FRAGMENTED BODIES: POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY

Towards a feminist analysis of visual and verbal language in early surrealism poetry and art.

An examination of relationships between visual and verbal language in early surrealist literature and art.

Jennifer J. Patterson

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ABSTRACT

The thesis identifies the violent process of fragmentation inherent in the surrealist image with the politics of a fragmentation of female presence through the imposition of externalised gendered textuality. It exposes patriarchal domination of the structures of knowledge with those of quest and uses interdisciplinary information to foreground the structures of control upon which such authority is based.

The opening section examines three dream texts, contextualised by their dedicatory inscription to de Chirico. An analysis of visual and verbal language and common themes demonstrates positions of authority in the text with regard to function.

The second and third sections continue work from the previous section by detailing the nature and history of the labyrinth and myth reference as conceptual affirmations of patriarchal ancestry, situating Breton’s quest within the tradition of the masculine heroic.

The section on anorexia examines female presence as an anorexic body denied suitable ‘food’ in cultural history with which to nourish herself.

The final section discusses the politics of the representation of a disfigured feminine presence as a pornographic stereotypical production.

All sections inscribe the necessity for presence in determining positions and the need for a process of interdisciplinary self-education to rethink and recover presence from its absence in textual alienation.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A great many people have helped me in a variety of ways during my work on this thesis and I can only offer a heartfelt global thank you. I wish also to thank the staff of the French Department at the University College and in particular Michael Worton who has given me tremendous support and encouragement both as supervisor and friend. My mother has rescued me in times of crisis and my father, despite thinking the content sounded ‘dreadful’, has helped me in every practical way he could. My memories of the contributions of Rosemary, Carol and Dr. Lequet are especially poignant.

Many, many thanks to Angie who transferred this text from an obsolete word processing programme and has typed the edits with endless patience.
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PREFACE

The 'subject' of this thesis is a textual recuperation of a feminine position in readings from the work of the surrealist poet and theoretician, André Breton. Although he was not concerned with questioning issues of gender and indeed used gender stereotypes to enforce his arguments, paradoxically much of his philosophical work expresses theories which, within their own historical textual context, are remarkably similar to those expressed by feminist theory within its own context.

The introduction does not clearly 'map' the thesis in terms of 'what I will do' but rather presents the theory for 'why I am doing it', in terms of an evolutionary experience of alienation, re-cognition and recovery. The explanatory 'why' presents a reasoned argument of positions which have evolved from the research which they present. Each section has its own conclusion but there is no finite conclusion in the formal sense. This is important for the open structure presented by the thesis, as is discussed at the end.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS
Full references given in bibliography

A.O.W., Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will.*
C.C., R.F. Willetts, *Cretan Cults and Festivals.*
C.d.T., André Breton, *Clair de terre.*
C.e.B., Robert Desnos, *Corps et biens.*
C.G., W.F.J. Knight, *Cumaen Gates.*
E., Gaston Bachelard, *La Poétique de l’espaces.*

L.R.S., *La Revolution Surréaliste.*
M., André Breton, *Manifestes du surréalisme.*
N., André Breton, *Nadja.*
P.d.J., André Breton, *Point du jour.*
P.F.L., IV, Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams.*
P.F.L., VI, Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious.*
P.P., André Breton, *Les Pas perdus.*
S.A., André Breton, *Signe ascendant*
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INTRODUCTION:
FRAGMENTATION AND ALIENATION

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FRAGMENTATION AND ALIENATION

During the course of my research on the surrealist poet and theoretician, André Breton, I have realised how unacceptable and indeed damaging much of his discourse is to myself as a woman and a feminist. My reactions to certain texts were very different to the so-called ‘established’ body of work on Breton. I believe that I first started work on ‘Surrealism’ because I was fascinated by the mystery of the unknown which it presented and by a desire to understand, comprehend and thereby regain control of the texts which eluded me. I believe that these needs were culturally manufactured, rather than innate and in fact, totally misdirected.

Questions of authority have raised powerful issues when reading the work of a poet who has copiously constructed his own theoretical system of intertexts and cross references, a labyrinthine defence system with its own initiation rites. I believe that our understanding of language is based on what it means to us and that ‘meaning’ is based on both individual experience and a sharing of knowledge. Central to this I believe that our understanding of certain words and certain structures within our linguistic system is weighted with the significance of physical experience. I have used the word ‘weighted’ for two reasons. Firstly because Western cultural history has so privileged and valued masculine ex-perience, the external, the visible and the product, that the ‘feminine’ has itself been constructed and stereotyped in masculine terms. Secondly because in psychosexual terms, that part of meaning which is determined by the personal rejects the immanent: hence, ‘insperience’ has been violently overthrown in favour of ‘experience’ and permeates the language which structures our systems of thinking and constructs our identities.

Within that system, female presence is denied an independent existence. Defined as feminine presence, she is usually totally constructed from a masculine view. She is an object of fantasy and fetish, alternately adored and hated with the ‘choice’ of a submissive, passive existence or that of
having the operation which restructures her psychosexual being in masculine mode, giving her those attributes which she needs to be able to swear by, to establish the criteria for her ‘existence’. I have found it incredibly difficult to recover my own feminine textuality and to give it space within a theoretical system whose language presents an intrusive masculine view of textual satisfaction in psychosexual terms.

POSITIONS
The writer writing about the subject attempts to present a ‘perceived’ objective analysis which is inevitably highly subjective in relation to the presentation of the textual objective, resulting in a structure similar to that of pornography, based on the handling or ‘manipulation’ of the object presented for view.

The establishment of a masculine discourse permitted within the parameters of a phallocentric system, is centred in true Freudian tradition, on the objectification of the subject. The resultant Barthéjan ‘émision’ is an ex-pressed product of a subject-object dialogue in which the reading author and the text are engaged in a stereotypical reproductive relationship.

By definition, such a presentation of ‘authority’ is neither passive nor objective but a selective hierarchical system of control and release for the ‘dis-semín-atión’ of information. If we privilege authority in this context we might just as arguably accept ourselves as vessels for the ‘rebirth’ of text fertilised by the suspended (and rather dead) sperm of ‘jouissance’, embalmed and encrypted in the ‘énoncé’ and spread over Aphrodite’s buttocks in visual testicular proof, communicative ‘testimony’ to the (male) sculptor’s representational achievement.¹

Accepting that ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’ are culturally determined, we are ourselves texts

¹ The buttocks of the statue of Aphrodite by Praxiteles were reputedly stained with semen which testified to the artist’s skill in creating a statue so lifelike/desirable!
inscribed with histories and sociocultural values which we will in turn inscribe both in our readings of others textuality and of written texts per se. Western culture is structured by the gendered stereotypes of patriarchy which has imposed textual identity in testament to phallocracy.

An examination of the language of sexual experience with its emphasis on ‘ex’ - an outward movement and ‘in’ - a movement inwards of the externalised, reveals a linguistic subordination of the internalised which permeates textual production of all types.

THE ACT OF REVOLUTION IS AN ACT OF VIOLENCE: SURVIVING TEXTUAL VIOLENCE: THE RECUPERATION OF PRESENCE

As a movement, Surrealism seeks to break through the barriers imposed by conscious logic and to liberate the imagination by freeing language from standardised denotational values. From the first pages of the Manifeste du surréalisme (1924), Breton describes man as a discontented dreamer searching to find liberation through an experience of spontaneous abandon. As a theoretician, he sexualises language (‘les mots font l’amour’) and places images which conjoin on an egalitarian basis. (P.P., p.141; M., pp.48-9). However as a writer using language, he presents it as a tool for surrealist use: ‘le language a été donné à l’homme pour qu’il en fasse un usage surréaliste’. (M., p.44).

Breton presents this language as a means of attacking, conquering and dominating literary values, and of substituting new and exciting textual experience. His theoretical discourse presents Surrealist activity as an experience of desire and satisfaction, expressed in a masculine language of orgasm:

Il ne faut donc pas s’étonner de voir le surréalisme se situer tout d’abord presque uniquement sur le plan du langage et, non plus, au retour de quelque incursion que ce soit, y revenir comme pour le plaisir de s’y comporter en pays conquis. Rien, en effet ne peut plus empêcher que, pour la grand part, ce pays soit conquis. Les hordes de mots littéralement déchaînés auxquels Dada et le surréalisme ont tenu à ouvrir les portes, quoi qu’il en ait, ne sont pas de celles qui se retirent si vainement. Elles pénètreront sans hâte, à coup sûr dans les petites villes idiotes de la littérature...elles feront posément une belle consommation de tourelles...On fênt de ne pas trop s’apercevoir que le mécanisme
Language is used here in a climactic way, exhibiting an external position moving inward in an articulation of desire, to satisfy the aim of that desire which is an eventual projection outside of the individual: ‘incursion...plaisir...ouvrir les portes...pénétreront...à coup sûr...déclencher la sécuouss’. Yet the organisation of the language is infinitely more complex than progressive and full of gaps and returns. Surrealism is situated 'presque uniquement' (but not entirely) 'sur le plan du langage'. After ‘incursions’ (which implies a movement into hostile territory), surrealism will not return to language (as a place) to flaunt its victory.

The sensation of twisting and knotting created by these incursions and negated returns is analogous to the establishment of a defence mechanism. Breton therefore writes a defence (‘retour, revenir’) of his surrealist territory into the text which theorises it and to escape a continual return, presents a statement of fact: ‘Rien...ne peut plus empêcher que...ce pays soit conquis’. The complexity of the sentence with the negation of negative forces reads as an over-emphatic affirmative return, a paradoxical negation of the intentions expressed in the previous sentence where the implication is that surrealism will not treat language as a conquered country. In textual fact, Breton has returned in his discourse to the conquered country, to affirm authoritatively that it is indeed conquered.

In complete contrast, words are ‘littéralement déchainés’. Unleashed, set free by Dada and Surrealism, they penetrate, consume towers and will presumably be able to ‘déclencher la secousse émotive’ which gives value to man’s life, defined in traditional terms of ‘virility’. ² Breton’s textual desires result in pronominal manipulation and confusion since ‘le’ surrealism conquers and

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² In a note in the Second manifeste du surréalisme, Breton continues on the same theme but watching surrealism excite others without being able to ‘déclencher la secouss’: ‘C’est à nous, en effet, sans pour cela tolérer que s’émoussent la pointe de curiosité spécifiquement intellectuelle dont le surréalisme agace, sur leur propre terrain, les spécialistes de la poésie, de l’art.... aux fenêtres fermées’. (M., p.81).
liberates, (elsewhere provides keys) opening doors for hordes ('elles') which will alternately penetrate (a male experience) rival towns and consume towers (an 'expressed' male desire within the phallic state) to achieve a singular climax. Hence power connotes penetration, yet the liberated feminine noun services the culminating excitement of an ejaculatory release. Engaging with logic is written as a masculine engagement with a rival who is viewed as 'impuissant' and contrasts with the poet's ability to liberate 'les produits simultanée de l'activité que j'appelle surréaliste'. (M., p.49).

While surrealist liberation is presented as desirable, it is accompanied by anxiety about loss, leaving authority with its masculine ego vulnerable to fear of attack and even castration, to fear of not producing and reproducing.

Breton, who transfers his potency to the the realm of language, equally transfers his need to make it reproductive: 'il faut que le nom germe'. (M., p.167). Language takes on reproductive capacities. Woman is both vassal and vessel, a 'madonna/whore' in the service of massaging a poetic and linguistic ego:

\[
\text{partout la femme n'est plus qu'un calice débordant de voyelles en liaison avec le magnolia illimitable de la nuit. (S.A., p.143).}
\]

She is therefore subordinate to language, its slave and that of the author:

\[
Puis l'essentiel n'est-il pas que nous soyons, nos maîtres, et les maîtres des femmes, de l'amour aussi? (M., p.28).
\]

Woman is a sex object to be sacrificed or 'consumed' by language: 'la femme de plaisir, objet de consommation'. (L.S.A.S.D.L.R., No.4, p.14). Yet her externalised state is necessary to the phallic 'I' to 'l'âme à longue portée du cynisme sexuel' (M., p.78). She is a 'promise' and inevitably a catalyst or facilitator of the work:
Dans le surréalisme, la femme aura été aimée et célébrée comme la grande promesse, celle qui subsiste après avoir été tenue. (M., p.169).

In her summary of modern feminist theorists, Dale Spender isolates this 'I' which demands woman’s willing cooperation, holds her responsible and hates her for its needs.³

Breton’s language presents logic and its textual products as a phallic virgin mother within the discourse of a homoerotic politics of submission, enslavement, violence, penetration, liberation, rival potency and dependency.

Imagination is enslaved by a limiting and constraining logic which has restricted the freedom of potent masculine desire. (M., pp.15, 20). Desire is ideally in a state of unconstrained erection within its own territory: ‘la région où s’érige le désir sans contrainte’. (M., p.167). Logic is accordingly impotent by comparison with surrealist activity and is treated as an enemy: ‘Mon attention, en proie à une sollicitation qu’elle ne peut décemment repousser, traite la pensée adverse en ennemie’. (M., p.46).

The ‘enemy’ is feminised in a celebration of the destructive forces of surrealist potency:

la définition du surréalisme donnée dans le premier 'Manifeste', ne fait en somme, que 'recouper' un des grands mots d’ordre traditionnels, qui est d’avoir à ‘crever le tambour de la raison raisonnante et en contempler le trou’, ce qui mènera à s’éclairer les symboles jusqu’alors ténébreux. (M., p.168).

‘Recouper’ is a linear divisive activity which involves the cutting off of something for a second time, or geometrically, the double intersection of circles. Bursting the membrane of a drum involves penetration of a different dimension. The drum can be burst only once and is useless after that since it can no longer produce sound. It has been submitted to the destruction and

violence of the surrealist gaze and its subjective function hijacked and devalued for the momentary satisfaction of the destructive phallic eye in virgin cave territory.

Surrealism creates a state of need, tension and anger and thereby justifies violence:

*Le surréalisme...Tout porte à croire qu'il agit sur l'esprit à la manière des stupéfiants; comme eux il crée un certain état de besoin et peut pousser l'homme à de terribles révoltes.* (M., p.47).

Surrealism offers a drug which satisfies all palates and offers ultimate pleasure; ‘...il a comme le haschisch de quoi satisfaire tous les délicats’. (M., p.48). Evacuating choice or responsibility from the pressing demands of instant satisfaction, it is hardly surprising that the same man co-authors a definition of rape as ‘l’amour de la vitesse’... (L.R.S., No.11, p.8). The poet’s reward for surrealist products? ‘Il sera vraiment élu et les plus douces femmes l’aimeront avec violence’. (M., p.43).

Responsibility for violence is incorporated in the language of seduction, choice is abdicated by an author who cannot resist his libidinal vision and projects the anger for his desire onto the desirable party, conceived as a positive and negative ‘problem’: ‘Le problème de la femme est, au monde, tout ce qu’il y a de merveilleux et de trouble’. (M., p.129, note). The phallic order has historically acquired and requires her willing submission as its object. The value placed upon this is enormous and it is essential to the phallocratic construction of the heroic masculine textual self:

*La clé de l’amour...le poète...il l’a. Il ne tient qu’à lui de s’élever au-dessus du sentiment passager de vivre dangereusement et de mourir. Qu’il use, au mépris de toutes les prohibitions, de l’arme vengeresse de l’idée contre la bestialité de tous les êtres et de toutes les choses...il accueille la décharge de ses tristes fusils comme un feu de salve.* (M., p.137).

Breton uses the phallic language of weapons and battle against a feminised phallic enemy
throughout his discourse:

_Il y a bel et bien torpillage de l'idée au sein de la phrase qui l'énonce, quand bien même
cette phrase serait nette de toute charmante liberté prise avec son sens_. (M., p.108).

Surrealism seeks to give new life to language and deliberately sets out to destroy the stereotypes
of image association. In feminist terms, this seems a positive step, particularly for female gender
stereotyping. The surrealist text relies heavily on the female body as an echo-image of the text
and destroys many of the familiar clichés associated with such imaging. However, Surrealism
perpetuates and celebrates the more sinister image of the female body as an ideal locus of violent
acts.

This might seem strange but then a British society which legislates (somewhat reluctantly) against
male violence towards women also condones that violence when the legal definition of rape not
only requires physical proof of resistance but also specifies penetration by the phallus, defining
rape as 'successful' only when sperm is present.4

The section on 'pornography' contextualises the structure of shared viewing set up in Breton's text
_Union Libre_, with his attitudes to women. (C.d.T., pp.93-5). _Union Libre_ is a poem which
presents the poet making love and depicts the body of Suzanne Muzard, whose only identity is
as the property of the poet, as 'ma femme', which reads as a poetic rather than a biographical
identity.

The woman is made a textual possession by her poetic representation which presents her body as
an itemised list. This dismemberment externalises her presence and constructs her appearance as
desirable.

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4 Susan Edwards, _Female Sexuality and the Law_, Martin Robertson and Company,
The separated parts of the body are images to be used for individual poetic and linguistic associations to demonstrate surrealist principles of language. The disruptive violence of the images presents the representational act and echoes the violence done to her body.

Linguistic manipulations exhibit alchemical metaphors and form part of the textual realisation of Breton’s cultural quests, thereby confirming the dominance of his identity as theoretician with regard to ‘l’alchimie du verbe’. (M., pp.123-4). Surrealist ‘liberation’ is perceived and constructed as a linguistic concept; the woman’s body is merely a surface onto which authors project their own desire. There is no ‘freedom’ for the woman, merely a series of imprisoning structures, each built around the other, with the represented and fragmented female body at the centre.

As a woman and a feminist, I found it difficult to identify with this expression of desire, because of the violent disfiguring, domination and incarceration of (metaphorical) woman which leaves me no space. I would emphasise that this is an emotional response to the manner of presenting these images of male aggression as lovemaking, not to any subjective or projective conception of the female body that I may have.

Surrealist images of women often display extreme cruelty, and reify the women they represent, using them to embody the creative process. Collectively working within the patriarchal culture system and with men (for the most part) as authors and authorities on surrealist texts, these texts inevitably reflect their author’s psychological attitudes towards woman as an object to be flattered, celebrated, confined, manipulated, disfigured and finally effaced.

Mary Ann Caws describes the handling of the female image as ‘management’. This manual

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mauling is intentional violence towards women signifying the representational act in which everything is subject to a conquering masculine phallic 'expression' of desire:

*le surréalisme n'a jamais été tenté de se voiler le point de fascination qui lui dans l'amour de l'homme et de la femme. Il l'eût pu d'autant moins que ses premières investigations, comme on l'a vu, l'avaient introduit dans une contrée où le désir était roi. (Ms, p.168).*

The veil is a device which may be directly related to ownership. It conceals the property (woman) of one man from the gaze of others. It is transparent from within and opaque from without, an object of non-penetration from the outside. It is a device textually inscribed with erotic connotations, a barrier to that which is concealed and secret. Were Surrealism to veil itself, it would be on the inside of the veil, able to perceive the visible fascination described. However, by veiling itself it becomes desirable and a veiled Surrealism would be a feminine vassal in a country where desire was king.

Thus the veil is, to a female reader, a transparently seductive textual device, an empty image of safety. Veiled or unveiled, a feminised Surrealism is prey to a violent desire based in scopophilic sight. Another image of veiling appears in the *Second manifeste du surréalisme*, where a pretty young woman does the dance of the veils before a bored sultan. (Ms, pp.134-5). When she is naked he requires further stripping, of her skin and flesh, which is to be burned off. The text narrates her continuing presence after skinning as still woman, still dancing. The sultan’s pleasure demands the dancer’s death which is used to illustrate the poet’s potency, his ability to use his surrealist ‘tool’. The veil reads as the seductive prelude to an act of horrific and sadistic violence used to substantiate the textual potency of the ‘exegi monumentum’. This image of a woman tortured to death indicates the need of an authoritarian ego to express his text in terms of power and dominance. It is a strong image of desire and of power over life which is used to facilitate the expression of a more potent object of desire. My own response to this kind of dominance is to read it as victimisation, and to suggest that a social context which
has textualised women as victims demands resistance. I cannot collude with the image of physical violence as proof of power, rivalled by that of a dancing skeleton as a desirable ‘testament’ to an omnipotent ego.

Breton describes desire as the powerful king of a conquered country; where desire ‘s’érige sans contrainte’ (M., p.167). This is the land offered by the surrealist poet in true patriarchal heroic style. He regularly compares the search for the surreal with journeys and quests and also inevitably with the archetypes and literary antecedents of his western cultural inheritance:

Je ne vois aucun inconvénient, pour le faire saisir, à ouvrir les fenêtres sur les plus grandes paysages utopiques. Une époque comme celle que nous vivons peut supporter...tous les départs pour les voyages à la Bergerac, à la Gulliver. Et toute chance d’arriver quelque part, après certains détours même en terre plus raisonnable que celle que nous quittons, n’est pas exclue du voyage auquel j’invite aujourd’hui. (M., pp.160-1).

Trop de tableaux, en particulier, se parent aujourd’hui dans le monde de ce qui n’a rien coûté aux inombrables suiveurs de Chirico, de Picasso, d’Ernst, de Masson, de Miro, de Tanguy - demain ce sera de Matta - à ceux qui ignorent qu’il n’est pas de grande expédition, en art, qui ne s’entreprene au péril de la vie, que la route à suivre n’est, de toute évidence, pas celle qui est bordée de garde-fous et que chaque artiste doit reprendre seul la poursuite de la Toison d’or. (M., pp.156-7).

By repeatedly making reference to a shared cultural inheritance, Breton authenticates the archetypal nature of his quest and also claims a literary identity.

In the first of the manifestos this takes the form of a list of authors, praised for individual surrealist characteristics. In the second, he seems to wish to break down social barriers in what

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6 Breton’s surrealist country is also unassailable, a place of no return, a state of spontaneity which can be revisited but not undone: the ultimate defence against conventional critical activity. Breton’s use of this discourse reflects a masculine cultural stereotype combining conquest with sexual dominance. War propaganda often links the defeated country, represented as a woman weak (vanquished) and beautiful (desirable), with images of the conquering hero, the all-powerful male, thus reinforcing and promoting the sexual stereotypes of warior tradition. See A.O.W., pp.31-113 and Gerda Lema, The Creation of Patriarchy, Oxford University Press, New York, 1986, passim.
might be read as a positive rebellion in feminist terms: ‘Tout est à faire, tous les moyens doivent être bons à employer pour ruiner les idées de famille, de patrie, de religion’. (M., p.77). On the previous page he states: ‘En matière de révolte, aucun de nous ne doit avoir besoin d’ancêtres’. However this seems to be more a response to various problems and disagreements within the group and disappointments with some of the previous ‘ancestors’ as he continues to cite the names of literary and artistic precursors, particularly in his writing on art. By 1942, he is aligning himself with ‘ma propre ligne’ which is philosophical and literary, and is a partial set of co-ordinates from which he draws both the line and any alterations. (M., p.153).

The naming of ‘ancestors’ is similar to the Classical rules for identifying epic narrative, which derived from the social functions of naming ancestors in the rites of more primitive societies. Breton situates his text firmly in this conceptualisation of the ‘masculine’ heroic, identifying with it and indeed ‘invoking’ it to contextualise his own cause and status as a writer, perceived within tradition as poetic questing.

Breton’s surrealist quest is situated within the patriarchal tradition which focuses on a (male) hero’s trajectory towards that which is sought or desired, whether it be ideal or real. The narrative of the quest is perceived from this limited viewpoint which established and politicised the cult of the male hero in literary, social, cultural and religious tradition. In the texts cited above, the image of archetypal hero is combined with the search for gold, be it the Golden Fleece of Jason and the Argonauts, the gold of alchemy, or a representative quest from his cultural inheritance. The social status of the male in Western Culture is a function of financial worth and success, linked ultimately to ability to own (property) and to provide (pater familias). In very basic terms these uphold the precepts of dominance and authority upon which patriarchy is founded.

A re-reading of Freudian theory could usefully situate Freud’s reading and writing of the money/faeces/gift equation within the same heroic quest tradition. The connection between
writing, reading and quest is aptly observed by Stanley Edgar Hyman with regard to the relationship between Freud’s quest to resolve the enigma of dreaming and the emblematic content of the stylistic organisation of this pursuit embodied in *The Interpretation of Dreams.* Freud offers a topological recording, a map of his quest through the uncharted terrain of the unconscious constructed through his text, comparable to those left by Breton throughout his quests for the textual surreal. Such maps may be read as phenomenological linear products of the organisational masculine desire to unify and present internalised textual fictions as morphological wholes.

Theseus, with whom Breton often identifies, is read in patriarchal tradition as he who, with the virgin’s gift, treads the path of reason, and of scientific rationale. Breton’s Theseus is presented as hero who has no need for the ‘gift’ of rationality, since his labyrinth is a transparent creation of surrealist activity.⁸

Sans fil... Ce sont de faibles repères de cet ordre qui me donne parfois l’illusion de tenter la grande aventure, de ressembler quelque peu à un chercher d’or : je cherche l’or du temps. Qu’évoquent-ils donc ces mots que j’avais choisis? ..... la Crète, où je dois être Thésée, mais Thésée enfermé pour toujours dans son labyrinthe de cristal. (P.d.I, p.7).

Concurrent with myth (an individual’s invented narrative of the deeds of his own hero, related to the group), these steps represent, in Freudian terms, the emergence of the individual from the group. This masculine rationale contextualises heroic success in terms of the individual: for the male, faecal birth and monetary success, for the female, perceived reproductive efficiency. So the social culture of the labyrinthine intestinal city state, the working of the minds reflecting that culture and the image of social function could be described as meeting in excremental confusion in this psychoanalytic reading of social values contextualised by their own mythologies through

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⁸ The Minotaur has long been read as the product of irrational feminine desire and Ariadne as the sacred Virgin. In this way ‘order’ has a masculine personification and the feminine is portrayed as divided - the madonna/whore problematic.
the mind which reproduces them. I have begun retracing these in the contextualised sections on ‘Labyrinth’ and ‘Breton and Myth’; it is a process of recovery by identifying structures and origins which have repressed and excluded female presence:

Indeed the metaphor of the labyrinth is one of the discourses of exploration specifically used by Foucault, Derrida, Freud and Bachelard to present individualised readings which ‘illuminate’ the obscure, involving an heroic image of textual penetration. This is a masculine experience with which Freud freely identifies in the discourse of his work On Sexuality:

*The significance of the factor of sexual overvaluation can be best studied in men, for their erotic life alone has become accessible to research. That of women - partly owing to the stunting effect of civilised conditions and partly owing to their conventional secretiveness and insincerity - is still veiled in an impenetrable obscurity. (P.F.L., VII, p.63).*

In the context of sexualised language this forms part of the traditional exploratory discourse of philosophy. Penetration is by the eye, clarification, like the sun, lights the obscure. For Breton, light is the product of surrealistic activity. It erupts spontaneously in an outward spurting movement:

*C’est du rapprochement en quelque sorte fortuit des deux termes qu’a jailli une lumière particulière, lumière de l’image...La valeur de l’image dépend de la beauté de l’étincelle obtenue...ils sont les produits simultanés de l’activité que j’appelle surréaliste. (M., p.49).*

Value is a function of visual appreciation and the supreme reality of the images enables man to be conscious of a place of limitless desire until consciousness intervenes. Breton presents the possibility of this experience as a surrealist gift for all:

*Et de même que la longueur de l’étincelle gagne à travers des gaz raréfiés... l’atmosphère surréaliste créée par l’écriture mécanique, que j’ai tenu à mettre à la portée de tous, se prête particulièrement à la production des plus belles images...YL’esprit se convainc peu à peu de la réalité suprême de ces images...il s’aperçoit bientôt qu’elles flattent sa raison, augmentent d’autant sa confiance. Il prend conscience des étendues illimitées où se*
This textual experience is the product of masculine gender stereotypes, a self perpetuating and enclosed system of visual affirmation of text production. In Breton’s poetic work images operate in a surrealist way, reacting against each other and producing surrealist sparks, for surrealist images are light-producing according to the Manifestes. Breton constructs whole systems of images whose signifiers bear a relationship to light. In this context crystal is translucent, the labyrinth, the house, the text all shine with the perceptible sight of spontaneous surrealist activity:

*Les coqs de roche passent dans le cristal. Ils défendent la rosée à coups de crête... (C.d.T., p.67)*

Breton’s ‘projector’ lights the obscure. (M., p.167). It is a writing weapon, used to illuminate the place where desire and myth are located. Freud uses the image of light rays passing through the lens of a periscope, together with the physical reality and invisibility of the lens as a figurative image, a ‘dynamic’ replacement of his ‘topographical way of representing things’. He uses it to describe the relationship between the conscious and imperceptible systems of the unconscious and preconscious. Hence the ‘two kinds of processes of excitation or modes of its discharge’ displace a cruder conception of ‘two localities in the mental apparatus - conceptions which have left their traces in the expressions to repress and to force a way through’. (P.F.L., IV, pp.770-1). The image of a visible ejaculation transcends that of linguistic representation of dominating or penetrating places.

The statement which follows this image may be read with an ironic circularity: ‘so far we have been psychologizing on our own account’.

Wilhelm Reich gives a description of the orgasm in terms of electric energy, a theory which he regards as an evolution fecundated by his work with Freud:
The orgasm formula which directs sex-economic research is as follows: MECHANICAL TENSION -> BIOELECTRIC CHARGE -> BIOELECTRIC DISCHARGE -> MECHANICAL RELAXATION.⁹

Reich stresses that ‘procreation is a function of sexuality, and not vice versa’ and that ‘Freud had maintained the same thing with respect to psychosexuality, when he separated the concepts sexual and genital’.¹⁰ Yet the discourse of his theory, like that of Breton and Freud, ‘testifies’ to his identification with the stereotyped textuality associated with his genitalia!

