this exhibition is the *essential presence of the surrealist spirit*, its *disquieting and revolutionary* existence in our consciousness.

Ragnar VON HOLTEN



*(Preface to the catalogue of the exhibition SURREALISM? which opened in March 1970 in Stockholm, Sweden)*



# SURREALISM IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

*The American critics' practice of limiting surrealism to France is one of their favorite methods of obscuring its universal significance. Surely it requires either blindness or dishonesty to overlook the marvelous efflorescences of the disquieting muse in Martinique, Yugoslavia, Haiti, Denmark, Portugal, Holland, Japan and above all Czechoslovakia, the native land of some of the most outstanding surrealists: Karel Teige, an exceptionally lucid theoretician; Jindřich Heisler, a frenetically inventive poet; Zbyněk Havlíček, psychoanalyst and poet; Jindřich Styrský, remarkable especially for his violent collages; and the admirable Toyen, who lives today in Paris, one of the greatest of all surrealist painters.*

*A summary of Czech surrealism from its pre-history in the 1920's and the establishment of the Czech surrealist group in 1933 through the 1947 International Surrealist Exhibition in Prague, may be found in Jean-Louis Bédouin's Vingt Ans de Surréalisme: 1939-59 (Denoël, 1961). A new work, The Poets of Prague by Alfred French (Oxford, 1970) which we have not yet seen, promises a discussion of surrealism in Czechoslovakia and translations of Czech surrealist poems.*

*Surrealism as an organized movement in Czechoslovakia was forced out of open existence by the stalinization of the country in 1948. The suicide of Karel Teige, who was sought by the secret police; the execution of Závěš Kalandra, a brilliant marxist theoretician sympathetic to surrealism: these actions define the brutal outline of the events that led surrealism in Czechoslovakia, in company with all truly revolutionary thought, and like the old mole of Hegel and Marx, to find its way underground. Only in very recent years was it able to re-emerge, and only very briefly could it manifest itself openly. But this momentary respite was sufficient to reveal the surrealist group of Prague as one of the major reference-points of surrealism today. Let us mention the exhibition The Pleasure Principle and the manifesto The Platform of Prague, both prepared in collaboration with the surrealist group in Paris (1968); the important review ANALAGON, subsequently suppressed (a single issue appeared in 1969); and Vratislav Effenberger's Realita a poesia (Prague, Edici Ypsilon, 1969), one of the most significant theoretical works of contemporary surrealism. The collective text published here cites still other works, and indicates the general lines of the Czech surrealists' orientation.*

*After the Soviet invasion of 1968, the situation of surrealism in Czechoslovakia has grown increasingly precarious. Many comrades have had to flee; others who remain are forced to confine their activity to the narrowest limits.*

*But in Prague as in Vietnam and in Paris as in Chicago: the struggle continues. ARSENAL will continue to receive its miraculous weapons from all over the world, and to distribute them as widely as possible to those who know how to use them.*

# ★ Prague in

*Note by the editors of L'ARCHIBRAS: Latest events have made certain parts of this text (prepared in Prague, December 1967 – January 1968) purely historical. If, in spite of that, we publish it in its original form, it is because we hope, by revealing the intellectual situation immediately preceding the Czechoslovakian "process of rebirth," to clarify certain aspects of the latter – aspects which are not always easy to grasp when seen from outside.*

## 1. After the Rain

It has been just twenty years since an International Surrealist Exhibition was held in Prague. This was during the brief period that was marked in Czechoslovakia by an assessment of ideas, conducted in an intensive manner (evenings of discussions, formations of groups, etc.). The war years had virtually paralysed cultural life and we were faced with an unusual situation: paradoxically, the sky was clear, for we discovered the extent of a general crisis of consciousness; illusions were falling; this era was a new twilight of the idols. The more difficult it was to become oriented in the new situation, the more rigorous and fruitful should have been the ideological polemic, if it had been able to reach maturity. But everything was brutally stopped by the advent of stalinism, by the campaign against "perverted art," and subsequently by the uprooting of "monstrous formalism." We find ourselves today in a situation in which, after a long sleep, different voices have again been able to make themselves heard in the past few years. In what way does Prague of November 1967 differ from Prague of November 1947? What has changed, in twenty years, in the intellectual sphere?

## 2. 20 Years

The aptitude of the 1947 groups to develop their own conceptions calls for more detailed explanations. At that time, certain indications made it permissible to predict regroupings around certain ideas; at present, our situation in this regard is much more obscure. The tendency to form groups remains strong, to be sure, even today: but this tendency remains almost entirely formal; the internal cohesion of the groups offers almost no resistance, for this cohesion is based not on common principles, but most often on opportunities for collective publication. Moreover, the different postwar circles by and large took the thirties as a point of departure: it was a matter of renewing the old models *en bloc*, although there was much talk of a critical examination of the past. The present rebirth of cultural life, after a void of twenty to thirty years, is naturally submitted to the most diverse influences, notably those of Western Europe which do not, however, find the soil here prepared. It has become useless to think about the fifties; socialist realism has disappeared, and for a long time the real fronts have been located on other terrains. Today one can distinguish several currents in Prague's intellectual life. There is first of all the disorganized camp of representatives of cultural stalinism who are trying as best they can to modernize their formulas, although they are the least able to engage in polemics regarding

# the Colors of the Times ★

contemporary questions. In opposition, one finds some marxist philosophers and specialists who devote themselves exclusively to the procedures of modern research in the human sciences and the arts: psychoanalysis, structuralism, etc. The representatives of this tendency are few in number but remarkable for their erudition and personalities. Finally, much more numerous are the partisans of a sort of "modernist eclecticism," totally devoid of ideological content (all ideology is naively assimilated into stalinism): even if they parade their philosophical problematicism, for the most part they do not rise above "decorative" creativity nor above an aesthetic faithful to the taste of the day.

### 3. Boutique for Whales

Under these conditions, the only "vivifying" element of intellectual development is constituted by *fashion*. It seems that it is necessary at all costs to keep in step with others; that nothing that is done in the world that surrounds us — even the most superficial manifestation — must leave us indifferent. One experiences here an anguished fear of not being up to date. Provincialism, so characteristic of this country in the past — only a few exceptional people (F. X. Salda, L. Klima and others) and naturally all those who formed the avant-garde of the period between the two great wars succeeded in not being tainted by it — this provincialism is today wearing only a new mask. One is no longer fifty or a hundred years behind the transformations of thought and sensibility in Europe, but one lamentably admires the "ripples" which agitate the surfaces of world art markets in order to reproduce the movement as promptly as possible on a small, local duck-pond.

### 4. At Reduced Price

The rejection of ideology is today as much a matter of course for a part of our youth, who display, at Happenings, a countenance unblemished by the celebration of Mass (and vice versa) as it is a matter of course for many famous men of letters. It is the "fear of freedom" in which one no longer sees anything but a door to which everyone may privately obtain a false key. The discrediting of ideological criteria, which results from their degraded popularization, has not been received as an invitation to *revalue* them; on the contrary, most frequently it is received like an order given to schoolchildren, when a lesson has been canceled, to flee the school *en masse* . . .

### 5. Thought is Not a Pretty Puddle

The notion of *ideology* has become a repulsive notion and is interpreted, most often, in an expressly pejorative fashion. This is a fact of formalist thought *par excellence!* Is it then so easy to renounce the original signification of words? On the other hand, is it truly possible to resign oneself to the practice of creation only in

the wings of a theatre whose stage is empty? Each conception or creative method must defend its legitimacy somehow or other in the world into which it enters and with which it "settles its accounts." But each demonstration of this legitimacy — which no artistic conception can elude if, of course, it does not intend to limit itself to rambling aimlessly — is at the same time the determination of the signification not only of art, but also of life. It is in this rapport between artistic expression and the reality of life that there resides the ideological intentionality of creativity, and it is in this same rapport that creativity surpasses the most elementary intentionality — often purely intuitive — in order to develop itself into a system of conceiving the world. Only when this evidence has been understood more generally will it be possible to evaluate creativity according to its value as *communication*; and only then will it be esteemed according to its depth as *discovery*. This goal can be attained only through struggles between different conceptions, struggles which will cease to be scorned when the "public" tires of the "attractions" by which it is diverted; when, in the milieu of emptiness, it suddenly realizes it is at the end of its patience.

### 6. A Sieve Full of Water

Certainly we are today in a situation in which one joyfully receives each variation of the menu, even if one is presented with preserves whose time-limit for consumption has long since elapsed. Thus it is not surprising that people like Aragon, Ehrenburg or Sartre (to say nothing of Simone de Beauvoir) still enjoy relatively high reputations . . .

### 7. Pralines of Sentimental Education

. . . and it is not by chance that a star has been made by Erich Fromm whose "neo-psychoanalysis," which loses itself in abstract humanism and in an apology for christian love, is marvelously in accord with the pathetic sentimentality of the Johns-and-Marys with which youth has been benumbed for years, under the pretext of awakening sensibility.

### 8. Fighting Phantoms with Rakes

On the other hand, authors like Bataille, Péret or Roussel remain practically unknown. In return, there is no little novel *à la* Queneau which is not easily published; any fantasy *à la* Boris Vian is applauded. The politics of publishing is, in general, very revealing of the state of thought. One may speak in this connection of the case of Teige. If the publication of his work is delayed, it is not only because those who most "distinguished" themselves during the fifties would feel morally compromised by it, it is also because of the indifference on the part of others, for various motives. It is evidently easier to perform one's duty toward Teige if he remains a *mere name*, if

his works remain for the most part unknown.

#### 9. J. V. Djughashvili and Pierre Restany

It is here that a paradoxical but very significant phenomenon becomes evident; the survivors of cultural stalinism (who are today trying to officialize a modernistic eclecticism, without pretensions) are striving objectively for the same goals as the modernistic eclectics of the Restany type who are trying to abuse the publishing monopolization to suppress their adversaries by administrative means. Theoretically, these two groups illustrate the disagreement between adherents of engaged art and adherents of art-for-art's-sake — an apparently insurmountable disagreement; in fact the disagreement is *nothing more than apparent*, for objectively these two tendencies have in common a *lack of critical consciousness*, passive receptivity, epigonism, submission to official or fashionable dictates; that is, recourse to the easiest means. Incapable of developing critical consciousness in the order of irrational creation, they both reduce art to a purely decorative camouflage which masks the spiritual void as well as material interest. This is one of the fronts on which the artistic battle is being waged in Prague.

#### 10. Nothing but Nothingness

It is obvious that in such conditions the formerly flourishing category of nonconformist and independent creators has almost disappeared. Instead of opposing contemporary decadence by confronting it in critical fashion, by assuming responsibilities, one presents as the best "trump" the false card of resignation which, despite its very diverse origins, is always a winner. Well-dressed philosophers, to applause (mostly mechanical) of the audience, repeat

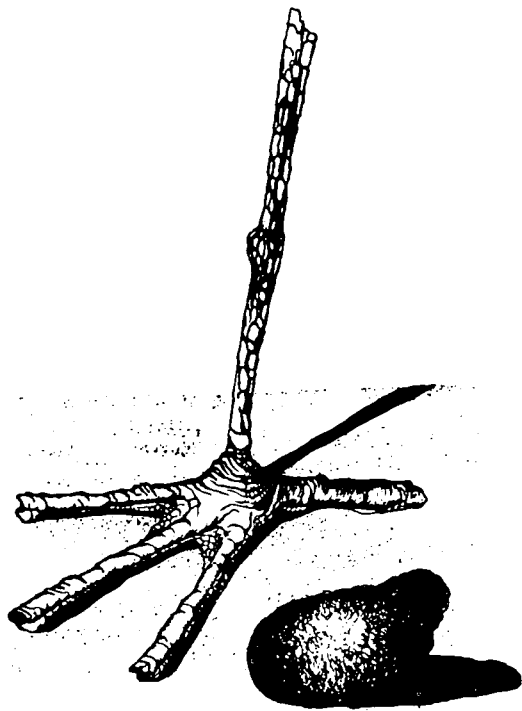
their perilous leaps into nothingness; a nothingness which (reasonably enough, moreover) seems more seductive than a difficult ideological struggle, even in the eyes of some who, recently, sensed in themselves surrealist dispositions. While some now look at themselves complacently in the pocket mirrors of skepticism or of language erected into an absolute value, firmly determined not to soil themselves in contact with discouraging reality, others already feel themselves drawn toward similar deserts — this time it is a question of eternity — by the "shepherd's pipe" which teaches religious humility before the unknowable world. It is not surprising that it should be precisely these partisans of philosophical speculations founded on a naive faith in the Absolute (were it even nihilistic) who take the concrete psycho-ideology of surrealism for a tardy manifestation of naive romanticism — as if romanticism required "monocles." No, the race of aristocrats of the mind is not yet extinct. There are still some left, even among the youngest poets who, fleeing the difficult problem of action in today's world, take refuge in the aristocratic and Bremondian culture of the "pure word," at the heart of which the noisy engineer Max Bense can be seen extending his hand to old T. S. Eliot.

#### 11. Being in Nothingness

These formalist games to which thought is molded are for the most part pure grimace. Fortified with all he has learned, most often indirectly, from Heidegger, our existentialist poet begins to write ninety-nine versions of the melody "I'm going to hide in the corner," but, actually, nothing could be farther from his true demeanor. Even before writing the last words of his scornful indictment of life and the world, he feverishly makes the rounds of the publishing houses in order to give a very practical result to his disgust with everything.

#### 12. The Magdeburg Hemispheres of Alienation

To escape an ideological choice, one assumes a "scientific" illusion. But science (which interests us above all to the extent that it concerns anthropology) has not been sheltered from the contemporary intellectual apathy and mediocrity. To adapt promptly to the changing wind of fashion is becoming, even in this domain, a law for all those for whom a simple updating of yesterday's terminology and a superficially scientific arrangement of old machines may especially aid — and truly aid — in obtaining invitations to congresses abroad and in falsely aggrandizing their own international reputations. It is a question here of world explorers scarcely worth the operettas of our fathers. The edifice of science remains, for the most part, a haunted castle. Reality is not grasped globally (this discouraging approach is perhaps a sign of the times) and under these conditions there is faint hope of seeing in the near future a resurgence of a new interpretation of the world, more profound and more fruitful. Naturally, it is more clever to take advantage of the semi-results of past research to attempt to construct from them the



drawing by TOYEN

Toyen 17

supports for intellectual shelters — comfortable, theoretical refuges. . . And what is most frightening is the posting of the progress of these works at each street corner. Thus it is possible to learn the technique of love by radio courses, in the same way that one learns Russian — with no less results! And one does not fail to find in the library of the educated contemporeary, besides the best-sellers of the new novel (*le roman nouveau*) and the books of Heidegger, with pages still uncut, the work of the important atomic scientist concerning beauty, the direction of art, etc.

### 13. Without Guarantee

It would be imprecise to say that the situation is obscure and complicated. For this would be a sort of excuse for everyone. A few superficial events of intellectual life suffice to reveal what is happening in depth. It is more than probable, moreover, that we could observe the same phenomena (with a few variations) everywhere. This situation is not confined to Prague or Czechoslovakia. The difficulties begin the moment one refuses to be satisfied with the general decline of judgement and the hysterical gestures against a blank background, the only apparent results of the cultural explosion, and when one decides to search in the current "art scene" for elements likely to produce, in the long run, a renewal.

### 14. Between the Barriers

It is *à priori* suspect that one should stress more readily the favorites of the current season than give credit to the continuous development of a determined creative conception. Those who until now defended the "theatre of the absurd" are presently fighting again for the knotty baton of Stanislavski; in the plastic arts we see the chiefs of the "non-figurative post-surrealist school" — whose attention was aroused by the prosperity of the pop-art derivations from surrealism — again falsifying sewing machines in their paintings; finally, the apostles of film-truth are rising from the mud, borne on the wings of an avant-gardism with a Polish cut (Vera Chytilova: "The Little Marguerites").

### 15. For Information

Differing from this Polish avant-garde inspiration, a truly new and subversive *genre* of creation has begun to manifest itself in the contemporary Czech film, in which little space is given to formalist originality. It is not even a question of an offensive of the imagination. But this *genre* of film could be marvelously effective in renewing the awareness of reality which the imagination cannot do without, for the function of the imagination tends toward the dialectical rapport which it maintains between the conscious and unconscious components. We are thinking of the first films of Milos Forman, which without any doubt escaped the directives of the producers and which differ in this sense in a striking way from the rest of the production of the local pseudo "young cinema."

drawing by TOYEN



### 16. Fencing in the Dark

Where surrealism is concerned, it is impossible not to notice (by certain *exterior* but quite specific signs) that its situation here is very different from what it may be in France and elsewhere. The absence of all publication for more than twenty years explains why it is that today the "partisans" and adversaries of surrealism are divided according to ways of seeing which are at least schematic. Those who realize, little by little, that they can reclaim again the love of their youth, accept and admire surrealism only to the strict degree that it does not alter the idea they formed of it, once and for all, thirty years ago. Others, adversaries of surrealism, can be irritated (they rather nervously pronounce the word "anachronism") by its Teigist version, which is partly known: irritated on the one hand because they are ignorant of the historical context which would permit them to understand how Teige's marxist conception of surrealism was linked to the situation of the thirties, and on the other hand because this Teigist version (which is here practically the only accessible source of information on the surrealist movement) is intentionally generalized and presented as the dogma to which all surrealist activity, past and present, must be reduced. Although recently this lack of information has been somewhat surmounted, it is only from the Czech edition of Nadeau's *History of Surrealism* (in preparation) and from J.-L. Bédouin's *Twenty Years of Surrealism: 1939-1959* (for the moment the "Salvation Army" has succeeded in having this title removed from publication plans!) that one may expect a first harvest of fundamental information, a necessary condition for all fruitful discussion.