In Reich’s model, pressure builds in a ‘bladder’ likened to a ‘pumping system’ which in a rigid, compressed state requires ‘tossing..kneading..stabbing..injury’ and at worst ‘dissolving, perishing, disintegrating (Nirvana, sacrificial death)’ or becomes ‘armoured’ and ‘hostile towards nature’.¹¹ Since he sites the orgasm primarily in the genitals, his anxieties about ‘misdirected’ or ‘bound’ genital energy are hardly surprising.¹² He describes a fear of ‘coitus interruptus’ which produces ‘sexual stasis and nervousness en masse’ and relates this problem to social conditions, family and housing. The way in which our society presents such concerns, relates to the masculine textuality of the ‘pater familias’. Within the Freudian language of gifts, that which is gold for men may well be ‘shit’ for women and unfortunately the counterpart of Reich’s testicular bladder is the (already fertilised) egg whose development reflects the structure of his orgasm theory with the relevant anxieties and sites woman’s orgasm back in the womb (and the Middle Ages). This represents a return to the textual/sexual economics of ‘men make money, women produce babies’.

Patriarchal culture literally placed its balls on the line when it promoted definitions of sexuality for both men and women based on the male genitalia and lack thereof. Freud’s obsession with

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¹⁰ Reich, Orgasm, p.283.

¹¹ Reich, Orgasm, pp.279-280.

¹² Reich, Orgasm, p.153.
normative sexuality is projected onto woman who besides her ‘innate disposition’ to anxiety, is
defined as anxious in terms of masculine performance. (P.F.L., X, p.46). In other words the
Freudian ‘she’ is a textually constructed location for masculine anxieties centred on ejaculation
and potency fears. Patriarchy carries its own responsibility for having sited the masculine orgasm
outside of itself, identified with a masculine concept of external reality, in a visible presence of
sperm, sparks, orgone energy (Reich), or a projected reality experienced as a negative object, a
loss of its ‘other’.

Certain aspects of Reich’s work are useful to feminism, particularly his discussion on the
destructive nature of patriarchal culture, and the social distortion of ‘natural sexuality’ although,
as I have suggested, his model of sex-economy is a masculine construct of his own textuality.
Reich sites the origins of patriarchy in the Middle Ages, presumably due to his obsession with
repressed female orgasms which it is his project to ‘restore’ to their ‘correct place’ in the vagina.

Surrealism presents a love affair between the author and language. Woman is read in terms of
her ‘effect’ upon the poet and used to describe his relationship to language in sexual terms:

Il ose à peine exprimer....que telle idée, telle femme lui fait l'effet. (M., p.23).

The ensuing discourse brands woman with the sign of ‘élection’ and evaluates reciprocal attraction
in terms of subject/object unity (‘complémentarité absolue’) evaluated by its fulfilment of that
masculine desire for an idealised perfect unity: ‘l’unité intégrale à la fois organique et psychique’
(M., p.169):

...c’est seulement en toute humilité que l’homme peut faire servir le peu qu’il sait de lui-
même à la reconnaissance de ce qui l’entoure. Pour cela, le grand moyen dont il dispose
est l’intuition poétique.... Elle seule nous pourvoit du fil qui remet sur le chemin de la
Gnose, en tant que connaissance de la réalité suprasensible, ‘invisiblement visible dans un
éternel mystère’. (M., pp.172-3).
Yet, despite the more positive discourse on sexuality and freedom which follows this flattering exaltation of woman and the desire for ‘l’unité intégrale’, she is throughout perceived only in terms of a masculine need to perceive, albeit in a fragmentary manner, that the outside and the inside visibly identify with each other. Freud defines a similar ‘sexual aim’ as the ‘incorporation of the object’. (P.F.L., VII, p.117).

In his formulation of the mirror stage, Lacan describes his textual masculine subjectivity as a fictive creation structured by a social dialectic which reason renders ‘plus autonome que l’animal du champ de forces du désir’ on the one hand but which also determines ‘ce peu de réalité’ as unsatisfactory in the surrealist sense. He describes the mirror stage as:

\[\text{un drame dont la poussée interne se précipite de l'insuffisance à l'anticipation - et qui pour le sujet, pris au leurre de l'identification spatiel, machine des fantasms qui se succèdent d'une image morcelée du corps.}^{13}\]

The crystal labyrinth and the context of reality, fragmentation, ideal unity and the heroic tradition make an interesting contextual comparison with the metaphors and discourse of Lacan’s mirror stage. This is seen as the formation of the linguistic individual (the singular ‘I’), the anxiety of the dialectic of identification with the masculine other fictively and subjectively restored by language whose hierarchical nature determines the emerging authority of this singular authoritative ‘I’.

In her discussion of the mirror phase, Jacqueline Rose describes the veiling of the phallus in which Lacan locates the fundamental duplicity of the sign.\(^{14}\) Within the construction of this mimetic image, the subjective phallic ‘I’ is dependent on the gaze of its subordinated object, being itself a fictive creation. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose stress the child’s dependency on the ‘look

\(^{13}\) Lacan, Écrits, pp.93-4.

of the mother who thereby guarantees the child’s reality’ (image of a coherent identity).\textsuperscript{15}

Margaret Whitford contextualises the value of seeing in the work of Luce Irigaray:

*Western systems of representation privilege seeing: what can be seen (presence) is privileged over what cannot be seen (absence) and guarantees Being, hence the privilege of the penis which is elevated to the status of the Phallus*.\textsuperscript{16}

Hence ‘the ontological status assigned to women in western metaphysics is equivalent to an imaginary which does not recognise sexual difference’. Women’s sexuality and conceptualisation of the feminine is defined within masculine culture as ‘lack’ or negativity. Within this system light plays an important part since lack of light implies invisibility, a negative space associated with woman and female sexuality which has been defined as ‘castrated’. In Western masculine culture, the discourses of light and of seeing confirm the products of the textualised masculine ego. As products of patriarchal culture, they are inherently dangerous and injurious to the nurture and growth of any female construction of ‘femininity’.

Irigaray deconstructs Lacan’s mirror, questioning its form and shape and the way in which Lacan sites woman as the reflecting glass.\textsuperscript{17} However woman’s gaze reflects not the exteriority of her own internal subjective but is given an appearance to identify with, which is constructed by patriarchal authority. The violence of externalisation imposed on woman’s inner space, creates the false appearance of an alien and singular construction of herself. As masculine other, this image is a fictive projection constructed by the emotive tensions of ego verification insecurities. Accepting this position, her violated being will reflect dominant power projections, perpetuating


\textsuperscript{17} Luce Irigaray, *Ce Sexe qui n’en est pas un*, Éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1977, p.147.
the self-destruction of her ‘différence’.

Woman’s internal reality has been subjected to untold violence and this has been imposed by the external textuality forced over her, blocking her voice, denying the reality of her presence. The gendered textuality constructed by masculine discourse creates an internalised state of anorexic illness with all the related distorted self-perceptions.

Anorexia and bulimia are eating disorders which primarily affect women. Whether the changing climate of sexual politics has any bearing on the rising instance of the illness, it has certainly opened the way for its assessment in different terms. It is rapidly becoming possible to read eating disorders in terms of changing sociocultural conditions, in terms of the individual’s social context, in terms of projected ‘ideal’ body shapes and of the changing status of women in society.\(^{18}\)

Ideal form is intimately connected to perception of sexuality and changing socio-cultural conditions. This well-documented history can be rather crudely described as having two main branches: a literary and figurative aesthetic of cultural values derived from the philosophy of the Academy in Ancient Greece and a sociological aesthetic of shape based on issues such as wealth, class and population needs.\(^{19}\)

The relationship between shape, beauty and value in Western society is mirrored in the painting of female nudes throughout the ages which reflects a catalogue of personal and social masculine

\(^{18}\) Other obvious factors include the wide availability of fattening food, consumer orientated advertising and the implications of junk food subculture.

\(^{19}\) The arguments on women’s subordination as fundamental to the formation of culture and the meaning of systems of society, Bachofen’s concept of ‘Mutterrecht’ and ensuing debates are discussed in Lerner, Creation of Patriarchy, pp.15-35.
views of desirable body-shapes in women.\textsuperscript{20}

That which provides good food for the masculine ego is destructive to a feminine denied a subject space. A concept of feminine which is a masculinised external perception is equally destructive and dangerous to the internal female ‘I’, leaving it starving and regurgitating, trying to assume a projected ‘ideal’ shape. Regurgitating alien masculine products destroys internal digestion and leads to annihilation, in what Irigaray describes as ‘cet engrenage infernalement rigoureux de l’ordre patriarchal phallocratique’.\textsuperscript{21}

Mitchell and Rose define subjectivity as ‘the condition of a social being, aware of her separate existence and the laws of her culture’.\textsuperscript{22} Irigaray describes women as ‘privées d’un ordre subjectif pour unifier leur vitalité corporelle’.\textsuperscript{23} Whitford reads Irigaray’s work as restructuring the construction of the rational subject and reclaiming a feminine imaginary, deconstructing the dominant conceptualisation of sexual difference, creating circular discourses which turn masculine images and presentations on themselves through the gestures of exclusion which place woman outside of her representations.

Irigaray expresses a need for a feminine education of respect for life and food, taught through mother and daughter relations to restore feminine identity.\textsuperscript{24}

Woman’s sexuality is a healing of the self. It is neither dependent on the phallus nor necessary

\textsuperscript{20} Images which present statements of identity, for example, Renaissance portraiture reflect social positions; men are depicted with ‘masculine’ attributes of social success, women are depicted as possessions and desirable in those terms, as daughters, wives, mistresses or mothers.


\textsuperscript{22} Mitchell and Rose, \textit{Feminine Sexuality}, p.117.

\textsuperscript{23} Irigaray, \textit{je, tu, nous}, p.130.

\textsuperscript{24} Irigaray, \textit{je, tu, nous}, p.59.
for procreation. It is plural and multiple and purely pleasurable. Women need to recuperate and heal their own sexual identities through a retouching or sensing of self with other. Recovery is a surfacing of awareness, of choice of nourishment, of nurturing a healthy space for the self.

Patriarchy has taught how it feels to be oppressed, by our bodies viewed as reproductive systems, our sexuality denied, our energy harnessed. In fact, woman’s orgasm is not necessary for reproduction, and it is small wonder that the advances in medical science, contraception and the recognition of choice has lead to fantasising the possible demise of men and their replacement by the sperm bank!

Lacan transfers sexuality to the realm of language, reading it as a fictive creation. Yet I would argue that the discourse of loss created by textual sexual fiction is precisely that of loss and that anxiety about the phallic subject’s identification with a negative object which is interdependent within patriarchal culture and relates directly to masculine visual ‘experience’ of reality.

Phallocratic culture has been shown to be heavily dependent on sight in its construction of masculine identity. So far women’s resistance has been embodied in a voicing of dissent. Women have listened to these voices which resound and echo their exiled selves. I sense this element in the work of Irigaray who is restructuring the construction of the rational subject and reclaiming a feminine imaginary, deconstructing the dominant conceptualisation of sexual difference, creating circular discourses which turn masculine images and presentations on themselves. She examines gestures of exclusion which place woman outside of her representations, hence the female equivalent of the male mirror identity construction is viewed through the speculum.

‘Women have no words, secret or otherwise, to describe some of the simplest sex characteristics and expressions’. This statement by Elsie Clews Parsons reflects an historical view which Baron unhelpfully describes as ‘modern’ (1913). It is balanced by his recognition of women’s

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25 Dennis Baron, Grammar and Gender, Yale University Press, 1986, p.86.
creative linguistic potential and of the negativity of criticism of their innovative use of words. Yet he also describes the linguistic insecurity of an imposed and alien dialect leading to overcorrection or to silence, the alien tongue.

Ironically, silence is punishment forced by many oppressive regimes and one with which women are particularly well acquainted:

'Women are forbidden to use and own their sexuality for themselves, as a means of personal self-expression.'

The threat of silence plays a large part in the women's movement, as do the difficulties of self-expression. The voice of dissent has been validated by collaboration, not by its potency over others, produced as a controlling function in revolutionary discourse. Listening to the voices of dissent, those voices which have spoken, has informed our knowledge and our ability to write outside of history in terms of the insperience of totalitarian oppression.

A re-reading of the structuring of the hero cults as the maps of patriarchal culture, presents a similar history of the premises for the succession rights of philosophical authorities or 'masters'. This cultural identity in Western philosophy, stems from the Platonic doctrines expounded in texts such as The Symposium and The Republic. Sexual identity and biological determinism underlie the Platonic theories upon which the state and the Academy are founded. His ideal republic has an hierarchical structure with censorship and control operated by the state over education and breeding. Sex is reserved for procreation and as a reward among the guardian rulers. Although he determines that women be equal to men and should be freed from the ties of family life, the structure of the state determines that they be perceived as weaker versions. There is no suggestion that the philosopher ruler be other than male.

The organisation of Plato's thought is derived from politics, which assume that humanity has its origins in a single tripartite identity. This being is female, male and hermaphrodite. Plato's reading of separation bases sexual identity upon these three categories. Thus the female identity comprises women who love women and are lesbian, the hermaphrodite identity comprises men and women who love the opposite sex and are sexually promiscuous and the male identity comprises men who love men. The lovers of men are defined as the most 'manly' and those who engage in public life, the makers of strategy. Manliness is considered the most worthy and the concept of self-control is construed as as a strength, hence virility and virtue have the same root in the concept of masculinity.

These hierarchical categorisations result in several basic and fundamental concepts upon which society and culture within the patriarchal state are 'organised':

1. That people can be categorised according to their biological and sexual identity.
2. That biological sex and sexual identity determine the place of the individual within society.
3. That the concept of 'splitting' leads to a desire to reunite with the 'other' and that the uniting of other with the same constitutes the idea of 'manly' or 'womanly'.
4. That 'manliness presents the highest order, being spiritual rather than physical love.
5. That woman is excluded by the evidence of her 'lack' of organs from government of the State or the Academy which is phallocratic.

These concepts lie at the base of Western philosophy and culture and have formed the structures of our institutions, society and thinking. Plato's discourse is a product of his environment, culture and personal sexual identity. Physical sex was not a high priority and was mainly directed towards men. Plato was also a product of the existing forms of political patriarchal organisation with which he was in disagreement. These legitimised the ownership and appropriation of women's reproductive rights and the sanctification of fatherhood, to ensure patrilineal succession.
Later religious sanctification of contextualised procreation denied and outlawed lesbian and homosexual rights as 'sinful'.

I would suggest that if we read Plato's texts as mythographic writing, it is fairly evident that his premise for the origins of sexuality is a re-reading of the earlier histories and totemic practises of matriarchal cults. The politics of uniting Hermes and Aphrodite and separating them to create a formal organisation of society emulates the supplanting of the Mother goddess by her male consort/son. The structure of the patriarchal society is probably based on that of the matriarchy in which men were vassals in the service of the Goddess, the triple Mother of earth, moon and sun and the life cycle. The agrarian cycle mirrored the life cycle and was divided into a calendar year of 13 months, the menses, whose 28 day length was determined by that of menstruation, the sacred female fluid. Robert Graves has traced an historical grammar of early alphabets which associates Minerva, Mnemosyne, the Moirae or Fates with the letter 'M' in ancient alphabets, with fruition, the vine, and the harvest month. I suspect that further study could also reconstruct developmental relations between Dionysus or Eluyseus, the Mysteries, menstruation, blood sacrifice, wine and Christian doctrine. In very general terms, the alphabet was a system of sacred signs of totemic, numeric and cyclical significance, historically developed and modified. It was a means of divination and was also used for relating creation myths and tribal histories in totemic form. It was a sacred system containing mystic numbers and names. When St.John stated 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God' the conceptualisation of sacred powers concealed in the name repeated, the practices of earlier cults in which letters

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were sacred to the five seasonal yearly cycle of the Earth Mother.  

Knowledge, Wisdom and the Fates were previously female deities associated with Triple Mother cults and it is arguable that the institutionalisation of phallocracy necessarily denied women access to past, present and future (intuitive) wisdom, and to the cave. Knowledge would have been deliberately kept from women because of its association with power and with biological determinism. The concept of innate knowledge seems to have been synonymous with menstruation, originally determined by the special cyclical lunar relationship shared by women and the earth, perceived as a female entity.

As worship of the sun took over from the earth, spawning what Graham Martin calls 'a polygamy' of gods, reverence was externalised.  

The gods took on human form and in the Judeo-Christian religion, resulted in the rewriting of previous creation theories and the worship of a supreme being who transcended the earth and the universe. No wonder the sacred snake was vilified and Eve was punished for eating from the original (alphabet) tree of knowledge. However, her greatest handicap was perhaps that she was made responsible for a self-constructed masculine banishment from his conceived ideal.

Plato's philosophical dependence on sight, can be read as a contextual incorporation of religious history. Certainly his use of the cave where men were bound in chains, reading shadows on the walls, would present the use of previous ritual practices as powerful metaphors for a masculine

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28 Graves suggests that the secret letters of the original cycle invented by the Fates, read: A,O,U,E,I as in Ogam script, with A as procreation, the portal and O as the egg or womb and I as the death letter, symbolising the progress of the year, with the double AA (long O) in front and the double II (Y or J) behind to symbolise the sacred creation and death of the world. (The White Goddess, pp.248-9). Reading these sun-wise rather than in terms of the year, they give the secret oral name of the Hebrew God of The Old Testament. (p.285-6). It seems logical to me to assume that this reverse reading manifests patriarchal religion taking over the sacred alphabet of the calendar year from Earth Mother cults.

acquisition of knowledge based on sight and dependent on light. He uses images previously associated with matriarchal wisdom to describe his reconstructed view of the cosmology in terms of the spindle and, knowledge in terms of the cave. He then determines this knowledge to be of the highest order, upheld by the study of dialectics and the rationalisation of sensory perception as verification, to present the philosopher as ruler of the state. His discourse reads as a rewriting of matrilineal structures presenting his mastery of cultural antecedents, an ancestry of knowledge fundamental to identifying his philosophical discourse as knowledge of ‘Truth’.

Freudian theory reads in this context as an extension of phallocracy, in which the oedipal complex is intuitive and presents a return to the past. Women’s supposed castration complex is a transference of anxieties, a textual projection. In the phallocratic society, power is identified with testicles. Women lost power, their thoughts and reproductive systems were harnessed but they certainly did not lose their testicles: that was what happened to Kings - castration was a ritual practice of early Greek fertility cults!

Feminism has raised a chorus of protest against the violent structures of oppression. Much has been achieved in the name of equality and yet there is a long way to go. Accepting individual rights indeterminate of sex, undermines the foundations of this society and of its gendered construction. There has to some extent been a trade-off: status in return for silence. Woman has been admitted into man’s world but her identity is still defined and shaped by patriarchal structures.

The premise that patriarchy repeated the bilateralism of a society grounded in unified sexual divisions emphasises the need for an examination of the oppressive structures which underlie our socio-cultural identities. For if knowledge and position have been denied on the basis of biological sex and sexual practice has been defined on the basis of religious codes, sexual identity has been an imposed construction of systems which deny individual identity in the process of
manufacturing ideals.

In women’s history, the voices of dissent and militant revolt have fragmented the dominant structures of oppression. Women’s education about the oppression and the strength of women has altered woman’s identity, gradually recovering her position, stating her intrinsic value and not that which she holds as a construct of patriarchal dependence. Over a hundred years ago and with amazing foresight, Matilda Joslyn Gage argued that men had appropriated the fruits of women’s physical, intellectual, emotional, psychological and creative labour.30 50 years later, Mary Ritter Beard reached similar conclusions and also advocated women’s education in their own history as a means of altering consciousness and rebuilding self-worth which has been externalised and dependent on masculine approval.31

Voicing and more importantly, listening and hearing, echoing, assent and dissent, have been the means by which woman has re-cognised female identity. It has not been through a discourse grounded in the primacy of sight but through one grounded in listening and healing.

Surrealism is presented as a powerful weapon which breaks through previous systems using a masculine language of rebellion. While it does alter many stereotypical values, it affirms and enlarges on gender stereotyping. Breton’s discourse and theory are wholly dependent on his domination and conceptualisation of woman whose image is designed to service his desires and fantasies:

*Àvec cette découverte d’un terrain vierge où peut se donner libre carrière la fantasie la plus étincelante. (P.P., p.158).*

Female presence is a feminised surrealist textual construction without which the highly sexed

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discourse of his philosophy and poetry, would, like his textual desire, wilt. Woman is totally owned, her creative energies and her mind are harnessed and appropriated for the production surrealist texts. Indeed the only artist I could find whose work Breton praised for its independent parallelism is Frida Kahlo and he rapidly incorporated her achievements as 'surrealist' in his writing on painting. (L.S.e.L.P., pp.141-144). Under the guise of liberation, women formed the backbone of surrealism in a strange co-dependency of textual desire. Without a dissenting voice, the female reader risks collusion with the text and the displacement and disfiguration of her self. By stating personal presence, an independent position is liberated from which to interrogate gendered identity and its performative stereotypes in a re-reading which does not impose a bilateral condemnation of suurealism and its male leaders.

Statements of presence and position in writing are fundamental to a recovery of identity. Presence is a position which recognises the individuality of its textuality, without the illusion of projected unity. The process of self-education through an examination of individual textual identity is a process of recognition and re-thinking which leads to knowledge of self by study of the resonances and dissonances which inform intuitive understanding and affirmation. Re-thinking textuality is a process of individual growth, of self-education, of the individual right to exist. The contextualisation of individual presence is necessary to an identification of self which is non-impositional. Education is a process of growth. The cyclical progressive heuristic and intuitive structure of self-education must be accorded space to contextualise presence in a therepeutic recuperation and rehabilitation of identity.
DREAM TEXTS: A VISUAL/VERBAL COLLABORATION:

THREE TEXTS FROM THE CINQ REVES.

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The 'Cinq Rêves' are five dream texts dedicated to the artist 'Georges de Chirico'. I, II and III were published, without dedication, as 'Récit de Trois Rêves' in March 1922 and IV as 'Rêve' in December 1922. The four texts were partially edited and republished, together with a fifth and the addition of the dedication, in Clair de Terre (1923).

Four of the texts were therefore originally presented without a dedication which indicates that the dedication is not a generator for the original text and that images common to both Breton's texts and de Chirico's paintings are not intentionally inscribed by Breton. However, the physical presence of the dedication on the page in the Clair de Terre volume, together with Breton's 1920 article on de Chirico, the artist's 1922 exhibition and various articles in response to it, provide a contextual frame of reference for reading the dreams. The Surrealists' preoccupations with dreams and the apparent similarities in de Chirico's metaphysical discourse which equated revelation with a state between waking and dreaming, led to their adoption of de Chirico's works as primary dream texts at this time.

He was formally 'adopted' as a forerunner in this respect and his photograph included in a montage of portraits of 'Surrealists' surrounding that of the anarchist Germaine Berton, which

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appeared in the first issue of La Révolution Surréaliste (Décembre 1924). The issue opens with an account of a dream written by de Chirico, followed by one written by Breton.

However, the works so admired by the Surrealists were those of the 1912-17 period, such later works as were eventually exhibited were rejected, and the artist, with whom they were not well acquainted, was given pride of place in the surrealist canon in his absence (See Appendix I). It can be argued that his texts and his theories were acquired and appropriated by the Surrealists for their own purpose, despite an unease, voiced by Breton as early as 1920, with the traditional route by which de Chirico rewrites imagery which is then logically retraceable. The rigorous logic of de Chirico’s metaphysics, based on a modernisation of traditionalist Greek aesthetics in terms of essential notions of Truth and its imagistic genealogical representations, seems to have led towards irreconcilable differences, particularly in terms of the redemptive quality of art, and to have formed part of their later rupture.

Freud and de Chirico are the two main sources acknowledged by Breton for his thinking on dream, and their work is central to the formulation of his ideas: he quotes extensively from de Chirico at the beginning of Nadja, commenting on his perception of revelation and his contribution to oneiric inspiration. (N., pp.14-15).

The dream texts were written during the formative period known as ‘l’époque des sommeils’, when members of the Littérature group who later became the Surrealists, experimented with various techniques including hypnosis, to produce dream texts. (N., p.35). In ‘Entrée des Médiums’, Breton describes the evolutionary state of his concept of surrealism as psychic automatism corresponding to that of the dream state. The tone of this text is hesitant by comparison with the 1924 definition which it prefigures, and the preoccupation with dream experimentation reads as an exploration, a search for understanding and confirming the
‘surrealism’ hypothesis.

Although Breton’s texts and those of de Chirico reveal similarities in content, as do these and Freud’s dream symbols, such similarities also denote shared historical, social, philosophical and psychosexual contexts and sources. Intertextual reference is inscribed within a cognisant reading as a series of echo images. Breton acknowledges the influence of Freud’s work on dream and its significance in his conceptualisation of Surrealism in the 1924 Manifeste (M., p.21). He visited Freud in Vienna in 1921 and the resulting and somewhat bland interview was published in the same edition of Littérature as the first three dream texts.

Dawn Ades convincingly proposes that Breton’s psychoanalytic ideas were closer to those of Janet than to Freud’s or Charcot’s:

Although Freud, rather than Janet, is mentioned in the 'First Manifesto', it seems likely that Janet was the more vital influence on Breton’s thinking at this stage. Janet had, for example, advocated the use of automatic writing as a means of exploring the 'normal' mind as well as a therapy for the insane. His interest in mediumism also parallels Breton’s. His emphasis on experimentation contrasts with Freud’s emphasis on therapy, and is closer to Breton’s attitude.34

Janet’s work is not incompatible with Freud’s, and Breton combined the experimental aspects of Janet’s with a reading of the psyche and a vocabulary of interpretation and symbolism which he adapted from Freud’s work. Breton was well acquainted with Freud’s theories from his own medical background and is selective in his agreements and paraphrasing. His adamant rejection of the therapeutic value of psychoanalysis does not proceed from scepticism but rather from a theoretical belief that madness is an ideal state. His use of Freudian theory as a frame of reference

in the early 1920’s was extremely topical: the first full French translations of certain works were published in 1922, although The Interpretation of Dreams was not itself fully translated and published until 1925.

Siting the texts reflects the dilemmas presented by the nature of reading and writing dream texts. The cognisant reader will have a knowledge of certain of de Chirico’s paintings and perhaps also, as Breton did, of his theoretical writings on the enigma of the moment of revelation which his paintings present. Whether the dreams are real or invented and what is consciously or unconsciously implanted are questions which properly belong to manuscript analysis and to dialogue with the author. They constitute a movement outside of the text into the author’s territory and the pitfalls of a guessing game which rewards the heroic perpetrator with a structure of organisational dominance. This seems as potentially unbalanced a method of reading as the unprofessional psychoanalysis of a non-participating client (a practice in which Freud occasionally indulged). Interpretive case studies of the famous and/or absent, such as that of Leonardo, reveal more about the intruding subject and his desire to rewrite and dominate an ever more passive object, even unto invention, than they do about original subject of the study. Freudian reference and the dream context invites hypothetical uni-directional analysis as a means of rationalising and analysing such text.

In reading the ‘Cinq Rêves’, circumstantial links and facts are present, situating the reader’s intertextual experience of the dedicatory inscription as a reading, an historical addition. As such, circumstantial and speculatory information is acknowledged. Its directional function is thereby neutralised and given place as environmentally integral to a hermeneutic process and its displaced nature is an expression of the awkwardness of reassessing traditional critical methodology.

To impose a solely psychoanalytic interpretation on the dream texts is to ignore their literary
function. To read them simply as texts is to ignore the significance of title, the placing of the dedication and indeed, the place of dream in surrealist theory.

The presence and non-presence of the dedication forms the history of the texts. Once read in the form in which the texts appear in the Clair de Terre volume, the dedication to de Chirico is present in all future readings.

I have chosen here to analyse three of the dream texts and to supplement the first two readings with a comparable reading of a visual work by de Chirico. To avoid complications of choice and suitability of painting, I use the same painting. I have chosen 'L'Énigme d'une Journée' as the most appropriate, as it was owned by Breton and hung in his apartment from 1924-35 where it formed a backdrop for many meetings of the Surrealist Group.\textsuperscript{35} It was used by the Surrealists for the exercise entitled 'SUR LES POSSIBILITÉS IRRATIONNELLES DE PÉNÉTRATION ET D'ORIENTATION DANS UN TABLEAU GEORGIO DE CHIRICO: L'ÉNIGME D'UNE JOURNÉE'. (L.S.A.D.L.R., No.6, pp.13-15).

By presenting an analysis of a written text followed by a parallel analysis of a painting, I will examine a similar structuring of visual and verbal language, common to both as

\textsuperscript{35} Soby, De Chirico, p.70.
communications.\textsuperscript{36} I do not wish to suggest that literature and the visual arts communicate in
the same way as manifestly they do not. A written piece of work can describe the structural
elements of a painting in the manner of a grammatical language but cannot communicate exact
tones of colour or brush strokes on the surface of the canvas, as these are visual communications.
I can describe these effects only as I perceive them and cannot re-create their visual appeal
in the way in which a written quotation can re-create a piece of written text.

As forms of language, both visual and verbal text communicate by means of an interweaving of
representation and image; the sign of the image, whether in a pictorial or written form, carries the
same connotative value. Moreover, the dialogue between images and the manner of their
representation in the visual arts corresponds to an analogous dialogue in the literary arts, while the
organisation of pictorial elements in a visual text corresponds with the organisation of words into
coherent linguistic structures.

The first analysis examines the evolution of ‘Cinq Rêves I’ towards light in an architectural
dwelling place in which various narrative structures construct a controlling identifiable
authoritarian presence within the context of surrealist theory. The second examines language
games played in ‘Cinq Rêves’ II. In each case the operation of the text is examined through a

\textsuperscript{36}The language of art historical analysis has derived from literary tradition. There
is therefore no non-linguistic terminology for describing a language of painting, as
opposed to a language in word form, indeed, the very term ‘language’ (deriving from
lingua - tongue) indicates this historical bias. Dividing language into visual and
verbal elements, I am using the label ‘visual’ to refer to the parts of the language
which have denotative object referents in the real world. Confusion as to the meaning
of the term ‘visual’ is compounded by the generic appellation ‘The Visual Arts’,
referring to painting, sculpture, architecture and more recently, decorative arts, mixed
media and cinema. These may be defined as ‘arts which communicate by being seen’.
The term does not differentiate between those texts which operate as visual
communications and written texts which also need to be seen in order to be read.

The label ‘verbal’ will not be used to refer to that which is word-based but
in a more general sense, to those parts of language which derive from communication
production and to non-visual images (imitations) of non-visual concepts.
detailed study of its functioning, but through the analysis of structure I shall be questioning the origins and uses of that structure, an ‘edifice’ whose architecture forms a three-dimensional temporal construction with all the attendant tensions. I read these as texts of dreams: as literature, acknowledging that as dreams they are ‘false’ texts, or, as Lyotard describes it: ‘ce lisible est un pseudo-lisible’.

The final analysis will be an exploration of the narrative of ‘Cinq Rêves V’ as a journey through an intertextual labyrinth, writing the externalised de Chirico dedication into the reading of the dream. The fourth dream, also previously published without a dedication, is commented on in terms of ‘signs’ indicated by the dedicatory context, in the introduction to the fifth dream, to make a comparative analogy with that dream.

I wish briefly to comment on ‘Cinq Rêves’ III which, like the fourth text, I have not analysed in detail due to space constraints and because many of the issues it raises are discussed in the other readings. The violence preceding strange transformations amid picturesque settings is similar in form, if not content, to the fifth text. The pun of the phosphorescent eye which then becomes a monocle (‘my eye’), is an instance of punning related to seeing and to surrealist light and viewing, topics discussed in the first and second texts. In the revisions between the first and second publications, the substitution of ‘l’anecdote’ for ‘l’histoire’ changes the nature of the short story of the monocle. It becomes a commentary on the dream, a form of ‘displacement’, as do Breton’s corrections. It reads in a manner similar to the instance of reported speech in the second dream, which, like the addition of the dedication, the changes and additions of titles for de Chirico’s work and the strange and symbolic replacements of objects in his paintings, are examined in the other analyses.

37 J.F.Lyotard, Discours, Figure, Kluinsieck, Paris, 1978, p.269.
In consequence, environmental information is presented within a fragmented structure which reflects both its existence and its relation to the reading. This introduction balances context against content. Each of the dreams are separate texts read from differing perspectives and presented together because of their form. Any one of them could hypothetically be read in the same manner as any other, although the choice has been a result of my own subjective collaboration with the text. The analysis of the fifth dream stands in opposition to the sections on ‘Labyrinth’ and ‘Myth’ which follow it, presenting ‘other’ readings of the same text.
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Giorgio de Chirico:
'L’Enigme d’une Journee

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Je passe le soir dans une rue déserte du quartier des Grands-Augustins quand mon attention est arrêtée par un écrivain au-dessus de la porte d’une maison. Cet écrivain c’est : 'ABRI' ou 'A LOUER', en tout cas quelque chose qui n’a plus cours. Intrigué, j’entre et je m’enfonce dans un couloir extrêmement sombre.

Un personnage, qui fait dans la suite du rêve figure de génie, vient à ma rencontre et me guide à travers un escalier que nous descendons tous deux et qui est très long.

Ce personnage je l’ai déjà vu. C’est un homme qui s’est occupé autrefois de me trouver une situation.

Aux murs de l’escalier je remarque un certain nombre de reliefs bizarres, que je suis amené à examiner de près, mon guide ne m’adressant pas la parole.
Il s’agit de moulages en plâtre, plus exactement : de moulages de moustaches considérablement grossies.

Voici, entre autres, les moustaches de Baudelaire, de Germain Nouveau et de Barbey d’Aurevilly.

Le génie me quitte sur la dernière marche et je me trouve dans une sorte de vaste hall divisé en trois parties.

Dans la première salle, de beaucoup la plus petite, où pénètre seulement le jour d’un soupirail incompréhensible, un jeune homme est assis à une table et compose des poèmes. Tout autour de lui, sur la table et par terre, sont répandus à profusion des manuscrits extrêmement sales.

Ce jeune homme ne m’est pas inconnu, c’est M. Georges Gabory.

La pièce voisine, elle aussi plus que sommairement meublée, est un peu mieux éclairée, quoique d’une façon tout à fait insuffisante.

Dans la même attitude que le premier personnage, mais m’inspirant, par contre, une sympathie réelle, je distingue M. Pierre Reverdy.

Ni l’un ni l’autre n’a paru me voir, et c’est seulement après m’être arrêté tristement derrière eux que je pénètre dans la troisième pièce.

Celle-ci est de beaucoup la plus grande, et les objets s’y trouvent un peu mieux en valeur : un fauteuil inoccupé devant la table paraît m’être destiné; je prends place devant le papier immaculé.

J’obéis à la suggestion et me mets en devoir de composer des poèmes. Mais, tout en m’abandonnant à la spontanéité la plus grande, je n’arrive à écrire sur le premier feuillet que ces mots : La lumière...

Celui-ci aussitôt déchiré, sur le second feuillet : La lumière... et sur le troisième feuillet : La lumière......
INTRODUCTION

The text contains various descriptions of settings or spaces - street, locality, door, house, corridor, stairs, hall and three rooms - through which the dreamer walks towards light. The rooms are described in turn, as they are perceived, the first two being occupied by Georges Gabory and Pierre Reverdy respectively. The descriptive narrative of the structure of the building may be read as an imaged representation, a pictorial metaphoric translation of the dreamer’s narrative journey, which reinforces linear and sequential elements of text, perception, communication and language. As the reader writes the dreamer/narrator’s progression through the architectural structure towards light, so simultaneously they progress inexorably towards the last words ‘La lumière...’ written on the page, and presumably towards perception of its metaphoric significance as ‘revelation’ in Breton’s authoritarian text house.

As a ‘récit de rêve’, the text is presented as having been written after the action; the dream has finished before the narrative has begun and a hermeneutic reading of the text will constitute an exploration of its inherently circular nature. Elements of narrative are read in a linear and sequential manner: leading towards and anticipating revelation, enacting its didactic and ‘enlightening’ surrealist function. (M., p.49).

A series of phrases act as signs, indicating the absence and presence of light, proportionate to surrealist ‘seeing’ and textual evolution. Another complex series of signs marking semantic absence/presence, written into the text, constitutes a pattern similar to the textual absence/presence of light and gives structural support to the progression of the narrative towards the last paragraph.

I will examine various levels on which the first dream may be said to be progressing towards this final textual inscribing of light (‘La Lumiére’) in the last paragraph and demonstrate the symbolic,
manifest and structural narrative referents of this progression and its refractive evolution through the text. In doing this, I am contextualising the text in terms of its written ending, reading it as a circular, rather than a finite narrative culminating in textual loss.

The author, Breton, is considered here to have three complex identities; the original author/poet persona, his identity as author of other works and his biographical identity. The first is formed through the original writing of the dream experience, is presented in the manifest content and abstracted by the reading. Biographical identity is formed by the reader's association of text with extra-textual biographical referents. The narrating author's identity is constructed from a combination of those aspects of the narrative which read as commentary and those which can be identified as themes in other works.

The reader inherits a writing identity which is partially controlled by signatures of the author's past presence, whose original present was itself a rewriting of past. The writing ('l'écriture') is a residual emission of the original author's textual engagement. Its connotative external significations identify the author, transferring authorial identity from internal verbal, to external visual, referent. To demonstrate this I shall endeavour to identify elements of text which seem to me to indicate these different authorial entities.

Architectural and structural aspects of light and time are analysed as narrative elements and their contribution to the formation of the text as a house is discussed. I shall also comment on the use of this emblematic device in Breton's work and reading the house as a body, a dwelling place, demonstrate it to be a phallocentric structure of externalised, linear progression, focused on projection beyond itself and dependent on external recognition. In the analysis I am contextualising the structures of the text in terms of the 'architecture' which it presents. I am also constructing my own position by a gendered description of this dwelling place, stating and writing a position from within itself, to determine the nature of the building.
IDENTIFYING NARRATIVE STRUCTURES

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE PARTICIPATION

In general, the narrator describes the dream through the dreamer’s active participation in it and passive observation of it. An analysis of direct and indirect pronouns shows a consistent balancing of active and passive behaviour in the text.

In the first paragraph ‘je’ designates the narrator relating the dreamer’s actions; ‘je passe’, ‘intrigué’, ‘j’entre’, ‘je m’enfonce’. This is followed by a more passive act - following/being led by ‘un personnage’ with whom the narrator communes: ‘nous descendons’. At this point, the narrator gives commentary on the person’s identity, extraneous to the present text: - ‘déjà vu’, ‘autrefois’.

The narrator returns to the dreamer’s active participation - ‘je remarque’ - but then uses a passive form to express action, giving a motivation for that action which at first appears illogical: ‘que je suis amené à examiner de près, mon guide ne m’adressant pas la parole’. Hence the dreamers’s actions are prompted by the ‘génie’s’ inaction. A precise, almost telescopic, description of the mouldings on the wall examined by the dreamer defuses the passive/active clash. Identifying and naming the moustaches re-establishes the Breton-surrealist poetic persona.

Action verbs are restored as the génie ‘personnage’ leaves and ‘je’ (the narrator/dreamer) again controls dream narrative. In the descriptive passage of the first room, the narrating presence is concealed in the selective order of the text, the images presented and such evaluative terms as ‘incompréhensible’ and ‘extrêmement’. The narrator comments on the scene and on the young man (Georges Gabory) sitting in the room, from a double-negative, double-distanced position: ‘ne m’est pas inconnu’.

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A passage describing the second room follows. Again the narrative presence is concealed in commentary such as ‘un peu mieux’, ‘quoique d’une façon tout à fait insuffisante’. The subsequent section names the second occupant as Pierre Reverdy and also implies the reason for the narrator’s previous distance from Gabory. The textual presence of ‘par contre’ contrasts with the textual absence of comment on Gabory. The judgement implicit in the description ‘des manuscripts extrêmement sales’ is confirmed by this present/absent contrast. This in turn acts as a pivotal catalyst for reassessment of the description of Reverdy’s room, giving ‘insuffisante’ its double significance as factual description and evaluation.

The narrator briefly and wistfully (‘tristement’) relates the dreamer’s unacknowledged presence as an isolated, seemingly invisible observer: ‘ni l’un ni l’autre n’a paru me voir’. Such comments on the manifest content may be read as signs of the narrator’s active involvement in the translation of event into language. The dreamer’s movement into the first and second room is implied by his viewing presence. It is not stated. ‘Je pénetre’ describes the dreamer’s entry into his own room and corresponds to his entering the corridor of the building: ‘je m’enfonce’.

Description of the third room involves a balance between the dreamer’s passive response to the setting, his evacuation of the subject function - ‘paraît m’être destiné’ - and his active response - ‘je prends place’. In the penultimate paragraph, the dream sequence appears to take control: ‘j’obéis à’, ‘je me mets à’. The last active verb is presented in a negative expression - ‘je n’arrive à écrire ... que ...’. ‘M’abandonnant à la spontanéité la plus grande’ has an extra-textual significance with regard to the desired spontaneity of surrealist text production and introduces a justification for the generation and poetic value of the inscription of ‘La lumière’. (M., pp.41, 48).

At this point textual events take over from the narrator’s commentator persona, continuing through the act of writing (‘l’écriture’). The identity posited in ‘je’ vanishes from the last paragraph. The
dreamer is present in a passive sense as the owner of the hand behind the description ‘déchiré’ and behind the act of writing.

Writing the sign whose residue indicates other possibilities (‘ne...que’) and its exclusive signified ‘La lumière’, fuses narrator, dreamer and biographical identities into a textual whole, which is present as a connoted referent of ‘La lumière’. The text is presented as self-generating; the momentum and repetition of its re-enactment is expressed without a main verb. When the autonomy of the text takes over the author functions, it has no finite ending: the momentum, unhindered by a full stop, carries the reading beyond the final marks on the page fusing communing reader/writer/narrator/dreamer in a timeless moment of surrealist revelation.

NEGATIVES
Negatives in the text function as signifiers of the author’s presence as narrator. They posit absent reality and manifest that which is not ‘normal’ or ‘real’ in the dream.
The narrator’s intervening thought processes acknowledge something as not happening, creating hesitations in the progression of the narrative:

*n’a plus cours - ne..plus*: temporal negative; suggests perspective of time outside and beyond dream. Implication that narrator (reflecting back from distance on as yet unwritten text) is making judgement on relevance of text on sign outside house;

*ne m’adressant pas la parole*: implies recognition that something didn’t happen, expresses intervening thought processes;

*incompréhensible*: double meaning; (a) imperceptibly small and (b) incomprehensible; implies judgement and/or observation;
ne m'est pas inconnu: double negative; distances narrator from Gabory. Ne..pas..’ combined with negative prefix ‘in’, shifts emphasis from referent to sign. Breton’s negative feelings about Gabony expressed by double negative, affirmed by ‘par contre’ and ‘un jeune homme’.

insuffisante: ambivalent; may be judgement of how well lit room ought to be, or of how Reverdy’s room should be better (‘suffisamment’) lit;

ni l’un ni l’autre n’a paru me voir: textually unites two poets and distances them from dream subject. Description of afterthought: narrator is reflecting simultaneously upon two poets’ not having noticed him;

inoccupé: negative form; suggests filling chair is predestined;

immaculé: negative/positive word with religious and sexual overtones. Generally describes lack of sexual experience in women as positive, negating sexual identity as ‘spotted’, or stained by sex. ‘Unsullied’, ‘virginal’ paper carries weight of patriarchal values. Divides and retains two words - ‘maculé’ and ‘immaculé’, contrasts with ‘sales’ (Gabory’s sullied manuscripts.) Empty page viewed as potential recipient of any text;

je n’arrive à écrire... que... - ne...que...: ‘false’ negative; text transcends singular meaning of ‘ne...que...’ by plurality of reference, implies presence of all other related possibilities. As positive negative, ‘ne... que...’, reinforces textual importance of ‘La lumière’, operating to isolate but not exclude; may also be read as verbalisation of dividing colon marks (‘;’).

Negatives are read as signs of the unstated. They describe what is, by describing what is not. Lyotard discusses this aspect of negatives in visual terms:
Negatives are therefore also signs of the author’s presence and signifiers of his disappearance. Their function signals thought processes intervening in the translation of the manifest content of the dream into language form. As signifiers, they indicate the presence of all referents whose presence they deny, thus liberating a field of connotations which depasses denotational content and creates spatial gaps both in the narrative sequence and in the manifest content. Since they textually manifest that which is not present and thereby constitute its presence, so, conversely, they are also verbal manifestations of the inherent possibility of the loss of textual creations:

Constituer un objet visible c’est pouvoir le perdre; cette virtualité le manque, qui doit rester présente dans l’actualité même de la chose, c’est le ne ... pas qui la représente dans la parole.

NARRATOR AS COMMENTATOR

The list indicates a concealed narrating presence, words and phrases which offer comments, and explanations, states of mind and evaluations:

(a) comments on the manifest content and rational explanations of actions such as: je l’ai déjà vu ne m’adressant pas la parole plus exactement c’est seulement après avoir.

(b) states of mind expressed by statements such as: ‘intrigué’ sympathie réelle tristement.

38 Lyotard, Discours, Figure, p.29.

39 Lyotard, Discours, Figure, p.29.
(c) qualitative/quantitative evaluations or assessments such as:
extrêmement sombre
reliefs bizarres
un peu mieux
insuffisante
autrefois
un certain nombre

In a paper entitled 'Le Discours Étrange', Roland Barthes describes aspect of the narrator as commentator, exploiting the ambiguity of the double 'je' identity. He calls this form of discourse 'meta-énonciation' - text in which the narrator comments on that which he is discussing, from a position combining his heroic temporally encrypted status as subject of both 'l'énonciation' and 'l'énoncé'- and he describes how the narrator then becomes guarantor of the safety of the construction: 'Le texte glisse en permanence d'un palier à l'autre sur un axe sémantique conçu par le narrateur'. 40 I would suggest the following phrases may be read in a similar manner:

quelque chose qui n'a plus cours;
qui fait dans la suite du rêve.

Such commentaries may be read as sophisticated protection devices, as slippery traps or snares in the guise of friendly address. They communicate with the person of the analyst, the reading role invited and often solicited by the presentation and contextualisation of surrealist dream texts. On this level, they may be read as examples of transference neurosis, the obsessional illness of re-reading and revising text. 41 This illness is of a viral nature, programmed in the dialogue which presents it, triggered and nurtured by subsequent readings. The implications are that the analyst reader who accepts the analyst narrator's communication at face value will, in turn, accept an engendered undermining of 'his' own textuality by masculine 'authoritarian' control, thus


infecting his reading with analyst transference. The commentator aspect of the narrative therefore may be said to operate a dangerous and traditionally seductive controlling function through a homoerotic authorial communion to which the reader's individual and extratextual textuality is sacrificed.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE: TEMPORAL

The text alternates between passages describing the dreamer's actions and those which describe what he sees or observes. This gives momentum to the narrative structure, leading towards the author's 'disappearance' before the end of the text and culminating in the word 'La lumière' repeatedly written on blank pages. In other words, the text inscribes a controlled dominance of the narrative function.

Temporal narrative parallels the narrative identities concealed and revealed by the text. There are three main time structures located in the text - the reader's, the narrator's and the dreamer's, interweaving past, present and future referents. The past (dream) is described within the present of the narrator and of the reader, which alternates between this constant past-within-present narrative and a series of extra-textual allusions to time.

I wish now to distinguish a series of references to time outside of textual present, which, as present text of past event, may be read as a converging and diverging of narrator and dreamer identities:

quelque chose qui n'a plus cours: situates NOW present of text perceived and commented on, constituting reference within present narrative to future of now past dream and drawing conclusion with reference to future as narrative. Also presents possible allusion to an extra-textual time, referring to general as well as textual validity of sign.
un personnage qui fait dans la suite du rêve figure de génie: refers to future narrative text, as yet unwritten, of past events;

je l’ai déjà vu, qui s’est occupé autrefois: ‘Génie’ labelled through reference to narrator’s biographical past, and/or to dreamer’s past dreams; anterior to dream text, possible allusion to ‘déjà vu’ phenomenon in dream texts and Freudian theory; (P.F.L., IV, pp.524, 578-9, 616).

que je suis amené: indicates future action - ‘à regarder’ and reason for future action: past decision. Phrase pre-posit what is textually to follow: description. Includes reference to impending future - recognition of dream event, and rationalisation of past action;

voici: post-seeing recognition of specific moustaches. Refers to time outside text and to communing with reader - identifying moustaches as symbols of surrealist forerunners;

grossies: suggests extra-textual time - comparison - status symbol, moustaches are larger than life size!

ne m’est pas inconnu: reference in textual present to past recognition in dream and to extra textual time as biographical distancing from narrative. Narrator identifies with dreamer and explains (distancing himself from dream event) that he (dreamer) knows man. Knowledge contained within narrative sequence rather than dream sequence i.e. recognition displaced in description;

m’inspirant, par contre: reference to past feeling about Gabory, implied in present narrative;

n’a paru me voir: remark in textual present about non-event in past dream; narrator’s reflection on not having been seen;
paraît m’être: reference within presented dream to future dream events - dreamer sitting down;

je n’arrive à écrire...que...ces mots: last marker of narrating ‘je’ and of distinct temporal divisions.

As the narrative progresses, the narrator comes closer to the dreamer’s time and to re-enactment of dreamed event. Time is fused in the last paragraph which contains no main verb, no sense of a separate and guiding narrator. Although the text has a definite and physical ending, since the words on the page stop, the narrative momentum of the act of repetition compels an apparent continuity of the limiting event.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURES: LIGHT

The narrative text moves through description from darkness towards light. It is evening, ‘le soir’, the passage which the dreamer enters is ‘extrêmement sombre’ and the moustache plaques cannot be clearly distinguished, except from close up. Lighting improves progressively as the narrative advances through the three rooms towards ‘La lumière’. The following phrases describe the increasing brightness of these rooms:

\[ où \textit{pénétre seulement le jour d'un soupirail} \]

\[ \textit{incompréhensible} \]

\[ \textit{un peu mieux éclairée quoique d'une façon tout à fait insuffisante} \]

By a process of deductive reasoning, the increasing brightness of the rooms suggests that the third room will be better lit than the other two. In fact the brightness of the room is not mentioned in the text which reaches a climax with the triple repetition of the words ‘La lumière’, written onto blank paper.
A balance in the narrative alternates between descriptions of the act of seeing something (‘je l’ai déjà vu’, ‘je remarque’, ‘je distingue’, ‘n’a paru me voir’) and descriptions of what is done or seen (‘nous descendons’, ‘voici, entre autres, les moustaches ...’, ‘je me trouve...’). There are also expressions of implied seeing in phrases such as: ‘mon attention est arrêté’, ‘à examiner de près’, ‘incompréhensible’.

Woven into the narrative of seeing is a textural discourse of relationships between seeing and light, and seeing and language. On a basic level, light is necessary to seeing and seeing is necessary to reading. The two are intertwined in phrases such as ‘mon attention est arrêté par un écriteu’ and ‘je suis amené à examiner de près, mon guide ne m’adressant pas la parole’.

Description by exclusion necessitates mental perception and therefore participation in the narrated. It is another form used to describe seeing in ‘authorial’ terms. The descriptions of the three rooms, their similarity and sequential nature, imply a series of equivalent suppositions about each of the rooms and their occupants.

The list which follows presents an analysis of the properties of the rooms and their occupants:

**SIZE:**
Room (1).- de beaucoup la plus petite
Room (3). - de beaucoup la plus grande
Room (2). - The symmetry created infer that room (2) is bigger than (1) and smaller than (3).

**LIGHT:**
Room (1). - un soupirail incompréhensible.
Room (2). - un peu mieux éclairée quoique d’une façon insuffisante.
Room (3). - no mention of lighting - light as a phenomenon is textually represented by its sign and its connotative field is thereby liberated. (It is also of course inevitably restricted by surrealist contextualisation)
Consistency of structuring prompts a reading of the third room as better lit.
CONTENTS AND OCCUPANTS:
Room (1) - un jeune homme  a) - assis.
(Gabory) b) - à une table.
c) - compose des poèmes
Room (2) - Pierre Revery  a) - dans le même attitude.
b) - elle aussi plus que sommairement meublé.
Room (3) - (dreamer)  a) - fauteuil inoccupé.
b) - devant la table.
c) - un peu mieux en valeur

The sequence is one of increasing value in proportion to progression through the rooms/text, in terms of size, light, furnishings and poetic value (befitting the dreamer’s/narrator’s ego). Missing information about the rooms is supplied by the reader who uses this generative matrix to ‘fill in’ gaps or spaces in the structure.

Evaluative interpretation is invited by the series of comparisons of which only one half is textually present. The disposition of the contents of the room are presented in foresight of the conclusion of the dream, the narrative predicts, informs and rationalises the dreamer’s actions. This sense of inevitability is apparent in phrases such as ‘paraît m’être destiné’ and ‘j’obéis à la suggestion’. It may also be read as leading to the narrator’s and dreamer’s abstraction from the act of writing and as a foil to the narrator’s programmed presentation of the dreamer’s poetic worth. These comparisons are set out below:

Attitudes suggested:

Room (1)  a) use of ‘un’(jeune homme). NE m’est
PAS INconnu - double negative.
Recognition acknowledged as afterthought.
b) incompréhensible - see above.
c) manuscrits extrêmement sales/papier
immaculé - see below.
Room (2)  a) M’inspirant, par contre, une sympathie réelle - affirms
Breton does not particularly like
Gabory, implies that quality of
light, furnishings, room and poetic
value are ‘index’ linked to
system of value consistent with
structure.
   b) insuffisante.

Room (3)  a) No description: disingenuous implication
that Breton is better poet - has spontaneity.
   b) papier immaculé - contrasts
   Gabory’s manuscrits sales.
   ‘virgin’ paper suggests infinite
   possibilities previous to
   writing - ideal ‘white’ facilitator for
   light as a sign of infinite poetic surrealist
   possibilities.

This descriptive text may be read as an alternative to the type of text which Breton denounces as
unimaginative. In the Manifestes, he comments;

    ‘je n’entre pas dans sa chambre......Cette description de chambre, permettes-moi de la
    passer, avec beaucoup d’autres’. (M, p.18).

For Breton, the reading mind has to work and should not be given all the details, as he perceives
to be the case in the Dostoïevski quotation he uses. However the question of what is written into
text is inevitably a function of the reader’s textual awareness/knowledge, which is in turn
inscribed with concepts of ‘authority’ based on the written word. Light inherent in the dream,
is manifest in the text; revelation is the focus and the ‘raison d’être’ of the structure and
illuminator of the architecture of the text.

NARRATOR AS AUTHOR OF OTHER WORKS

The presence of the narrator is indicated through his use of the instruments of language - the
verbal bridges and expression of manifest content. An extra-textual reading of themes and style
can identify these as the marks or signatures of the narrator as author of other works. Thus, the
apparent precision of the locative phrase ‘une rue déserte du quartier des Grands Augustins’,
recalls similar phrases in other texts such as: ‘Place du Panthéon’; ‘La station Trocadéro’; ‘je
remonte, à Pantin, la route d’Aubervilliers dans la direction de la Mairie lorsque ... ’. (N., p.24;
C.d.T., p.39; L.R.S., No.1, p.3). These phrases establish precise locations in the same way as
proper nouns and naming devices, they situate textual experience in the everyday world. They
act as foils, providing a contrasting ground to ‘set off’ the strangeness of the dream events, for
which they are often a starting point or, as in Nadja, they form a string of actual locations to link
and differentiate narrative events.

Similarly, the device of using the noun denoting a written sign - (‘écriteau’) to indicate a
generalised connotation, rather than a precise referent, recalls other texts in which Breton uses
hotels to designate places where one stays briefly and stations as the places where journeys begin
and end. In such cases, the name of the hotel or that which is written on the sign often stands in
opposition to its function, conveying a sense of evacuated meaning and a need to fill that loss, if
not with logic, then with symbolic significance. In this text ‘abri’ and ‘à louer’ can be explored
through their textual juxtaposition and copulation as referents for places vacant and possibly
inviting possession, even though ‘shelter’ and ‘to let’ signify different use.

These statements are followed by ‘qui n’a plus cours’ which may therefore be interpreted as
meaning ‘no longer valid’ since: -

(a) the ‘meanings’ of the preceding words have already been established
(b) the event referred to occurs in another time and the labels are now obsolete within that
context
(c) by the time of the narrative present the empty room/house has been filled.

Thus, the text may be read as a commentary on its functional autonomy.

Another reference of authorial contextual significance is light. The significance of light in
Breton’s theories of the image in the surrealist manifestos has led to its functioning as a sign of surrealist activity, rather than as a free signifier. The structuring of references to light (and to seeing) in the text strengthens its denotative, connotative and metaphoric meanings.

**BIOGRAPHICAL AUTHOR**

Breton’s biographical persona may be identified by the cognisant reader through the contextualising of images which may be linked to events in his extra-textual life. The moustache images may be read as stereotypical symbols of father figures (the moustache symbol is also found in de Chirico’s writing in which an ‘impériale’ signifies Napoléon and by father-figure association, Cavour).\(^{42}\) The names identifying the owners of these moustaches - Baudelaire, Germain Nouveau and Barbey d’Aurevilly are those of recognised surrealist prerunners. The poet ‘Georges Gabory’ in the first room, is indicated as someone not admired by Breton, and other indications of Breton’s opinions are the lack of light in Gabory’s room (‘incompréhensible’) and the description of his manuscripts as (‘extrêmement sales’).

‘Pierre Reverdy’ is differentiated from Gabory by light in his room, suggesting that he is admired by Breton, albeit to a limited extent. Breton quoted Reverdy’s definition of the image in the 1924 *Manifeste du Surréalisme* and they worked together as colleagues on various surrealist magazines. (M., p.31). A certain ambivalence in Breton’s attitude to Reverdy is implied by the qualitative ‘insuffisance’ of the lighting in his room. This ambivalence is implied elsewhere in the Manifestes. (M., pp.38, 48). Such names, as signs, indicate the extra-textual poetic and biographic identities associated with the dreamer’s absent name.

\(^{42}\) Breton, ‘Le Surréalisme et la Peinture’, in *L.R.S.*, No.7., juin, 1926, p.5. See the father figure in ‘The Child’s Brain’ by de Chirico and Breton’s commentary on it in Bonnet’s *Perspective Cavalière*. Facial hair is often a feature of patriarchal authoritative figures in Freud’s case studies of dreams, being a visible masculine adult/child differentiation.
BRETON'S HOUSE.