## 17. Carried Away by the Bridge

On the other hand, can one better define the *internal* situation of surrealism in Czechoslovakia? It is not much easier, it seems. First of all, for the good reason that the activity of surrealist (or quasi-surrealist) groups, if they exist outside of Prague, is not very visible up to now. Recent years have naturally accumulated a quantity of questions which must be discussed. Even if the re-establishment (still rather timid) of the means of publication invites collective manifestations, the latter would surely be premature as long as they are not founded on a more profound exchange of views. Thus real solidarity can be manifested only by the constitution of a common basis for discussions. There are, moreover, the creations of some more or less isolated authors whose activities, at least in part, are close to surrealism, even if they do not always say so. We can thus feel ourselves directly concerned by the mediumistic drawings of Karel Havlíček, the intimate journal made of photographic recordings of Jiri Sever, the naive and very expressive humor of Oldrich Wenzl, the plays on words and images of Ladislav Novak or the cinematographic research of Karel Vachek who, after having made some short footages, seems otherwise to have forbidden himself all activity.

Yet it would be vain to attempt to predict today, in any sense whatever, the *future* perspectives of surrealism here: one would be expressing only the mood of the moment. Although it is no longer impossible to publish, in Prague, certain works of Freud, Breton or Teige (despite some partial difficulties and despite the slowness of publication), nor to dedicate to surrealism thematic exhibitions, radio broadcasts or series of lectures, the fact that these opportunities in no way guarantee a continuity of publications and manifestations considerably limits their scope to the level of simple information.

## 18. Differentiation

... of artistic conceptions is theoretically recognized today and the confrontation of creative points of view has even already been realized more than once—most often with pitiful results, for want of the fundamental prerequisites for each confrontation; that is, because of lack of knowledge, but also by reason of the confusion which prevails today in the entire world regarding everything which concerns art.

All the blame cannot be placed on the administrative monopolization of the means of publication. This monopolization was the consequence of official opinion according to which marxism as a science of social life, incorporates all the criteria to appreciate the value of creative thought being offered for publication. But this point of view has been relaxed little by little. There subsists a system of monopolization which is opposed, of course, to differentiation and confrontation of opinions, but whose principle, otherwise, thanks to vast publishing plans, facilitates publications whose economic deficit would not be assumed in any other way. Then, too, it is possible that the discussion clubs which are

beginning to be formed around certain periodicals will constitute progress. But the most encouraging perspectives are obviously those which have been opened, on the threshold of the year 1968, by the healthy events which are well known.

## 19. Reanimated Relations

From February to May 1968 there will be held in Brno, Prague and Bratislava, the exhibition *The Pleasure Principle*, prepared by Vincent Bounoure, Claude Courtot and José Pierre—an exhibition in which there will be presented, under four principal themes (violation of the law, the law of night, automatic truth, and play), a selection of contemporary works of the surrealist movement. The catalogue of the exhibition will be completed by a bulletin, *The Prague-Paris Surrealist Telephone*, in which the organizers of the exhibition as well as Philippe Audoin, Annie Lebrun, Gérard Legrand, Jean Schuster, Jean-Claude Silbermann and Hervé Télémaque answer our questions. Concurrently with this exhibition, the Socialist Academy of Prague is going to organize a cycle of conferences on *Surrealism and Art* in which the problems of surrealist creativity and ideology of yesterday and today will be approached.

After recent publications (first complete edition of the *Chants of Maldoror*; a series of texts published in the first six issues of the magazine SVETOVA LITERATURA under the title *Surrealist Defenestrations*; the collection *Poetism*; Nadeau's *History of Surrealism* and a vast collection of texts by André Breton) and following the first two exhibitions of the Prague surrealist group (*Symbols of Monstrosity*, 1966; *Karel Teige: From Poetism to Surrealism*, 1967), the exhibition *The Pleasure Principle* represents an important step in the recognition of current creation and thought of the surrealist movement.

On the other hand, various works written by members of the Prague surrealist group are currently in the process of publication: *Photography in Surrealism*, *Plastic Creations of Surrealism*, *Reality and Poetry*, and the collection *Surrealist Point of Departure* which retraces the history of the surrealist movement, notably in Czechoslovakia, down to the present.

By its collaboration in the preparation of the exhibition *The Pleasure Principle*, Prague, for a long time one of the advanced centers of surrealism, renews direct contact with the group in Paris, for the first time since the International Surrealist Exhibition of 1947.

*For the Prague surrealist movement:*

Stanislav DVORSKY  
Vratislav EFFENBERGER  
Petr KRAL  
Ludvik SVAB



European Lynx (*L. lynx*). (330)

# THE DEBUTANTE

When I was a debutante I often went to the zoological garden. I went so often that I was better acquainted with animals than with the young girls of my age. It was to escape from the world that I found myself each day at the zoo. The beast I knew best was a young hyena. She knew me too. She was extremely intelligent; I taught her French and in return she taught me her language. We spent many pleasant hours in this way.

For the first of May my mother had arranged a ball in my honor. For entire nights I suffered: I had always detested balls, above all those given in my own honor.

On the morning of May first, 1934, very early, I went to visit the hyena. "What a mess of shit," I told her. "I must go to my ball this evening."

"You're lucky," she said. "I would go happily. I do not know how to dance, but after all, I could engage in conversation."

"There will be many things to eat," said I. "I have seen wagons loaded entirely with food coming up to the house."

"And you complain!" replied the hyena with disgust. "As for me, I eat only once a day, and what rubbish they stick me with!"

I had a bold idea; I almost laughed. "You have only to go in my place."

"We do not look enough alike, otherwise I would gladly go," said the hyena, a little sad. "Listen," said I, "in the evening light one does not see very well. If you were disguised a little, no one would notice in the crowd. Besides, we are almost the same size. You are my only friend; I implore you."

She reflected upon this sentiment. I knew that she wanted to accept. "It is done," she said suddenly.

It was very early; not many keepers were about. Quickly I opened the cage and in a moment we were in the street. I took a taxi; at the house, everyone was in bed. In my room, I brought out the gown I was supposed to wear that evening. It was a little long, and the hyena walked with difficulty in my high-heeled shoes. I found some gloves to disguise her hands which were too hairy to resemble mine. When the sunlight entered, she strolled around the room several times — walking more or less correctly. We were so much occupied that my mother, who came to tell me good morning, almost opened the door before the hyena could hide herself under my bed. "There is a bad odor in the room," said my mother, opening the window. "Before this evening you must take a perfumed bath with my new salts."

"Agreed," said I. She did not stay long; I believe the odor was too strong for her. "Do not be late for breakfast," she said, as she left the room.

The greatest difficulty was to find a disguise for the hyena's face. For hours and hours we sought an answer: she rejected all of my proposals. At last she said, "I think I know a solution. You have a maid?"

"Yes," I said, perplexed.

"Well, that's it. You will ring for the maid and when she enters we will throw ourselves upon her and remove her face. I will wear her face this evening in place of my own."

"That's not practical," I said to her. "She will probably die when she has no more face; someone will surely find the corpse and we will go to prison."

"I am hungry enough to eat her," replied the hyena.

"And the bones?"

"Those too," she said. "Then it's settled?"

"Only if you agree to kill her before removing her face. It would be too uncomfortable otherwise."

"Good; it's all right with me."

I rang for Marie, the maid, with a certain nervousness. I would not have done it if I did not detest balls so much. When Marie entered I turned to the wall so as not to see. I admit that it was done quickly. A brief cry and it was over. While the hyena ate, I looked out the window. A few minutes later, she said: "I cannot eat any more; the two feet are left, but if you have a little bag I will eat them later in the day."

"You will find in the wardrobe a bag embroidered with *fleurs de lys*. Remove the handkerchiefs inside it and take it." She did as I indicated.

At last she said: "Turn around now and look, because I am beautiful!" Before the mirror, the hyena admired herself in Marie's face. She had eaten very carefully all around the face so that what was left was just what was needed. "Surely, it's properly done," said I.

Toward evening, when the hyena was all adressed, she declared: "I am in a very good mood. I have the impression that I will be a great success this evening."

When the music below had been heard for some time, I said to her: "Go now, and remember not to place yourself at my mother's side: she will surely know that it is not I. Otherwise I know no one. Good luck." I embraced her as we parted but she smelled very strong.

Night had fallen. Exhausted by the emotions of the day, I took a book and sat down by the open window. I remember that I was reading *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift. It was perhaps an hour later that the first sign of misfortune announced itself. A bat entered through the window, emitting little cries. I am terribly afraid of bats. I hid behind a chair, my teeth chattering. Scarcely was I on my knees when the beating of the wings was drowned out by a great commotion at my door. My mother entered, pale with rage. "We were coming to seat ourselves at the table," she said, "when the thing who was in your place rose and cried: 'I smell a little strong, eh? Well, as for me, I do not eat cake.' With these words she removed her face and ate it. A great leap and she disappeared out the window."

Leonora CARRINGTON

# CONQUEST OF DAWN



*We die our death in the forests of giant  
eucalyptus fondling the beachings of  
absurd steamers,  
in the land where  
noxious sundew grows  
grazing at the mouths of sleep-walking lights*

*drunk  
very drunken garland picking demonstratively  
our resounding petals  
in the bell-shaped rain of blue blood,*

*we die  
with crossing stares in ecstatic loves  
in the worm-eaten rooms, not a word  
for damming-up in our pockets, like an island  
that lies dark in the misty outburst of its  
polyps — in the evening,*

*we die  
among live substances swollen in anecdote  
with hoisted premeditation which  
only exults, which only creeps  
into the very heart of our cries, which only  
foliates with a child's voice, which only  
crawls around the eyelids in the  
march pierced by the sacred myriapods  
of silent tears,*

*we die from a white death flowered  
with mosques its breast-plate of splendid absence  
where the spider-web of pearls drools its burning  
melancholy of my convulsive era*

*in the unspeakable conversion of the End.*

*Marvellous death of nothing*

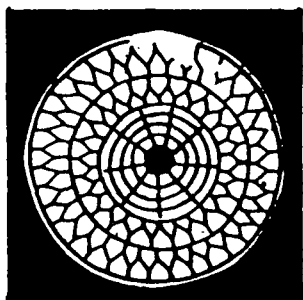
*A canal-lock fed at the most secret spring-heads  
of the traveler's tree broadens into the rump  
of the absent-minded gazelle*

*Marvellous death of nothing*

*The smiles escaped from the lasso of obliging remarks  
sell unpriced the jewels of their childhood  
to the strongest at the sensitives' fair in the apron  
of an angel  
in the preliminary season of my voice  
on the gentle slope of my voice  
at the top of my lungs  
to go to sleep*

*The day no longer consecrates its day  
The day simply lays an egg of day in  
the esophagus of the clematis, ignorant of day,  
sugar-burner oblique to the straight necks*

*Marvellous death of nothing*



*Ah the deposed crest of infantile prides  
 the foreseen caresses  
 here at the doors that are more shined than the knees  
 of prostitution  
 the house of dews — my dream  
 where I adore  
 from the withering of useless hearts  
 (except for the orchid-triangle that bleeds violently  
 like the silence of the lowlands  
 on the orphan-Fridays of stone and void)*

*burst out*

*in a glory of freed trumpets at the scarlet rind*

*Non-creamy heart rescuing from the spacious voice  
 of the precipices  
 from incendiaries and sensuous tumult of pageant*

*And shit like none other the sea without undermining without  
 listening-post without shrapnel-shields without trenches  
 peeled by moons broken across the iron knees  
 of the night as if a votive squid of the coal pits,  
 I set against his breast my coal-chute  
 from the green Antilles*

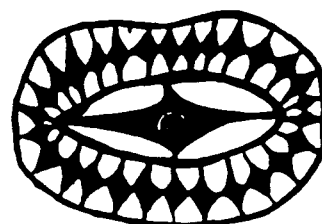
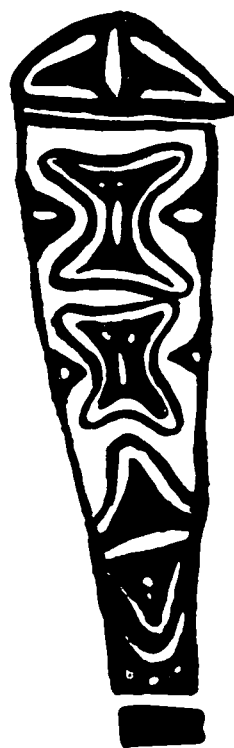
*corymbe of days corymbe of nights  
 towards the hermaphrodite Nothing big spoor cultivating  
 its praying and cross-bearing soul  
 shit between waking and sleep of the sensitive me  
 standing in the fields of blood and the west  
 tapping out their songs of  
 hernandia sonora  
 and your forked tongue revered by my purity, Revolt  
 in the ruins  
 it is the drooling sea of Gorgons and Isis and  
 my eyes and the harnessed air  
 rain and the gold of bullets of orgasm your eyes  
 shit between waking and sleep of the sensitive, it's  
 the sea without opposite that opens its fans  
 and rattles its nuts it's the sea that knocks down  
 all its heredity-charts it's the sea  
 that imprints a river of herds and  
 tongues beneath the palm of lethal lands  
 and the wind, its pocket full of shipwrecks  
 with a mouth of a stream as fresh as your  
 thought that I lose and that I hunt down between  
 waking and sleep*

*It's the sea my dear carrion-lover and virginal foaming  
 toward the hermaphrodite Nothing  
 its excellent leaves of woman and buttercup  
 where the spermatozoa of a perfect bird  
 create themselves*

*As the sun my dear as the sun frog  
 spattered in its nest of dried mud*

Aimé CESAIRE

(Translated by Jon Ford)



SCULPTURAL DESIGNS,  
 NEW IRELAND.





Jorge CAMACHO

Preliminary Transatlantic Repercussions of the Painting of  
**JORGE CAMACHO**

with Special Reference to his *Homage to Raymond Roussel*

The three-toed sloth of South America, for reasons which at present remain as mysterious, elusive and suggestive to me as a dream I had some months ago in which George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel visited me in Chicago (on which occasion we drank beer together while discussing the contemporary implications of *The Phenomenology of the Mind*) is known to nourish itself only on the leaves of the crecopia tree, a fact which alone is sufficient guarantee of this unforgiveably neglected beast's unassailable qualifications in matters of elegance, regarding which all definitions and commentary are doubtless equally arbitrary, and in any case superfluous. This peculiar variety of elegance, moreover, is probably comprehensible only to certain inexorable practitioners of poetry, to those who are serious in matters of love and laziness; certainly it possesses all the earmarks of having evolved according to the invariably disquieting but deliriously gratifying *laws of chance*. Such an extraordinarily acute degree of specialization, and the truly formidable risks it implies, clearly give the image of the three-toed sloth (especially when viewed from the poetic plane) a particularly unsettling and almost hopelessly poignant quality, provoking the apparition of certain irresistible syllogisms which flash like fireflies in the cool loopholes of starless darkness on these long, restless summer nights: *If there were no more crecopia leaves, there would be no more sloths or, if there were no more sloths, what would become of the crecopia leaves? Etc.*

It was Alphonse Toussenet, the astonishing disciple of Charles Fourier, who, at the very moment when the revisionist leadership of Victor Considerant practically reduced the entire French phalansterian movement to the level of mere petty-bourgeois political agitation (in which only the immediately applicable aspects of the Master's doctrine were publicized, and the more "fantastic" aspects suppressed in a true conspiracy of silence) solitarily pursued his memorable study of *passional zoology*. Toussenet avowed that his researches were meant to continue the work of poetry, that they were intended to fill a gap which science seemed unprepared, unsuited, to fill. Today it is the pleasure and the pride of surrealism to have resumed this effort, and to have contributed genuine advances across the immense terrain of the Unknown — advances which only the ignorant, the blind or professional scoffers in the service of confusion continue to deny.