Breton often uses houses or dwelling places as metaphors for text. His habitations are frequently temporary dwelling places. The label attached to the 'house' often denotes accessibility as a function: 'City Hôtel', 'Sphinx Hôtel', 'Hôtel des étincelles'. (N., pp.94, 122) In this dream text, "abri" or "à louer" has a similar function. Such labels signal places which, like the text, may be inhabited by anyone for a short space of time. In some cases the name of the place carries a specific biographical significance as for example 'L'Hôtel Des Grands Hommes', Place Panthéon, where Breton lived for a period and where he met Eluard.43 The poetic habitation is the text; an intimate and private construction which contains the writing author. This house, labyrinth or prison has windows, transparent walls, and fetishistic veiling curtains.44 Its images inscribe a watching presence, a viewing reader and an author on display:

Pour moi je continuerai à habiter ma maison de verre, où l'on peut voir à toute heure qui vient me rendre visite, où tout ce qui est suspendu aux plafonds et aux murs tient comme par enchantement, où je repose la nuit sur un lit de verre aux draps de verre, où qui je suis m'apparaîtra tôt ou tard gravé au diamant. (N., pp.18-19).

An appeal to the reader's latent voyeurism, the conceptualised viewing of intimate spaces, is often played upon by Breton who manipulates the view, using the stereotypical erotic formulae of veiling, revealing and disclosing. In the intimacy of the building, Breton inscribes such texts with a libidinal appeal, based on precepts of ownership and display, of a textual masculine desire comprising a system of evaluation based on externalised perception and the penetration of that which may be per-ceived or 'seen through':

Quand les fenêtres comme l'œil du chacal et le désir percent l'aurore, des treuils de soie me hissent sur les passerelles de la banlieue.... (C.d.T., p.54).

43 See Margueritte Bonnet, André Breton, José Corti, Paris, 1975, p.151.

44 See Susan Harris Smith, 'The Surrealists' Windows', in Dada and Surrealism, No.13, 1983, pp.48-69 for a short summary of the use of windows as artistic and symbolic devices in surrealist art. For Breton see also windows of thought: "ô vitres superposées de la pensée"(C.d.T., p.64) and images of curtains etc.(C.d.T., pp.52, 55, 80, 115, 118, 151 and 171).
Some descriptions appear to denote the personal importance of certain types of ‘houses’ or their locations. While such phrases may be read as references to the poetic importance of states of being, personalisation and qualification can also be read as inhibiting the reader’s free occupation of text:

Une maison - qui tient dans ma vie une place considérable (L.R.S., No.1, p.5.)
- que j’ai habitée (L.R.S., No.1, p.3).

un hôtel - où les allées et venues à tout heure, pour qui ne se satisfait pas de solutions trop simples sont suspects (N, p.94).

‘Quelque chose qui n’a plus cours’, in the dream narrative can be read in much the same way.

In this text and in the Manifestes, Breton implies that the poet’s room is not only his possession but also indicative of his quality as a poet. (M., p.18). In the poem ‘Mille et Mille Fois’, the juxtaposition of images presents the text as a house:

Ma construction ma belle construction page à page
Maison insensément vitrée à ciel ouvert à sol ouvert. (C.d.T., p.80).

The house is constructed (built from the inside) by the poetic journey and metaphor is created by juxtaposition.

In La Poétique de L’Espace, Bachelard describes the house as ‘un état d’âme’ which reproduces an internal intimacy: ‘même reproduite dans son aspect extérieur, elle dit une intimité’. (E., p.77). He stresses that the house, whose prime reality is ‘visible et tangible’, is an image representative of dream reality; ‘l’espace habité transcende l’espace géométrique’. (E., pp.59, 58). As the expression of a person’s psychic state, its construction metaphorically replaces its constructor. Thus the poet’s house determines and is determined by, the world:

The text becomes readable as a world true unto itself - 'Quand l’image est nouvelle, le monde est nouveau' - and truth is relative to that world. (E, p.58). For Bachelard, the imagery of the house is often used to express an author’s relationship to the cosmos: 'la maison est donc bien un instrument de topo analyse'. (E, p.58).

On another level the world of the author as poet, is the text, which may be read as a linguistic dream house. (E, p.59). Such houses are the poet’s past possessions and habitations.

Many of Freud’s case studies in The Interpretation of Dreams contain architectural motifs as symbols. Separate parts of houses are often interpreted as parts of the body or, indeed, as the whole body, expressed from a male perspective. Moreover this body-house may only be read in psychosexual terms as female, a building to be externally viewed and entered into. Penetration of narrow entrances is read as entering the vagina; walking up and down steps, ladders and staircases are interpreted as symbolising the sexual act. (P.F.L., IV pp.521, 472, 482-4). Freud read these symbols both in the context of his own cultural identity and that of his sexual identity, from a masculine standpoint and then applied them universally. It seems evident that the experience of penetrating, of entering, of linear progression through a series of muscles and ridges expanding and contracting, leading to a sexual climax, is primarily a male experience of the sex act.45

For Breton, Bachelard and Freud, these houses and architectural structures are entered, inhabited and owned. They are personal and private places. Yet they are palaces of masculine fantasy; there is little or no domestic activity in them. There is no housework, no apparent maintenance.

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45 I have used the word ‘primarily’ since for women, masturbation obviously involves penetration.
Who does the cleaning? Why is there a lot of dirt in the first room and none in the last? For if Breton constructs the house, he has dirtied the other rooms and abdicated responsibility! I wondered whether it had just been cleaned ready for a new occupant and who had cleaned it.

Breton stood against the rationalisation of dream texts by coherent critical or psychoanalytical methods. The description of the dwelling in the first text of the 'Cinq Rêves' reads somewhat like a visit to an ancient classical temple in which the order of the size of rooms has been inverted to make the inner sanctum the largest. This dwelling is constructed to be viewed, penetrated and entered. The active verbs 'entrer', 'pénétrer', 's'enfoncer', combined with the imagery of a place of entry, door, corridor, stairs, rooms, the final revelation of the dreamer's 'own place' - better furnished, befitting his ego - and the textual culmination of 'la lumière', suggest a sexual encounter and a continual moment of culmination. Yet Breton invites a colluding masculine experience of that textual desirability; but, the image presents a fraternal domestic homoerotics of reader/writer relations in an ambivalent tension which hovers between the desire to be taken and read and the fear of losing dominance and mastery over his own textually constructed domain.
GIORGIO DE CHIRICO: ‘L’ÉNIGME D’UNE JOURNÉE’

INTRODUCTION

De Chirico’s works are not dream texts, although they produce effects deemed by the Surrealists to be similar to those of dream texts. The artist presents them as narratives of the experience of ‘revelation’, effects which he himself likens to the experiences of childhood and dreams. The narratives are designed to offer a re-experiencing of that feeling and as such they combine conscious creative construction and theoretical reconstruction with a contextual history.

De Chirico’s theoretical discourse profiles an elitist viewer or reader for his work. That person must be ‘intelligent and sensitive’ and since any intelligent and sensitive person will experience what de Chirico’s ‘great sensitivity’ has produced, a logical exclusion writes that those who do not must be neither intelligent nor sensitive! His discourse is therefore more grandiose and overtly dogmatic than Breton’s, it is also more personal, containing many personal explanations to references, situations and meditations on the mysteries of the world and its creations.

LIGHT

The importance of light in de Chirico’s work is manifest in his painting and discussed in his theoretical writings. In Breton’s writings, the ‘lumière de l’image’ facilitates perception of the surreal. In those of de Chirico, light has a similar significance being closely linked to ‘revelation’, the perception of metaphysical realities:

In my opinion there is no point in using technical means (divisionism, pointillism, etc.) to try to give the illusion of what we call truth. For example, to paint a sunlit landscape trying in every way to give the sensation of light. Why? I too see the light; however well it may be reproduced, I also see it in nature, and a painting that has this for its purpose will never be able to give me the sensation of something new, of something that,
previously, I have not known. While if a man faithfully reproduces the strange sensations that he feels, this can always give new joys to any sensitive and intelligent person.\footnote{De Chirico, Eluard manuscript in James Thrall Soby, \textit{Georgio de Chirico}. Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1955, pp.244-250. Subsequent de Chirico quotations in English are taken from this manuscript which will be referred to as 'Eluard'.}

In his documented discussion of the genesis of the work, ‘L’Énigme d’un après-midi d’automne’, de Chirico’s perceived enigma of the Piazza Santa Croce is evoked by effects of natural light on the square:

\begin{quote}
\emph{Le soleil automnal, tiède et sans amour, éclairait la statue ainsi que la façade du temple. J’eus alors l’impression étrange que je voyais toutes les choses pour la première fois. Et la composition de mon tableau me vint à l’esprit; et chaque fois que je regardé cette peinture je revis ce moment: le moment pourtant est une énigme pour moi, car il est inexplicable. J’aime appeler aussi l’oeuvre qui en résulte une énigme.} \footnote{Giorgio de Chirico, Paulhan manuscript. Printed in Giorgio de Chirico. Exhibition Catalogue, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 1983, pp.247-55. All subsequent quotations in French from this manuscript will be referred to as ‘Paulhan’.}
\end{quote}

Effects of natural light and shade have inspired artists for centuries, but de Chirico does not depict light as a purely visual phenomenon. He does not aim to present an illusion of truth but the impression or sensation of his feelings, to impart a new knowledge, a strangeness of effects not seen in nature. He therefore presents the emotions and sensations evoked by light, in association with time, combining the present with a sense of nostalgia for the past. He describes the autumn sun as ‘tiède et sans amour’ in the Piazza Santa Croce and the autumn atmosphere in Turin is ‘lamartinien’, melancholic and artistically inspiring. (Paulhan; Eluard). The long shadows create a sense of timelessness; ‘une douce immobilité’. (Paulhan). Daybreak is a world in which time as an enigmatic dimension is sensed by de Chirico at the first light of dawn:

\begin{quote}
\emph{If in the first light of dawn one can feel the shudder of death shot through with the shudder of eternity, receding to the end of everything, into the beginning of time, then many a covering and many a veil falls before this feeling.}(Eluard).
\end{quote}
The 'frigid hour of dawn' is described as the moment of the primordial artist's spiritual rebirth which De Chirico experiences as a return to the sacred values of the classical world. A sense of spatial timelessness is recreated in the moment of revelation and reproduced in the work it inspires, by a combination of encounters between images and effects of light and linear composition. Historical timelessness is created by disturbing juxtapositions of antique and modern objects and architecture.

Light in de Chirico's work also carries an illuminating significance whose origins derive from aesthetic, philosophical and religious discourse. The metaphysical value of things is dependent on both visual and mental perception:

*Thought must so detach itself from all human fetters that all things appear to it anew - as if lit for the first time by a brilliant star.*

The significance of light and shade is humanist and enigmatic:

*There are many more enigmas in the shadow of a man who walks in the sun than in all the religions of the past, present and future.* (Eluard).

The contrasts of strong light are preferred to obscurity:

*je crois, moi, qu’une place pétrifiée dans la clarté de midi recèle plus de mystère qu’une chambre obscure, au milieu de la nuit, pendant une séance de spiritualisme.* (Paulhan)

Light permeates Chirico's paintings. It is represented pictorially and non-pictorially. Sources are often inconsistent in the angling of highlights and shadows. Light and shade are manipulated as coloured geometric forms, as diachronic objects. They may not correspond with each other, nor with a fixed time shown, for example, on a clock. As such they are treated as objects, as
linear devices which mark out patterns on the picture surface and can be wilfully manipulated to obtain certain effects:

_The steeple clock marks half past twelve. The sun is high and burning in the sky. It lights houses, palaces, porticos. Their shadows on the ground describe rectangles, squares, and trapezoids of so soft a black that the burned eye likes to refresh in them. What light._

Light used to represent volume and space combines with linear perspective, to create new spatial concepts with emotional effects:

_The sun had a terrible beauty._
_Precise geometric shadows. (Paulhan)._  

Light and shade are represented as flat, often geometric forms, as two-dimensional areas of colour. As such they form relationships on the picture surface and are treated as individual objects with their own discourse;

_on doit se taire quand on pénètre dans toute sa profondeur. Alors la lumière et les ombres, les lignes, les angles, tous les mystères du volume commencent à parler._
_(Paulhan)._  

The mathematics of de Chirico’s geometry are precise yet fluid. They offer multiple readings which alter with the viewpoint.

Some of Man Ray’s early work depicts a similar fascination with mathematical forms in drawings, aerographs and the large oil entitled ‘The rope dancer accompanies herself with her shadows’.

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48 The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of G.David Thompson. The oil (1916) is, like the Revolving door series, constructed of paper cut-outs. The concepts explored are different since Man Ray’s work explores juxtaposition of colour contrasts and the mechanisation of techniques but the shadows depicted form blocks of interrelated two-dimensional patterns on the picture surface.
In this work areas of light and shade are made of scraps of paper glued together and partially over-painted. It owes much to the techniques of photographic stills which mechanically capture movement in a series of frames. The rope dancer’s movements are indicated by the series of sequential coloured shadows. This picture maintains the precision of recorded action from a singular perspective. De Chirico, on the other hand, is preoccupied with a single fixed moment in time, incorporating it as a spatial rather than linear concept. The altering of perspective and use of light and shade moving around objects, owe some painterly origin to the work of Cézanne and of the cubists, as much as to Renaissance architectural treatises and illusionary landscapes.

Light and shade define form, adding volume and three-dimensionality by juxtaposition of different colours and by the use of tone. Tonality is achieved by lightening or darkening the colour and by using lighter brush strokes. In general De Chirico uses a very light creamy-coloured ground on the canvas and often applies only thin translucent washes of paint to areas of highlight. In this way volume is represented by changing the thickness, rather than the colour of the paint and the object depicted may be read as literally ‘lit from within’. A certain plasticity of forms built out of layers of brush strokes is apparent.

‘L’Enigme d’une Journée’, owned by Breton, contains strong effects of light and shade which are rigidly demarcated and yet there are many anomalies since the light sources are multiple, the colour of the sky does not correspond with the intensity of the light and the main area of light draws the reader’s eye out of the painting at the very same point at which its composition draws it in. The strength of the light suggests midday but the shadows are long like those of early evening and the sky is that of a clear summer night after the sun has gone. The first part of the analysis examines light sources and the angling of highlights and shadows to demonstrate the part that these play in reading the painting. The second type of lighting analysed is internal. It produces the effect of brightness, of an underlying luminous colour. Light pervades the actual painting technique as an integral part of the painting process.
READING LIGHT

The lighting in ‘L’Énigme d’une Journée’ creates a series of disturbing impressions for the reader. A large ‘pie-slice’ segment of light leads from a narrow point in the left hand corner, widening towards the centre of the painting and extending to the horizon. The geometric form presented by the light acts as a perspectival device whose outer limits form compositional lines which draw the reader’s eye in an inward and left to right direction. This movement contradicts that of the light which is emanating from right to left, travelling out of the picture as the eye moves in. The perspectival context of the architecture which ‘lines’ the view, affects the reading of light, altering it to read as that which emanates from a point and diffuses beyond; the inverse effect. The reading sensed by the eye is similar to that of a peep-hole view in which the image is telescopic, truncated and partial and which places the reader outside the frame. The main area of shade in the foreground, a continuation of the shaded building on the right, creates a foil for the telescopic view. It widens the foreground to the right of the pie segment, which enlarges the viewpoint and places the reader of the painting in a central position. The illusionist extrusion created by the foreshortening of the shadowy foreground, situates the reader outside the painting whilst the view and internal perspective places them within a fictional architectural space. The spatial organisation of foreground, middle ground and background is inconsistent in terms of discordant elevations and scale. These contrast with the rigid demarcation of the lighted area whose source (also inconsistent) lies beyond the arch of the building on the right and outside the picture frame. The effect is totally disconcerting without being obvious.

The eye led into the painting by the horizontal widening triangle is vertically diverted on the left hand side, by the wall of sunlit arcades which form a visual barrier. The alternating arches and facade form a rhythmic pattern accentuated by highlight and shadow. The eye continues a progressive undulating movement until it is blocked from further progression by the curved red wall at the foot of the chimneys. Diverted along this wall it is alternately blocked and freed and then blocked by its continuation glimpsed through the arch of the right hand arcade. It returns
to the point of departure following the path of the light along the line marking light and shade on edge of the ochre segment.

The reader views from obscurity into brightness but the eye returns to the point of departure where the light continues beyond the picture into the reader's space. The apex of the ochre triangle formed by light falling onto the ground, is cut off by the edge of the picture. An ambiguous articulation in the angle of the shadow at the foot of the last arcade combined with its open-sided arch, suggest that the light continues through the last arcade into areas beyond the picture space. The very slight change in angle would require a higher light source but this would preclude the extremely long shadows cast by statue, arcade, figures and box. On the other hand if the arcade on the left continued it would meet the shadow and complete the triangle. The open-ended angle forms a passage into the painting and through which the world created by the painting extrudes to surround and displace the reader by its disorientating perspectives and viewpoints.
In general terms strong light originates from the left beyond the corner of the arcade on the right and falls across the scene, giving a sense of depth, highlighting the right-hand side of the dark figures and walls. The model for this apparently reflects the presence of the A and E points in the third dimension that result in a combination of the one by the arcade. At the window F, light appears to travel in the direction of B. Figure 1
In general terms, strong light sources located at an area beyond the centre of the image on the right and falls across the entire greater detail towards the left, highlighting the right-hand side of the object. This effect is achieved by the use of a strong light source to create a specific visual effect. Figure 1

Figure 1
LIGHT SOURCES

In general terms strong light emanates from an area beyond the corner of the arcade on the right and falls across the ochre ground colour towards the left, highlighting the right hand side of the box and statue and the facade of the left arcade. The angle of this general ‘daylight’ source is represented by (A) in the diagram. This source of light is however, neither consistent nor singular. Angles of areas of highlight and shade vary from object to object and from side to side of the painting.

Light seems to fall on the box in the middle ground of the picture from two different sources. The highlighting of the side of the box and the angle of the lower edge of the shadow indicate a source (B) lower than that suggested by the length and angle of the shadow behind the box. If the source (A) suggested by angle of the upper edge of the shadow were consistent then, given the slant of the box, the lower part of the shadow would be longer.

The first half of the shadow apparently cast by the arcade on the right of the picture runs parallel to the upper edge of the shadow of the box confirming source (A). This angled shadow begins behind the arch of the arcade, which suggests that it belongs to a larger building beyond. There does not appear to be such a building since this would have to stand behind the arch in order to cast the shadow. The start of the shadow, therefore is a disorientating compositional device which delineates the right hand side of the lighted ochre segment of ground and one which appears to be independently projected.

The long shadow cast by the arcade falls across the middle ground, hitting the statue and then continues at a different angle into the bottom left corner of the picture, indicating a source just below (A). This second half of the shadow only partially reflects the form of the statue in the third closest to that object and reads as a continuation of that cast by the arcade. Yet the shadow
has both moved to the left and shifted in angle, as if it were that of the statue in which case it is improbably exaggerated.

The statue poses a problem in the lighting alignment since the arcade’s shadow does not fall evenly across it. The shadow on the pedestal is inconsistent with the arcade’s shadow in front of it and with the angle of that cast by the statue itself. Its shading is therefore physically impossible given that it should be subject to arcade’s. The shadows on the statue indicate a ‘spotlight’ type of source at angle (C).

The disparate lighting of the statue dislocates its exact position in relation to the arcade on the right. The lighting is not realistically related to that of the arcade but constructed to appear to be. The fictive lighting of the statue renders it incongruous and autonomous whilst the subtle paraphrasing of shadows around it create the impression of normality.

The two figures in the background cast long shadows suggesting a source at (D), from an area behind the chimney on the right. The chimneys do not cast shadows, which would upset the composition, and appear to be lit from the opposite direction to the figures (E), there is also some variation in shading between them.

The facade of the left arcade is lit from angle (F) although the arcade in the foreground is lit from a slightly different angle (G). Each of the angles of shadow in the arches varies minutely, indicating a slightly varying light source. A change in the colour of the ground from ochre to grey emphasises the linear alignment of the arches and differentiates their space from that of the ochre ground. Ochre continues into the small passage, separating the two buildings but is cut off by the dark shadow which is of the same tone as those on the grey ground. The opening of a space between the buildings on the left is echoed by the change in angle of the light and shade of the incomplete arch in the foreground. The light therefore spills over into the left hand side
of the picture just above and aside from the generally ambiguous but relatively central viewing position defined by the perspective.

Light leads the eye into the painting, presenting a view which does not concur with the spectator’s viewpoints suggested by the perspective, the foreshortening or the differing vanishing points. The long shadows of late afternoon do not correspond with the strong midday light and are anachronistic, oversized and ominous. Light sources vary in a subtle conflict, creating disturbing and confusing effects. The sources lie behind the arcade on the right, in the world created by the painting and not outside of it. They imply the presence of the rest of the town or city of which this is a view, a sensation which Breton describes in his essay ‘Le Surréalisme et La Peinture’ as ‘cette ville éclairée en plein jour de l’intérieur’. (L.R.S., No.7, p.3).
ÉCLAIRÉE DE L’INTERIEUR

In the painting, the sky exemplifies the working of internalised luminosity. The overall effect is of dawn or dusk, a time when the sun is below the horizon and barely lighting it. The highest part of the sky is the deepest colour - a deep petrol blue - and this is where the paint is thickest. The paint thins towards the horizon and the underlying ground begins to show through (Plate III). It is a yellowish white and as the blue paint thins it takes on the yellow hue and becomes lighter in colour. The sky was painted after the chimneys and the statue and is ‘filled in’ around them. The thinner paint and lighter brush strokes create fluffy outlining effect and (circle the statue’s head like a halo). Where the sky and horizon meet the blue overwash is very faint. Seen from a distance the surface seems fairly unified but close to it is entirely broken down into individual brush strokes, some more discernable than others, which give a layered effect. The layering creates a certain plasticity of the surface, a three-dimensional technique.

Three-dimensional modelling of the picture surface is particularly evident in the ochre colour of the large segment and in the statue’s hand. These details are immediately obvious on looking at the original but are scarcely perceptible in the stronger contrasts of the reproduction. The translucent quality and the colour of the paint is created by its being put onto the picture surface in thin layers. It literally holds light.

In Piccolo trattoria di tecnica pittorica, de Chirico discusses mixing and making paint by various methods to create both thick, light coloured primers and thin varnish-like substances which allow both the ground and underpainting to show through.49

The thinness of the paint allows considerable underpainting to show through, and the chronological

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order of painting can be charted by the naked eye. The thin, uneven paint suggests a hasty execution, a capturing of the moment. Its ephemeral quality contrasts strongly with the impression of fixed timelessness conveyed by the picture.

CHIRICO CITY

‘L’Énigme d’une Journée, like many of the paintings of this period presents a city-scape which is an exercise in geometry and perspective. For de Chirico, the process of representation involved the transformation and reduction of everything to bare essentials in a radical denial of naturalism. Indebted to his study of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, this rationalisation of forms created a new relationship between sense and non-sense, attacking the concept of reality as a visible phenomenon, leading to a system of perception and representation based on the otherwise hidden plurality of meaning produced by signs.

In his essay entitled ‘de Chirico and Savino: The Theory and Iconography of Metaphysical Painting’, Paolo Baldacci describes the significance of their architectural representation:

As the theory contained in the manuscripts attests, de Chirico conceived the means of representing the inversion of values through images of architecture. He recalled that he had at first experienced ‘metaphysical illumination’ while meditating on the architecture of the Piazza Santa Croce...By virtue of its essentially geometric volumes, architecture became a marvellous repository of significance: house, box, toy, pure abstraction, at once everything and nothing, interior and exterior, empty and full, the habitation of dream and memory...The reduction of the architectural object to its geometric essence, to a spectre of reality, gave de Chirico the idea of creating what he termed ‘solitudine plastica’ (‘plastic solitude’) ... ‘Plastic solitude’ conferred a second life upon the object, one that was purified, absolute and spectral. ‘Solitude of signs’ went further, invoking other images, hence other signs and meanings, in the reading of a painting. A multitude of spectres of things, stripped of their conventional references, were associated with each other in an order that had nothing to do with common logic.  

50 ‘Chirico-city’ is a term coined by Gordon Onslow Ford. See Soby, De Chirico, p.27.

The flat planes of the facades of the buildings in de Chirico’s metaphysical works contrast with the rounded forms of objects and statues for which they act as a staged setting. Images and scenery are repeated in different works. They form sets of symbols which are personal to the artist and his brother, Savino. These were constructed from the collective reminiscences of historical and mythological culture and images of personal significance, which Savino called ‘a family language’.\(^\text{52}\)

Various pictorial elements of ‘L’Énigme d’une Journée’ are found in other works and the references which follow are by no means definitive. The tall red chimneys appear in ‘The Enigma of Fatality’ (1914) and ‘Self Portrait’ (1913). The two conversing cloaked, philosopher figures accompanied by their shadows (Plate IV) are found in ‘Melancholia’ (1912) and ‘Gare Montparnasse (The Melancholy of Departure)’ (1914) (Plate V). The large 19th Century frocked statue in the foreground has been identified by Soby with that of Bottero in Turin.\(^\text{53}\) Soby suggests that de Chirico’s interest in public statuary at this time was probably aroused by Schopenhauer but Baldacci gives stronger arguments for at least two of the statue’s associations with Nietzsche’s sojourn in Turin, which reveals the complexity of their symbolism.\(^\text{54}\)

The train behind the brick wall features in ‘The poet’s torment’ (n.d.), ‘Gare Montparnasse’, ‘The Song of Love’ (1914) and ‘Ariadne’s Afternoon’ (1913). Flags appear in various works. The arcaded building on the left of the painting is similar to that which appears in ‘Melancholia’ and in ‘The Sailor’s Barracks’. Wieland Schmied has identified the source for this last painting, and for much of de Chirico’s architecture, with the Hofgarten in Munich, arguing convincingly that

\(^{52}\) Baldacci, ‘Metaphysical Painting’, p.63.

\(^{53}\) Soby, De Chirico, p.70.

\(^{54}\) Baldacci, ‘Metaphysical Painting’, p.63.
the city squares depicted owe as much to Italianate German architecture as they do to the Italian piazza, and that as reproductions these embody a certain corresponding nostalgia.  

Arcades are used in different ways. Sometimes, as described above, they present flat facades receding into the picture and punctuated by a series of arches. Or, as in the arch on the left, the form of the building may provide a window through to the background whilst retaining its structural function. The arcades and buildings, their recurrence and they way in which they are used, read as signatures of the geometrical city state. They are manipulated and altered forming blocks, corners and angles to direct the moving eye.

Chirico city is structured with a rigid mathematical and authoritarian logic which is designed to alienate and disrupt the reading. The viewpoint is shifted by foreshortening one space and distacing another, by presenting unified forms viewed from various angles combined to create disturbing effects. Rigorous intellectual processes inform the selection of objects. Some are images commenting on form, others personal heroic and poetic references to an ancestral masculine cultural tradition.

De Chirico presents himself as the philosopher poet in many of his self-portraits. His discourse is as authoritarian as that of Breton and often as cabbalistic as Breton’s alchemical language in ‘L’Union Libre’. The importance of perception is paramount but as in Breton’s text, it involves seeing in the same way as the author, the poet-seer who occupies the domain. The structure of de Chirico’s spaces present designs based on the homoerotic desirability of the impenetrable balanced by the promise of private viewing, subject to authorial communing.

The architectural and spatial incongruities are formal objectifications and manipulations of reality

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designed to produce certain effects, 'pure' sensations. The incorporation of theoretician and poet 'signatures' by the use of objects, statues and plaster casts referring amongst others, to the Orphic tradition (fish), to Apollo, to Nietzsche (arrows, signs, sails, clocks), to Dionysic liberation (Ariadne), presents a discourse whose incongruity resides in the personal, rather than the universal.

COMPARATIVE SUMMARY

Structures in Breton's text, both thematic and discursive, lead towards and focus on the end paragraph of the text. As the manifest content provides an image for the workings of the text, the dreamer's journey is an image of the reader's. The coherent structure of the manifest content makes it all the more interpretable on a symbolic level. Revelation as 'La lumière' - escapes definition as a textual sign of infinite possibilities; through its repetitive presentation in the text it becomes a sign of continuous activity. As a function of surrealism desire, this object eludes definition or 'capture', generating fresh pursuit for those who read this as a pleasurable function. Light is present in the text, by the text and through the text. Its objectification exemplifies the transcendence of denotational values, constantly generating further textual significance, but its didactic function combined with the relevant theoretical contextualisation, ironically establishes 'knowledgeable reading' to function as a voyeuristic construction based on access to information/privacy/intimacy.

Similarly the perspective of 'L'énigme d'une Journée' focuses on that which is outside the text. Strong light streams in from beyond the picture space which it defines. Both light and perspective lead the reader into and out of the picture without resolving its organisation, deliberately imposing sensations of disorientation. This pictorial extrusion situates the reader in a space beyond the text but one which relates directly to it, thereby determining its continuance beyond the picture frame.

In both cases these indicate authorial objectives, and the desire to place the reading in a certain
situation with regard to the text. This position lies outside the text in a climactic seminal revelation/seeing. The narrative structures of each manipulate the logic they undermine and ironically employ a rigorous logic to do so. Each therefore perpetuates the system they are attacking, albeit by shifting direction.

The fabric of the city can be read as a metaphor for the structuring of the painting. This personalised living space can be read as an exposition of the working of de Chirico’s use of metaphor, fixed but fictional, communicating and alienating, moving outside and returning to itself, like the dual manifestation of light, signifier of the metaphor of revelation, present in the text and as the text. The same may be said of Breton’s architectural construction. Both are dependent on light and viewing, on being looked at, on the author’s vision, as essential to the masculine myth of universal desire for the unknown, as the making known of that seen and therefore ‘conquered’, built, constructed.