Toussenet seems to have largely confined his research to the fauna of France, and did not (as far as I have been able to determine) devise an analogical interpretation of the three-toed sloth who, disdaining the countryside dear to Alexandre Dumas and Claude Monet, insistently prefers to sleep in the distant jungle,

to enjoy its arboreal reveries in a violently non-European context, suspending itself, upside-down and with its eyes closed, as if in deliberate repudiation of the most cherished notions of the protestant ethic. The spirit of this beast is to the spirit of the dog or the cow what the lower Amazon basin or the Equatorial Rain Forest of central Africa is to the most modernized and industrialized suburb of Paris. It is a matter of no small interest, fascination and charm, for me, that the psychic air which surrounds my image of the jungle, the particular cluster of sensations radiating, for example, from the prints used to illustrate popular exotic narratives of earlier years, with captions like "The Boa Constrictor Moved Forward as the Beating of the Drums Grew Louder" — that this *aura* of the jungle, conceived almost as a sort of lyrical antithesis of urbanism, was penetrated most profoundly, explored with relentless verve and a genius beyond powers of description, by a *Parisian*: I refer to Raymond Roussel.\*

It is certainly not dismissible as "mere coincidence" that the emotional and intellectual latitudes and longitudes of the voyages taken by Raymond Roussel and Jorge Camacho should have coincided — one might say *collided* — before our eyes with such terrifyingly momentous reverberation. Let us imagine a map, spread out on a table, on which one is

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\* That the work, or even the *name*, of Raymond Roussel is scarcely known in the English-speaking world is cause for regret as well as anger. The very slow rate of translanguing communication — reflected in the fact that the work of the incomparable Lautréamont, who died in 1870, and whose influence on revolutionary thought in the French language has been enormous and is still steadily growing, has only very recently been truly made available (and even so in a mediocre translation) to the mass of American readers; or, again, that Marx's *Grundrisse*, which has excited such stirring commentaries, has yet to appear in translation, except for a fragment — is a crime against the needs and capacities of the human imagination for which ten major publishers, chosen at random, should be publicly flogged. Of course, purely ideological interests here exert a determining influence. It is in the interests of capitalist publishers to anaesthetize the reader, to annihilate his critical faculties and reduce him to passivity, apathy and brutalized mental anguish, a condition of intellectual and imaginative slavery, and certainly not to encourage him to break through the cage of ideological superstitions, thus raising his level of consciousness so that he could begin to act in the interests of his own and others' freedom. Is it any surprise that publishers under such a system consistently prefer translations of works which meet their stultifying and oppressive requirements? This is why one may easily obtain books by third- and fifth-rate imbeciles like Camus and Teilhard de Chardin (not to mention Georges Simenon) while Roussel, Jacques Vaché, Arthur Cravan, Benjamin Péret and so many others remain largely untranslated, or, in other words, refused by the U. S. authorities in charge of intellectual immigration.

And thus, with the naturalness and simplicity of the legendary descent of Isaac Newton's apple, is demonstrated, without at all straying from the subject, that the critical and passionate pursuit of any existing human problem will always lead to still another argument in favor of the revolutionary socialist transformation of society and the dictatorship of the proletariat, which would pave the way to a society in which production would serve legitimate human needs and aspirations instead of the repulsive greed for profits of a tiny minority of parasitical, hypocritical, cowardly, jingoistic and thoroughly vile exploiters.

able to trace the routes of the mind's most exalting adventures, as well as the shapes, contours and topography of the various continents, islands and seas, the peninsulas, the mainland, with its mountains and rivers: the domain commonly called reality. And then let us place upon this map a large piece of clear glass (emblem, in this instance, of concrete intuition) on which appears a vast multitude of variations, alterations, details, colorings, shadings, and marvelous extensions; thus superimposed, the two unite to make a single new map exceeding in its implications the independent revelations of its two constituent sections. As is the case with *frottage* and critical paranoia, there is really no limit to the discoveries one can make in the context of such a *miraculous convergence*. What is certain is that it is largely through Camacho's eyes that the work of Roussel assumes, today, its most dynamic significations. (I should add, immediately, to dispose in advance of the accusations of certain critical dunces, that the foregoing delineation by no means diminishes the painterly and poetic contributions of Camacho, any more than the work of André Breton is diminished by the fact that it was he, more than anyone else, who was responsible for reviving, in this century, the resplendent message of Fourier. It should perhaps be emphasized that the hermetic and lyrical reinterpretation of Roussel is only one aspect—albeit so far the most magically resonant—of Camacho's work. One could add that he is still young, and that his revolutionary attitude enables us to say that we have everything to expect of the future.)

It is surely with confidence in the possibilities of tomorrow that Camacho moves through the transparent shadows of alligators, brandishing his machete, stepping on stones of silence across the meandering tributaries of sharp mirrors where the noonday sun, like a Red Colobus of Zanzibar, plays ruthless optical tricks with the folds in the traveler's vest.

But let us call attention to an elementary but crucial fact: far from permitting himself the dubious and irrelevant luxury of merely *illustrating* Roussel, according to conventional academic methods of pictorial annotation, Camacho, with true poetic sensitivity and the severity of Ducassian and Leninist precision, has taken on the infinitely superior task of *broadening, deepening, extending, clarifying* and *verifying* the Rousselian conception of the world, by means of surrealist methods, the infallibility of which is unquestionable. (I mean infallible in the sense that these methods, systematically utilized for their revelatory rather than "artistic" effect, will unvaryingly yield results of immeasurably greater authenticity and validity than will any of the formalist methods of traditional aestheticians, from the most withered proponents of the oldest Florentine academy to the most modern salesmen of Pop or Minimal Art. It goes without saying that surrealism remains emphatically *not interested* in aesthetic criteria; in view of the thoroughly deplorable condition of human culture today, such academic preoccupations constitute nothing but an inexcusable evasion of the revolutionary

necessities of our time.)

As his work becomes more widely known here, the merciless intervention of Jorge Camacho will be instrumental in definitively exposing as contemptible lies both the obituaries for surrealist painting which have rapaciously proliferated in recent years, as well as the "schools" of painting championed by the well-paid authors of these obituaries. Is it necessary to insist on the fact that Camacho has pursued his researches in complete opposition to the demands of artistic fashion, the "art market" as it is detestably called? This suffices to explain the neglect he has hitherto suffered on these shores, in the "land of the dollar." Yet Camacho holds the explosive secret which one day will reduce all the enemies of the marvelous to the most insignificant dust. We know that the stars in the highest portion of the sky have their counterparts in the luminous fishes in the deepest part of the ocean. And we may be sure that inspired seekers of the highest and deepest truths will continue to find their way to Camacho's door which is a replica of the Emerald Table. For in each of his works there burns a flame of passionate integrity which is exceedingly rare, but which is absolutely necessary in order to find one's way through the otherwise unnavigable obscurity of our time. This startling lucidity, in such contrast to the empty vagueness and deception that prevails in the official art and thought of today, points the way to Camacho's alchemical triumph, the fulfillment of his quest for the Golden Fleece of human freedom.

And meanwhile, where may we expect to find the Argo of Jorge Camacho?

We shall find it in the dust raised by the talons of the Great Horned Owl engaged in mortal combat with the Canadian lynx, whose bloody traces engraved on the earth's surface do not fail to bring forth shudders from even the most indifferent passersby; we shall find it in the middle of forgotten sentences interrupted by violent claps of thunder and the apparition of vampires; in the mysteries of the Antarctic where Poe sought the well-springs of terror in poetic investigations subsequently and admirably renewed by the great recluse of Providence, Rhode Island; in the trajectory of the horn of a rhinoceros rushing madly through a village in Oklahoma; in the opening of giant black orchids in the crisp January snow; in the legend of the *Flying Dutchman*; in the moving spectacle of Bugs Bunny at sea in a washtub singing SOMEbody's ROCKING MY DREAMBOAT; in the amazing photographs of early automobile races; in the eyes of Marilyn Monroe glancing into the future; in the infinite shoplifting of Harpo Marx; in Navaho sand paintings, Kwakiutl house-fronts and the Hopi rituals of the Katchinas; in the spectral conversation, perhaps forever lost to us but always secure in the realm of conjecture, between Jack Johnson and Arthur Cravan in the boxing-ring in Barcelona in 1916; in John Brown's speech to the court that sentenced him to death; in the disconcerting splendour of certain seashells, several butterflies of India and Peru, and old colored diagrams of geological stratifications; in the almost fanatical enthusiasm which Penelope

and I share for the Giant Anteater and his more secretive brother the Sumatra Pangolin; in the magnificent gestures with which Malcolm X quietly brought down the blade of the intellectual guillotine over the heads of his reactionary antagonists — in all of these images of permanent revelation, beacons of an automatic zodiac, which possess, for me, all the value of an indisputable criteria in matters of light, of knowledge, of inspiration and the substance of genius; it is in all of these involuntary but indelible reference-points of the mind, and in their spontaneous combustion which ignites and destroys the monstrous barriers which shut out the dawn of the possible; and especially, in their marvelous *intersections*, in which the mind advances with pulsating geometric fervour toward the definitive realization of the potentiality of desire: it is here that the mediation of Jorge Camacho assumes its true proportions, its proper magnitude, and, beyond any questions of exaggeration, its measureless bearing on the fundamental problems of consciousness in the present epoch.

The luminous and eccentric fringe of the sea raises its hat, handsomely and heavily, several

inches above its head. There is an ostrich plume slowly passing by in the lazy countenance of the wind, and an armchair, presumably filled with the saccharine of revenge, upon which someone has placed a large snail.

Jorge Camacho, inheritor and Avenger of the Wolf-Table, roams the deserted squares of the metropolis leaving a delightful trail of murdered bishops and half-devoured police sergeants in homage to our immortal comrade Benjamin Péret!

Solemn as the blackest cloud at the moment that a squirrel sets foot on the piano keyboard, the jar of moths whistles softly in the sand; a large crow flies overhead, pronouncing the words: *"The glass of water in the storm."*

Jorge Camacho, Brother of the Havana Sunrise, vanishes into the mountains of madness in search of the Lost Cities of the Mind!

Somewhere, at this very moment in the Amazon jungle there is a three-toed sloth beginning its dinner of crecopia leaves.

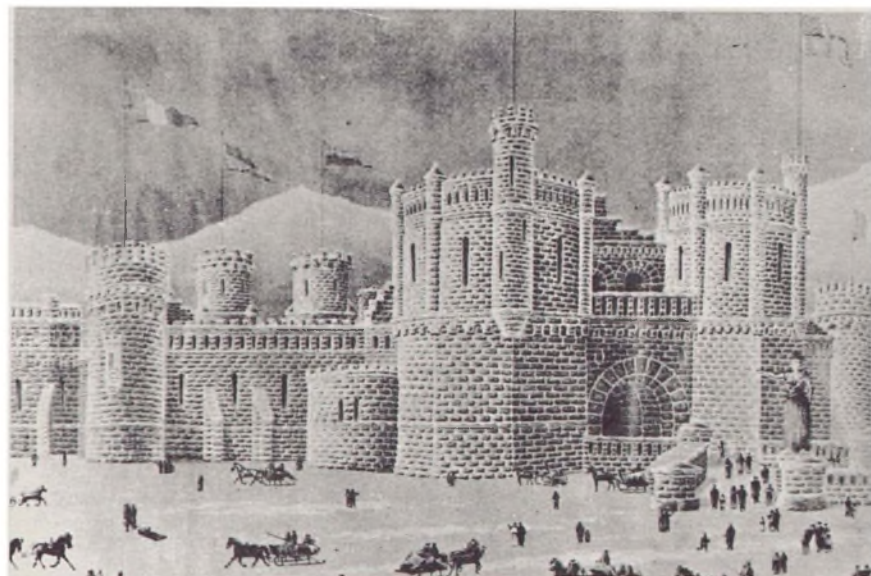
Jorge Camacho, Master of Quicksand, rides on at full gallop into the future.

F.R.

## The Leadville (Colorado) Ice Palace

*It was a miracle of rare device,  
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!*

S. T. COLERIDGE



*Caravans set out. And Hotel Splendid was built  
in the chaos of ice and of the polar night.*

Arthur RIMBAUD



André BRETON, Diego RIVERA and Leon TROTSKY (1938)

## REVOLUTIONARY ART and the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

(excerpt)

Only a new upsurge of the revolutionary movement can enrich art with new perspectives and possibilities. The Fourth International obviously cannot take on the task of directing art, that is to say, give orders or prescribe methods. Such an attitude towards art could enter only the skulls of Moscow bureaucrats drunk with omnipotence. Art and science do not find their fundamental nature through patrons; art, by its very existence, rejects them. Creative revolutionary activity has its own internal laws even when it consciously serves social development. Revolutionary art is incompatible with falsehood, hypocrisy and the spirit of accommodation. Poets, artists, sculptors and musicians will themselves find their paths and methods, if the revolutionary movement of the masses dissipates the clouds of skepticism and pessimism which darken humanity's horizon today. The new generation of creators must be convinced that the face of the old internationals represents the past of humanity and not its future.

Leon TROTSKY

1 June 1938

## THE INVISIBLE AXIS

Literature and revolution: who better than Trotsky was able to come to grips with these two terms, and in the most vivifying light there is, that of the Hegelian dialectic? Between the expression of the spiritual destiny of the individual and the historical process of the emancipation of the people, we know that there are bridges to be built until we have something better — that is, until the kingdom of necessity and the world of categories that corresponds to it are replaced by the kingdom of freedom and a world of unity.

To this end, both revolution — insofar as it is permanent — and literature — insofar as it is permanent — work continually. It is in the analogy of their internal dynamics (every authentic work of art, writes Trotsky, carries in it a protest against reality) which permits us to infer their eventual reconciliation.

Let us forget that the word *literature* covers and slips into another meaning; let us employ it here in a positive sense. But we must not allow ourselves to think that the problem is actually one of depth, for Trotsky, throughout *Literature and Revolution*, fustigates, very precisely, that which we, ourselves, call literature — be it the manifestation of a subjectivity directed back upon itself and thereby renouncing all inclination to communicate; or conversely, a pretension to objectivity, to a formal and minutely detailed description of the exterior world. In one case as in the other, literature pompously recreates nothingness.

It is clear that what Trotsky intends by literature is a profoundly subjective spiritual quest which opens — and is opened by — the exterior world and, especially, the historical process. In the tenuous context which has motivated and given form to certain questions which remain major today, one understands that he evinces — to the astonishment of Maurice Parajanine — unreserved admiration for Pascal.

It is, nevertheless, in thus defining literature in as negative a manner as one could wish, that Trotsky makes of it a means of real emancipation. In bringing to light his inner richness, the artist makes a gift to all men. But this act of *bringing to light* is effected in a social framework and in a precise historical context of such a kind that he cannot but feel its impact. The artist has received from the revolution a certain *knowledge* which has modified his sensibility and which is present, though hidden, in his work. The invisible axis, writes Trotsky (the axis

of the Earth is equally invisible) ought to be the Revolution itself. That is, the Revolution has no need to be the manifest content of a work, but indeed, to the contrary, it participates in every revolutionary work in the latent content: it is the principle of overdetermination.

A recent article by Maurice Blanchot (in the *NOUVELLE REVUE FRANCAISE*, August 1964) has pointed out how, for the German Romantics, the French Revolution influenced and, in the final analysis, enriched the course of their lyrical subjectivity. But it was not their concern to use the French Revolution as a poetic ingredient. To do so would have diminished poetry and revolution alike. The relationship of the one to the other is to be found much more in the heart than in the mind; it is for the mind to discover their dialectic and to prevent their emerging in overt expression and thus being transformed into mere lyrico-revolutionary verbalism.

One knows, of course, that the real difficulties begin when literature has, opposing it, a power that it has coveted: revolutionary power. One knows, alas, that this power has a strong tendency to confine artists to propaganda, thus alienating them more seriously than any bourgeois democracy could ever do.

Since nothing could have foretold the course of events, in 1923, when power was in the process of escaping from him, it is the merit of Leon Trotsky to have written these unequivocal lines:

*"Our marxist conception of the objective social dependence and social utility of art, when translated into the language of politics, does not at all mean a desire to dominate art by means of decrees and orders. It is not true that we regard only that art as new and revolutionary which speaks of the worker, and it is nonsense to say that we demand that poets should inevitably describe a factory chimney or the uprising against capital! Of course, by its very nature, the new art cannot but place the struggle of the proletariat in the center of its attention. But the plow of the new art is not limited to numbered strips. On the contrary, it must plow the entire field in all directions. Personal lyrics of the very smallest scope have an absolute right to exist within the new art. Moreover, the new man cannot be formed without a new lyricism."*

Jean SCHUSTER

(translated by Louise Hudson)

## Letter to André Breton

27 October 1938

Dear Comrade Breton,

The purpose of this letter is to clarify a point which could give rise to deplorable misunderstandings. In one of my letters to *PARTISAN REVIEW* I advise having a critical, expectant and . . . "eclectic" attitude toward the different artistic tendencies. The last will seem strange to you, because generally I am hardly the partisan of eclecticism. But it is worth discerning the sense of this counsel. *PARTISAN REVIEW* is not the review of an artistic school. It is a marxist review devoted to the problems of art. It must maintain toward the different artistic schools a critical and friendly attitude. But each artistic school must be faithful to itself. That is why it would be absurd to propose, for example, to the surrealists, the advice that they become eclectic. Each artistic tendency has the absolute right to dispose of itself. This is, moreover, the sense of your manifesto.

My best regards,

Leon TROTSKY

## TROTSKY

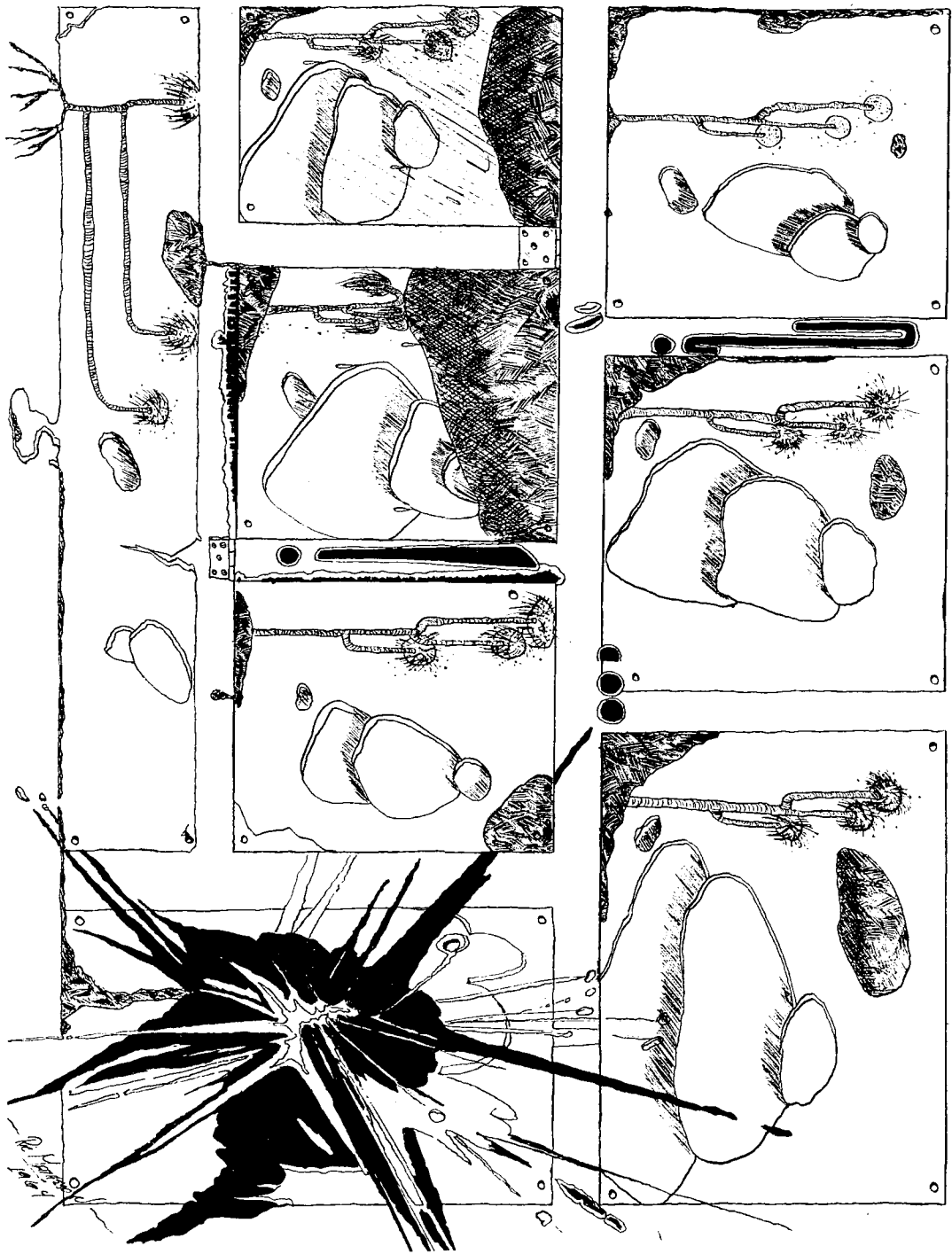
The Pathfinder Press (formerly Merit Publishers) of New York has distinguished itself above all by making available in this country the works of Leon Trotsky. In addition to his most celebrated writings, their catalogue includes many lesser-known titles, including two recently issued collections of his last articles, interviews, letters, etc. (1937-9) and a selection of his important *Military Writings*. Most recently they have reprinted *My Life*, with an introduction by Joseph Hansen, "With Trotsky in Coyoacan." Regrettably, Hansen ignores André Breton's visit to Trotsky in 1938 and the resultant co-authored *Manifesto for an Independent Revolutionary Art* which inaugurated the International Federation for Independent Revolutionary Art (FIARI). Hansen's silence in this regard — especially striking since, as a young militant in the Socialist Workers Party, he was one of Trotsky's guards in Mexico, and present during Breton's stay — testifies eloquently to the disheartening weakness of Trotsky's American followers on the cultural plane. Let us emphasize that Trotsky himself, however, toward the end of his life even more, perhaps, than in the time of *Literature and Revolution* (1923) remained acutely sensitive to the dynamic if elusive interrelations of cultural activity and revolution. Thus one looks forward eagerly to the collection *Leon Trotsky on Literature and Art* announced for fall.

No one — or I should say hardly anyone, for there are always some who go through life refusing to learn anything — pretends that Trotsky's conception of art (or politics, for that matter) holds a monopoly on the answers to the burning questions of our time. But only by assimilating his irreplaceable teachings can we go further. As he himself wrote, "those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones."

In 1970, an impassioned salute to the President of the Petrograd Soviet of 1905, the old companion of Lenin, organizer of the Red Army and theoretician of permanent revolution, who included among his "exceptional abilities" (in Lenin's words) a profound and uniquely sympathetic understanding of the cultural currents of his time.

F. R.

★ ★



Eric MATHESON

## THE STREET LAMP AND THE EYELID

*Close near my eyelid,  
The golden threads were damp,  
That moved like a fairy cobweb  
Beneath the orbly chant*

*Gradation was it woven,  
As it ruse from the puzzle-box,  
To the highest place was proven,  
As the lid would shut and relax*

*Below and above  
A godly stride  
Like stalks in a fairy dream  
While lightning in the sky did hide  
That shimmering tearful gleam*

*I closed mine eyes, the struggling heart,  
That held like the clouded sun  
While my hands grew cold, a tear did part  
From the soul that glanced thereon.*

## AFRICAN DESERT

*And we thought of wilderness  
That Bore the thousand angles  
That strew the dust  
As fine as frost  
'Pon the fancied candels*

*O Black as autumn night  
are fed the Holy Forests  
That fertilized the grain  
That breaths the birth  
Of chanted aurists*

*The soaring swan of danger  
That held the mighty plain  
The Bitter seed of glittering age  
Seems glad to mourn its twain*

## FLOWER SOUL

*She roameth at thy side  
In Bloom of Lust and pride  
I to adore her ream  
That shiners the Bigmans ween*

*One day I rose fresh and clean  
And stept to see my face  
Well what did I Behold!  
Seemed Common, But O maze*

*Such crude naked wretch  
With locks that fell abuse  
Who danced away — a giddy catch  
And saw his truly muse*

*Ye stay my only feign  
What written lore can tell  
An Epics wisdom reign  
From whence divined doth Knell*

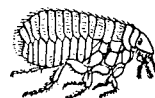
Samuel GREENBERG

NOTE: These poems were written around 1914-15.

## ART POETIQUE

Songs are thoughts, sung out with the breath when people are moved by great forces and ordinary speech no longer suffices. Man is moved just like the ice floe sailing here and there in the current. His thoughts are driven by a flowing force when he feels joy, when he feels fear, when he feels sorrow. Thoughts can wash over him like a flood, making his breath come in gasps and his heart throb. Something like an abatement in the weather will keep him thawed up. And then it will happen that we, who always think we are small, will feel still smaller. And we will fear to use words. But it will happen that the words we need will come of themselves. When the words we want to use shoot up of themselves — we get a new song.

ORPINGALIK  
(Netsilik Eskimo)



LETTER  
on  
LAUTREAMONT  
(excerpt)

Yes, I do have some inside information on the unthinkable Comte de Lautréamont, on the magnetic extravagance of his letters, those dark iron-fisted dictates he sent with such elegance — cordiality, even — to his father, banker, publisher or friends. Extravagant? Of course. These letters have that harsh extravagance of a man who rushes forward with his lyricism like an erect avenging blade in one hand or the other.

Incapable of a simple everyday letter, he always gives the sense of a certain epileptoid tremor of the Word, which, for whatever object, does not lend itself to being utilized without a shudder.

This Word nurtures a single inhabitant: Poetry, swimming in the infinitesimal detail of it like a frog and, with each letter, swelling up into a bigbertha ejaculating broadsides against all that is bovine.

Antonin ARTAUD



## HOPI SUN CHIEF

*Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian* by Don C. Talayesva (available as a Yale paperback) is almost certainly the best presentation of the Hopi vision of the world and way of life. Moreover, the author's renunciation of Christianity and the values of American education, etc., and his return to the Hopi way after a decade of "integration," suggests a profound critique of American imperialist civilization. We publish below a translation of the message sent to Don Talayesva by the surrealist group in Paris on the occasion of the publication of the French translation of *Sun Chief*.

### LETTER FROM THE SURREALISTS TO DON C. TALAYESVA

(Hopi Reservation;  
Oraibi, Arizona)

Your book, *Sun Chief*, in French translation, is on sale in all the bookstores of Paris and the other cities of France. We have read it eagerly from cover to cover and remain penetrated with your message.

Against all forms of oppression and alienation of modern society that we combat from our position, you are for us *man* in his original, marvelously safeguarded truth, and also in all his dignity.

Writers and artists that we are, for a long time we have regarded, with the highest estimation and honor, the art of the Hopi, and what ethnological works have been able to reveal to us of the thought that inspires it. One of us, who had the good fortune to visit Oraibi, Hotavilla, Wolpi, Mishongovi, Shungopavi, Shipaulvi, and to assist in several of your ceremonies, has endeavored to imbue us with their climate, which is very valuable to us.

Thanks to you, these places, this thought, this art are becoming infinitely closer to us. From the story of your life, all men are called upon to draw a lesson of mental health and loftiness.

Fervent homage to the immortal genius of the American Indian; prosperity to the admirable Hopi people in the respect and defense of its high traditions; happiness, a long life and glory to Don C. Talayesva!

June 1959

## THE HEARTLESS SQUARE

*Of course the shells of your knees on my eyes at the airport  
And everything rolled up in the folded arms of the yellow vest,  
blue with sleep*

*And yet the slap, bluish from the resolution of automobiles  
The leper fingers counted from cigarettes that are put one by  
one on the retina of morning*

*The jolting of time for the parade on the short ladder of  
twenty-four hours*

*While polishing the last blade of your tongue on the trembling  
asphalt of my ears*

*I keep an unconditional preference for the duration of the  
game of my fingers, leap-frog in the wool of your  
warmth*

*It doesn't concern tenderness anymore*

*The show is buried in the theatre where the fire from the  
hatchet is at the center of the billiard ball*

*When the conjurers of the heart really live at the crest of  
the obscurity in the swervings of the wind*

*It's to them that I throw the fistful of red grass, torn from  
the fibers of speed*

*The furorless fever of she-wolves from the savannah  
But the dawning is confused with the poverty of writing sticks  
all packed up*

*The tires scatter change from my nails before day  
The cherries exploded with lights spun on the poles of the  
hags who mend the black linen*

*The mud from the Rhine climbs like a serpent of autumn  
about my legs, crossed high on the last mind  
of the swollen sheets*

*And the four directions of decor slide imponderably between  
our arms in slings*

*I want so much to be you under the chalk barrier drawn on the  
felt of your loins*

*At the opening of the glass doors of your return*

*To accompany you in the confusion of crossed canes*

*Like the jingling of white pebbles in the bottle of red wine*

*Like the little bean that sprouts under the third finger of the  
hand in white gloves*

*Like coffee grounds you lick from under  
the scales of disreputable streets*

*I want so much to hang up all the wrong ways in the petticoats  
the whores throw laughing on the bed-ridden*

*But crouched under the chair of your shoulders*

*I can hardly endure the noise of journeys.*

translated by Cheryl Seaman

Annie LEBRUN



Jean-Claude SILBERMANN

## MIRAGE ARTIFACTS

However often I am assured there is an exchange between us, I care only that your seizure of power within me be permanent, that my steps be guided more certainly than by street warfare to our encounter in a world still unexplored and brought to light in this crumbling building where an isolated spark, disorientation, is the key to the only door I dare enter.

Yet perhaps you must always flee.

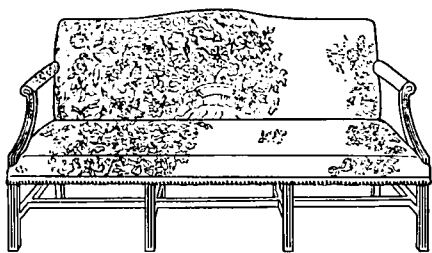
Your hair tinted as ambiguously as your eyes rivaling the exquisite power of a lichen, your lips so delicately thick they threaten to conquer your entire face, its quality of decipherability always apparent: I encounter you in place of myself, there in the mirror where you have left yourself, and you insist you could steal every measure of my strength. Then I open my eyes on a highway traversed only by the dismaying shadows of poplars and ruined gateposts, where I will meet you as one meets the forest, at a glance.

Your character is exposed to me in the following manner: you sleep away an afternoon dreaming of inimitable blue-veined hands approaching a metal table loaded with books. The lifting of these books provokes a tremor throughout your body as if all your sensibility is reserved in the table's surface, for at that moment a cat resting in your midriff chooses to stir and depart.

And because you are first to understand one must avoid any position of extreme safety, especially safety disguised as risk, it is in you that at any cost my every hope is placed.

Liberty in the form of woman: near midnight on the ninth of September, 1598, exactly three hundred fifty years before my birth, the girl soon to be known to all as Ambergris slept protected by the strength of many umbrellas opened and closed at random not far away, and yet the bedchamber wall approaching the jungle in the form of a condor was prepared to seize and bloody her, lifting her to be joined to its own body in the form of a chair upholstered by her streaming tresses, carried to her father's room where as it settled to the floor and she emerged it burst into flame, consuming her and producing a thick pall enveloping and asphyxiating the sleeping form of her parent, the *sycamore*.

Stephen SCHWARTZ

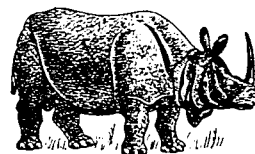


Late Georgian Sofa with old needlework covering.

## EXCERPTS from A LETTER

I am as usual still living my transhumance life in Africa where it all started and it all shall finish. . . Now I have inspiration to create a *need*. That need is an indeed needed international surrealist magazine with one title: SURREALISM. The title is enough to be understood by all of mankind wherever he may be. Even that group of racists out in Californical *Kayak* will know what surrealism really is after digging our magazine. . . All countries should be and will be represented, from Antarctica to the Arctic. Africa has some marvelous goings-ons and creativeness to include. Poets like T'chicia Tamsi of Congo B. is just as seriously surreal as thee.

Ted JOANS



Rhinoceros. (3/60)

## SURREALIST INQUIRY

Desiring to open, by any means necessary, a field of research beyond the treacherous barriers of conventional intellectual and moral restraint, and fully intending to expand the subversive range of imaginative possibilities here and now, we have decided to pose the following questions to the widest public:

- 1) *What role does the letter X play in your life?*
- 2) *Which extinct animal would you most like to reappear, and why?*
- 3) *What should be done with the White House?*

Everyone is welcome to respond except cops, priests, public office-holders, etc.

The responses (which will be published in the second issue of *Arsenal*) should be sent to the mailing address on page one.



## REVOLUTIONARY WOMEN

One could paraphrase Marx and say that a sex that oppresses another cannot itself be free. In its essence, the cause of the liberation of women is the cause of real, total, human liberation. The emerging revolutionary women's movement is still (consciously) in its preparatory stages. Amorphous, experimental and suspicious of every orthodoxy, it defiantly asserts its right, even its obligation, to develop its own theory and practice out of its own living experience. It is true that its very openness makes it easily susceptible to the maneuvers of bourgeois and stalinist ideologists whose ambition it is to mislead the greatest possible number into an abyss of irremediable confusion. But it is also true that "mass movements are bound to be confused at the beginning" (Engels). The fundamental prerequisite of revolutionary criticism, of course, is to distinguish between tendencies moving out of the confusion toward greater clarity, and other tendencies which merely perpetuate and reinforce the existing confusion. What is important in the present instance is that the *direction* of radical feminism today is increasingly anticapitalist and increasingly oriented toward socialist revolution. Moreover, certain of its theoretical and polemical interventions have already shed considerable light on some of the darker shadows of the repressive superstructure of bourgeois civilization. The reader is referred in particular to Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*, particularly the chapter published in *NEW AMERICAN REVIEW* 7, a scathing critique of Henry Miller and Norman Mailer (which reaches a level of admirable vir-

# SURREALISM and the Future of PSYCHOANALYSIS

*Psychology has still far to go.*  
— LAUTREAMONT

This is as good a time and place as any to denounce the exceedingly low level to which psychoanalytical thought has been degraded since the death of Freud in 1939. Already in 1942, in the *Prolegomena to a Third Manifesto of Surrealism or Else*, André Breton was able to write: "...the death of Freud is enough to render the future of psychoanalytic ideas uncertain, and threatens once again to turn an exemplary instrument of liberation into an instrument of oppression." What is called for now, it seems clear, is a detailed critical history of the psychoanalytic movement from its origins to the present day. Such a study, which would necessarily have to cut through the deceptions of the official psychoanalytic bureaucracies as well as the metaphysical hypocrisies of the so-called "post-Freudian" sects, would be of inestimable value today in carrying forward the discoveries of psychoanalysis on the path of human emancipation.

Meanwhile, one can begin only by attacking the various ideological mystifications which obscure, distort and deny the living truth of the psychoanalytic revelation. This requires, in the first place, the passionate defense of the vast superiority of the ideas of Freud over those of the numerous psychoanalytic schismatics who, through the years, retreated into one or another smokescreen of confusion and consequently betrayed the emancipatory essence of Freudian doctrine. Particularly valuable in this regard is Herbert Marcuse's "Critique of Neo-Freudian Revisionism" included as an appendix to *Eros and Civilization*.