Both city and house present exhibition views, combining private space with public facade. They combine the universal with the intimate and therefore vulnerable, the defensive and excluding, with the didactic. The psychology of these architectural theorists is authoritarian. Their message one of coercive fraternity, of peer pressure in the masculine tradition ‘belonging’ to the group by ‘seeing’ the world as presented by the text. This is the organisational trope of the heroic philosopher whose perceptive brilliance leads the group through unfamiliar and obscure terrain, constructing systems with which to claim dominance of the ‘virgin’ territory.

The masculine language of Breton and de Chirico’s discourse, the choice of programmed and repeated images, together with the inclusion of ancestral symbols, to ‘guarantee’ the text, exhibit this tension between heroism and insecurity, narcissism and neurosis, culturally inherited and textually incorporated. The dogmatic and didactic authoritarian tone of the theorist imposes signatory systems of value and reference, modestly expressed as universal truths to a world of
co-respondents, a discourse of psychological bonding and leadership inscribed throughout the texts and presented in the following extracts from de Chirico and Breton:

...our minds are haunted by visions; they are anchored to everlasting foundations. In the public squares shadows lengthen their enigmas. Over the walls rise nonsensical towers decked with little multicolored flags; infinitude is everywhere, and everywhere is mystery. One thing remains, immutable as if its roots were frozen in the entrails of eternity: our will as artist-creators. (Eluard).

Mais nous, qui ne nous sommes livrés à aucun travail de filtration, qui nous sommes faits dans nos œuvres les sourdes réceptacles de tant d’échos, les modestes ‘appareils enregistreurs’ qui ne s’hypnotisent pas sur le dessin qu’ils tracent, nous servons peut-être encore une plus noble cause. (M., p.39).

The position of the feminist critic is complex: a recognition of the dwelling-places presented and of their gendered heritage. Traditional roles are unacceptable. Doing the housework in Breton’s home or shopping in Chirico city for the metaphysical family confirm acceptance of the ‘master’ author’s ownership of the textual dwelling.

Analysis of authoritarian positions inscribes a personal alienation whilst acknowledging function. Repossession of text merely confirms the hierarchical structures of ‘dominance’, ownership and authority.  

Cultural discourse has determined that the presence of these dwellings is dependent on a lighted environment in which their existence may be perceived and defined. External perception is therefore an existential guarantor of value and of the author’s ‘safety’. Yet the text is an illusion created by its author, guaranteed by a equally illusive construction called ‘seeing’. Security of space lies in the re-cognition of these illusions, in thinking within the innate ability of the verbal to convey the visual and of the painting narrative to create images and forms. The reality of the text lies less in externalised projections perceived and affirmed by a cohabitant reader, than in the power of a necessary presence to sense personal internal values. Woman’s cultural presence

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56 From the Latin ‘dominus’, ‘master of the house’.
reflects the imposition of an illusion called ‘femininity’, an empty house, constructed and owned by men. For as much as the text presents a view, structured by a gendered cultural inheritance, the feminine view mirrors the sensing of her distorted reflection.
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J'étais assis dans le métropolitain en face d’une femme que je n'avais pas autrement remarquée, lorsqu’à l'arrêt du train elle se leva et dit en me regardant: ‘Vie végétative’. J'hésitai un instant, on était à la station Trocadéro, puis je me levai, décidé à la suivre.

Au haut de l'escalier nous étions dans une immense prairie sur laquelle tombait un jour verdâtre, extrêmement dur, de fin d'après-midi. La femme avançait dans la prairie sans se retourner et bientôt un personnage très inquiétant, d'allure athlétique et coiffé d'une casquette, vint à sa rencontre.

Cet homme se détachait d'une équipe de joueurs de football composée de trois personnages. Ils échangèrent quelques mots sans faire attention à moi, puis la femme disparut, et je demeurai dans la prairie à regarder les joueurs qui avaient repris leur partie. J'essayai bien aussi d'attraper le ballon, mais... je n'y parvins qu'une fois.
INTRODUCTION

The sequence of events related in the second dream text concludes with a game of football in which the dreamer/narrator joins with the football players. The text also contains two particularly obvious instances of verbal punning or ‘word play’, one in the form of reported speech and the other as part of a visual description. The playing of games may therefore be said to be inextricably woven into the fabric and substance of the text and this second dream text is read as an exploration of a series of visual and verbal games. The use of punning in dream texts is taken from Freudian psychoanalytic theory, contextualised with Breton’s theories.

The text, once written, is no longer under the control of its originator, although it bears the marks of its writing and is contained within that frame. The reader invests the text with meaning, actively re-writing it. The author can be read as a textual past manifested in the textual present, as present text and as an instigator of action on a level temporally previous to the present game.

Participation in the text, like the dreamer’s participation in the football game, is necessary to its enactment. Movement of the ball between players is read as a metaphor for a phenomenological reading of the text as a series of fluid discursive temporal and linguistic linear movements.

The text will be understood as a linear form both by its physical graphic presence on the page and as a string of successive units of information, which as connected events constitute a narrative which I will call ‘the general narrative’. 57

Reading of text reveals the general narrative string to be a complex weave of narratatives of form

57 A narrative being defined as a system of communication comprising two or more elements which can be shown to have an order and to relate to each other.
and content. Narratives which derive from textual content are products of relationships between word and meaning, of connotations and associations of specific textual elements. Readings of semantic content mirror the active subject’s participation in the textual game. Elements of these narrative structures relate semantically, thematically, symbolically, metaphorically, bringing textual referents into the reading and writing of text, both to enriching and defining meaning by confrontational slippage.

Narratives derived from the form of the text result from the relationships between words and the way in which they function in language structures and also from relationships between other non-semantic elements of language such as sounds and visual representations. Narratives of form do not consist of reading semantic meanings but of observing structures, of reconstructing the syntax of the football game. These narrative structures relate grammatically, syntactically, linguistically, temporally, phonetically and graphically.

Narrative will be understood to be disruptive of itself when the graphic marks on the page are read, since the resulting discourse interrupts progressive sequence, moving between text and reader in the present moment of reading and also, on account of the cumulative nature of meaning, between past/present/(future) of text and of reader associations.

Language games are emphasised as a feature of the narrative process by their structural isolation from other aspects of the text. Specific instances of word-play are analysed both as part of the structure and as individual games with reference to Freud’s comments on condensation and displacement in dream narratives and joke techniques. Verbal puns will be shown to create lacunae in narrative discourse. Those played in the text constitute a paradigmatic manifestation of the disruption of reading (as a linear exercise) and demonstrate the possibility of multiple and simultaneous levels of meaning coexisting in a momentary ‘gap’. The progressive linear structure of narrative therefore reads as the vehicle of its own discontinuity and the fragmented image of
itself. It carries encrypted in its structure the destruction of cohesive enactment.

In the second part of the analysis, de Chirico's painting, 'L'Énigme D'une Journée' will be examined in a manner analogous to the text Cinq Rêves II.

The painting, like others from de Chirico's metaphysical period, presents verbal punning on the mimetic value of representational structures. Games are played with perspective in order to re-create disorientating and enigmatic effects. De Chirico's paintings, as Breton's texts, create strange and yet familiar environments and the inherent dislocation of logical continuity present in the perspectival language of these texts is akin to the mechanisms of verbal puns.

As in Breton's text, the content is authoritatively programmed to manipulate the reading writer to identify with an alien textuality, outside of their own experience of reality.

The second part of the analysis will discuss perspectival disclocation and map the associative relationships created by the confrontational clash of programming authorities with regard to De Chirico's metaphysical painting.
GAMES, JOKES, DREAMS, ART

In Freudian psychoanalytic theory the source of pleasure in jokes is described as 'pleasure in nonsense' and is traced to the period at which the child learning language treats words as things with which it has a purely sensory relationship:

_He puts words together without regard to the condition that they should make sense, in order to obtain from them the pleasurable effect of rhythm or rhyme._ (P.F.L., VI, p.174).

Jokes are therefore language games which seek to recover 'the old pleasure in nonsense or the old pleasure in words'. (P.F.L., VI, p.229). Satisfaction is gained from making possible that which is denied by critical faculties and this engagement with those faculties centres on finding a meaning which satisfies (and thereby outwits) them. A secondary pleasure in play is derived from this power.

Freud draws a distinction between jokes and jests while acknowledging that linguistic usage does not make such a distinction. Meaning must be permissible even if unusual, unnecessary or useless. In 'jokes', pleasure is gained primarily from the meaning, from the world disclosed and liberated by the joke. In 'jest' the main pleasure is derived from making possible what is forbidden by criticism and the 'joke-work' or 'play' which brings about the joke is the primary source of satisfaction rather than the absurdity which its content brings into existence. Both protect word and thought sequences from criticism and share pleasure 'in lifting...internal inhibitions and making sources of pleasure fertile'. (P.F.L., VI, p.180). Jokes often have a further more political aim, a psychical power to promote the thought they contain, to upset critical judgement and convert the hearer into an ally.

Freud argues that jokes in dreams are not generally 'good' jokes because of the inherently asocial
nature of dream, and sites the difference between the two within the bounds of communication.¹⁸ He reads the difference in terms of mental activities, as developed play and the seeking of pleasure (jokes) and of wish fulfilment and the avoidance of unpleasure (dream).

The surrealist text presents dream narrative as an intelligible and interesting communication. According to Breton, the meaning should ideally be indeterminate in order to function:

\[ l'\text{apparition d'un poncif indiscutable à l'intérieur de ces textes est aussi tout à fait préjudiciable à l'espèce de conversion que nous voulions opérer par eux.} \ (M., \ p.107). \]

In the wider context of surrealist language, play on words has a purpose similar to that of Freud’s description of the joke-work. Breton’s intentions, voiced in the Manifestos, towards liberating language from the constraints of logic and reason, bear a remarkable resemblance to Freud’s descriptions.

The play on words ‘vie végétative/verdâtre/verdure’ in this text is a jest. Pleasure is derived from the linguistic pun. The presence of the verbal pun within the frame of valid communication, emphasises the element of play which brings it about, a developed play on words formed by linguistic association rather than mental substitution or representation. It necessitates participation, as such has a social purpose and therefore stands in a different relation to the text than the verbal

¹⁸ See Freud, *P.F.L.*, Vol.VI, p.238: ‘A dream is a completely asocial mental product; it has nothing to communicate to anyone else; it arises within the subject as a compromise between the mental forces struggling in him, it remains unintelligible to the subject himself and is for that reason totally uninteresting to other people. Not only does it not need to set any store by intelligibility, it must actually avoid being understood, for otherwise it would be destroyed’. Ironically these words read as a propaganda foil to Freud’s own work on dream - since he obviously found other peoples’ dreams interesting enough to occupy a major part of his life. See also Vol.IV, p.405 and p.533.
puns to dreams, quoted by Freud. It can be accredited with a tendentious aim - to demonstrate the existence of an accessible surreal by liberating language from the constraints of critical rational faculties.

According to Freud, the sharing of a joke makes it ‘the most sociable of all the mental functions that aim at a yield of pleasure’ because its completion ‘requires the participation of someone else in the mental processes it starts’. (P.F.L., VI, p.238). Necessity for participation, whether direct or indirect, is a sub-theme which runs throughout this dream text.

From the first pages of the Manifeste, the association between Surrealism and dream is evident. The surreal is described as:

\[ \text{la résolution future de ces deux états, en apparence si contradictoires, que sont le rêve et la réalité. (M, p.24).} \]

Dream and game are linked in Breton’s philosophical definition of Surrealism:

\[ \text{Le surréalisme repose sur la croyance à la réalité supérieure de certaines formes d'associations négligées jusqu'à lui, à la toute-puissance du rêve, au jeu désintéressé de la pensée. (M, p.36).} \]

Freud’s work on dreams is acknowledged and his theories are adapted by Breton to elucidate the workings of Surrealism but Breton rejects the validity and therapeutic value of analysis of the dream work. (M, pp.21-24). Dream narrative and automatic writing are two means of creating surrealist texts, of liberating ‘le jeu surréaliste’ which, in 1930, Breton regrets have not been fully explored. (M, pp.41, 107, 111).

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59 The latter for the most part constitute a play between manifest dream content and latent dream thoughts, are deemed unintelligible and therefore operate as a function of psychoanalytic interpretation, within a complicated system of symbolic substitutions.
Freud states that 'the technique of jokes indicate the same processes that are known to us as peculiarities of the dream work'. (P.F.L., VI, pp.222-3). Use of technique varies due to the different purposes of dreams and jokes and their differing social operation; 'dreams serve predominantly for the avoidance of unpleasure, jokes for the attainment of pleasure'. (P.F.L., VI, p.238). Technique is a source of pleasure in jokes but is mainly used as a defence mechanism in dreams.

The techniques - condensation, displacement and indirect representation - are all forms of substitution, of putting something in place of something else, of movement and of discourse.\^\textsuperscript{60}

'**Condensation**' consists of one thought having several representations or conversely one representation conveying several thoughts and incorporates the pleasurable effect of economy of psychical expenditure.

'**Displacement**' is a 'diversion of thought' which in dreams defends against revealing the value importance of the displaced. A secondary revision, it fills in gaps, introduces connections and rationalisation and it is used to avoid the censorship of conscious thinking.

'**Indirect representation**' or 'allusion' is the representation of something by allusion to it, by its opposite, by analogy and so on. It is used in dreams as a defence mechanism to deflect comprehension of associations, and in jokes to free the absurd.

The functioning of the surrealist text may be read in a manner similar to the functioning of jokes and dreams as described by Freud. Text and dream share similar purposes; to avoid critical

rationale and to 'access' the surreal world. Breton's preoccupations with a return to the simplicity of child-like perception, with dream, with the textualised fusion of dreaming and waking states, and with the revitalisation of language, bear obvious parallels to those Freudian theories to which he alludes.

Dream texts present apparent dream narratives as text, as a literary work, as art. The verbal pun which functions as a jest may be read as illustrative of the mechanisms of both dreams and surrealist texts. The football game is, within this context, a pictorial representation of free association techniques. Language is therefore a social game in which a series of manipulations of word and thought sequences occur, directed by memory as it relates to text.

Mechanisms similar to condensation, displacement and indirect representation may be detected in surrealist texts and read as spatial movements. Text is presented as a game whose purpose is not that of dreams - the avoidance of unpleasure - but that of jest, to seek out pleasure in the absurd, sense in nonsense, to return language to a forgotten state and to liberate the surreal by outwitting critical faculties.

Disruption of acquired critical faculties, as occurs in dreams and jokes is described by Freud as a 'plunging into the unconscious', a sense of illumination, and a re-experiencing of the joys of childhood. (P.F.L., VI, p.227). Breton describes a similar disruption of 'normative' textuality as 'lumière de l'image', a plunging into surrealist consciousness and a reliving of childhood. (M., pp.49, 52).

In his theoretical writings of around 1912, De Chirico describes the sensations he wishes to recreate in painting, as outside of logical apprehension:

[J'eus alors l'impression étrange que je voyais toutes les choses pour la première fois. Et la composition de mon tableau me vint à l'esprit; et chaque fois que je regarde cette peinture]
je revis ce moment: le moment pourtant est une énigme pour moi, car il est inexplicable. (Paulhan).

Mais presque tous ceux qui versent dans les sciences occultes sont doués d'une intelligence qui n'a rien d'hyperphysique: et c'est avec leur logique, avec cet inévitable 'modus agendi' qu'ils sont fatalement contraints de traiter le phénomène. Pourtant, si quelques 'vrais intelligences', si quelques vrais métaphysiciens se décidaient à créer des séances d'occultisme, qui sait quels nouveaux mondes, quels torrents de lyrisme inconnu jailliraient. (Paulhan).

The phenomenon of the unknown is described as akin to dream, as a metaphysical state, in terms of light (the revealing light of the enigma) and as a pleasureable child-like discovery for those who experience it: 'Il est étonné et content comme l'enfant auquel on a donné un jouet'. (Paulhan). However, unlike Breton, de Chirico does not aim to re-create the effects of dream. Indeed, the word 'dream' is a linguistic descriptive simile used to approximate certain sensations. His intertextual reference is philosophical rather than psychoanalytical and his sources are different. His aim is to attack reality as a visible phenomenon, disrupting order by the use of intellectual games. He recreates a new vocabulary and syntax to portray the illogical, the irrational, the non-subject and a sense of the absolute, the spirit of matter and the domain of metahistory, through the manipulation of the faculty of memory and visual language structures. Classical theories linking art to play describe the sense of pleasure to be gained in art from the satisfactory image which it produces of the real world. In seeking to do other than provide a representation, surrealist and metaphysical art encompass wider horizons than the Aristotelian aesthetic view. They inscribe the power to change the reader's view of the world rather than to act as a reflection of the real world, to create an independent world, whose textual intelligibility satisfies critical faculties.

I.A. Richards describes art and play as impulse systems, a means of working out responses which are otherwise inhibited by civilization. Play provides the opportunity for retaining 'many human activities which .... are no longer required of or possible to civilized man' and art provides an
analogous outlet through vicarious experience. Thus art and play enable escape or relief from the constraints of the civilising process.

Reading such critical theories in the broadest sense, they seem not dissimilar to Freud’s avoidance of social inhibitors (critical rationale) and a return to a stage at which the impulses have not been suppressed. Breton and de Chirico, unlike Freud and Richards, read the disturbance and disruption of critical faculties as positive. Richards and Freud seek to uphold and confirm systems of values based on mimetic representations of the classically ideal view of the world. Within the world which they create, they are men of wisdom, capable of value judgements based on traditional notions of ‘Truth’.

Bachelard describes the generative powers of the image to redefine the world from which it comes: ‘Quand l’image est nouvelle, le monde est nouveau’. (E., p.58) Riffaterre reads communication as a game in which the text verifies truth as a linguistic value, determined by internal structure:

\[
\text{la communication est un jeu, ou plutôt une gymnastique puisque c’est un jeu guidé, programmé par le texte. L’explication devra montrer comment ce contrôle est assuré par les mots; - deuxièmement, le jeu étant joué selon les règles du language (conformément ou transgressivement), le lecteur perçoit le texte en fonction de son comportement habituel dans la communication ordinaire: un texte non figuratif sera reconstitué, rationalisé comme figuratif. Parler de la vérité ou la non-vérité d’un tel texte n’a donc aucune pertinence: nous ne pouvons l’expliquer qu’en évaluant son degré de conformité au système verbal, en nous demandant s’il obéit aux conventions du code ou s’il les transgresse.}\]

In the world which Breton and de Chirico create, they maintain the patriarchal structure of the phallic judge who evaluates what is or is not a ‘good’ representation of that world and this

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authoritarian and controlling structure is as inherent to the programme of the text as the new rules by which the game is played.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURES: TEXT-TEXERE: TO WEAVE

A text is made up of a multiplicity of interwoven structures. The general narrative structure is constant, progressive and sequential and at a mimetic level is read as constituting a string of information units. Reading text in this way reveals the fabric to be an interweave of different types of structured relationships, of other ‘hidden’ or less obvious interactions and narratives.

Freud describes analysis of dream as a ‘following of associative threads’ which ‘interweave with one another and finally lead to a tissue of thoughts which are not only perfectly rational but can also be easily fitted into the known content of our mental processes’. (P.F.L., VI, p.26). In La Production du Texte, Michael Riffaterre makes a similar statement with regard to surrealist poetry:

_A l'intérieur de ce microcosme, une logique des mots s'impose qui n'a rien à voir avec la communication linguistique normale: elle crée un code spécial, un dialecte au sein du language qui suite chez le lecteur le dépouyement de la sensation où les Surréalistes voient l'essentiel de l'expérience poétique._

Rather than untangling the threads which lead from separate elements of the dream’s manifest content to transcribed psychical rationale, this analysis proposes to trace the relationships between various elements, to foreground the phenomenological structures of the game.

NARRATIVE OF DESCRIPTION/NARRATIVE OF EVENT

The general narrative content of the text contains two basic types of information: description of things, which will be called ‘description’, and description of actions, termed ‘event’.

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63 Michael Riffaterre, _La Production du Texte_, p.217.
The following analysis does not include an examination of the psychoanalytical implications of the symbolism of the descriptive narrative, nor of post-dream perceptions, but retains the implications of temporal and psychological distance as a feature of text presented as, or appearing to be, dream narrative. The text may be divided into sections which are mainly descriptive ‘(A)’ and those which describe dream events ‘(B)’. ‘(A)’ and ‘(B)’ denote whole passages and are interrupted by specific instances of each within this framework, referred to by ‘a’ and ‘b’ respectively as in the following examples:

(A)a. J’étais assis....locative description
que je n’avais pas autrement remarqué -
description of non manifest event
which becomes narrative event.
Lorsque - denotes time and signals
forthcoming event
à l’arrêt du train - event as description
(le train s’arrêta).

(B)b. elle se leva et dit ....
a. vie végétative - description as event
(speech).

b. j’hésitai - event/about to act
a. on était à - description of location -
semantic hesitation in sentence
context.

b. je me levai.....

(A)b. Cet homme se détachait - action temporally
preceding ‘vint’, therefore
textually describes ‘personnage’
rather than event of leaving
the football players.
a. d’une équipe....de trois personnages -
description of objects.

b. ils échangèrent quelques mots -
semi-pictorial description
(echanger) of talking, a
non-pictorial event.
a. sans faire attention à moi - non-event
thereby inscribed with its
opposite, possible event
presented as verbal description.

puis - signals forthcoming event.
(B)b. la femme disparut - event.
a/b. je demeurai à regarder -
continuous situation, non-active
event (demeurai) and positional watching
(form of participation).

a. les joueurs qui avaient repris - event as
description. Description follows action,
describes players
rather than action.

b/a. j’essayai d’attraper - narrative takes over
event describing trying rather
than repeated actions. Action is
therefore incomplete but
represented by finite past tense.

b/a. je n’y parvins qu’une fois - use of ‘que’
completes action. Timeless
sequence of unsuccessful dream
events represented by excluded
absence of completion in
textual presence of ne...que.

Woven through the alternating narrative of descriptions and events is a creative subversion of these
forms, an ambulating discourse between the manifest content and the narrative of that content,
between ‘dream and text. Descriptions of the dream often form events in the textual present,
demanding the reader’s participation. Verbal puns present the two most obvious examples of this.
Events and actions are sometimes presented as descriptions of the dream objects and are
sometimes textually enacted. For instance hesitation in the dream is rendered textually concrete
by a semantic gap.

Reading constantly shifts between narrative which describes the dream, narrative as an enactment,
an event and the relationship of these to the pictorial actions and images of the dream. There is
slippage between two dimensions of text; its present form and its content. The status of
information is continually in question and often ambivalent. The narrative structures of event and
description are textual manifestations which represent and internalise the fragmentation and
ambiguity of dislocation.
TEMPORAL NARRATIVE

'Temporal narrative' is a term used here to refer to the relationship between sequence of the events in the dream and their represented sequence in the text. Words which allude to events previous to textual events but hitherto unmentioned by it, create gaps in the ongoing narrative sequence. Disruption of the order of events is in part a consequence of the fragmentary nature of linguistic narrative representation but can also be read as evidence of displacement and as the encryptment of temporal inhibitors within the text. In psychosocial analytic terms these disruptions act as defence mechanisms and refer to textual events unshared by the reader. They prevent continuous temporal progression and identify the dream (past) as distinct from its narrative (present) by temporal movement between that narrative and the now noted absence of full dream representation.

The dream itself is therefore alluded to as an ideal and only partially representable entity. Although the narrative of the text is a composite whole, its apparent physical present is a fragmentary present whose gaps reveal the absence of present structure. These gaps disclose the temporary presence of other text existing on spatial planes outside the weave of present textual narrative.

Temporal 'punning' is a dislocation of time sequence and constitutes a structural repetition of the fragmentary nature of the remembered dream, providing a pleasurable escape (liberation) from social conventions and critical rationale. Seeking to avoid rational, temporal analysis becomes a game of out-witting logical progressions imposed by the socialised features of language structures as shared forms of communications. The examples set out diagrammatically below demonstrate the fragmentation of progressive sequences relative to the occurrence of events in the dream. The forward and backward direction of the arrows indicates links to text future and previous to the phrase isolated on the following page:
Continuous progressive
sequence ————> ————> ————> ————> ————> ————>
refers back to
‘une femme’ ——— reference to
absent ‘other’ ——— refers forward
of ‘otherwise’ ——— to ‘lorsque’

Figure 2

The act of noticing, logically precedes what is said about the woman. The only previous referent to ‘autrement’ is her sexed identity of ‘woman’. Consequently it describes everything there is to say about the woman by the implied previous absence of anything remarkable. It also prefigures what it is that is about to make her noticeable and by coincidence this takes the form of a remark. On further reading, it seems that her remark(ability) both post-dates and is prefigured by ‘autrement’, revealing hiatus and disruption in logical temporal sequence and rationale. A non-event becomes a textual event by predicting subsequent events. ‘N’avais pas remarqué’ is contextually a logical impossibility, ‘autrement’ simultaneously justifies it and compounds the absurdity.

As the text proceeds, reading and writing sequences defined by language structures are more evident than the order of events. In the following example ‘looking back’ would redirect movement towards the narrating subject. Paradoxically this absence of looking reaffirms his subject position as observer, thereby confirming his presence. He is present by a stated absence of observation on the part of the dream object, physically behind and textually in front of the woman but excluded from her present as observer and follower:
Continuous progressive

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La femme avançait dans la prairie sans se retourner

Text and woman moving forward

Directs back to the dreamer watching,
the narrator telling and the reader reading,
visually following the woman
who is not looking back.

Figure 3

The man coming towards the woman leaves the football players before he meets her but the text inverts the sequence of these events, stressing their importance. 'Vint' is prefaced by a long description of the man (in contrast to that of the woman) and by 'inquiétant' - which may be read as a commentary on the dream-work. The inequality of the descriptions together with the presentation of the man as a possible rival (athletic, wearing a hat- 'capping' a Freudian 'I' ego) suggest that the primary focus of the narrative centres on 'inquiétant' and deflects attention from the football game which subsequently becomes the focus of the dream. This confusion and replacing of dream objects is reflected in the text by the ambiguity of subject referred to by 'ils'. That 'ils' refers to the man and the woman only becomes apparent at the end of the sentence, since it is the football players who are the previous textual plural referents. Thus the third part of the sentence - 'puis la femme disparut' - indicates by linking (puis) that the man and woman are subjects of the whole. These inversions are temporally summarised as follows:

The first event (the man meeting the woman) textually precedes the second event (his leaving the football players) but the second event logically and temporally precedes event the first. The third event (the exchange of words) is temporally unlocatable until the fourth event (the woman's disappearance) identifies it as a continuation of the first event.
This movement between the sequence of events and their narrative representations can be read as a metaphoric representation of the game for subjective control of the ball.

In the final sentence a series of repeated events are globalized and economically represented by 'ne... qu’une' - a singular narrative event. The past historic shows completed action. Plural dream events are fused in a singular textual event present by a grammatically but not semantically negative allusion. The sequence is therefore brought to a halt by present representation of continually repeated past events.

TENSES

Use of past tenses in the text serves as a constant reminder to the reader that events in the text are described in retrospect. Grouping of tenses shows an even pattern of distribution in which finite past tenses are grouped together in two sections and surround or enclose a central section of imperfect tenses. This structure isolates the central portion of the text and highlights it as different to the surrounding narrative. A paradoxical sense of timeliness and lyricism occurs in the central portion of text, whose rural descriptions contextualised with the verbal puns make it most demanding of the readers full and present participation.
Concentration of imperfect tenses in this central section of the text highlights their dual grammatical functions: to convey description in the past (‘sur laquelle tombait un jour’) and continuity of action in the past, re-presenting the moment of the event (‘avançait’ and ‘détaîait’).

This sense of continuity brings the action temporally and emotionally closer to the reader. The tenses present actions which are continuous or incomplete within the textual experience. Actions therefore appear as events, experienced as present within a retrospective frame.

The past historic creates a double distance between reading and event, acknowledging text as a formal literary record of past event and positing that fact in the verb ending.

The pluperfect tense is temporal evidence of disruption of the sequence of events. It is generally used to refer back to completed events which temporally preceded the point at which the pluperfect verb occurs in the textual narrative sequence. Thus such use imparts dream events, explanations of actions and often make links, between the present and past textual information which the reader has obtained. Since these present information about the dream-work out of sequence and unknowable to the reading/writer, they may also be read as defence mechanisms, protecting the authority of the narrator as ‘author’ of the dream.
SEEING AND OBSERVING

Verbs of seeing and of observation form a structure of enclosure around the central passage in which the narrator describes what he/the dreamer saw at the top of the staircase. This evolves from the dream subject’s (past) not-seeing of the dream object (woman), to his watching the dream objects (football players). By the end of the text he is describing the act of intentional looking (‘je demeurai à regarder’) rather than the act of not quite noticing (‘que je n’avais pas autrement remarquée’). ‘Noticing’ is emphasised by the complex structure in which the absolute negation is subverted.

A similar, if converse structure is created with regard to the dream object’s observation of the dreamer. The act of looking appears to give direction to the woman’s remark. When she looks at the dreamer (‘en me regardant’), he notices her and what she says is reported in the narrative. When the woman and the man are talking, the words exchanged are are not reported. They are not paying any attention to the dreamer (‘sans faire attention à moi’).

These references lead into and out of the central passage which is differentiated from them, being a descriptive event independent of perceived and stated acts of observation. It is therefore liberated from the personalisation of these constraints. Instead of describing the action of looking in the dream as a part of the dream, a distanced event, the narrator identifies himself, the dreamer and the dream objects in a single plural (‘nous’) and writes what the writing subject sees. Finite temporality is momentarily abandoned as action gives way to description. The text therefore manifests the act of looking and the means by which the reader will also participate and see.