But quite apart from the so-called "neo-Freudians," today it is the protagonists of "sense relaxation," the "neo-gestaltists" and their eclectic fellow-travelers who would seem to constitute the vanguard of Psychology in the Service of the Maintenance of Law and Order. These tendencies, clearly reflecting what Marcuse has called "repressive desublimation," are inextricably bound up with the recent and growing wave of pop art pseudo-occultism (from Edgar Cayce to the Beatles) which in turn reflects the depth of the crisis of uncritical thought in this country.

The symptoms, however, are less crucial than the disease. Accompanying these commercial and reactionary fads is a far-reaching and systematic reproval of Freud, an effort sufficiently harmful in itself, but also, still more ominous, the simultaneous revival of interest in the works of a certain Carl Gustav Jung — that is, the man who, more than any other, devoted himself to perverting the teachings of psychoanalysis for the benefit of the oppressing class.

I am well aware that the alleged "profundity" of this latter figure is taken for granted by that section of the intelligentsia whose "philosophy" is a ludicrous melange of Albert Camus, Alan Watts, Rollo May, P. D. Ouspensky, Teilhard de Chardin, Timothy Leary, Kahil Gibran, the Tolkien trilogy and the *Whole Earth Catalog*. But what is unforgivable is that there

are some who have maintained that Jung's pretensions are in some way linked to the aims and principles of surrealism. Thus Yves Duplessis, in his popular (and very mediocre) little book *Surrealism*, cites Jung in such a way as to suggest an agreement between the Jungian point of view and that of the surrealists. And Mary Ann Caws, in her *Surrealism and the Literary Imagination*, of which the least that can be said is that it is ridiculous from cover to cover, also cites Jung as an "authority," which is particularly misleading in such a context.

The essential fallacies of the Jungian deviation were outlined and devastatingly analyzed by Freud himself in the *History of the Psychoanalytic Movement*, published in 1914. This was, however, still early in the career of Jung, who during the ensuing years greatly embellished his earlier errors with a vast and intricate, almost impenetrable, web of obfuscation. Against such a refined edifice Freud's early warnings did not seem entirely sufficient: what was required was a more extensive Freudian critique of the fully-elaborated Jungian system. This was provided by Edward Glover's masterful *Freud or Jung?* (New York, Norton, 1950), a thoroughgoing and merciless study which demonstrates beyond any doubt the entirely confusional character of the theoretical meanderings of Jung, from his initial retreat from the Freudian conception of the unconscious and repression to his avowal of Nazi racism and an "Aryan psychology," his repulsive capitulations to religious superstition, his garbled dabbings in hermetic philosophy and his trite obscurities on art.

It is a misfortune, however, that Mr. Glover, who engaged in such meticulous scholarship to pursue his admirable refutation of Jung, permitted himself to bring up the subject of surrealism without having devoted to it even a moment's serious research. Let us emphasize that this constitutes the only blemish in a work to whose conclusions we otherwise declare our unreserved adherence. But it is precisely because of our complete agreement with Glover's critique of Jung that we cannot allow his misinterpretation of surrealism to go uncorrected.

Mr. Glover, in his ignorance in this area, imagines that he sees a connection between surrealism and Jung, and quotes, as authorities, to advance this regrettable thesis, three English critics: Hodin, Glicksberg and Herbert Read. But this would be comparable to quoting, as authorities on marxism, two book-reviewers chosen at random from the staff of any metropolitan newspaper and a conservative ex-radical, like Sidney Hook or Louis Fischer. Only the use of such careless and misinformed sources could lead Glover to write: "In the case of surrealism, it is not the shadow of psychoanalysis that has fallen on art but the shadow of the Jungian Collective Unconscious."

It is a pity that Glover declined to take the trouble to get his information from the horse's mouth. He could, for example, have looked into the *Foyers d'Incendie* by Nicolas Calas (Paris, Denoël, 1939) which contains a scathing indictment of Jung's reactionary system by a member of the surrealist group in Paris. Or he could have looked into the English surrealist journal *FREE UNIONS* (July 1946) in which Robert Melville, then a member of the English surrealist group, reviewed a book by John Layard, *The Lady of the Hare*, the record of an analysis of dreams in the Jungian manner. "In its way," Melville wrote, "this is an outstanding book, for its systematic provision of interpretations of dreams calculated to flatter both the patient and the present social set-up takes the debasement of psychoanalytical method further than Jung's efforts in the same direction."

It should be acknowledged, however, to avoid misunder-

ulence unfortunately not maintained in the section on Jean Genet); several articles which have appeared in *WOMEN: A JOURNAL OF LIBERATION* (3011 Guilford Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland, 21218) and the special *Women* issue of *RADICAL AMERICA* (1237 Spaight Street, Madison, Wisconsin, 53703). These publications, in turn, list still others, the number of which is steadily growing.

To ignore this light, to fail to contribute to its diffusion, would be to take the side of blindness and to betray the promise of dawn.

★

... The most salutary effects tending to improve mankind might be expected from a *REVOLUTION* in female manners...

Mary WOLLSTONECRAFT

We must unquestionably recompense these women that we have so cruelly enslaved... O enchanting sex! You will be free. Why should the most divine half of humanity be chained up by the other? Break your fetters, nature wishes it.

D. A. F. SADE

The change in a historical epoch can always be determined by the progress of women toward freedom, because in the relation of woman to man, of the weak to the strong, the victory of human nature over brutality is most evident. The degree of emancipation of women is the natural measure of general emancipation.

Charles FOURIER

Woman is the being who projects the greatest shadow or the greatest light in our dreams.

Charles BAUDELAIRE

... I am taken for a *revolutionary*, a *Jacobin*, a *Sanguinary*, and finally for a species of female *monster* who dares to demand *equality of rights for man as well as for woman*.

Flora TRISTAN

The marriage law is the most damnable outrage upon woman that was ever conceived.

Victoria WOODHULL

In the family, *he* is the bourgeois; the wife represents the proletariat.

Frederick ENGELS

Women! Become once again sublimely unjust like all the forces of nature. Free yourselves from every control; find once again your instinct.

Valentine de SAINT-POINT

The proletariat cannot achieve complete liberty until it has won complete liberty for women.

V. I. LENIN

There are no limits to masculine egotism in ordinary life. In order to change the conditions of life we must learn to see them through the eyes of women.

Leon TROTSKY

The longer the sexual crisis lasts, the more difficult it becomes . . . It would be a tremendous error to assume that only members of the economically secure classes are caught in its toils. The sexual crisis creates dramas among the working people which are no less violent or tragic than the psychological conflicts of the refined bourgeoisie.

Alexandra KOLLONTAI

You never get nothing by being  
an angel child.  
You better change your ways  
and get real wild.

Cause wild women don't worry,  
Wild women don't have the  
blues.

Ida COX

Women can have only a caricature of liberty so long as they are not prepared to organize their own lives but instead allow the State to decide for them in the minutest details.

Marie-Louise BERNERI

In surrealism, woman is to be loved and honored as the great promise, a promise that still exists even after it has been kept.

André BRETON

\* \* \*

## SEXUAL FREEDOM

*Sexual freedom* is the demand currently raised from two quarters: the groups organized around the idea of women's liberation and those who identify with the notion of homosexual liberation. Although it often sets its demands at a spectacularly low level, only the cause of women's liberation may be said to possess a truly liberating potential. The demand for the liberation of women implies, ultimately, the destruction of many

standing, that the surrealists' complete rejection of the Jungian system does not, of course, imply complete acceptance of the Freudian system. As Breton wrote: "Surrealism has been led to attach a particular importance to the process of dreaming in Freud and, in general, in this author, to all that is elucidation, based on clinical exploration, of unconscious life. Nonetheless, we reject the greater portion of Freudian philosophy as *metaphysics*." And Calas had reason to observe that "the scientific daring of Freud is countered by his astonishing social conformism. . . . Morally Freud expresses the attitude of the bourgeoisie."

One could also cite Wilhelm Reich, from his best, most lucid period, when he wrote in his 1934 "Letter to Otto Fenichel for Dissemination to All Analysts in Sympathy with Marxism": "The basic debate between dialectical materialist and bourgeois psychoanalysts will primarily have to prove where Freud the scientist came into conflict with Freud the bourgeois philosopher; where psychoanalytic research corrected the bourgeois concept of culture and where the bourgeois concept of culture hindered and confused scientific research and led it astray. Freud against Freud is the theme of our criticism."

I do not think it can be reasonably argued that more than a very few faltering steps have been made in this direction.\* It is interesting, meanwhile, that Robert Melville, in the article in *FREE UNIONS* already cited, could write that "the time may not be too far distant when the genius Freud will be recognized only by poets." Has this moment arrived? It is true, of course, that the great majority of those who mistakenly confuse their literary vanity with the poetic quest are less prepared than anyone to recognize the immense significance of Freud. But such "poets" have as little to do with the actual tasks of poetry as the "official" heirs of psychoanalysis have to do with Freud. *Existence lies elsewhere*. Surrealism, in particular, seems to hold here a marvelous promise. It could quite possibly assume the role of catalyst, at the very least, in the stimulation and reinforcement of a revolutionary current of psychoanalysis. It should be noted that surrealism has already made enormous contributions in this area which have received far too little attention. It has contributed much, for example, to the overthrow of the mystical conceptions of "inspiration" (descended practically unaltered from the Christian notion of grace) which tend to reinforce the elitist and compartmentalized character of bourgeois culture. One has only to compare the sublime and essentially "materialistic" presentation of this problem in the works of Breton, Crevel, Péret, Teige, Mabille, Bounoure, etc., with the silly and verbose idealism of Jung — who, despite the artificial sophistication of his vocabulary, adds nothing to this subject not already described a thousand times more lucidly by St. Teresa (in her *Interior Castle*) or Paracelsus, whose occasional ambiguity is justified by the fact that they wrote centuries ago — to appreciate the potentiality of the surrealist intrusion in this area. Moreover, against cer-

\* It is worth calling attention to a significant recent contribution: Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (Doubleday), which includes a stimulating and generally perspicacious critique of Freud's often mistaken and misleading conclusions regarding women, and the reactionary abuse of his errors in this regard, not only by later analysts but eventually by every species of bourgeois ideologist. But it is as unfair to charge Freud with the crimes of his followers, as Millett has a tendency to do, as it would be to make Marx and Lenin responsible for stalinism. It would be ironic if Kate Millett's regrettable underestimation of the fundamentally revolutionary implications of the Freudian critique of civilization was to reinforce the growing anti-Freudian bias of American intellectual life today, for this rampant anti-Freudianism is clearly reactionary — consisting of contempt for the theories of the unconscious, dreams, infantile sexuality, the Oedipus complex, etc. — and thus clearly anti-feminist as well.

tain prosaic epigones and opportunists of psychoanalysis for whom poetry is merely an abstract and irrelevant corpse to be academically and cynically dissected according to a few elementary formulations, we hold, with Péret, that poetry is "the source and crown of all thought," and find ample justification for our catalytic initiative, in regard to the further development of psychoanalysis, in the works of Freud himself, who wrote: "Poets are in the knowledge of the soul our masters, for they drink at sources not yet made accessible to science. Why has the poet not expressed himself more precisely on the nature of the dream?"

More than ever, Freud's warnings (in *The Question of Lay Analysis*) against the monopolization of psychoanalysis by a medical clique retain their explosive cogency. In opposition to such usurpation, surrealism, by its very existence, continues to verify, fortify and develop the invaluable discoveries of psychoanalysis and to mobilize its critical resources against all those who strive to dilute the impact and scope of these discoveries by adapting them to the requirements of *surplus-repression* — Marcuse's term for the restrictions necessitated by social domination (distinguished from basic repression which consists of the "modifications" of the instincts necessary for the perpetuation of the human race in civilization). Surrealism also undermines the position of those who, perhaps initially repelled by the repressive orientation of official psychoanalytic activity today, have been led — in their confusion, fear and trembling — to retreat into the arms of even worse therapeutic formations (from existential analysis to Zen Buddhist and LSD psychotherapy), thus contributing to the current fashionableness of "post-Freudian" (anti-Freudian) ideology. The protagonists of these latter "theories" pretend to have left Freud behind, but attentive examination reveals that Freud's conceptions are invariably more advanced than theirs. Only the monstrous egotism of such people could mislead them into believing that they have gone deeper than Freud while merely splashing about in the shallowest of waters.

An additional word of clarification is required regarding surrealist aspirations on the psychoanalytic plane. Less than ever does psychoanalysis exist in a vacuum. It is unlikely that it will assume in the future the forms it has already outgrown. The narrowly therapeutic emphasis, in particular, has clearly tended to become obsolete. Such specialization may have been necessary when psychoanalysis was just learning to walk, but today it can only impede its forward motion. So, too, the existence of *professional analysts* — those whose plentiful income is derived exclusively from the treatment of neurotics — is much less important than the extension of psychoanalytic *ideas* into all domains of intellectual inquiry.

One has only to consider the sterile, scholastic preoccupations of AMERICAN IMAGO and other journals in the field to be convinced that official psychoanalysts — with a few honorable exceptions — do nothing more than repair and lubricate the *disembraining machine* announced by Alfred Jarry. Against this ossification of psychoanalytic criticism in the hands of coteries of mindless academicians, surrealism proposes a militant counter-offensive, consisting of nothing less than a total renewal of psychoanalytic exploration and research according to the lines set down by Freud — *and in the first place, the study and interpretation of dreams and other manifestations of unconscious life*. It is perhaps worth adding that neither the seemingly obvious nor the admittedly grandiose character of this proposal mitigate its urgency, for anything less than a profound and far-reaching renaissance of

cultural factors that are direct causes of repression, and thus, the liberation of both sexes. The homosexual groups, apparently uninterested in the cultural causes of their plight, seem rather to desire only society's sanction. Briefly, women want freedom from the crippling effects of culture, while homosexuals want freedom to be crippled by the culture. Most homosexuals deny the cultural factors involved, preferring to think of themselves as inverts, congenitally created (a "third sex"). Yet this contention is unsupported by scientific evidence — psychoanalysis, in fact, constantly disproves this notion by showing that nearly all homosexuals are neurotically engaged in a flight *away from women*. The characteristics of certain object choices betray this fact. Enlightenment regarding at least one contributing factor was brought to light years ago by Sandor Ferenczi in his essay "The Nosology of Male Homosexuality," and while Ferenczi's works, like the discussions of homosexuality by Freud, do not claim to be definitive, their direction and results are inescapably pertinent. (Unfortunately, psychoanalytic investigations of female homosexuality, and female sexuality in general, have often been misleading.) It may seem, from a study of psychoanalytic literature, that the form of homosexuality that Freud called "true inversion" is caused by non-cultural factors, but even though "constitutional" factors play a part in the creation of this disorder, it is probable that the deciding and crucial factors can be found, rather, at an early stage of infantile sexuality. Hopefully, psychoanalysis coupled with critical insight will demonstrate the exact cause and nature of all forms of homosexuality, and point the way to true sexual freedom.

It cannot be denied that the homosexual liberation groups are going in the opposite direction. It is necessary, of course, to protest the persecution of homosexuals, including the stupid legislation against them. Nonetheless, to the meaningless catch-phrase "Freedom for homosexuals," we *must* reply "Freedom *from* homosexuality — freedom from repression."

P. G.



Leopard Frog. (1/2)

## ASPHALT GALLOWS

Your hands are on the motor  
My thighs on the seat  
The brake against my knees  
Your flesh against my skin  
There is a bird in the wind-vent  
A man under the tires  
Your hands on the motor  
Playing with a nail  
There is a scream in the motor  
A cop and his ticket-book  
A road in the rear-view mirror  
Wind between my knees  
A headless giant drives  
My hands are on the wheel  
My artless sex, begging

Joyce MANSOUR

(translated by Jon Ford)

psychoanalytic thought will promote only the rise of barbarism. The task before us is, above all, to develop the essentially *political* and *poetic* categories of Freudian theory, and to realize their revolutionary implications. *Psychoanalysis must be made by all. Not by one. Poor Jung! Poor Adler! Poor Rank! Poor Melanie Klein! Tics, tics and tics.*

Certainly the indispensable preliminary requirement of such an effort must be, first, that the lessons of Freud are not to be lightmindedly "taken for granted" but rather critically assimilated with all their dynamism, all their force; and second, that the revisionist theories of the Jungs, the Adlers, the Fromms and the Horneys are to be discarded as useless regressions to a succession of equally indefensible pre-Freudian positions.

Just as Lenin, in 1915-17, surpassed the ideology of the decrepit Second International by going back to Marx, and even to Hegel; just as Trotsky and the Left Opposition, to enable the communist cause to advance from its stalinist straitjacket, raised the battle-cry "Back to Lenin!"—so the watchword today, for an advance in the knowledge of human consciousness, must be "Back to Freud!"

F. R.

# HOMAGE TO MARCEL DUCHAMP

The Bugs Bunny Comic Album (June-August, 1959) includes a story of one of Bugs' ancestors, Bunnio Bunny, a close friend of Leonardo da Vinci. The following segment is presented here as a salute to the creator of the celebrated L. H. O. O. Q.



# A CORPSE



Pablo Neruda, one-time winner of the Stalin Prize for Literature, and without doubt one of the most servile and mediocre gentlemen to ever abuse the cause of poetry, has lately won for himself a large audience of admirers in the U.S., many of whom have so thoroughly impoverished a conception of poetry as to eulogize this senile hack as the "greatest living poet," a designation which (like the Holy Roman Empire) is thrice incorrect: for Mr. Neruda is certainly not great, nor can he (properly speaking) be considered truly among the living, and, we insist, he is in no sense of the word a poet.

The popularity of this two-bit sentimental fraud among certain people who otherwise seem to possess at least the rudiments of critical intelligence, is profoundly symptomatic of the extreme precariousness and destitution of the situation of poetry in this country. Clearing away the ideological fog and rubble is the first step toward revolutionary lucidity. Thus it is particularly necessary to expose and ruthlessly discredit the derisive and confusional efforts of those who try to pass off certain of Neruda's writings as having something in common with surrealism. Let us state plainly that even his earliest literary productions reek of vanity and cowardice and have nothing to do with the quest for the *total liberation of the mind* by which surrealism chose to define itself from the very beginning. The mildewed cuteness and stale, limping images, the various little aesthetic postures place these early works of Neruda's, from the surrealist point of view, squarely in the domain of the *inexcusable*.

Far worse than the fawning idiocies of his youth, however, is his later writing, characterized above all by a total subservience to the dictates of stalinist realism, which inspired him to write such lines as these: "We are Stalinists! There is our pride! Stalinists! There is the Legion of Honor of our time," etc. Moreover, when one recalls Neruda's complicity in the murder of Leon Trotsky (in his capacity as Chilean consular official in Mexico) it becomes perfectly clear that we are concerned here, not with a poet, but with a contemptible advertising agent employed by the bureaucracy and secret police of the Soviet Union.

The only contribution Pablo Neruda could make to poetry would be for him to die as soon as possible and to have all editions (including translations) of his cretinizing books reduced to ashes and buried with him in his grave.

Surrealist Group  
Chicago, Illinois

(July 1969)



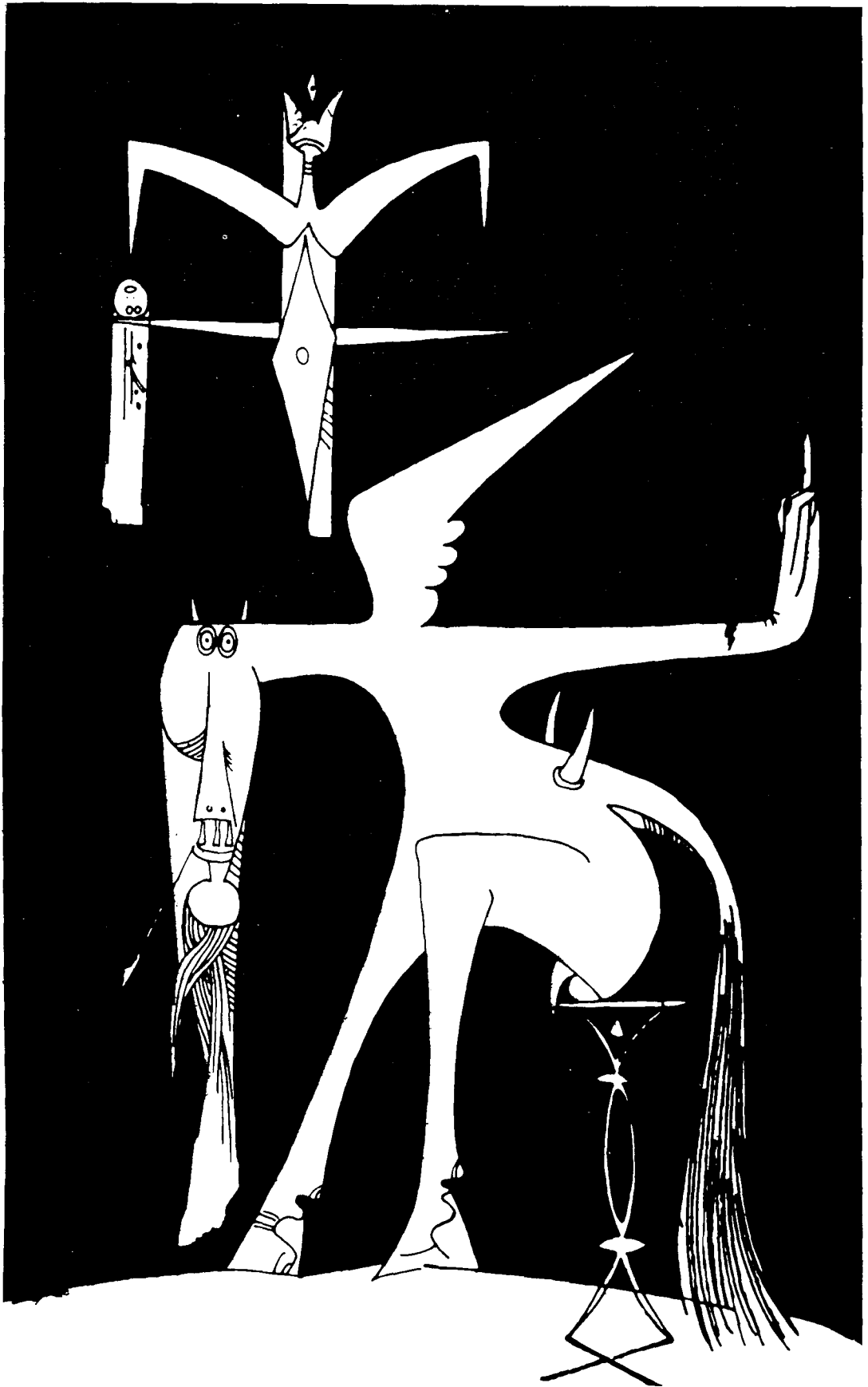
POSADA



## \$ALVADOR DALI

Nothing testifies so clearly to the abysmal ignorance of surrealism that prevails in this country as the fact that it is still widely assumed to have something to do with the antics of Salvador Dalí. It is therefore entirely in order to remind the American public that Dalí was expelled from surrealism, for his cosmopolitan tendencies, over three decades ago — an expulsion which his subsequent career (support for fascism, avowal of racism, adherence to Roman Catholicism and the boundless commercialism which earned him the well-known anagram of *Avida Dollars*) has more than justified. It is a stupid misfortune that a book such as the *Conversations with Salvador Dalí* (Dutton, 1970) will be mistaken by some for a surrealist work, a confusion aggravated by the fact that an appendix includes an essay written by Dalí when he still belonged to the surrealist movement: *The Conquest of the Irrational*, the translation of which, however, is excessively poor.





Wifredo LAM

# HEGEL - LENIN - LUXEMBURG

1770 - 1870 - 1970

*The surrealists are eager to salute, in 1970, the bicentennial of the birth of the greatest philosopher of all time and the centennial of the births of two revolutionaries in whose lives and thought the Hegelian light assumes its most expansive social resonance. The following imaginary voyage of quotations is intended only as a modest contribution of fuel to the flames of dialectic, practically extinguished after a long and continuing succession of fiendish attacks by stalinists, social-democrats, existentialists, structuralists, analysts and other neo-pleistocene political anemics. He who knows, today, how to read the super-coherent cries of the schizophrenic and the majestic chants of wild-cat strikers knows that the "algebra of revolution" (Alexander Herzen's expression for the Hegelian system) provides the only conceivable theoretical basis for definitive emancipation, commencing with the systematic destruction of the compartmentalized evasions of everyday life and increasingly restoring to daylight, like the minotaur, the apocalyptic reign of the implacable truth of freedom.*

★

The History of the World begins with its general aim — only in an implicit form, that is, as Nature; a hidden, most profoundly hidden, unconscious instinct; and the whole process of History (as already observed) is directed to rendering this unconscious impulse a conscious one.

Only that which is an object of freedom can be called an idea.

In my view, everything depends on grasping and expressing the ultimate truth not as Substance but as Subject as well.

If to be aware of the idea — to be aware, i.e., that men are aware of freedom as their essence, aim and object — is a matter of *speculation*, still this very idea itself is the actuality of men — not something they *have*, as men, but which they *are*.

All consciousness is an appeal to other consciousness.

G. W. F. HEGEL

★

I ... openly avowed myself the pupil of that mighty thinker (Hegel) and even here and there, in the chapter on the theory of value (in *Capital*) coquetted with the modes of expression peculiar to him. The mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up

again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell. In its mystified form, dialectic became the fashion in Germany, because it seemed to transfigure and to glorify the existing state of things. In its rational form it is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary.

Karl MARX

★

What these gentleman all lack is dialectic. They never see anything but here cause and there effect. That this is a hollow abstraction, that such metaphysical polar opposites only exist in the real world during crises, while the whole vast process proceeds in the form of interaction (though of very unequal forces, the economic movement being by far the strongest, most elemental and most decisive) and that here everything is relative and nothing is absolute — this they never begin to see. Hegel has never existed for them.

Frederick ENGELS

★

When (Bernstein) directs his keenest arrows against our dialectic system, he is really attacking the specific mode of thought employed by the conscious proletariat in its struggle for liberation. It is an attempt to break the sword that has helped the proletariat to pierce the darkness of its future. It is an attempt to shatter the intellectual arm with the aid of which the proletariat, though materially under the yoke of the bourgeoisie, is yet enabled to triumph over the bourgeoisie. For it is our dialectical system that shows to the working class the transitory character of its yoke, proving to the workers the inevitability of their victory, and is already realizing a revolution in the domain of thought.

Rosa LUXEMBURG

★

Human knowledge is not (or does not follow) a straight line, but a curve, which endlessly approximates a series of circles, a spiral. Any fragment, segment, section of this curve can be transformed (transformed one-sidedly) into an independent, complete, straight line, which then (if one does not see the wood for the trees) leads into the quagmire, into clerical obscurantism (where it is *anchored* by the class interests of the ruling classes).

Rectilinearity and one-sidedness, woodenness and petrification, subjectivism and subjective blindness — there are the epistemological roots of idealism. And clerical obscurantism (= philosophical idealism), of course, has *epistemological* roots, it is not groundless; it is a *sterile flower* undoubtedly, but a sterile flower that grows on the living tree of living, fertile, genuine, powerful, omnipotent, objective, absolute human knowledge.

*Aphorism:* It is impossible completely to understand Marx's *Capital*, and especially its first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the *whole* of Hegel's *Logic*. Consequently, half a century later none of the Marxists understood Marx!!

A tumbler is assuredly both a glass cylinder and a drinking vessel. But there are more than these two properties, qualities or facets to it; there are an infinite number of them, an infinite number of "mediacies" and inter-relationships with the rest of the world. A tumbler is a heavy object which can be used as a missile; it can serve as a paperweight, a receptacle for a captive butterfly, or a valuable object with an artistic engraving or design, and this has nothing at all to do with whether or not it can be used for drinking, is made of glass, is cylindrical or not quite, and so on and so forth. Moreover, if I needed a tumbler just now for drinking, it would not in the least matter how cylindrical it was, and whether it was actually made of glass; what would matter though would be whether it had any holes in the bottom, or anything that would cut my lips when I drank, etc. But if I did not need a tumbler for drinking but for a purpose that could be served by any glass cylinder, a tumbler with a cracked bottom or without one at all would do just as well, etc. Formal logic, which is as far as schools go (and should go, with suitable abridgements for the lower forms), deals with formal definitions, draws on what is most common, or glaring, and stops there. When two or more different definitions are taken and combined at random (a glass cylinder and a drinking vessel), the result is an eclectic definition which is indicative of different facets of the object, and nothing more. Dialectical logic demands that we should go further. Firstly, if we are to have a true knowledge of an object we must look at and examine all its facets, its connections and "mediacies." That is something we cannot ever hope to achieve completely, but the rule of comprehensiveness is a safeguard against mistakes and rigidity. Secondly, dialectical logic requires that an object should be taken in development, in change, in "self-movement" (as Hegel sometimes puts it). This is not immediately obvious in respect of such an object as a tumbler, but it, too, is in flux, and this holds especially true for its purpose, use and *connection* with the surrounding world. Thirdly, a full "definition" of an object must include the whole of human experience, both as a criterion of truth and a practical indicator of its connection with human wants. Fourthly, dialectical logic holds that "truth is

always concrete, never abstract," as the late Plekhanov liked to say after Hegel.

V. I. LENIN

★

Lenin must be studied by Communists in the same spirit as he studied Marx. He must be studied in order to learn how to apply the dialectic; to learn how to discover, by concrete analysis of concrete situations, the specific in the general and the general in the specific; to see in the novelty of a situation what connects it with former developments; to observe the perpetually new phenomena constantly produced under the laws of historical development; to detect the part in the whole and the whole in the part; to find in historical necessity the moment of activity and in activity the connection with historical necessity. Leninism represents a hitherto unprecedented degree of concrete, unschematic, unmechanistic, purely praxis-oriented thought. To preserve *this* is the task of the leninist. But, in the historical process, only what develops in living fashion can be preserved. *Such a preservation* of the leninist tradition is today the noblest duty of all serious believers in the dialectic as a weapon in the class struggle of the proletariat.

Georg LUKACS (1924)

★

The fundamental flaw of vulgar thought lies in the fact that it wishes to content itself with motionless imprints of a reality which consists of eternal motion. Dialectical thinking gives to concepts, by means of closer approximations, corrections, concretizations, a richness of content and flexibility; I would even say a succulence which to a certain extent brings them close to living phenomena.

Anyone acquainted with the history of the struggles of tendencies within workers' parties knows that desertions to the camp of opportunism and even to the camp of the bourgeois reaction began not infrequently with rejection of the dialectic. Petty-bourgeois intellectuals consider the dialectic the most vulnerable point in marxism and at the same time take advantage of the fact that it is much more difficult for workers to verify differences on the philosophical than on the political plane. This long known fact is backed by all the evidence of experience. Again, it is impermissible to discount an even more important fact, namely, that all the great and outstanding revolutionists — first and foremost, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg, Franz Mehring — stood on the ground of dialectical materialism.

Leon TROTSKY

★

The dictatorship of the proletariat in the sense of Lenin was to be that authority which had to be created for the *abolition of any kind of authority...* It differed basically from the fascist ideology of dictatorship in that it set

itself the task of undermining itself, that is, of replacing authoritarian leadership by social self-regulation. Its task was — apart from the establishment of the economic prerequisites of social democracy — the alteration of human structure. True, this is not what Lenin called it, but this alteration of structure was an essential and integral part of his sociological theory. According to this, the task of the social revolution is not only that of eliminating external and actual serfdom but that of making people structurally incapable of serfdom.

Wilhelm REICH

★

Those anxious to preserve the critical import of the Marxian doctrine saw in the anti-dialectical trends not only a theoretical deviation, but a serious political danger that threatened the success of socialist action at every turn. To them the dialectical method, with its uncompromising “spirit of contradiction,” was the essential without which the critical theory of society would of necessity become a neutral of positivist sociology. And since there existed an intrinsic connection between Marxian theory and practice, the transformation of the theory would result in a neutral or positivist attitude to the existing social form.

The method of dialectic is a totality wherein “the negation and destruction of the existing” appears in every concept, thus furnishing the full conceptual framework for understanding the entirety of the existing order in accordance with the interest of freedom. Dialectical analysis alone can provide an adequate orientation for revolutionary practice, for it prevents this practice from being overwhelmed by the interests and aims of an opportunist philosophy. Lenin insisted on dialectical method to such an extent that he considered it to be the hallmark of revolutionary marxism.

Herbert MARCUSE

★

It has been left to the surrealists (who, with the exception of a few professional philosophers, are alone here in claiming derivation from Hegelian thought and in constantly referring their own activity to it) to publish, for the first time in France, fragments of the Hegel-Lenin dialogue. For us it is obviously not a question of making an ostentatious display of erudition, nor the mere arousal of amused curiosity. The effect produced on each of us by reading these texts has led us to recognize in them the greatest power of shock on all who aspire to disentangle the laws of the evolution of all material and intellectual objects.

It is remarkable that at the very moment that the 2nd International was about to collapse, Lenin deemed indispensable a new interrogation of Hegel, in reaction against the fact that the most celebrated social-democratic theoreticians had curiously neglected him. Doubtless Lenin considered this work the necessary complement of the denunciation — with which he was then occupied — of the betrayal of the socialist parties.

André THIRION

(Le Surréalisme A.S.D.L.R., No. 6, 1933)

★

“We must dream,” said Lenin. “We must act,” said Goethe. Surrealism has never maintained anything else, for practically all its efforts have tended towards the dialectical resolution of this opposition.