VERBAL GAMES

VIE VÉGÉTATIVE

The phrase ‘vie végétative’ is grammatically and structurally separated from the body of the text as reported speech and textually differentiated by punctuation. Although it forms an apparently
self-sufficient and enclosed unit, it is surrounded by text and can be read as a generator both of action and of the later pun on ‘verdure’. The lack of defining article gives the phrase something of the quality of a casual greeting, whilst direction is given to it by the mention ‘en me regardant’.

The act of looking thus indicates a possible application for the meaning, a clue to contextual relationship and significance. The importance of seeing and observing is emphasised in the textual prefiguration of what the woman is about to do to make her noticeable: ‘que je n’avais pas autrement remarquée’. The woman is described by the (retrospective) absence of her remarkability, before she speaks. The look suggests that the phrase may be directed at the dreamer (vie), implying a negative form of passivity in his life or on his part.  

Such an interpretation is textually reinforced by the dreamer’s previous inaction. The significance of game-like quality of the phrase’s seemingly nonsensical content (and apparent self-contradiction) is reinforced by the structure of its phonological content. The repetitive alliterative sounds [vi ve-ze-ta-tiv], present a structure in which [e(z)e-t(a)t] are enclosed by [vi] and its inversion [iv] and may be said to form ‘chiastic’ stasis. In Chiastic Structures in Literature: Some Forms and Functions, Max Nanny suggests that the chiastic series abba may be seen as a dynamic or temporal sequence that reverses its movement or inverts its development. 

This arrangement of form is represented in the diagram below.

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The pattern of alliteration is reinforced by the double 't' and 'é' sounds. The pattern of enclosure is reinforced by the composition of the sounds: one long, three short and one long.

The circular nature of the repetitive sounds reinforce the impression of self-referentiality. At the same time, the logically ambiguous significance of the phrase prompts the reader to search for other meanings.

The ambiguity is reminiscent of linguistic puns or games, and its meaning, or one of its meanings, may lie in its functioning. The phrase may be read as self-generating and self-contained. Circularity reflects similar circular forms in the text: the dreamer’s move from passivity to activity to passivity and the pattern of tenses described above. As an icon of symmetry it may be read as a ‘mise en abyme’ of the text. The apparent semantic chaos generates actions described in the text and is itself a description and a violation of semantic inactivity. In this reading of the dream, the phrase functions as a generator, as an instigator of action. It prompts the dreamer to take an active role, to get up and follow the woman and it prefigures the later pun on verdure to which it is semantically related.

According to Freud dream work treats reported speech, along with other specifications such as numbers, ‘as a medium for the expression of its purpose’. The dream narrative framework constitutes a context in which specifications such as ‘vie végétative’ may be read as inscribed with the desire for symbolic and significant referents. The verbal manifestation may therefore be seen to be a demonstrative model of the working of the text - a game in which the reader is prompted to take a more active part.
VERDATRE/DUR

The description of the 'prairie' or field, is the only part of the text which is explicitly fantastic both pictorially and semantically. It constitutes a visual/phonological game of associations between word form and meaning and is the only moment when the dreamer as subject identifies himself with the woman as object, when 'je' and 'elle' momentarily become 'nous'. This fusion focuses attention on the description of the scene.

The locations - métro, Trocadéro and escalier have their familiar Parisian referents. Naming a precise location in the text establishes a common link between reader and event and serves as a foil to set off the subsequent fantasy. The short [o] sound of the phonologically repetitive device 'au haut' creates a hiatus, a gap between the two locations and expressing differentiation between scenes. This phonological space precipitates the reader into the prairie.

The prairie sentence 'sur laquelle tombait un jour verdâtre, extrêmement dur, de fin d'après-midi', operates in the following manner:

_Sur laquelle tombait un jour:_ Two meanings - a) end of the day (= unit of time) and b) end of daylight.

_{Verdâtre:_ As a colour adjective, verdâtre limits the meaning of jour to (day)light, something which can actually be seen. However verdâtre is a peculiar colour with which to describe light and is therefore disturbing, signalling a strange environment of poetic realities.

_{extrêmement dur:_ The grammatical structure of the sentence links 'dur' to 'jour' However, phonetic dissonance, the emphatic 'extrêmement' and its unusual association with 'verdâtre' combine to create semaotic dislocation so that 'dur' combines with 'verdâtre' to form 'verdure' - in a game of associations which has its own internal rationale and disrupts the denotational logic of the text.

_{de fin d'après-midi:_ Reinstates jour in its second meaning as a measure of time - day - referring the reader to the beginning of the phrase.

These readings may be visually represented as follows:
In the context of Breton’s description of the surrealist image, the sentence may be described as a verbal metaphor in which the conjoining of the separate parts liberates potential pluralities of meaning.

The pun on verdître-dur can be semantically associated with the generative phrase ‘vie végétative’ through their common signifiers of colour, greenery, vegetation, growth, life and so on. The apparently negative ‘végétative’ is enlivened through the positive connotations of this contextualisation. The association of dur with vert reverts the order of reading and recalls the previously ambiguous remark made by the woman. This is reinforced by the ‘v’ sounds of the words. The associations and their movements can be visually represented in the diagrammatic pattern below:

Retaining the grammatical structure of words close to each other permits manipulation of semantics, phonetics and other linguistic elements pertaining to those words. In consequence words may be arranged like objects in the manner of cut-out collages and separated into categories according to their grammatical functions. Language is therefore a game in which the players
construct texts according to grammatical rules. Textual truths are created which bear no relation to the real world but which are presented in a grammatically and syntactically consistent form. Language thus becomes the repository of truth about the world which it creates and by inference the only means by which such truths are verifiable. Observing the structure of the game demonstrates the boundaries which control it.

**SUMMARY**

Various narrative structures have been shown to centre around the section of text in which the narrator describes the prairie, thereby exerting control over the continuation of the text beyond this point. This central section is enclosed within the text but it is also a closed structure in itself whose hermetic nature constitutes textual independence. It is simultaneously that which is contained within a structure of continuity and that which disrupts it by an inherent discontinuity.

The flow of the text ensures continuity, illustrated by the movement of the ball between players. 'Les mots qui se suivent pratiquent entre eux la plus grande solidarité' (M., p.45). This is the narrative which links images and events, the 'coulée verbale' of automatic writing and dream texts. (P.d.J., p.184).

Breton is preoccupied and indeed anxious about maintaining this almost orgiastic frenzy of excitement and illumination: 'Seule la moindre perte d'élan pourrait m'être fatale'; 'la continuité absolue de la coulée'; 'Le débit torrentiel de l'écriture automatique'; and in metapoetic terms
'Rivière d'étoiles'. (M., pp.45; P.d.J., p.171; C.d.T., p.63) In her thesis, Elsa Dunwoodie discusses this flow.\(^6\)

Breton’s hunger for ‘la nuit des étoiles’ demands a continuous sequence of surrealist activity, rather than a finite ending, and for Dunwoodie, plays an important part in his alienation of critics: ‘Mon partie est pris contre la critique. Je la déteste quand elle se permet de conclure’.\(^7\)

I have demonstrated the linear enactment of the game in the second dream text to describe the structure of the reading process. Freudian theory isolates dream objects and commentary on them, reading these in terms of pseudo-universal symbolism, defining them by reference to a his own ‘higher’ authority. Critical approaches to Breton have tended to use a similar approach, reading images in terms of the authoritative context presented by the Manifestes and Breton adopts this pseudo-objective method when commenting on the surrealist object, using and universalising Freudian approaches to interpret the subjective images in de Chirico’s art.

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\(^6\) Elsa Dunwoodie, ‘A Stammering Staircase: association and disruption in André Breton’s surrealist poetry (1919-1939)’, Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1985. Dunwoodie comments on the question of the inapplicability of traditional criticism, based on a comparative evaluation and analysis of standardised techniques. She points out that the structural ambiguities of the writing process have perhaps contributed to the polarity of criticism which usually reads Breton’s texts in the context of the directives given in the Manifestes. It is interesting to note the pattern which occurs by this obedience to authority. Thus, the critics, bereft of the traditional body of values which have been acquired to enable them to pass judgements, merely adapt the system by substituting a different set of values and creating hierarchies accordingly. Yet the ambiguity of the image definitions which Breton gives and the absence of proof of method of generation, often leaves the literary text relatively unassailable by such methods of evaluation. This is less true of visual work, which Breton can and does criticise from the point of its production and according to the rules of spontaneity and experimentation which he has established and which are often visually evident in the art text in a way in which they are not in the literary work. Yet this critical evaluation is one in which artistry is less a question of technique than of impact. Hence authority is an ambivalent figure; it is neither based such rules as are given in the Manifestes, nor on the reading writer who actively experiences surrealism, but on both. Breton’s anxieties about this transfer of authority and the ambivalence of his position of theoretician/critic and author/poet are reflected in his texts.

\(^7\) Letter to Simone Breton, 18-08-1920, in Margueritte Bonnet, André Breton: Naissance de l’aventure surréaliste, Corti, Paris, 1975, p.402.
The above mapping of Breton’s text above affirms the structure it uncovers. It is written in what I would consider to be the equivalent of appositional anger. That is to say, it repeats the structure with which it is in conflict, in a manner similar to de Chirico’s use of perspective and it is dependant upon those structures from which it departs. This examination of structures of authority has enabled me to examine and assess the games in which I was involved and this was a part of the process of self-education, an examination of foundations.

Breton’s desire for the unknown woman, his use and abuse of Nadja, his obsession with the maintenance of his ‘élan’ as a continuous ‘rivière d’étoiles’, a ‘coulée absolue’ present a highly traditional masculine and misogynist philosophy, an expression of extreme excitement about his authorship with which I do not identify.

In order to complete this section, I propose to offer a general discussion of the historical textual politics which have placed de Chirico’s work on the surrealist map. I shall look at structures of dislocation and suggest why there has been a substitution of authorities in the reading of his paintings. I shall locate the specificity of a space by outlining the rigorous authority of his textual iconographical presence.

PERSPECTIVES

I have already discussed the way in which painted light and shade are dislocated from sources, creating incongruous effects. It is possible to substitute the painted image for the written text and, reading left to right, with emphasis on key elements, to describe and map pictorial associations, balances and reverberations between objects, forms and colours. This type of map creates a
unified chart of the organisation of the work. The formal study of fine art incorporates the study of work in this way as an extension of perspectival work and mathematical divisions based on Greek and Renaissance theory of Art.

In order to highlight the physical aspects of dislocation in the painting, I have constructed a diagram of the key perspectival lines. These present a structure whose perspective and proportions are highly exaggerated and construed in grammatical dislocation with the language of the science of perspective. The discourse of rebellion constructed by De Chirico is the antithesis of traditional mathematics of unity and spatial recession within a work. It is textually dependent on the language of visual representation which it subverts and it incorporates and acknowledges the artist's formal studies, his intellectual acquisition of the techniques and styles of the artists of the Trecento, the Quattrocento and the Renaissance and particularly of theories of perspective in architecture and painting grounded in texts written by Alberti and Serlio. The diagram which follows illustrates perspective in the painting:
In a Renaissance work, images and architecture are organised in terms of a coherent vanishing point and directional lines radiate from that point. Formal perspective is used to organise a space distance within a work in imitation of reality, to present the view. In a more complex work there are sometimes two vanishing points, producing an impression of distance with perhaps an hiatus in the form of a river, a window or a hill in between.

This image is ‘framed’ in a traditional way by the buildings on either side which lead the eye towards the centre of the painting but the angles are extreme and distorted and the vanishing points conflict. The buildings do not bear a coherent relation to each other, their perspective is internalised and individual and the dislocation of logic between the purpose of the frame and the manner of its presentation, creates an imbalance in the reader’s viewing position. Moreover the box-forms of the trunk, the base of the statue and the diagrammatic lines on the right-hand side are out of perspective and proportion with their surroundings. Indeed the base of the statue is constructed from oppositional lines which do not converge and which give the illusion that the back is larger than the front, a perspective which would accord with the viewer being behind the statue, in the centre of the painting. There is no resting place for the eye of the reader communicating with the work in terms of actual or pictorial representation.

I feel that these perspectival incongruities read as an extreme form of similar effects found in the work of Cézanne, who in viewing and painting an object from different angles, effectively emphasised the three dimensional view of the contouring eye in representing plastic structures on a two dimensional surface. Cubist painting evolved and extrapolated this representation of three dimensional reality on a two dimensional plane. While Cubism and Metaphysics are very different, since the former deals with the reorganisation of perceived facts and the latter with the manipulation of memory of psychological facts in relation to external reality, it seems possible that de Chirico’s contact with Apollinaire and the cubist circle which so influenced his thinking on Orphism, may also have influenced the dislocative effects of his Renaissance-based use of
perspective. By manipulating the syntax of perspective, de Chirico creates a staged setting for the objects which appears coherent but comprises a structure of displacement. The viewing eye reads from left to right but is positionally disrupted by the incongruities which fragment apperception of the image as an entity presented from a single external view. This has a profoundly disorientating effect.

The narrative that evolves in de Chirico’s work between the images and the manner of their representation is rigorously logical, personal and authoritarian. The dislocative effects of verbal jokes, similar to those of dream, serve to maintain control over the presentation of images and structures. The paintings can be read as mimetic reproductions designed to reproduce these effects. The mathematical rigour of their construction, the deliberate staging and choice of objects convey a world subjectively designed to appear incongruous but with a hermetic internalised rationale.

CRITICAL CONTEXTS

Historically, readings of de Chirico’s art have been heavily influenced by the way in which they were read by the Surrealists. The effects they created were read, in the illuminist tradition, as ends in themselves. Specific works, certain objects and the atmospheric settings, generated works by artists such as Max Ernst, René Magritte, Yves Tanguy and Salvador Dali amongst others. Breton’s art criticism, primarily produced in essays and articles, culminated in his authoritative and seminal text, *Le Surréalisme et la Peinture* (1928). Arguably, the inclusion of de Chirico’s early work within the surrealist canon and the rejection by the Surrealists of his

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68 With the notable exception of Jean Cocteau’s *Mystère Laïc* (1928), illustrated by de Chirico.


70 The section on de Chirico appeared in the second part of his preliminary essay in *L.R.S.*, No.7, juin 1926, pp.306.
later work have detracted from serious study of his own theory of metaphysical painting until relatively recently. It is effectively only in Italy, where de Chirico and Savino's nationality is acclaimed and where most of their writings were published, that this has been recognised. In America, Britain and France and other countries where Surrealism took hold, most of the work on de Chirico has been from within the frame of selective reconciliation and renunciation created by Breton, although the 1989 exhibition 'Italian Art in the 20th Century' went a long way towards the rehabilitation of de Chirico's authority and intellectual integrity.

The metaphysical theories developed by de Chirico and his brother Alberto Savino are extremely complex. They combine the philosophies of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer with those of Heraclitus and with Orphic doctrines and are studied in some detail in the exhibition catalogue by Paolo Baldacci.71 Inherent is a belief in the mystic and magical essence or sign hidden in all things, which the artist grasps and presents through a process of translating, modifying and deforming natural appearances, expressing concepts through the intelligent alteration of form. As such, objects and allusions form the vocabulary of a cabbalistic 'family language' conceived by de Chirico and his brother.

Both brothers produced highly intellectual works. They were educated in Greece, Italy and Germany, and de Chirico also spent considerable time in France. Together they constructed a philosophy of Metaphysics which demonstrates their comprehensive cultural education and is grounded in a translation of verbal into visual with the poet-seer as central authority. By combining turn of the century concepts of semantics and linguistics with pre-Greek concepts of Memory and Orphic doctrines, they created a radical visual language system. This system has a rigorous intellectual integrity and a programme which organises the redemption of man, through the re-uniting of the soul and its divine principle by the removal of fixed temporality.

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71Paolo Baldacci, 'Metaphysical Painting', in Italian Art in the 20th Century, pp.61-70.
For the Surrealists to accept chaos as a divine order would have been irreconcilable with their own theories. For Breton to acknowledge the full import of de Chirico's intentions and fully to validate his philosophy, would have resulted in the negation of the authority of his own position and in the philosophy of Surrealism. I feel that reading effects as finite in terms of dislocation and atemporality in the paintings, lead to partial misreadings, whether wilful or otherwise of his theories and to the editing of those which appear in surrealist texts. His art and his theories were literally subjugated to Breton's authority and were selectively and conditionally revered and incorporated. By the time he arrived in Paris, perhaps expecting a recognition of his authority, there must have been a conflict of interest which would have provoked the now legendary ruptures and petty jealousies on both sides.

It is arguable that surrealist critical theory influenced a misreading which in turn led to a limited comprehension of Metaphysics in current critical theory. Criticism of his work produces commentary on the strangeness of chosen objects, their appearances and a limited amount of symbolic reference, almost exclusively those commented on, acknowledged or inherited by the Surrealists. Familiar symbols such as Ariadne, have been identified and their significance read into the texts yet there is little explanation of the place occupied by literary or philosophical intertextual reference. The substitution of authorities has lead to a kind of second-hand and abstracted criticism of the works, a partial denial of their intellectual organisation which weights the biographical content of intertextual reference.

These limitations have lead to a critical collusion with the Surrealists rupture with de Chirico by the rejection of the idea of continuity in his work from 1919 onwards which has further reinforced the limits of understanding the ideological and intellectual content of the works. Absent in this rejection is the fundamental disagreement with the painter's purpose which is oppositional to surrealist aims in producing works. For de Chirico dreams presented an analogy, a linguistic metaphor for temporal and denotational disorientation (dependant on a symbolic form of memory),
in the interpretation of a new humanistic culture of the uniqueness, the essentiality of the idea in grasping the non-significance of the phenomenal world.

In the general lacunae created by the non-subject, a philosophical nihilism derived from Nietzsche, critics have traced the relations between paintings and objects, building up a language of associations and interpretations in the search for a unified meaning. I have found this a useful means of compiling intertextual reference, without initially realising that it did not help towards the creation of a personal viewing space. There is considerable linking of the reappearances and substitutions of settings, objects and symbols in other works. While this foregrounds the critic’s research it also presents a statistical reference system for constructing narratives, with hypotheses based on deductive reasoning possibly compensating for the absence of subject narrative in the works. Indeed it is arguable that these rationalisations present traditional criticism in crisis faced with the subversion of the traditional frame of representational reference. I am not suggesting that it is of more value to read a work in accordance with the frame of authoritative intentions since I feel that this subordinates the presence of self to an alien textual authority. What I do find of interest is the mapping of didactic exchanges, the evacuation, substitution and reinstatement of authority, and the maps of interrelated objects, and the structures of dilemma and confusion, which have been presented by critical authorities. In Concepts of Modern Art, first published by Penguin and reprinted by Thames and Hudson, de Chirico is briefly mentioned in the Chapter on Dada and Surrealism with no reference to Metaphysics. In general terms, where the concept is mentioned, it is not elaborated. De Chirico’s texts do not translate into a traditional narratives and I find it ironic that readings which often construct their own textuality and authority by cross-referencing other works, do so by presenting a critical rationale based on allusions, quotations, acknowledgement and obscurity which mirrors the appearance of the works.

In Anthologie de l'humour noir, first published in 1938, Breton imposed his own overriding

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authority by framing the works of Savino (and incidentally, de Chirico who is by then only briefly mentioned) within the context of psychoanalysis: ‘Nous sommes ici au coeur du même monde sexuel symbolique tel que l’ont décrit Volkelt et Scherner avant Freud’.

In a published letter he offers a reconstruction of the artist’s personal identity through psychoanalytic criticism of ‘The Child’s Brain’ (1914). Concentrating on the personal, rather than the intellectual and philosophical content of the works, he effected an intimate and fraternal negation of the latter. Breton takes issue with critical appraisal of the work, transposing the sex of the father figure in a typically misogynist and even spiteful reading of de Chirico which exhibits his own perceptions of masculinity and femininity and perhaps his jealous insecurities:

Selon nous, il s’agit en réalité, d’une femme. Les paupières baissées sont d’une séduction féminine... les seins sont proéminents. Cette nudité elle-même est une invitation au ‘voyeurisme’ que la peinture réserve aux femmes... un corps flasque et efféminé. Les poils frisés de la poitrine, la singulière moustache, et les favoris excitent la recherche ‘voyeuriste’ des organes sexuels féminins. Cet homme semble à la fois réticent et soumis au livre.

Breton discusses this painting at length and determines that the book which he states would in Freudian terms usually be regarded as symbol of the vagina, is actually masculine (presumably) because it is a book of knowledge. Although the penis marker is penetrating the book, indicating the presence of an absent reader, rather than being a sexual attribute, he alters the reading to suit his interpretation. After all if the book hadn’t changed sex, there would be far too many women in authoritative positions in the picture!

Or, les livres sont généralement des symboles du vagin, comme tout ce qui s’ouvre et se referme... Si le livre doit ici représenter un sexe, c’est le sexe mâle. Ce livre d’or est celui de la paternité, autant que de la connaissance. On imagine facilement le livre avec sa langue

73 Lettre à Robert Amadou, published in Revue Métapsychique, reprinted in Marguerite Bonnet, Perspective Cavalière, Gallimard, Paris, 1970. Both quotations are from this letter.
(phallus) de ruban dardée, ce qui complète la triade familiale suggérée par ce tableau: l’enfant, le père-femme et la mère-homme.

Breton’s primary readings of de Chirico’s art incorporate selected quotations from his theories both to establish a correspondence with surrealist theory and to provide commentary on his art. They imply an intimacy or familiarity with the artist’s intentions while insisting on the enigma which the works present. They also present an authoritative emasculation of the artist.

Following the break in relations, Breton therefore substitutes the authority of his own interpretation of the work in terms of psychoanalysis. Baldacci’s text reinstates the artist’s authority over the text and presents a figure no less determined than Breton in his programming.

Images present de Chirico’s personal textual identity within the system which he re-presents. The phrasing of the language is patriarchal. The images are often phallic and sometimes painted in a child-like way. While this derives from a concept of representation through aesthetic filters, many of the images are those of masculine youth and appear qualitatively as toys.74 Boats and trains, plaster fish, statues, obscure inscriptions, pictures, perspectival diagrams are the artist’s tools of the trade in intertextual heroism. The images are staged, presented for a certain view. Their iconography is often cryptic and cabbalistic, issuing an intellectual challenge to theoreticians to interpret the steps of their origins.

The images present an elitist program whose disturbance is intellectual and charts the ego of the poet seer. As such they continue the Renaissance tradition of the work as a religious program, a concept derived from early Greece. The program which includes a transcendental aim, is highly

74 In a 1913 drawing entitled ‘La Joie’, the same frock coat statue figure is depicted from the back and placed beside the base of a huge chimney. In the foreground a toy train is running by while on the right a phallic toy cannon is being fired. Reproduced in Frantisek Smejkal, Surrealist Drawings, Octopus Books Ltd., London, 1974, Fig.6.
personalised. The narratives are not sequential stories in the formal sense, rather they are the compositions of poetic endeavour and identity. The multivalent language of signs, the atemporal system of reference, and the presentation of poetic essentialism, convey the artist's message through images and anecdotes which relate directly to his intellectual and poetic supremacy. They combine abstract personal heroic ideals by means of verbal and intellectual games which veil the programming authority of the artist who selects and abstracts images, indicating and signing his didactic textual presence.

The authority of the poet-seer is a construction of masculine textuality allied to the hero cults with which both de Chirico and Breton identified. While de Chirico's conceptualisation of the heroic landscape owes much to the Swiss born painter Arnold Böcklin (1827-1901), it is integral to both epic poetry and philosophy. In a series of self portraits, painted between 1919 and 1924, de Chirico identified himself with Mercury, Euripides, Heraclitus and Ulysses. Elsewhere he identifies with Apollo and Theseus of the Argonauts. Indeed the plethora of heroic figures with which he identified might today make him the subject of a case study of multi-personality disorder! Apart from these more overt identifications, de Chirico incorporated hidden and secret systems of reference combining his biographical and intellectual 'fathers'.

The masculine textuality with which he identifies is based on precepts of dominance, of proving the right of inheritance through works which testify to philosophical and intellectual authority. The combination of overt and covert reference reads as an homoerotic flirtation in which clues and invitations are combined in a highly technical language of concealment. This coded language is only decipherable by those with as competent a grasp of the complex underlying philosophies as de Chirico and he uses obscure reference to elude comprehension and to invite acknowledgement of his intellectual status. I feel there is a tension in the paintings between the assurance with which de Chirico presents and portrays himself as a cultural hero and the proving of his value inherent in that tradition. Like Breton, De Chirico perceives himself as a philosopher with a
message and the works ‘testify’ to his membership of the elitist class of visionary patriarchal rulers.

My relation to the painting is one of shared cultural textuality: I can express certain intellectual affinities resulting from the recognition of the systems of thought and reference with which the artist is engaged. I also recognise that such textuality is informed by a personal reading of the masculine heroic structures of patriarchal philosophical traditions and that the structure of critical authority affirms those traditions. The level on which I communicate with these highly organisational texts is one of an affinity with the experience of dislocation. That identification lies in a positional exclusion from the text, in an ability to view the structures from outside the frame and to sense an innate understanding of the cultural experience of exclusion.

There few images of woman who, when represented, is depicted within these masculine cultural traditions. The statues of Ariadne, the shadow of the girl with the hoop, the headless torso, his mother, all are properties of the artist, the mythic muses of his textuality. They do not represent a female presence as such and the alienation created by de Chirico’s use of filters such as casts and shadows ironically echoes her exclusion from the philosophical and artistic traditions with which he identifies.

Once established, the multivalence of de Chirico’s language of signs is extended in a highly personal way, yet for me they remain undeniably masculine constructions. The mannequin which he uses to represent the poet is a tailor’s dummy rather than a dressmaker’s. His artichokes may have an Apollonian significance through their sunflower origins but being situated at the base of a cannon read almost as a genital joke. While I identify with the desire to create a different symbolic order, the combination of historical and contemporary reference and his use of kitsch represents the individual innovatory language of his textually construed masculine identity.
The charting of the heroism of the awesome intellect at work in its search for identification within the systems with which it engages, exposes its dependence on the past, on a linear inheritance, and on external recognition. The masculine concept of heroism is dependant upon participation and recognition within the group which it dominates. It comprises a mixture of exhibitionism in acts and deeds and of invitations to collude. It presents ideals in terms of absolutes with respect being evaluated on the basis of attainment and proximity to ideals, which leaves little room for humanity, perceived as ‘flawed’. Within this culture the masculine human is always struggling to attain his unattainable textual ideal. For de Chirico, that ideal is intellectual and conceptual with its own traditional heros.

I recognise that these systems present a structure of enclosure and exclusion, of dominance and submission and that identifying with them presents an intellectual trap. Yet through the recognition and the re-thinking of the feelings of exclusion comes an understanding of my own experience and therefore how I read these texts. They do not merely map the past. De Chirico’s exuberant embracing of his textuality advocating the nihilism of the subject is directly confrontational. The subject is himself, his textual inheritance and his presence and perhaps, with the addition of kitsch, some deeper recognition of the absence which this textuality presents. For in aligning himself with heroic idealism, his masculine ego is dependent on recognition of his authoritarian message, its status within the group.

Breton identified with many of the same heroes, sharing a similar inheritance which he recognised in de Chirico’s art: ‘Les rameaux de l’arbre généalogique fleurissent un peu partout’. (P.P., p.95). He also claimed de Chirico’s ‘mythologie moderne’ for Surrealism yet his stance is ambivalent, repudiating de Chirico’s dependence on the past, whilst himself using the same technique (and often the same sources) in his philosophical work. He both quotes and paraphrases de Chirico’s writing and alternately praises and denigrates his work. There is, as I have said, evidence of a profound intellectual rivalry in Breton’s texts which lead to anger and irreconcilable differences.
Breton charged de Chirico with 'egoïsme amer' while de Chirico called Breton a 'pretentious ass and impotent arriviste' and wrote of 'the hysterical envy of the surrealists'.\textsuperscript{73} The re-writing of de Chirico's philosophical message by Breton's surrealist critical authority demonstrates a conflict of ego-recognition. Breton, in the position of acolyte, looks to de Chirico who requires a following but the ultimate aim of each is oppositional. On one hand, Breton's appropriation of individual textuality and intellect and its subordination to the group echo his parasitic acquisition of women's physical, intellectual and artistic being; on the other, De Chirico and Breton are bound by the confines of the traditional patriarchal game: the frame of textual reference, the map by which they explore linguistic revolution is a philosophical phallocracy.