I cannot repeat too often that Hegel, in his *Aesthetics*, attacked all the problems that on the plane of poetry and art may today be considered the most difficult, and that with unparalleled lucidity he solved them for the most part. It takes nothing less than the current lack of knowledge of almost the whole of Hegel’s brilliant work, a lack of knowledge that is deliberately perpetuated in various countries, for various obscurantists for hire here and there to still find in such problems either reasons for anxiety or pretexts for endless controversy. It also takes nothing less than the blind submission of too large a number of marxists to what they summarily take to be the right interpretation of Marx and Engels for Soviet Russia and the cultural bodies placed in other countries under its control, to raise their voices in the deplorable chorus with those who I just mentioned, allowing certain people to reopen, and what is worse, to fly into passions over debates which are impossible after Hegel. You cite Hegel and in revolutionary circles you immediately see brows darken. What, Hegel, that man who tried to make dialectics walk on its head! You are suspect, and since the marxist theses on poetry and art, which are very rare and not very convincing, were all improvised long after Marx, the first Philistine to come along feels free to garner applause for himself by throwing at your head the words “a fighting literature and painting,” “class content,” and the like. Yet Hegel did come along. He came along and before our day made short work of these vain quarrels people keep picking with us. His views on poetry and art, the only ones up to the present to have stemmed from an encyclopedic fund of knowledge, are still above all those of a marvelous historian; no systematic bias can be considered *à priori* as having vitiated them, and despite everything this bias would be noticeable in the course of an argument even if in the eyes of the materialist reader it entailed only a few easily rectifiable errors. The essential point is that a truly unique sum of knowledge was put to work in such a case, and that it was submitted to the action of the machine which was then completely new, since Hegel was the inventor of it, a machine whose power has proved to be unique: the dialectical machine. I say that even today it is Hegel whom we must question about how well-founded or ill-founded is surrealist activity in the arts. He alone can tell us whether this activity was predetermined in time; he alone can teach us whether its future duration is likely to be measured in days or centuries.

Where the Hegelian dialectic does not function, there is for me no thought, no hope of truth.

André BRETON

★

*I love a woman more beautiful than a wharf  
 sweeter than public transportation  
 more intelligent than fire-damp  
 more present than the journey around the world  
 more ingenious than the feather in Newton's tube  
 more spiritual than the tide  
 wiser than the speed of suicides  
 more naked than the moss  
 more discreet than the drumskin of thunder  
 more silent than Paris  
 merrier than a grain of salt  
 lighter than a knife  
 more calm than a hive  
 more sensible than a precipice  
 more adventurous than stones  
 clearer than blood  
 fairer than a dial  
 darker than the summer rain  
 more voluptuous than a needle  
 prouder than a ceiling  
 more delicate than granite  
 more elegant than lichens*

## POEM

*more faithful than verdegriis  
 more secret than the present hour  
 more vibrant than sperm  
 more transparent than a gesture made in a dream  
 more cruel than dew  
 more inventive than prime numbers  
 more arborescent than an egg  
 stranger than the + sign  
 more impassioned than wheel ruts  
 a woman equal to a woman*

Jehan MAYOUX



### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

. . . Having been relatively free from those political calamities which Europeans have borne, we seem to face our conflicts internally. Wanting to believe in a national credo, we have found ourselves declining to accept one that seems more and more self-evidently composed of euphetic half-truths. Consequently, our most perceptive minds have distinguished themselves from our popular spokesmen by concentrating upon the dark other half of the situation, and their distinctive attitude has been introspection, dissent or irony. Where the voice of the majority is by definition affirmative, the spirit of independence is likeliest to manifest itself by employing the negative: by saying *no* in thunder — as Melville wrote to Hawthorne — though bidden by the devil himself to say *yes*. . . . Our official reputation is grounded upon a series of one-sided platitudes. Therefore our freest spirits have voiced their denial by stressing the opposite side, expressing themselves in paradoxes, and confronting each standard assumption with its dialectical alternative.

Harry LEVIN

from *The Power of Blackness*,  
 Vintage Books, 1958



Collage by Ted JOANS

## RECENT CRITICS OF SURREALISM

It is little more than threescore and ten years since Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Pannekoek, Gorter, Labriola and, in the U.S., Louis B. Boudin — that is, those in whom resided the deepest integrity and farthest vision of international socialism — brought their cudgels to bear against the revisionists of marxism who hypocritically sang the praises of Marx, or at least pretended to “recognize” his “historical importance,” while simultaneously conducting a vigorous campaign against the revolutionary essence of marxism. Without at all wishing to exaggerate the analogy, today it would seem to be the turn of surrealism to suffer this “revisionist” abuse in the hands of an increasing number of critics. In the coming period, I think surrealists of all countries will have to give more attention to the growing efforts on the part of the repressive order to “assimilate” various aspects of surrealism as it has evolved over the last forty years. The advertisements that Dali began to design as early as the 1930s, and which the surrealists found very annoying even then, have long since secured a comfortable niche in the pink satin-lined vocabulary of Madison Avenue. Nor is the activity of the last years of Max Ernst any more reassuring. It is clear that the *artistic deviation* remains destructive to the further development of surrealism, perhaps more so now than ever. And if the original effort of socialist revisionism combined rightward-moving bureaucratic elements *inside* or on the periphery of the socialist movement and other elements which were *outside* socialism and in fact completely hostile to it, it is interesting to observe today that it is the *ex-surrealists* and erstwhile fellow-travelers who more and more are pooling their resources with bourgeois academicians in order to more effectively decimate the surrealist message. The renegade and the cop work arm in arm.

The new critical studies of surrealism are almost invariably more sophisticated, more “serious” than the simple-minded garbage and gossip passed off in earlier years by Georges Lemaitre and Wallace Fowlie, or by Matthew Josephson in his *Life Among the Surrealists*. And for this very reason these newer works are often capable of much greater harm. It is comparatively easy to shrug off the stale parlour catholicism of Fowlie or the jealous semi-stalinist tourism of Josephson. But the uninformed reader can scarcely avoid being impressed by the seemingly vast erudition of some of the new critics. And thus it is particularly urgent that the obscurantist content of the majority of these works be clearly exposed.

\* \* \*

Perhaps the baldest effort to pervert and debilitate the subversive essence of surrealism is Paul Ilie's *Surrealist Mode in Spanish Literature* (University of Michigan). Abandoning even the pretense of coming to grips with surrealist aims and principles, Ilie totally discards the theory and practice of the surrealist movement in favor of his own “definition” of surrealism: “a

strange, disturbing world,” the incongruous, the grotesque, the bizarre — a definition familiar enough from the Sunday supplements.

Ilie's book is concerned with late developments of Spanish romanticism and really has almost nothing to do with surrealism. He completely ignores the true manifestations of surrealism in Spain — the group around the review *GACETA DE ARTE* — pretending even that they did not exist. “There were no self-proclaimed exponents of surrealism,” says Ilie, insulting the memory of Oscar Dominguez, Domingo Perez Minik, Domingo Lopez Torres, Pedro Garcia Cabrera, Eduardo Westerdahl and Agustin Espinoza who organized a major international exhibition of surrealism and published an issue of the *INTERNATIONAL SURREALIST BULLETIN* in Tenerife in 1935. And when Ilie notes “the lack of any real historical development of surrealism as a movement in Spain,” without any attempt to analyze the reasons for this situation, one can only grind one's teeth in rage. For it is perfectly clear to anyone who takes the trouble to examine a little history that the reason why surrealism failed to develop in Spain was because of the reign of falangist fascism under Franco which has stifled all freedom of thought and action in Spain for decades. Many of the Spanish surrealists were shot by the fascists; others fought in the service of the proletarian revolution and eventually were forced into exile. But Ilie has no time to mention any of this — he is more concerned with “the evolution of an aesthetic mode.” It is appropriate that his discussion of Dali focusses almost entirely on the period following his defection from surrealism.

Ilie is nothing more than a swinish apologist for reaction who makes one desire all the more the advent of the moment when the weapons of revolutionary criticism will be replaced by the revolutionary criticism of weapons. He does not require the modest services one looks for in a book review, but rather the more effective services of a punitive expedition.

\* \* \*

Some weeks ago we received a letter from Herbert Gershman, in which he wrote: “I doubt that I would be a suitable contributor to your journal *ARSENAL*.” There is more accuracy and honesty in these few words than one can find in his entire *Surrealist Revolution in France* (University of Michigan). Let us note in passing that it is scarcely worth mentioning the grossly incomplete, inaccurate, misleading and totally useless accompanying *Bibliography*, prepared by Gershman and published as a separate volume.

Gershman's critical position remains essentially unaltered since his contribution to the anti-surrealist issue of *YALE FRENCH STUDIES* (1964), a defense of certain factional maneuvers of an eminently forgettable surrealist sectarian, Henri Pastoureaux, whose conception of surrealism was exceedingly static, hopelessly anchored to the past, and who was, in any case, at the moment he selected to make

a loud noise, seeking a path on which to retreat to a literary career. Gershman's readiness to take sides in the internal affairs of surrealism, even to the point of abusing the truth, leads one to the conclusion that his book, far from being truly "scholarly" as its flyleaf claims, is in fact little more than a dyspeptic polemic against surrealism in general and André Breton and Benjamin Péret in particular.

To be sure, in keeping with the current critical trend, he is more careful in his research than, say, Fowlie—as is evident from his copious notes; he pays surrealism certain "compliments" and even, in his own way, stresses its "revolutionary" significance. But the confusional purpose is apparent on every page. His animosity to Breton occasionally becomes so excessive that it carries him squarely into the domain of actual lies. Thus, in an imbecile attempt to slander Breton, Gershman claims that it was only after the author of the *Surrealist Manifesto* took over the direction of LA REVOLUTION SURREALISTE (with the fourth issue) that it began to publish poetry. But the very first issue contains, on page 12, in italic type, a poem by Paul Eluard; and the third issue includes some "Phrases de Reveil" by Maurice Bechet, quite clearly arranged as a poem.

Thus Gershman appears as one of those who, lacking any originality, can only venture into stupidity and error whenever he attempts it. If he has succeeded, by way of compensation, in perfecting a technique of borrowing bits and pieces from other critics, it is his peculiar misfortune to have borrowed only the weakest bits and pieces from the weakest sources. From Frederick Brown he borrows the absurd notion of translating *le merveilleux* (the marvelous) as *revelation*; and from Colin Wilson the laughably useless conception of the "outsider."

Sociology knows of men who, in their youth, aspired to become criminals, but who as adults became especially vicious cops. There are others who, in their youth, aspired to be poets, but who as adults became especially vicious critics.

\* \* \*

Of the insidious infamy of Prof. Rubin, curator of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, everything that has to be said has already been said, and said quite well, by Nicolas Calas in his reviews of Rubin's miserable 1968 exhibition, *Dada, Surrealism & Their Heritage*; the reader is referred also to our own observations on the Rubin school of falsification published under the title "The Heritage We Reject" in *SURREALIST INSURRECTION* 3 (August 1968).

Rubin's "research" for *Dada and Surrealist Art* (Abrams) seems to have consisted almost exclusively of systematizing and consolidating earlier errors and prejudices; doubtless he hopes to attain through quantity and mass what he lacks in quality and precision. Rubin is the Cecil B. deMille among the critics of surrealism. One has the feeling that he imagines himself to be omnipotent and infallible; that when he states, for example, in a subhead, that Lam, Matta and Gorky are *The Last Surrealists*, he expects this to become Law, carved in stone on

a public monument, memorized by schoolchildren everywhere. But despite his monolithic pretensions, Prof. Rubin is merely a spiteful little bureaucrat who abuses his petty authority and the endless funds at his disposal. Regarding his book, which weighs ten pounds, one can only recall the celebrated proverb of childhood: *The bigger they are, the harder they fall.*

\* \* \*

Sarane Alexandrian's *Surrealist Art* (Praeger) belongs to a genre which is already becoming somewhat tiresome: the reminiscences and reflections of ex-surrealists. Like his equally unillustrious forbears in this genre, Patrick Waldberg and Marcel Jean, Mr. Alexandrian believes that the surrealist movement may be spoken of only in the past tense. To the existing studies, he adds primarily details and anecdotes. His approach, while not especially profound, is at least not thoroughly vile. Much of his historical and biographical information is not available in other works in English.

Unlike Waldberg and Jean, Alexandrian briefly traces developments up to the death of André Breton in 1966, but he adds that this "marks the end of surrealism as an organized movement," thus conveniently ignoring the review L'ARCHIBRAS, the surrealist renaissance in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere, surrealist participation in the Cultural Congress of Havana, etc. One looks forward to a study of marxism by Alexandrian, in which we will learn, no doubt, that the death of Karl Marx marked the end of marxism as an organized movement.

\* \* \*

Mary Ann Caws, amazingly enough, has written yet another book, *The Poetry of Dada and Surrealism* (Princeton) which, like her earlier *Surrealism and the Literary Imagination* (Mouton) is so embarrassingly inane that it is almost immune to criticism. I prefer to read it as a caricature of academic prose or a compendium of critical clichés. But like Red Skelton's jokes, Mrs. Caws' work sometimes has a tendency to be more painful to the reader than funny. In one respect, however, she is superior to her fellow critics, and I therefore propose a toast in her honor: Long live Mrs. Caws, whose works are so preposterous that they are utterly harmless!

\* \* \*

One would like to be able to recommend the book *Surrealism: Permanent Revelation* (Dutton) by Roger Cardinal and Robert Stuart Short, for the authors' knowledge of the history and principles of surrealism far exceeds that of all the previously mentioned critics, except perhaps Alexandrian. But the authors' own orientation, eclectic and skeptical, reveals itself far too often, especially in the concluding chapter; and in spite of their largely sympathetic presentation, the book is little more than a superficial vulgarization entirely lacking in real insight.

Cardinal and Short belong to the school for whom surrealism has somehow "lost" its revolutionary capacities. One is again reminded of the revisionist socialists who, at the

beginning of the century, confused their own vacillation and doubt with a "crisis of marxism." The doubts of Cardinal and Short about the present revolutionary viability of surrealism are fundamentally the same as the doubts of those who, in the 1920s, questioned the viability of pursuing the poetic quest of Lautréamont, Rimbaud, Jarry, Vaché, as the first surrealists elected to do. Moreover, when Cardinal and Short inform us that "the conviction...that political revolution and poetry could become synonymous has not so far been substantiated," one realizes only too well that they are, after all, merely academicians who know where their money comes from, skeptics writing to satisfy skeptics, and that nothing they have to say of surrealism, poetry or revolution will be of any lasting significance.

\* \* \*

Quite apart from all the aforementioned critics is Mr. J. H. Matthews, whose several works on surrealism are notable for the freshness of their approach and their general historical accuracy. Matthews is almost unique among current writers on surrealism in this country in his emphasis on clarifying precisely what surrealists have actually said and done in the past, and what they are saying and doing today. His interest has been more in discovering the truth of surrealist development than in wielding his own critical hatchet or forcing surrealism into a prefabricated mold. His most recent book, *Surrealist Poetry in France* (Syracuse University) is valuable above all for its discussion of several poets very little known here — especially Jehan Mayoux among the older generation and Joyce Mansour, Vincent Bounoure and Guy Cabanel among the younger — and because it emphasizes the true diversity of surrealist poetry rather than the alleged "uniformity" conventional critics tell us so much about.

All the same, one must protest the limitation inherent in the title: instead of *in France*, far more preferable would have been *in the French language* — there is no national surrealism. Why omit Aimé Césaire from Martinique, Clement Magloire-Saint-Aude from Haiti, Malcolm de Chazal from Mauritius, Gisele Prassinou from Greece, and E. L. T. Mesens, Paul Nougé and Marcel Lecomte from Belgium — all of whom wrote exclusively or primarily in French? Tzara and Luca are probably excluded because they happened to be born in Rumania, but Joyce Mansour, who is fortunately included, is an Egyptian born in England. And even among those born in France there are some conspicuous omissions: Artaud and Duprey, for example (Breton is presumably excluded because Matthews has already discussed his work in the pamphlet, *André Breton*, published by Columbia University).

But despite these faults, Matthews' book remains useful. Unlike most other critical works on surrealism produced in this country, this book, like his earlier volumes, will contribute more to the understanding of surrealism than its obfuscation.

\* \* \*

But in order to truly disperse the fog of critical confusion; in order to create an intellectual climate in which the distortions of the academicians will be, if not made impossible, then at least subjected to a certain restraint, the first prerequisite must be the availability in English translation of the most important surrealist works. For as long as these works are locked away in other languages, most American critics — who have at their disposal all the power of the universities, the press and the museums — will continue to constitute a sort of priesthood whose function, as is true of priests everywhere, will be to poison the minds of the populace with superstitions and lies for the purpose of perpetuating the values of the existing order.

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## CLARK ASHTON SMITH

"... No author but yourself," wrote H. P. Lovecraft in a 1923 letter to Clark Ashton Smith, "seems to have glimpsed fully those tenebrous wastes, immensurable gulfs, grey topless pinnacles, crumbling corpses of forgotten cities, slimy, stagnant, cypress-bordered rivers, and alien, indefinable, antiquity-ridden gardens of strange decay, with which my own dreams have been crowded since earliest childhood." Now, with two recently published collections of Smith's work (*Other Dimensions* in cloth from Arkham House, and *Zothique* in a Ballantine paperback), one may more easily gain entrance to this enchanted terrain, where the marvelous wreaks its timeless revenge against the principle of reality.