Cinq Rêves

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Paul Eluard, Marcel Noll et moi nous trouvons réunis à la campagne dans une pièce où trois objets sollicitent notre attention : un livre fermé et un livre ouvert, d'assez grandes dimensions, de l'épaisseur d'un atlas et inclinés sur une sorte pupitre à musique, qui tient aussi d'un autel. Noll tourne les pages du livre ouvert sans parvenir à nous intéresser. En ce qui me concerne, je ne m'occupe que du troisième objet, un appareil métallique de construction très simple, que je vois pour la première fois et dont j'ignore l'usage, mais qui est extrêmement brillant. Je suis tenté de l'emporter mais, l'ayant pris en mains, je m'aperçois qu'il est étiqueté 9 fr. 90. Il disparaît d'ailleurs à ce moment et est remplacé par Philippe Soupault, en grand pardessus de voyage blanc, chapeau blanc, souliers blancs etc. Soupault est pressé de nous quitter, il s'excuse aimablement et j'essaie en vain de le retenir. Nous le regardons par la fenêtre s'éloigner en compagnie de sa femme, que nous ne voyons que de dos et qui est comme lui toute habillée de blanc. Sans chercher à savoir ce que Noll est devenu, Eluard et moi, nous quittons alors la maison. Eluard me demande de l'accompagner à la chasse. Il emporte un arc et des flèches. Nous arrivons au bord d'un étang couvert de faisanes. 'A la bonne heure', dis-je à Eluard. Mais lui: 'Cher ami, ne crois pas que je suis venu ici pour ces faisanes, je cherche tout autre chose, je cherche François. Tu vas voir François.' Alors toutes les faisanes d'appeler : 'François, François, François!' Et je distingue au milieu de l'étang un superbe faisân doré. Eluard décoche dans sa direction plusieurs flèches mais - ici l'idée de la maladresse prend en quelque sorte possession du rêve qu'elle n'abandonnera plus - les flèches portent 'trop court'. Pourtant le faisân doré finit par être atteint. A la place de ses ailes se fixent alors deux petites boîtes rectangulaires de papier rose qui flottent un instant sur l'eau après que l'oiseau a disparu. Nous ne bougeons plus jusqu'à ce qu'une femme nue, très belle, s'élève lentement de l'eau, le plus loin possible de nous. Nous la voyons à mi-corps puis à mi-jambes. Elle chante. A ma grande émotion, Eluard lance vers elle plusieurs traits qui ne l'atteignent pas mais voici que la femme, qu'une seconde nous avions perdue de vue, émerge de l'eau tout près de nous. Une nouvelle flèche vient de lui transpercer le sein. Elle y porte la main d'un geste adorable et se reprend à chanter. Sa voix s'affaiblit lentement. Je n'ai pas plus tôt cessé de l'entendre qu'Eluard et elle ne sont plus là. Je me trouve en présence de petits hommes mesurant environ 1 m. 10 et habillés de jersey bleu. Ils arrivent de tous les points de l'étang et, comme je les observe sans défiçance, l'un d'eux, ayant l'air d'accomplir un rite, s'apprête à m'enfoncer dans le mollet une très petite flèche à deux pointes. Il me semble qu'on veut m'unir dans la mort au faisân doré et à la belle chanteuse. Je me débats et j'envoie à terre plusieurs des petits hommes bleus. Mais le petit sacrificateur me poursuit et je finis par tomber dans un buisson où, avec l'aide d'un des autres poursuivants, il cherche à me ligoter. Il me semble facile de terrasser mes deux adversaires et de les ligoter à ma place mais la maladresse ne me permet que de leur prendre la corde et d'en faire autour de leur
corps un noeud extrêmement lâche. Je m’enfuis ensuite le long d’une voie de chemin de fer, et, comme on ne me poursuit plus, je modère peu à peu mon allure. Je passe à proximité d’une charmante usine que traverse un fil télégraphique dirigé perpendiculairement à la voie et situé à cinq ou six mètres du sol. Un homme de ma taille tend à deux reprises, très énergiquement, le bras vers le fil sur lequel, sans aucun mouvement de lancement, il réussit à placer en équilibre, à égale distance de l’usine et des rails, deux verres vides du type goblet. ‘C’est, dit-il, pour les oiseaux.’ Je repars, avec l’idée de regagner la gare encore lointaine d’où je puisse prendre le train pour Paris. J’arrive enfin sur la quai d’une ville qui est un peu Nantes et n’est pas tout à fait Versailles, mais où je ne suis plus du tout dépayssé. Je sais qu’il me faut tourner à droite et longer la fleuve assez longtemps. J’observe, au-dessus du très beau pont qui se trouve à ma gauche, les évolutions inquiétantes d’un avion, d’abord très élevé, qui boucle la boucle avec peine et inélégance. Il perd constamment de sa hauteur et n’est plus guère qu’au niveau des tourelles des maisons. C’est d’ailleurs moins un avion qu’un gros wagon noir. Il faut que le pilote soit fou de renouveler sa prouesse si bas. Je m’attends à le voir s’écraser sur le pont. Mais l’appareil s’abîme dans le fleuve et il en sort sain et sauf un des petits hommes bleus de tout à l’heure qui gagne la berge à la nage, passe près de moi sans paraître me remarquer et s’éloigne dans le sens opposé au mien.
INTRODUCTION

This section on the fifth dream text combines a reading of narrative as a series of movements and displacements with a contextualisation of the de Chirico dedication, derived from aspects of his art, his theories and commentary on his work by other Surrealists. I wish to differentiate between writing speculatively, through the eyes of the author who made the dedication, and writing contextually, incorporating the dedication as an integral part of the text, with which I merge associative positions. These associations will be necessarily selective and by no means definitive, operating as a function of my own critical boundaries. The context therefore writes the presence of the dedication on the page into the text of this reading.

Breton’s other dedications to artists in the Clair de Terre volume operate in a similar way, as a function of the perceived surrealist effect and value of an artist’s work and methodology.

The adoption of Chirician signs signifying authorial intent reads as assuming a mask of authority; in psychosexual terms a ‘head-fuck’, performed for a reading audience and akin to structures discussed in the pornography section. André Vielwahr discusses critical opinions of the ‘Cinq Rêves’, disproving Durozoi and Lecherbonnier’s statement that the dreams must have been fabricated and generated by de Chirico’s work. Hence, the minds of the artist and poet ‘font l’amour dans l’acte de création’, a mutual exchange which to all intents and purposes is fairly one-sided. He illustrates the dangers of such critical hypotheses and how knowledge of the previous publications alters textual perspectives. However, the dedication presents the environment for a comparative discourse which is separate from that of textual origins and their effect. Whether or not intertextual references are deliberate affects statements of authorial intent but not the integrity of the reader’s comparative textual analogies.

Of all five texts, the fourth dream, previously published separately and without dedication, ironically contains the most elements which correspond to a Chirico frame. As the title of a book, the word ‘énigmatique’ reads as the appropriation of a de Chirico signature, since ‘enigma’ appears in the title of many of his works. His theories describe the revelation as an enigma and his early ‘Self Portrait’ (1911), posed in reference to Nietzsche, includes a plinth inscribed ‘et quid amabo, nisi quod aenigma est’. Conversely, ‘énigmatique’ is not a word common to Breton’s general vocabulary.

The image of the gallery of Apollo, filled with statues, may be read in the context of his many paintings of statues and especially that of his famous ‘Portrait of Guillaume Apollinaire’ (1914), with its pun on both name and statue of Apollo and its references to Orphic doctrine. The empty gold frames read as a general reference to painting surrounds and compare with the plethora of frames and pictures within pictures, which are a feature of many of de Chirico’s works from 1916-17.  

Relative to this text, the authoritarian perceptions about a programming dedication situate the specular firmly within the realms of fantasy projection. Many Chirician allusions may be read into the text, yet were the text dedicated to Apollinaire, a similar number of associations might be made, alluding to his poetic authority, to the Surrealist’s regard for his work and theory, to his artistic environment and inventions of titles, even indirectly to his invention of the word ‘surréalisme’.

The fifth dream text was not previously published and appears for the first time with the dedication. Whether this constitutes any reason to perceive it differently is debateable. The dedication predicates a political comparison with an artist courted by the Surrealists as a primary

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dream poet painting visual dream texts. Breton had not yet met the painter and dedication is therefore presumably made on a professional and even presentational level.

There are certain biographical details from Breton’s life which may be read intertextually. These import another character into the dream; Jacques Vaché. In 1916, while working as a medical auxiliary in Nantes, Breton met Jacques Vaché who was in hospital with a wounded heel. Other details from Breton’s memories of Vaché seem to be echoed in the fifth text:

*Dans les rues de Nantes, il se promenait parfois en uniforme de lieutenant de hussards, d’aviateur, de médecin. Il arrivait qu’en vous croisant il ne semblât pas vous reconnaître et qu’il continuât son chemin sans se retourner.* (P.P., p.18)

According to Breton, Vaché always needed to be on the move:

*‘Écrire, penser, ne lui suffisait plus: il fallait à tout prix se donner l’illusion du mouvement, du bruit’.* (P.P., p.17)

Breton describes him working on canals, and, at their last meeting, wearing ‘ce long manteau de voyages’, going off to walk ‘le long du canal de l’Ourcq’. (P.P., p.20) Jacques Vaché died of an overdose of opium, shortly after the Armistice. He was a pre-surrealist cult figure for Breton and, by extension, for all the group. He had performed, what was the later foundation for ‘L’acte surréaliste le plus simple’ walking into the Conservatoire Maubel with a revolver, threatening to shoot the public. (M., p.74, P.P., p.19). He is included in Breton’s list of surrealist poets, with what is perhaps a personal tribute: ‘Vaché est surréaliste en moi’. (M., p.38). Whatever general and specific biographical intertextual references are contained in the fifth dream, they are incorporated into the dreamer/poet’s identity and detail the mementum of his surreal voyage.
LOOPING THE LOOP

The fifth dream text, like the second, emphasises movement, albeit a different form of movement, presenting a concentration of images related to displacement in the sense of voyaging and travelling. The dreamer’s narrated perception of an object activates the surrealist journey which is less centred on active observations than on the story of the dream. In the fifth dream, descriptions are more scenic and less environmental and story-telling distances narrator and dreamer identifies.

The three objects found in the room at the beginning of the text provide an introductory ‘map’ or preface to the dream sequence. The closed and open books on the ‘pupitre à musique...autel’ hold no interest for ‘Breton’ and ‘Eluard’ despite ‘Noll’s’ efforts. The books, described as atlas-size, may be atlases, musical scores, or religious works such as Bibles. The open book whose pages Noll turns does not interest the dreamer and is perhaps too accessible. It can be compared with the series of volumes in the fourth dream and the incongruous images and definitions they present. These closed books present the surrealist fascination with chance opening, desirability of potential access, of discovering, penetrating and possessing books, definitions and women. Effects of surprise and dislocation of visual and verbal signifiers are properties of the surrealist object recognised in de Chirico’s work. Breton expresses a desire for the inaccessible, closed book depicted in de Chirico’s work, ‘Le Cerveau de L’Enfant’, which he owned:

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78 René Magritte developed this Chirician aspect of incongruity further, perfecting visual and verbal games in a painting technique akin to photographic realism, presenting discordant word and image interactions in works such as ‘The Key of Dreams’ (1930) and ‘The Wind and the Song (1928-9), inscribed ‘ceci n’est pas une pipe’.
Since desire is by definition insatiable, the closed book retains its mystery as object and text, and posits a physical literary presence of the potential to liberate the imagination through writing. However, in the fifth dream, neither the open nor the closed book are of interest to ‘Breton’.

The third object in the room provides revelation through the disassociation of its physical appearance and the apparent contradiction of an extremely useful but unknown function. It is an object of wonder. Surrealist perception renders it ‘brillant’, shining with surrealist light. The purpose of the object is unknown, and as an ‘objet trouvé’, it is possessed of infinite applications, with an autonomous existence. For de Chirico, the possibility of revelation is inherent in every object, any or all of which may act as possible points of departure:

revelation can be born of a sudden, when one least expects it and can also be stimulated by the sight of something - a building, a street, a garden, a square...when ... a revelation grows out of the sight of an arrangement of objects. (Eluard).

Such an ‘arrangement of objects’ is reminiscent of Lautréamont’s famous image of the sewing machine and umbrella making love on the dissecting table. In this text the relationship is not an observed dialogue between objects, but one of fluid, changeable movements between dreamer, narrator, reader and object. For Breton, incongruities of situation and place are a source of pleasurable sensations and akin to dream experience:

79 Lettre à Robert Amadou, in Bonnet, Perspective Cavalière.

80 ‘Ces choses, dont la connaissance nous apporte tant de joie et nous ouvre des perspectives inconnues’. (Paulhan)
...depuis le mouvement spécial, indéfinissable, que provoque de notre part la vue de très rares objets ou notre arrivée dans tel ou tel lieu, accompagnées de la sensation très nette que pour nous quelque chose de grave, d'essentiel, en dépend... (N., p.21).

In this way, the object reads as symbolic of strange perceptions engendering displacement, prefiguration of the subsequent narrative. The sense of prefiguration is reinforced by the numbers on the price tag, 9fr 90, which are arguably displaced by and related to the later 1m 10 of the men in blue. In the Eluard manuscript, de Chirico discusses a revelation in the context of its source: the perception of objects which generate the text:

> When (on the other hand) a revelation grows out of the sight of an arrangement of objects, then the work which appears in our thoughts is closely linked with the circumstance that has provoked its birth. One resembles the other, but in a very strange way, like the resemblance there is between two brothers. (Eluard).

The continuing disappearance and replacement of prefacing objects and images which elude the dreamer, generate movement towards textual goals or desires:

> Je suis tenté de l'emporter ... il disparaît d'ailleurs en ce moment.

> Phillipe Soupault ... j'essaie en vain de le retenir.

> Je n'ai pas plus tot cessé de l'entendre qu'Eluard et elle ne sont plus là.

> Il me semble qu'on veut m'unir dans la mort au faisan doré et la belle chanteuse.

The sensation of loss of the disappearing object is mitigated by the distraction of a new replacement object.

In de Chirico's works, the sensation of loss and melancholy is overwhelming. His objects seem remaindered from the past, whether they be statues of Cavour, Ariadne, images of bananas, books or biscuits. They are presented in isolation. They read as fixed monuments to temporality, imbued with the loss and significance of their contexts. Although many images are repeated in
different paintings, the works do not read as frames in a continuous sequence, rather they present the same moment, and often the same objects, from different angles.

Breton’s text presents many images which signify displacement in the sense of travel and movement: Philippe Soupault is leaving dressed all in white, arrows are shot, the dreamer escapes along railway tracks, the plane flies overhead. In Breton’s texts it is often Louis Aragon who leaves, the many departures signifying a poetic ‘journey’. 81

Like Breton, de Chirico uses contemporary and myth symbolism of both quest and travel and these also signify the poetic journey inscribed in the text. His paintings incorporate images such as stations, trains, ships and maps are found in his painting alongside references to Ariadne, Orpheus, and the Argonauts, amongst others. Titles such as ‘Gare Montparnasse (Melancholy of Departure)’ (1914), Endless Voyage’ (1914) and ‘Melancholy of Departure’ (1916), emphasise travel.

The texts differ from Breton’s in the form of narrative they present. The prose text is a story, comparable to the visual text of film or comic-strip, a frame by frame action sequence. A painting presents a single, composite image, closer in form to poetry. The sequence of events presented in the dream narrative comment on the journey, while the images in the painting combine references to a journey. Hence ‘Breton’ follows a railway track and arrives at a station while de Chirico paints a train, or smoke or a station and not the journey between.

Both Breton and de Chirico situate their philosophical personalities within the tradition of quest. De Chirico paints himself into the hierarchy of heros in his series of self portraits. Breton aligns

81 ‘Voici Louis Aragon qui part; il n’a le temps de vous saluer; Philippe Soupault se lève avec les étoiles et Paul Eluard, notre grand Eluard, n’est pas encore rentré. Breton, M., p.27. See also Philippe Audoin, Les Surréalistes, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1973, pp.31-2.
himself in much the same way and becomes a character in the narrative, present as the ‘je’ identity. De Chirico’s poetic ‘je’ identity may be read into that of the philosophical mannequin. His author presence is painted into his choice of situations and symbols and Breton acknowledges this subjectivity of object selection in Nadja. (N., p.15).

On arrival at the lake, the dreamer (‘Breton’) makes an ambiguous statement - ‘à la bonne heure’ which the reading associates with finding pheasants to shoot. This type of reported speech is similar to those presented in Freud’s records of dream narratives as typical of day residue in dream or of particular significance in the dreamer’s past. However the apparent lacuna in the application of the remark ‘à la bonne heure’, renders it ambiguous. ‘Eluard’s’ reply is equally ambiguous: ‘Je cherche tout autre chose’. To comprehend the exchange the reading has to envisage the pheasants, assume ‘Breton’s’ remark refers to ‘it being a good time to be hunting as there are all these pheasants sitting on the lake’, and to associate Eluard’s answer with ‘pheasants not being the prey he is seeking’.

Breton’s general preoccupation with time contrasts strongly with de Chirico’s. As a rule, Breton uses poetically evocative times and generic words (midnight, dawn, dusk) to affirm its significance: ‘Le merveilleux n’est pas le même à toutes les époques’. (M., p.26). De Chirico, however recreates the seeming incongruity of precise time to signify the moment of revelation: ‘Chirico choisit une minute de pensée saisissante et la fixe avec des couleurs’.82 Several of his paintings depict a clock whose hands are fixed at twenty-eight minutes past one. The hour is in conflict with the elongated shadows in these works, the shadows of late afternoon, in the same way that the shadows are dislocated from the light sources. In an essay on metaphysical painting, Paolo Baldacci observes:

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Metaphysical art became the representation of the immobility of the present, or the domain of metahistory, dissolving the traditional concept of time into a series of completely equal moments.\(^3\)

The switching of sexes of the prey - faisane, faitan, papier rose, femme nue, invites a digression on Breton's psychology; disappearance, death, and the repeated firing of arrows (which keep falling short), have been briefly read as symbolic of the sexual act, as an expression of libido: 'qui exprime la libido et a une coloration sentimentale'.\(^4\) In this case, I would suggest that there is nothing sentimental about premature ejaculation, the arrows falling short - and would add that this image is consistent with others which manifest his textual desires.

The quasi-myth technique used provides a further contextualisation. The woman in the lake, the song and her death evoke images of Venus, sirens, nightingales and Arthurian legend amongst others. The orphic lyricism creates a sense of loss and nostalgia as the 'adorable' woman slowly disappears, her voice becoming more and more faint. The sense of loss and poetic nostalgia is similar to that created in many of de Chirico's paintings and linked to departure, poetic melancholy and images of Ariadne and Apollo. It relates directly to his metaphysical theories which promote investigation of the archetypal quality of the past, and through a process of intellectual translations and transformations, deform natural appearances to arrive at an essential notion of textual Truth.

The concept of the redemptive qualities of art which de Chirico and Savino promoted is directly linked with the regenerative functions of poetry and memory which are part of the doctrine of the ancient Orphic religion espoused by Apollinaire and his circle. These theories may be argued to be fundamental to surrealist discourse on the relationships between object, image and word,

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\(^3\) Paolo Baldacci, p.66.

although they diverge radically from them on the aesthetics of the illuminist tradition which determines madness to be a principle antagonistic to reason.

In the lake scene, the dreamer is a spectator. The reader also becomes a more passive participant/spectator since the 'tableau' presents a descriptive romance-like text which leaves less room for imaginative invention - a more active form of participation by the reader. As the charm disappears with the 'affaiblissement' of the spell-like song, the strange active little men dressed in blue jersey appear. Perhaps sticking arrows into the dreamer could be read as a necessary function, to force his departure by shock tactics, and his passive role 'Je les observe sans défiance', as mental inertia or romantic complacency. The little men are reminiscent of the Lilliputians in Swift's Gulliver's Travels; both fire arrows and tie up the 'hero' of the text.

Breton's appreciation of Swift as a forefather is documented in the Manifestes: 'Swift est surréaliste dans la méchanceté'. In Dada and Surrealism Reviewed, Dawn Ades describes Breton's admiration for Swift's ferocious black humour which lead him to place him first in L'Anthologie de l'humour noir (1939). There is another possible intertextual comparison with the film which Breton describes in Nadja and which may be associated with the small Chinese men in parachutes of the fourth dream text, particularly in relation to the later presence of the plane. (N., p.38).

'La maladresse' is the global explanation given earlier for the arrows falling short.

It provides a subjective, reason for various failures on the dreamer's behalf but is not a rational explanation of why they occur. The first reference to 'maladresse' (the arrows falling short) combines with the second (lack of capability to tie up the men in blue) and endows 'maladresse'  

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85 Breton, M., p.37. Gulliver's Travels is a text to which Freud also refers, in the context of how not to read his own intertextual associations into dream analysis! Freud, p.91, p.606.

with the power of an abstract function of active bearing on events. As the narrator explains, it is responsible for any failings within the dream. The escape from the ‘two-headed’ arrows and being tied up results in flight. Arrows have a dual death/indicator function in Breton’s work, pointing to poetic journeys:

_Toujours est-il qu’une flèche indique maintenant la direction de ces pays (sources de l’imagination poétique/régions reculées) et que l’atteinte du but véritable ne dépend plus que de l’endurance du voyageur._ (M, p.29).

De Chirico also uses arrows, gloves pointing downwards and other symbolic indicators, including perspective, as linguistic signs of dual functioning, derived from his readings of Nietzsche.

‘Breton’ flees along a railway track which passes near to a factory which is ‘charming’, both pretty and magical through the double referents of this adjective. The linear quality of the precise description of the horizontal and vertical relationships between the nearby telegraph wire and the railway track, closely recalls many of de Chirico’s paintings. 'Metaphysical Interior with a Large Factory' (1916), presents a neat (charming?) framed picture of a large square factory, viewed at an angle and situated in a bright rural landscape with a train passing behind it on the right. The perspective in the picture is realist and contrasts with the room in which it is sitting. It is surrounded by a plethora of geometricised instruments of painting, canvas stretchers and draughtsmen’s triangles, whose collaged perspectival space intersects that of the room whose window presents a glimpse of the more familiar Chirico-type building. Hence the work juxtaposes paradoxical images of illusion and reality in a manner similar to Breton’s verbal text.

Geometry is one of the attributes of the poetic muse Melancholia, an attribute which the Renaissance poet Du Bellay uses architecturally in his Regrets and Antiquitez de Rome. De Chirico’s fascination with Renaissance treaties on perspective and its relationship to poetic

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87 Illustrated in _Italian Art in the 20th Century_, plate 48, p.124.
melancholia and metaphysics is evidenced from his elaborately constructed urban settings and from the images of geometrical instruments and drawings in works such as 'The Jewish Angel' (1916/17) and 'Le Printemps Géographique' (1916). Breton's description of the scene is precise and map-like in its presentation of interrelated geographical locations. Organisationally, it is expressing the difficulty of describing and verbally recreating a view which the eye reads in a rapid panoramic glance. The resultant mapping difficulties of the visual to verbal transposition presents an order which fragments the unified view as evidenced in the maps of 'L'Énigme d'une journée' created by the Surrealists. (L.S.A.S.D.L.R., No.6, pp.13-15, 21-22).

The difference between visual and verbal description is marked. 'Charmante' is verbal, non-imagistic language. 'Un homme de ma taille' establishes a seemingly precise reference between the dreamer (whose stature is absent) and the man. The passage of time is presented through sequential movement 'tend à deux reprises, très énergiquement...il réussit à placer'. This adds a temporal narrative dimension of actions observed in the scene, creating movements of a film-like quality.

The difference between verbal and visual image is encapsulated by 'deux verres vides du type goblet' followed by 'C'est, dit-il, pour les oiseaux'. Any person looking at a picture would see two-empty-goblets or two-goblets-empty all in one glance. They are, therefore, transparent with the usual surrealist connotations. Empty, they become fully autonomous objects, transcending denotative function, objects 'dont j'ignore l'usage' which are 'extrêmement brillant(s)'. These transparent objects appear to refer back to the pheasants, as the only birds previously mentioned. However, the genus of the pheasant, whose weight and form makes them as little suited to balancing on wires as to swimming in lakes, bears little relation to mimetic reality. Which birds the glasses are for, is as precise and as irrelevant as the use of the generic implies.

The manner in which objects in the dream change form and relate to one another, the incongruity
of their properties, the strange displacements which occur and their located appearance in unfamiliar surroundings may be closely related to the function and appearance of objects in de Chirico’s work.

In 1920 Breton wrote an article entitled ‘Giorgio de Chirico’. It was later used as the preface to the de Chirico exhibition held in Paris by Paul Guillaume in 1922. Breton describes de Chirico’s use of associative techniques in constructing symbolic objects and of juxtaposing the old and the new by causal relationships thereby presenting a new mythological order endowed with the power of Lautréamont and Apollinaire’s imagery:

De nos jours quelques sages: Lautréamont, Apollinaire ont voué le parapluié, la machine à coudre, le chapeau haut de forme à l'admiration universelle. Avec cette certitude qu'il n'y a rien d'incompréhensible et que tout, au besoin, peut servir de symbole...Se figurer le sphinx comme un lion à tête de femme fut autrefois poétique. J'estime qu'une véritable mythologie moderne est en formation. C'est à Giorgio de Chirico qu'il appartient d'en fixer impérissablement le souvenir.
A son image Dieu a fait l'homme, l'homme a fait la statue et le mannequin. La nécessité de consolider celle-là (socle, tronc d'arbre), l'adaptation à sa fonction de celui-ci (pièces de bois verni replaçant la tête, les bras), sont l'objet de toutes les préoccupations de ce peintre. On ne peut douter que le style de nos habitations l'intéresse sous le même rapport, ainsi que les outils construits déjà par nous en vue de nouvelles constructions: équerre, rapporter, carte de géographie...Les rameaux de l'arbre généalogique fleurissent un peu partout. (P.P., pp.94-5).

The paintings present combinations of artichokes, gloves, trains, words, arrows, bananas, biscuits, books, eggs, frames, paintings and poet-seer mannequins with plaster cast images of statues of Apollo, Ariadne and the Orphic symbol par excellence, the fish. Images, postures and forms are repeated juxtaposed and substituted from one picture to the next and portrayed amid pseudo classical Italianate architecture and flat geometric structures. The altering, substituting and differentiation of both images and architecture between works offers a composite metaphysical narrative.

The creation of this modern mythology culminated in his novel Hebdomeros which appeared in

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**Littérature.** No.11, janvier 1920, reprinted in Breton, P.P.
1929, much to the surprise and acclaim of the Surrealist Group, given the shift in emphasis in de Chirico’s work during the 1920’s, away from the object and towards technical and theoretical concerns. The novel presents a literary rendering of metaphysical iconography by superimpositions of popular and classical imagery, in a visionary voyage of artistic and cultural paraphrases.

On arrival at the station, the sense of a precise location ‘je ne suis plus du tout dépaysé’ invites a feeling of arrival in a faceless yet familiar locality. The sense of place, of being everywhere at one and the same time is verbally translated by ‘un peu et pas tout à fait’ and grammatically conveyed by containing associative and dissociative referents together in one sentence (Nantes and Versailles being completely dissimilar). Paradoxically, this undermines the sense of a precise location since the actual difference, in terms of distance between the goal or destination (Paris) and the new two points of departure, is enormous. These are poetic rather than geographic locations. Removed from any real map, they become signs of diverse signification, and function in a manner similar to surrealist objects and images.

In a similar disassociation of the name of an object with that object, the plane is not a ‘plane’ as such, but ‘un gros wagon noir’ just as the ‘oiseaux’ are ‘des sortes de vaches ou de chevaux’, depending on how they are perceived. The ‘wagon noir’ carries connotations of death and solicits meditation on the earlier deaths in the text, on the death of the plane as a plane, on an excuse for the ‘peine et inélegance’ of the flight and on the death of the object as it disappears in the river. Its transformation or ‘evolution’ forms its flying ‘evolutions’ giving it an autonomous existence, as separated from its function as were the glasses and the third object in the room, earlier in the text. The ‘pilote’ madly and dedicatedly pursues a dangerous course which is described as ‘skilful’. It is relatively easy to juxtapose this comment and that of the earlier explanatory ‘maladresse’ as commentary on the dream work and to evaluate a textual sexual libido in Freudian terms which presents Breton’s inscribed textual masculine desire in terms of movement, flight and
participation in or observation of controlled out of control experiences.

A variety of meanings are generated when the plane is renamed 'appareil'. It may mean 'aeroplane', or 'machine', or be read back into the text and linked to the 'appareil métalique' of the first paragraph. There is no logical explanation for the reappearance of the little man in blue.

'Sens opposé' regenerates the text since the reading links the two appearances of little men in blue. As textual instigators they move the reader back into the text ('sens opposé' also indicating movement back into the narration which is progressing forward), constructing layered textual superimposition as did the bird/pheasant and the pheasant/woman/death associations. They can be read as emerging out of the composite plane/vehicle/text. The pilot performing death defying aerial acrobatics, traverses the landscape, closing the frame, presenting a linguistic labyrinth, since the ending then becomes unceasingly a source of internal departure.

The didactic signifiers which return the text upon itself, situate reader and narrator outside of the text. The structure emphasises the alienating voyeuristic position which the dream text invites by its combination of personal information and defence mechanisms. Breton persistently and necessarily paraphrases the personal as univerisable and this discourse leaves little room for linguistic or imaginative liberation.

In 'Les Yeux enchantés', Max Morise compares dream texts with de Chirico's paintings:

_Tout autant certes, mais pas plus que le récit d'un rêve, un tableau de Chirico ne peut passer pour typique du surréalisme: les images sont surréalistes, leur expression ne l'est pas. (L.R.S. No.1, pp.26-7)._ 

For Eluard, stating a creative reading position in de Chirico's spatial labyrinth is a verbal mimesis
of the surrounding text, resulting in his absence within it.

Un mur dénonce un autre mur
Et l’ombre me défend de mon ombre peureuse.
O tour de mon amour autour de mon amour,
Tous les murs filaient blanc autour de mon
.....silence.\(^9\)

The visual hermeticism of de Chirico’s perspective presents a structure which is as emphatic as the closure of the fifth dream text. Reading within the frame of the artist’s and author’s ‘virtual reality’ presents a dislocation and disorientation which positions the self outside of the text, viewing from an assumed pseud-authoritarian identity.

APPENDIX
DE CHIRICO AND THE SURREALISTS

De Chirico arrived in Paris on July 14th, 1911. Some confusion surrounds his first exhibition. According to Soby, this was at the 1912 Salon D’Automne but Dawn Ades gives the first reference to his work as the 1913 Salon. In his Memoires, De Chirico says that he exhibited three works at the 1912 Salon and four the following spring at the Salon des Indépendants.