## CHARLES FOURIER

"Since childhood I have been interested in Fourier's thought. This study is, at long last, my statement of it, and it can be considered in part a reaction against the kind of summaries and expositions of Fourier's views which I have read for over thirty years. To be sure, difficult, rich and important teachings are likely to be misinterpreted or inadequately presented. . . My purpose. . . is to state Fourier's system in its own terms. . ." Thus writes Nicholas V. Riasanovsky in his *Teaching of Charles Fourier* (University of California). Despite the unavoidable shortcomings of an introductory work, this survey of Fourier's system (together with the translation of André Breton's marvelous *Ode to Charles Fourier* recently published by Cape Editions) constitutes an admirable step toward the urgently necessary *reparation* owed to the genial theoretician of *Passional Attraction*, the miraculous harbinger of *Universal Harmony*.

F. R.



## THEIR LENIN & OURS

It was inevitable that the centennial of Lenin's birth would provide the pretext for a hundred varieties of dogmatic derision, sectarian malevolence, snobbery and obfuscation. To know the truth of Lenin's teaching today it is essential to step aside from *all* the falsifications: those of his "official" heirs no less than those of his detractors.

For us, surrealists, the author of *State and Revolution* represents, above all, a genius of human emancipation, one of the most resonant examples of revolutionary creativity and dynamism. It is clear, however, that most of what passes for "leninism" today has as little to do with Lenin as the self-styled cult of Hegelianism in Germany in the 1830s and 40s (ruthlessly dissected by Marx and Engels in *The Holy Family* and *The German Ideology*) had to do with Hegel. "We in no way regard Marx's theory as something perfect and unassailable," wrote Lenin in 1899. "On the contrary, we are persuaded that it has provided only the bases of a science that socialists must necessarily perfect in every way if they do not wish to lag behind life." Nothing is as painfully obvious today — and nothing is as far removed from the spirit of Marx and Lenin — as this hopeless lagging behind life of those who noisily pretend to follow in their orthodox footsteps.

One can only welcome the translation of a work such as *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of His Thought* by the early Lukacs (1924), just published by New Left Review Editions, and various essays by Marcel Liebman and Lucio Magri. But such important studies brutally emphasize the astonishing paucity of serious revolutionary revaluations *here and now*. One looks forward especially to C.L.R. James' biography of Lenin, which may be expected to constitute a truly fundamental work, overthrowing the miserable myths with which the heirs of Rockefeller no less than of Stalin attempt to stifle the real meaning of Lenin's words and deeds.

But if it is necessary to reject the different but equally false interpretations of Lenin propagated by apologists for imperialism and apologists for state-capitalist bureaucracies, so too it is necessary to reject the facile anti-leninism of anarchists like Cohn-Bendit who can do no more than idly repeat dull slanders discredited long ago. What is living and what is dead in the work of Lenin will never be brought to light by idolatrous reliance on catechisms, whether "leninist" or "anti-leninist."

Against the parliamentary cowards and corpses of the Second International who reduced socialism to an ossified system of servility and suffocation, Lenin's entire life was given over to the expansion, creative application, verification and development of the work of Marx, Engels and other revolutionaries. It is thus that he and Trotsky, and the Bolshevik Party, came to represent, in Rosa Luxemburg's words, "the salvation of the honor of international socialism."

Today this very same salvation demands the rescue of Lenin's teaching from the prison of

systematic deception in which it is kept by the ideologists. It is one of the greatest ambitions of surrealism to pool its resources in this effort to rekindle the flames of true revolutionary thought and action, to contribute to the elaboration of the theory of human emancipation (proletarian revolution), which, without necessarily calling itself "marxism-leninism" will nonetheless be truly in line with, and worthy of, the spirit and actions of Marx and Lenin.

F. R.

## WILHELM REICH

Few works deal with the diffuse interaction of psycho-sexual and socio-political factors that manifest themselves in the economic and social life of a state, and scarcely any of such works can be considered monumental. The long out-of-print *Mass Psychology of Fascism* is indeed such a work, and it is once again available (in a cloth edition by Farrar, Straus and in paperback by Albion Press). This book, Wilhelm Reich's greatest work and perhaps the most significant contribution to the subject of mass psychology, relentlessly traces the development of the authoritarian family structure, sexual repression, religion and numerous other forces that contribute to the power, acceptance and maintenance of a fascist (or stalinist) state. Reich's insights are invaluable, for the role of sexual repression must be understood if fascism is to be combatted. The rejection of Reich's work by vulgar marxists is further proof that we are here confronted with dialectical thinking operating so dynamically that the foolish purveyors of marxist platitudes, confronted with their own repressions, are forced into even more sterile interpretations of Marx's teachings. Those who are capable of grasping the wealth of factors involved in dynamic political theory, those who realize the tremendous role played by sexuality in the formation of all structures, in the character of individuals as well as of the state, will find Reich's *Mass Psychology of Fascism* to be one of the most successful studies produced by the synthesis of the teachings of Freud and Marx.

P. G.

## A SUPPRESSED TEXT OF T-BONE SLIM

*The Popular Wobbly*, which was to become one of T-Bone Slim's best-known lyrics, was published, for the first time, in the ONE BIG UNION MONTHLY, journal of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), in its April 1920 issue. The version in the current *IWW Songs*, as well as in the IWW anthology *Rebel Voices*, omits the following stanza:

*Even God, he went wild over me  
This I found out as I knelt upon my knee  
Did he hear my humble yell?  
No, he told me to go to hell  
He went wild, simply wild, over me.*

## MALCOLM X

C. L. R. James wrote in 1947 that among the black people of America "there sleep and are now awakening passions of a violence exceeding, perhaps . . . anything among the tremendous forces that capitalism has created . . . the hatred of bourgeois society and the readiness to destroy it when the opportunity should present itself, rests among them to a degree greater than in any other section of the population." The miraculous destiny of Malcolm X—and the revolutionary tendencies which continue in his tradition—proves this with such brilliance that it is impossible to argue. In his *Autobiography*, in *Malcolm X Speaks* and now in *By Any Means Necessary* (Pathfinder, 1970) one sees the seeds of revolt take root and blossom forth with majesty and a totally justifiable ferocity. The life of Malcolm X incarnates the principles of revolutionary dynamism. At the time of his murder, he had left behind the inhibitions of bourgeois nationalism; he had arrived at a clear anti-capitalist, anti-racist, anti-imperialist position; he had been among the first to move toward the internationalization of the black revolutionary struggle—"to unite the black flowers," as Ted Joans wrote in L'ARCHIBRAS. Today, inspired by the luminous words and exemplary deeds of Malcolm X, the forces of black liberation—with which the international surrealist movement has many times affirmed its unreserved solidarity—provide a major focus for the revolutionary cause in this country and in the world. *Remember Malcolm!* We may be sure that the garden of subversion will yet yield its harvest of total revolution.

F. R.

## ART & REVOLUTION

John Berger's *Art and Revolution* (Pantheon)—another failure. The Western World is obsessed with the *safe* problems of seeing and knowing; hence its search to revitalize past values. John Berger is a part of this world, unable to escape from its restrictions. That his book reveals little of the nature of revolutionary art does not surprise us. What does *he*, a critic, know about the artist as a revolutionist, as a saboteur, a guerrilla, magician, poet and eroticist?

If we sympathize somewhat with Ernst Niezvestny (contemporary Russian sculptor who is the subject of this book) it is because a few of his drawings have been capable of provoking our excitement. But most of his work, especially the sculpture (at least as far as the book reveals) belongs to the realm of "pure" art which is of course reactionary (though in an entirely different sense than is meant by Soviet bureaucrats for whom Niezvestny is in fact too "modern").

But most of the blame for this failure goes to John Berger for adding a new volume to the millions of unnecessary works which already pollute this earth.

S.D.

## MAGRITTE

*René Magritte* by Patrick Waldberg (Brussels, André de Rache) originally sold for \$30, became unobtainable, and then reappeared on the market for \$40: it can thus be said that a comprehensive study of Magritte is *available* only in a very limited sense. The book is sold in very few stores and few people could afford it anyway. Nevertheless, it offers over 350 illustrations of Magritte's work, excellently reproduced, many in color. Waldberg's text is quite definitely superfluous, and insidious in the subtle treachery of its attempts to pass off the author's typically slime-coated banterings as relevant material. If anything makes this book worth having, besides the Magritte illustrations (for no value lies in the Waldberg text), it is the superb bibliography compiled by André Blavier, which contains 993 entries (many with concise descriptions), arranged chronologically, with a special sub-topical division devoted to exhibitions immediately following the entries for each year. Besides a nearly complete listing of all publications in which Magritte has appeared, the bibliography lists countless critical studies and appreciations, as well as a wealth of exceedingly obscure items containing Magritte illustrations, passing references to the artist, etc. As an appendix, the book includes a document section consisting of excerpts from correspondence between Magritte, Goemans, Nougé and Lecomte.

More recently there has appeared a less expensive study, *René Magritte* by David Sylvester (Praeger). Although it contains only a little more than 100 pages, it has almost that number of illustrations, a third of which are in color. Scattered through the book are short excerpts from texts by Magritte and Louis Scutenaire, many appearing in English for the first time. Unfortunately, the meaningless text by the compiler takes up fourteen pages that could have been better used for more illustrations.

P. G.



DRAGON.

## SINCE ATHEISTS DARE EXIST

With his latest film, *La Voie Lactee* (*The Milky Way*), Luis Buñuel has returned once more to the language whose terms were first enunciated in his masterwork, *L'Age d'or*.

Thus his attention has again been attracted to the achievement of the "freest man who ever lived"\* — D. A. F. Sade, and, inspired, he has offered an unparalleled lucid challenge to religion. I believe an irresolvable moral conflict exists between the tinsel imitation of the "divine marquis" presented by such salesmen as Peter Weiss, and the modest thunderstorm in human form released to the screen by Buñuel.

Furthermore, *La Voie Lactée* carries within its very technical means a significant lesson for revolutionary artists: the use of the most efficient and advanced cinematic apparatus in Europe has done nothing to corrupt or tame Buñuel. Rather, it has allowed him to bring his powers of defiance to a higher intensity.

To Luis Buñuel, prince of wolves in a world of dogs, honor in the form of feathers falling.  
S. S.

\*Apollinaire

## C. L. R. JAMES

Among the greatest of those in the English-speaking world who have made appreciable contributions to revolutionary marxism in recent years is the Trinidad-born C. L. R. James, author of *The Black Jacobins* (Vintage paperback); *State Capitalism & World Revolution*; a study of Melville, *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* (the last two available from Martin Glaberman, 1443 Bewick, Detroit, Michigan); *Modern Politics* (available from University Place Bookshop in New York); and *A History of Pan-African Revolt* (recently reprinted by the Drum & Spear Press). Perhaps the best introduction to the range and depth of James' revolutionary vision is the special C.L.R. James issue of *Radical America* which includes several complete essays, unavailable elsewhere, and substantial excerpts from other works, including a chapter from his forthcoming study of Nkrumah and the problems of socialism in the Third World.

## ROSA LUXEMBURG

The centennial of the birth of Rosa Luxemburg has aroused scarcely any commemoration, or even comment, in this country. The unjustifiable neglect of her work continues unabated (most of her writings remain untranslated). It has been the tragic destiny of this remarkable woman — indisputably one of the greatest theoreticians and activists of revolutionary marxism — to have been condemned to a rather *marginal* existence in the history of socialism as it is customarily presented today. The posthumous abuse she has suffered, more-

over, has been curiously many-sided: completely hypocritical praise from social-democrats and even, occasionally, from overt apologists for capitalism, who pretend to see in her a champion of "democracy" against Lenin's "authority" (see, for example, the nauseating introduction by Bertram Wolfe to her unfinished notes published under the title *The Russian Revolution*); the equally perverse exploitation, in recent years, of certain ambiguities in her *Accumulation of Capital* by certain academic economists with pronounced neo-stalinist affinities; nor can one forget that Stalin, years after her death, denounced her for the "crime" of Trotskyism.

A recent collection, *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks* (Pathfinder) includes most of her better-known essays; another is to be published soon by Monthly Review. Hopefully such books will assist not only in restoring to Rosa Luxemburg the distinction she so fully deserves, but also in reducing somewhat to its properly insignificant proportions the ludicrous drivel of Mao, Debray, Althusser and other fashionable pseudo-marxists.

To truly get beyond the incredible muddle of ideology today, it is essential above all to avoid being sidetracked into outdated and irrelevant disputes, and to recognize that there are no easy short-cuts through the urgent tasks of criticism and reevaluation of the *highest points* reached by marxism in earlier years.

As is the case with the reevaluation of Lenin and Trotsky, we cannot afford to permit anyone's prejudices or narrow organizational requirements to stand in the way of the indispensable tasks of reevaluating the work of Rosa Luxemburg today. An excellent preliminary to this reevaluation would be to leave behind the monotonous and lifeless literature devoted to exaggerating the disputes between Luxemburg and Lenin — a literature which, for fifty years, has done nothing but repeat itself, almost word for word, over and over. As Peter Nettl wrote in his biography, *Rosa Luxemburg*: "Those who are made joyful by criticism of the fundamentals of the Bolshevik Revolution would do better to look elsewhere."

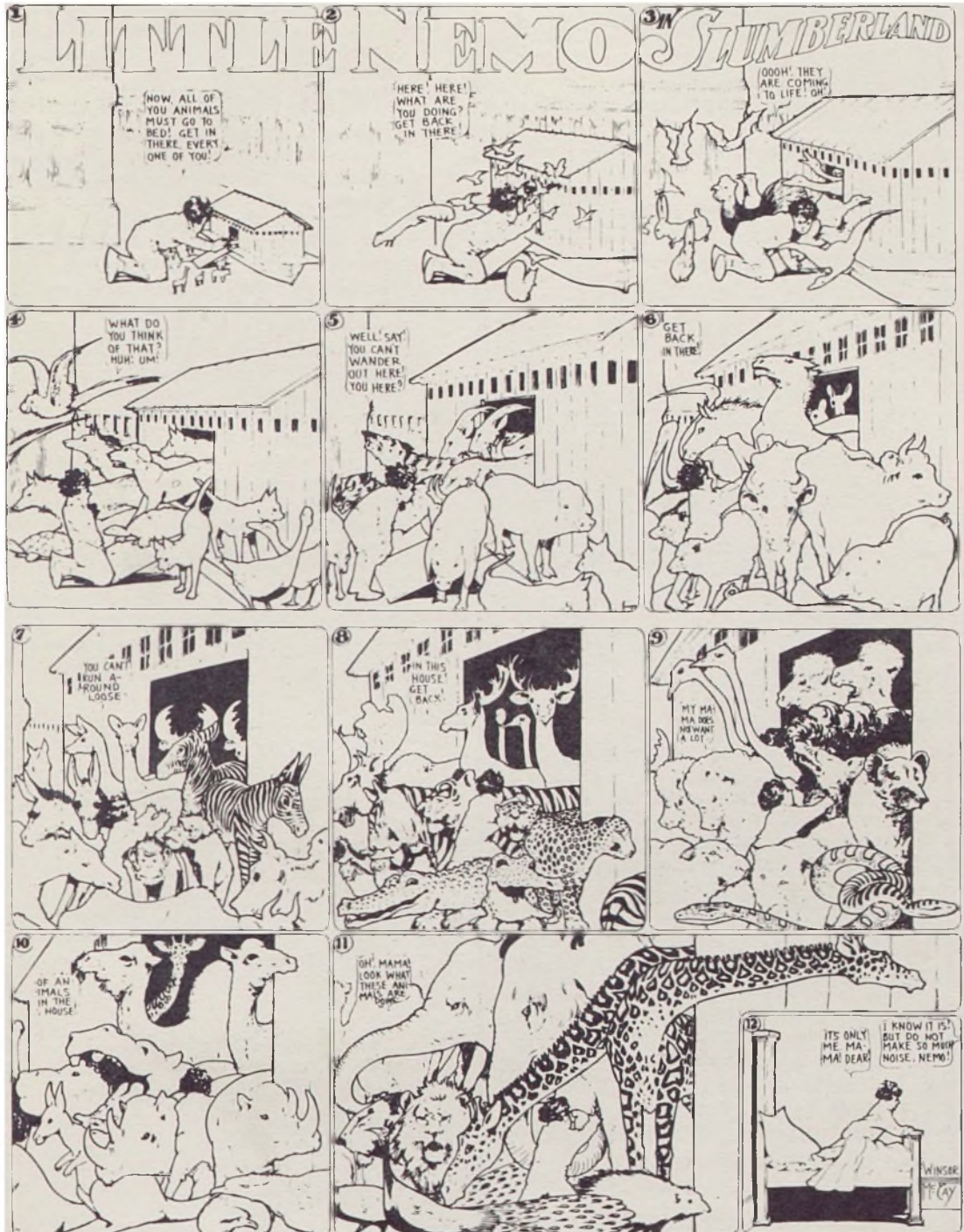
For some, whose conception of revolution is so degraded that they can only wallow in the mud of the blind alleys of the past, the light of Rosa Luxemburg will remain obscured by sectarian mist. But there are others, among whom we include ourselves, who intend to clear away this mist, to allow her exemplary passionate spirit to illuminate the very skies of the future.



Sacred Ibis. (14a)

*Even sleepers are workers and collaborators in what goes on in the universe.*

HERACLITUS



*The machinery for dreaming planted in the human brain was not planted for nothing.*

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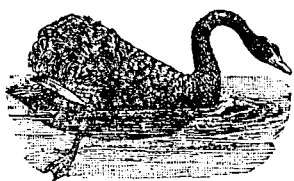
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