The metaphysical works which the Surrealists so admired, were painted from around 1911-17, at a time when the mainstream modern aesthetic of the new painting was cubism. De Chirico, somewhat disparagingly, describes frequent visits to Apollinaire’s famous Saturday receptions from 5-8, where he met a great many of the writers and painters of the ‘new ideas’. Ades describes his relationship with Apollinaire at around this time: ‘If de Chirico is only mentioned twice, and briefly, in Les Soirées de Paris, he was certainly championed by Apollinaire during his three years in Paris and painted his portrait’. Of his theoretical work she adds: ‘the way in which de Chirico wrote of his work at this time anticipates Breton’s "Manifesto of Surrealism"’.

De Chirico left Paris in 1915 and returned in 1925. His theories on metaphysical painting, revelation and their relationship to dream and light, were written during the 1911-15 period. The Surrealist group was formed during his absence. Max Ernst saw De Chirico’s work in 1919 in

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91 De Chirico, Memoirs, pp.65-73. the tone of the Memoirs is extremely egocentric and accounts for the lack of formal acknowledgement of shared ideas.

92 Ades, Dada and Surrealism, p.11.
the magazine Valori Plastici, and this influence is seen in ‘Aquis Submersus’ (1919).93 The debt of composition and image is acknowledged and paraphrased in his album of eight lithographs Fiat Modes Pereat Ars, and subsequent works stemming from this such as ‘The Elephant of the Celebes’ (1921), ‘La Femme Chancelante’(1923) and ‘2 enfants sont menacés par un rossignol’ (1924).94 In 1920, André Breton published an article in Littérature, on de Chirico, praising him for the invention of a new symbolic order of modern mythology. Yet even in this article there is an element of dissension: ‘Toutefois Chirico ne suppose pas qu’un revenant puisse s’introduire autrement que par la porte’ (P.P., 94-5). The article was reprinted as the preface to an exhibition of de Chirico’s metaphysical works, held in his absence by Paul Guillaume in March 1922. As early as 1922, in an address at the Barcelona ‘Ateneo’, Breton states his unwillingness to accept the classicism of de Chirico’s more recent work on account of the promise and revelation of his earlier work:

Cette grâce de situer avec des dons aussi personnels que possible dans le temps, et puisqu’il faut en passer par là, au moyens des couleurs ou des mots, ce trouble qui est obscurément celui de chaq’un de nous, n’a certes pas, à l’heure qu’il est, abandonné Georges de Chirico. Ce peintre, qui vit en Italie et dont, pour un observateur peu pénétrant, les dernières oeuvres semble faire à l’académisme le plus stérile concession sur concession, nous tient sous le coup d’une trop émouvante promesse pour que jamais nous puissions nous détourner de lui avec indifférence. (P.P., p.160).

Breton continues by acknowledging a debt to de Chirico:

C’est, en effet, à Chirico que nous devons la révélation des symboles qui président à notre vie instinctive et qui, nous nous en doutons un peu, se distinguent de ceux des époques sauvages. (P.P., p.160).

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94 For Ernst’s debt to Chirico and Picabia in these works see Max Ernst: Beyond Surrealism, New York Public Library and Oxford University Press, New York, 1986, p.8 and pp.42-5.
It is during this period (1921-2) that perceptions of de Chirico’s work shifted from their value in terms of objects and modern mythology towards their being dream texts.

En raison de la part toujours plus grand qu’elle est amenée à faire à la vie onirique, cette évolution demande à être retracée tout à fait séparément. Sans en tenir compte - comme celle de Picasso de la description à l’invention, comme celle de Duchamp de l’objet inventé de toutes pièces à l’objet tout fait (‘ready-made’), on manquerait de base historique pour comprendre tout le sens et toute la portée de la revendication surréaliste dans le domaine plastique. (L.S.E.L.P., p.63).

The following quotations document commentary on the dream text aspect of de Chirico’s work.

They are reproduced in the 1983 Exhibition Catalogue.

Tout autant certes, mais pas plus que le récit d’un rêve, un tableau de Chirico ne peut passer pour typique du surréalisme: les images sont surréalistes, leur expression ne l’est pas. (Max Morise, ‘Les Yeux enchantés’, in L.R.S., No.1, 1924).


Rien, en ces figures, qui puisse finalement se soustraire à une interprétation analogue à celle que je puisse faire porter sur tel ou tel objet de rêve, et ceci pourvu que l’artiste ne commette l’erreur de confondre le mystère rêel, persistant, de son œuvre avec de misérables cachotteries, ce qui par malheur est assez souvent le cas. (Breton, ‘L’objet Fantôme’, in L.S.A.D.L.R., No.3, déc. 1931, and L.V.C., 1932).

Paul and Gala Eluard travelled to Rome in 1923, where they met de Chirico and bought a large self-portrait from him. Eluard’s poem, ‘Giorgio de Chirico’ was published in Mourir de ne pas Mourir, in 1924. It was not, however, until 1925 that Breton and de Chirico finally met.

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96 Paul Eluard, Mourir de ne pas Mourir, Gallimard, Paris, 1924, reprinted in Capitale de la douleur.
It seems evident that the effusive praise of de Chirico’s work, supported by the similarities between his own theories and those of Breton, led to massive disappointment when it became clear that De Chirico had moved on to a more classical style and that the aims of his art were now widely divergent from surrealist comprehension of those of his metaphysical paintings. The Surrealists had placed such emphasis on De Chirico’s works as visual dream texts, and I imagine so eagerly awaited his arrival and endorsement of their own positions, that his change of position was represented as treachery. Instead of a kindred spirit whose work they had found inspirational and had adopted as a flagship for dream texts, they encountered a painter who was at first flattered (after all, the paintings he had left with the dealer Paul Guillaume were now selling well) and even joined in the games, but as it became clear that his new works were rejected, became increasingly estranged.

As disagreements developed, dialogue between De Chirico and the Surrealists became proportionately vitriolic:

*Quel abbé Bremond de misère et d’horreur viendra d’ici peu nous entretenir de la peinture ‘métaphysique’, de la peinture rêvée et, à ce propos, de tout ce que de 1910 à 1917 Chirico fit d’incomparable, et qu’il comparerà? J’ai mis, nous avons mis cinq ans à désespérer de Chirico, à admettre qu’il eût perdu tout sens de ce qu’il faisait. Nous sommes-nous assez souvent retrouvés sur cette place où tout semble si près d’être et est si peu ce qui est! (L.R.S., No.7, p.3).*

Breton found himself in the unenviable position of presenting a series of paintings elevated by surrealist critical acclaim and epitomising surrealist expression in the early 1920’s when the focus of attention was contextualised by dream exploration, but by an artist whose ideas had been misread. De Chirico’s subsequent work and exhibitions were slated by the Surrealists. Denigrating the latter, they organised their own exhibitions of earlier work. Subsequently they ignored any works other than those of the metaphysical period, for which he continued to be praised. De Chirico became increasingly embittered. He somewhat aggressively minimises the critical damage to his career in his *Memoirs*, yet during the 1950’s he returned to a metaphysical style (‘Piazza
d'Italia', 1954) and to re-using motifs from his earlier and more commercially successful works, associated with the Surrealists, such as mannequins and the sun image which appears in his illustrations for Guillaume Apollinaire's *Calligrammes* (1930).

Ironically it is the subject of metaphysical paintings and the respective pseudo-surrealist readings which present the largest body of critical writing on De Chirico to date, yet De Chirico's description of this period is relatively brief and, given the circumstances, understandably irate:

My arrival in Paris with a collection of new paintings, my relationships with local dealers and my exhibitions of paintings different in type from what they possessed and whose value they inflated, caused confusion in the Breton camp and made a mess of everything. For this reason the surrealists decided to undertake a large-scale boycott of my new output; when, in 1926, I had an exhibition at the Léonce Rosenberg Gallery, they immediately organised, in a shop they had opened in the rue Jacques Callot, an exhibition of metaphysical paintings which they owned...then they published a catalogue with an utterly silly preface by that same Aragon who now aspires to sit among the immortals in the Academy. The preface was a kind of libel and consisted more of criticising the paintings I was showing at the Rosenberg Gallery than of praising those shown by the surrealists. They were so persistent, so hysterical in their envy - which resembled that of eunuchs and old maids - that they...organised...large scale boycotts of my work also in Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Britain and the United States.97

De Chirico continues, saying Breton has 'a liver attack' when his exhibition is successful, in spite the Surrealist's parody of his recent pictures constructed from rubber horses, sand, stones and dolls furniture, and presented in the second window of the shop exhibiting the metaphysical works. He describes the Surrealists as 'hooligans and petty delinquents' and presents their meetings as laughable and ludicrous. His representations of his acquaintances at this time is quite as petty and vindictive as anything that they might have done, and he attacks them with personal insults, much as they tended to do themselves.

It is only more recently that the complexity of de Chirico's own theories have begun to be analysed. The postponement of re-evaluation is almost certainly a result of the dominance of a

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surrealist legacy which determined a break in his work and that his metaphysical paintings would always hold a primary place as dream texts, in the hierarchies of Surrealist Art.
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Il se peut que la vie demand à être déchiffée comme un cryptogramme...
Il est permis de concevoir la plus grande aventure de l'esprit comme un voyage de ce genre au paradis des pièges. (N., p.133).

INTRODUCTION

This section aims to demonstrate the multiplicity of directional readings which, when contextualised by the narrative sources of the labyrinth, present a danced diagrammatic record of primary and primal quest graphology. It will be further argued that the shape of this primary narrative form is not only structurally inscribed in the myth-narrative which represents it, but is ultimately inscribed in the form of inherited traditions of all narrative and therefore in the structure of the dance written by reading.

‘Labyrinth’ is a word which has been widely applied to any complex system which conveys a sense of the indecipherable combined with a definite notion of path and of quest or journey: it is an intricate maze to be travelled through by means of skill, knowledge or luck, a place of potential loss and death. We have a cultural familiarity with this word and an innate empathy, leading us to apply it freely in a descriptive way. It is used to describe twisting forms in areas from anthropology and medicine to psychology and architecture. A finite and comprehensive signified of the word ‘labyrinth’ is encrypted, buried deep within itself and the myth culture in which it originated. On the surface, its significance reflects the fragmentary aspects of its development, a generalised inheritance which can never be fully deciphered and only partly comprehended. The labyrinth may be read as the prime model of quest myth and as the narrative diagram of the archetypal quest: the life-death journey. The labyrinth is symbolic of places inhabited by dead and living royalty and fuses both tomb and palace in one location; it
structurally encrypts the form it represents. The shape and significance of this primary form is that of multi-cultural narratives sharing similar patterns, of which only diagrammatic traces remain.

The diagram functioned as narrative and record of the journey between life and death. It was an elaborate and integral part of threshold rites, danced at the mouths of caves and used to seal and protect both tombs and cities. Its intricate interweavings represented the route travelled between the land of the living and the mysterious underworld of the dead. This gave it immense magical powers of regeneration; those who knew the pattern emerged from the dance symbolically 'reborn', having travelled through and come back from the land of the dead.

The pattern describes the form of the unknown, which is the 'other' of its linear path. This path describes both the labyrinthine meander pattern of the dance - often recorded in diagrammatic form - and the narrative cryptogram which it originally represented. The cryptogram is all that remains as a complete, if indecipherable, narrative form from the era of which myth is the latent documentation. As the record of sacred and therefore secret rites, it is constructed for tactical protection, to guard against improper entry. It is the image of all dualities - a 'diagram' (twice

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98 On a phenomenological reading of the Heideggerian concept of 'Truth' as 'opening' which is at the same time 'concealing' in words as embodiments of 'meaning happening', Karl-Otto Apel remarks that 'each word of a living language can in this sense be considered as a paradigm of that opening and concealing of being that fixes itself in so-called natural language as "house of being" and "house of the human being" and as such precedes and makes possible the truth and falsehood of prepositions'. Bruzina and Wilshire (eds) Phenomenology: Dialogues and Bridges, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1982, p.100.
written) - with its own semantic double entry system of myth and mythology. 99

The connection between writing, reading and quest is aptly observed by Stanley Edgar Hyman with regard to the relationship between Freud’s quest to resolve the enigma of dreaming and the emblematic content of the stylistic organisation of this pursuit embodied in The Interpretation of Dreams. 100 Freud leaves us with a topological recording, a map of his quest, comparable to those left by Breton throughout his quests for the surreal. 101

Exploration of the world of the ‘other’, emulates the vast spaces occupied by myth. As an archetypal form, its meanders are present in the complex forms of surrealist quest which is interwoven with desire for its ‘other’ of reality.

Imagination is given new powers of surrealist reality, providing an inexhaustible and seductive source of surrealist truths in words and images. The linear movements of the surrealist reading are multi-directional, explorations of the ‘other’ of the path, of the space surrounding linearity. Such excursions are inscribed with the prospect of loss and of potential death of the known. For the maintenance of reason (as opposed to madness), narrative sequence residing in grammatical

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99 See Marcel Détienne, L’Invention de la Mythologie, Gallimard, Paris, 1981. Détienne reads hearing as the most important sense and describes myth as musical performance, developmental in time, dependent on memory and therefore the ear. He reads mythology as ‘l’ombre obscure que le language jette sur la pensée à un moment de sa genèse’ (p.21), ‘un système de sonorités’ (p.27), describing it as the semantic crossroads of two discourses (discursive statements about narratives and scolasticism) and argues that writing makes myth static. One of the contentions in this section is that the regenerative energies posited in the analogy inscribe a continual development. See also Levi-Strauss, Mythologiques - the rise of logic in the narration of myth. Myth antecedes mythology (= myth + logic).


101 Documented exploration of a topological map of itinerant locations in a text is also (re)constructed by the Surrealists in their experimental and partially geographic observations on ‘L’Énigme d’un Après-Midi’ by Giorgio de Chirico. These readings constitute a surrealist ‘quest’, a series of searches within the painting aimed at locating various objects and events extraneous to it.
structure performs the mnemonic function of the guiding thread, as necessary as a lifeline.

The ‘other’ of the path is the world of myth and of the surreal, the logically indefinable space and time of which fragments are glimpsed and of which all recordings are recessionary, fragmented and fragmentary. It is the uncharted terrain through which, for Breton, surrealist poetic intuition and the ‘fil des idées’ maintain the guiding thread:

..c’est seulement en tout humilité que l’homme peut faire servir le peu qu’il sait de lui-même à la reconnaissance de ce qui l’entoure. Pour cela, le grand moyen dont il dispose est l’intuition poétique. Celle-ci, enfin débridée dans le surréalisme, se veut non seulement assimilatrice de toutes les formes connues mais hardiment créatrice de nouvelles formes - soit en posture d’embrasser toutes les structures du monde, manifesté ou non. Elle seule nous pourvoit du fil qui remet sur le chemin de la Gnosè, en tant que connaissance de la réalité suprasensible, ‘invisiblement visible dans un éternel mystère’. (M., p.172-3).

The workings of the labyrinth are those of language as image of reality and those of the surrealist text as image of surreality. The quest for an infinite textual time akin to the timelessness of myth, for the restoration of power to language so that images move freely, is an ‘exorbitant’ exploration, ‘off the path’, in an unknown world.

Readings of any text can be spatially interpreted in diagrammatic form. As diagrams they can be read as linear enactments of a journey inscribed by the graphic marks on the page. These marks constitute the morphology or shape of the text. They describe a code representing a map or plan of the journey space, the circumscribed area into and through which the reader travels. The text can therefore be demonstrated to be the locus of progressive linear movements which can be interpreted as a series of symbolic journeys, placing texts read in this way (irrespective of their semantic content) within the tradition of quest narrative.
In the diagram above, the arrows represent the flow of associations made by the reader between different textual elements. These associations are made for a wide variety of reasons and determine the rewriting (diagram) of the journey through textual terrain, tracing the labyrinthine meanders of the reading process. The only constant line is that of the narrative lexical sequence from which there is no deviation.

Figure 9
The diagram above indicates a topographical ‘mapping’ of a sentence of text. The arrows (which can be read both backwards and forwards) indicate the physical graphic expression of various mental directions explored by the reading mapped. This type of mapping is neither especially complex nor new and merely requires the contextualisation of each word within the sentence in which it is presented and each sentence within the body of the text. Maps of this type are necessarily hermeneutic since knowledge of the goal or aim is inscribed in the form and passed on to subsequent travellers to ‘aid’ in retracing the process.

This map is designed and represented in directional rather than textural terms. Narrative sequence can be read as a framing structure which contains the centre but leaves it spatially free. Subversion of single and precise denotative referents confronts the reader with a multiplicity of choices as to finite interpretations of words and images - creating an area of random mental dilemma. Narrative sequence and the marks on the page continue, and reading instigates onward movement - but without having resolved the problem of definitive choice of direction or of finite referents, since these are multiple and ‘without’ hierarchical order.

The areas of ‘dilemma’ are moments of denotational linguistic crisis, of concurrent imaginative meandering inspired by the text, each of which traces a circular path connecting associations and possible textual counterparts before returning to the point of departure and source: the word.

Breton regularly compares the search for the surreal with journeys and quests and also inevitably with the archetypes and literary antecedents of his western cultural inheritance:

Je ne vois aucun inconvénient, pour le faire saisir, à ouvrir les fenêtres sur les plus grands paysages utopiques. Une époque comme celle que nous vivons peut supporter, si elles ont pour fin la mise en défiance de toutes les façons convenues de penser, dont la carence n’est que trop évidente, tous les départs pour les voyages à la Bergerac, à la Gulliver. Et toute chance d’arriver quelque part, après certains dévours même en terre plus raisonnable que celle que nous quittons, n’est pas exclue du voyage auquel j’invite aujourd’hui: (M., pp.160-1).
By making these references to a cultural inheritance shared with the reader, Breton authenticates the nature of his quest and claims a literary identity. His use of literary antecedents also situates his quest within the history of that genre. The naming of ‘ancestors’ is similar to traditional Classical rules for identifying epic narrative, which it may be suggested derived from the social functions of naming ancestors in the rites of more primitive societies.

The labyrinth model is one which Breton himself uses: This chapter will examine concepts of the labyrinth and its origins in order to understand its workings. Its significance will consequently be posited in relation to Breton’s attitudes to myth and to its place in his theoretical writing on language. The fifth dream text constitutes a quest for the surreal and documents or maps that quest. Furthermore it presents the narrative of an actual journey. The semantic content thus produces double and concurrent images of the journey process.

The text begins in a cinematic style, setting the scene, the location and then focusing on objects in the room described and particularly on the one which the dreamer is examining. A successive series of displacements and events mobilizes the dreamer who then moves from place to place and event to event.

Descriptions of fantastic creatures and explosions of connotations engendered by displacement of

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102 ‘Ma propre ligne’ (M., p.153).

103 The importance of naming has evolved in patriarchal culture as a system of identifying values and is fundamental to societies based on ownership and property structures.
objects and by surrealist images enlarge the journey space by inviting a multitude of mythical connotations and comparisons particularly those associated with quests. This is a further reason for reading the fifth dream as a labyrinthine text. The images narrated in the dream which are similar to those gleaned from labyrinth and quest mythology, are as follows:

**Pheasants** - These birds come originally from Phasis in Colchis which was the location of that other great quest symbol, the Golden Fleece. Pheasants were sacred birds in Ancient Greece. Bird cults form an integral part of labyrinthine dances which evolve from cave/stone religions through sun/bird cults and in Crete to a sun/bull cult which is then assimilated by the Christian religion through the Ariadne/Virgin association;

**The Golden Pheasant** - The bird may be linked to the symbolic Golden Fleece by the defining adjective. Golden pheasants were thought to be the mythical phoenix, a cultural symbol of regeneration. The labyrinth is equally an image of cyclical and magical regeneration from another culture.

Golden pheasants come from China which is part of the magical East and holds a special place in Breton’s thought;

**François** - A name commonly associated with French kings. The golden pheasant called François is the only male among females. He is shot by an arrow which is a method of ritual king-killing used in labyrinth dance when the king is replaced during the Sacred Marriage by his tanist;

**Arrow in the ankle** - Breton (the dreamer) is struck by an arrow in the ankle which was a very specific method of ritual killing associated with the labyrinth: Talos (who was made to defend Crete by Daedalus, architect of the labyrinth) and Achilles (whose shield, depicting the labyrinth, was also made by Daedalus) were both killed by this method;
Belle Chanteuse - the rebirth of the (male) pheasant as a singing woman can be linked to both representations of matrilinear rites and to the association between Stymphalian birds' transformation into Sirens. The Sirens were 'keepers' of the departed souls of dead kings.

Apart from these specific details, there is a sense of myth narrative in the middle section of the text which derives from the strange disappearances and replacements of the hunted and killed. The male bird is replaced by a singing woman and when she disappears the dreamer becomes the target of the arrows in a manner comparable with the strange enchantments woven by ancient gods.
THE LABYRINTH

The following pages examine the nature and types of labyrinths in order to construct an understanding of the regenerative power (condition of entry) manifest in the symbolic narrative design which has provided western culture with a constantly developing means of exploring and transversing unknown and supernatural territory. It is important to offer the sources which have informed my reading of the fifth text of Breton's Cinq Rêves so that this contextualisation should not appear as 'hidden text' of which any reader is deprived. I have therefore given references from as many disciplines as I am familiar with, in which the image of the labyrinth is used. The anthropological survey is a means of retrieving fragments of cultural information which have been edited and censored under a repressive patriarchal system. This retrieval situates my own information and textual position in this section and has enabled me to discuss myth in a gendered context in the section on Breton and Myth which follows it.

The Cretan Labyrinth was the most famous labyrinth, the one about which most has been written and therefore the prime/primary/primal model and archetype known to Western culture. However other labyrinths were known in antiquity and later. Many of the later ones (for example religious medieval diagrams) are in themselves interpretations or re-readings of the prime model and form part of the regenerating history of reading the labyrinth, a discourse which fills the space between myth and mythology and affects them both.

CRETE

Appendix I gives a comprehensive explanation of the myth and mythology of the Cretan labyrinth which appears to have been a danced design combining cyclical rites of initiation, fertility and death with those of the Sacred Marriage and Kingship Renewal.
The significance of the design is contextualised by a similar labyrinth dance, surviving in Malekula, in the New Hebrides. This contextualisation reveals as much about the labyrinth as it does about the representative function of myth and mythology, which then read as linguistic ‘labyrinths’ of socio-cultural and psycological archeology. The power of regeneration, a function of fertility, enables visiting the ancestral land of the dead and returning from it, and is inscribed in the dance pattern (the meander). The fragmentary references conceal and protect, permitting only brief glimpses of a society which conceived of the world and of its representation in a manner very different to our contemporary one.

As the religious and social bases of European society changed from matrilinear (inheritance by the female line) to patrilinear, the tradition of dance and design recording ancestral tales and concepts of this world and beyond, developed into oral traditions. Narrative altered accordingly, burying many of the original rituals in the developing hero cults and adapting to the increasing importance of male deities.

Primitive Western culture conceived of the world in terms of the human body, as ‘Mother Earth’. Caves were the loci of both fertility rites and burial rites, being places of entrance to the earth and of access for returning the body to the dust from which it was thought to have been made. The return of the dead into the body of a living being is also common to Eastern myth, which has retained much of the culture of Mother Earth.  

Caves were sacred places of communication with the earth and with ancestral wisdom. Myths of descent into the underworld reflect these rituals and beliefs. Caves were also orifices, both mouth and vagina. Indeed the most famous cave of all and source of the most powerful oracle was called

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104 The Cretan myth of Persphone links death and fertility, presonifying the custom of storing grain in caves during the winter months. The moon was the ruling deity and double-headed axes, sacred to the moon in her various aspects (Persephone, Ariadne and Pasiphae) are found inside Cretan caves in large numbers.
by the name for the female generative organ, Delphi. Anatomy and divination, oracle and language are therefore closely allied through the meander, in cave religions and as is later described, in Egyptian sun worship.\(^{105}\)

The two rituals (fertility and burial) were combined in the dance narratives of the Sacred Marriage. These sacred movements formed the meander which was endowed with special powers of protection. Dances based on these elements must have enacted the symbolic sacred form of the rites, being composed of a series of opening and closing linear movements of communion, initiation, fertility, exclusion, constriction, death and protection.

The labyrinth in which Theseus encountered the Minotaur and from which he emerged triumphant, thanks to Ariadne's magic thread, was clearly a dance of this type. It was performed every nine years when the ruling king (Minos) was ritually killed and replaced by a new king who derived his title by marriage to the young moon priestess - Ariadne.

Both myth and dance assimilate and combine a variety of successive early cults and fundamentally represent the natural, the agrarian, and the anthropomorphic cyclical themes of life, death and rebirth. That labyrinths were primitive tombs is attested by the presence of mazes and labyrinths in Egyptian tomb architecture and by the associations drawn by Knight and others between these and the meander patterns, false passageways and circular structures of celtic and barrow tombs.\(^{106}\) Layard and Deedes argue that the 'labyrinth' was originally a mortuary structure of...

\(^{105}\) Derrida reads 'la parole' as sperm, fecunding the listening vagina/cave/ear (Marges de la Phiosophie, Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1972, p.VI). I would like to suggest that the organisation of cave/body and the ways in which they, like letters, were repositories of oracular power, presents a complexe association which is quite definitely not centred on sperm! Foucault allies the notion of Truth with madness, anatomy and medicine, examining the development of the visual referentiality of Truth in discourse. Michel Foucault, L'Ordre du Discours, Gallimard, Paris, 1970.

the Stone Folk or Cyclops.

Whether the word ‘labyrs’ (‘stone’) is used in reference to caves (in which fertility and funerary rites were originally performed), or to materials used in building, or to describe the builders (stone-folk) is unclear, and there is as yet no finite answer. Certainly stones are used to build tomb structures from early times. However, in some places they represented the dead ancestors themselves and presumably our own customs of marking the places of the dead with tombstones derives from this practice. It is equally probable that, since labyrinth designs functioned essentially to convey protective powers, they were associated with tombs, rather than representing the structures themselves.

It seems that the myth of the labyrinth narrates the symbolic rites of the labyrinth dance, but in the language of another era. It is an adaptation which effectively buries ancestral culture by incorporating it in an alphabetical and ‘logical’ form - words - the logos. Narrative form based on the meander inherits the combination of its sacred powers. The words themselves can be read as ‘tombstones’ or markers of the dead they represent and also as that which contains and buries them. They then become places inhabited by a dead culture, places of renewal, of access to wisdom, labyrinths and cryptogrammes of unknown ancient regenerative power.

OTHER CLASSICAL LABYRINTHS

The first ‘labyrinth’ is recorded by Herodotus who also calls it by that name. It was an Egyptian tomb complex on Lake Moeris built of stone and containing a pyramid. It has never been found and remains a mystery.  

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Egyptian labyrinths were known in ancient times to belong to the cult of sun worship and associated with funerary rites and architecture. It is possible that the concept of labyrinth travelled to Crete from Egypt with the emerging sun cult. The Egyptian sun god, Horus, is often represented as a hawk. Presumably this could link Egyptian bird cults and labyrinths with the Malekulan labyrinth dances and the Cretan labyrinth. The Malekulan dances were brought to those islands a long time ago, according to local myth, by a fair-skinned people who built pyramid-shaped tombs. The bird represented in that dance is the hawk.

The labyrinth at Lemnos was consecrated to Vulcan and similar to that at Knossos, since Vulcan was a hobbling God associated with the partridge cult and with smithing. The evidence would seem to suggest that at one time there was a series of bird cults (hawk, partridge, crane) and that these cults were closely associated or interwoven with labyrinth dances in threshold rites.

The labyrinth was also known in Italy: Porsenna, king of Etruria, had a labyrinth built for himself to serve as a tomb. There is also a mosaic floor at Pompeii, obviously based on the Cretan labyrinth, whose centre reads ‘Labyrinthus, hic habitat Minotaurus’.

Presumably the labyrinth was adopted by the Romans and accorded the usual superior artistic and cultural status of Greek imports.

**MAZE DANCES AND MEANDER PATTERNS**

Several different types of ‘labyrinth’ designs share similar maze-like patterns and these range from turf dances to celtic spirals. The common factors which unite them are the principles of conditional entry and exclusion of the uninitiated, since all are magical protection devices.

Three maze dances are recorded in Antiquity. Two refer to the Cretan dance: Homer’s description of Achilles’ shield in *The Iliad* and Plutarch’s *Life of Theseus*. The third (*Aeneid V*) is Virgil’s
account of the ‘game of Troy’. Virgil says that the movements of the Trojan game were like
those of the labyrinth. The rituals were shrouded in secrecy and associated with the
‘mysteries’. 108

‘Troys’ occur throughout Scandinavia, North-Eastern Russia and in England and Wales. They
were and still are turf cut mazes. Introduced by the Romans, their popularity derived from their
association with Aeneas the Trojan, whom the Romans revered as a heroic ancestor and forefather.
Their survival is due to the incorporation of danced narratives in Medieval Christianity, when the
labyrinth was read as an emblem of pilgrimage. They were quite commonly danced by
schoolchildren (particularly at Easter) until the beginning of this century. Some are still
maintained, although they are now not often danced.

Maze dances are thought to be protection devices designed to bewilder evil forces. W. L.
Hildburgh associates this with a surviving belief in twisting patterns:

the preservative efficacy, against occult evils, of things comprising twisting, braiding,
interlacing or the like, that in view of the survival from Classical Antiquity, in Italy and
in Spain, of the notion of protection through the indeterminability of a number. I think
we may well presume that...the representations of twists and the like...may correspondingly
have been credited with apotropaic virtues’. 109

C.L. Day determines the use of knots as mnemonic devices, calendars and for recording
purposes. 110 The ancient Hebrews used knots before adopting an alphabet and they thus

108 This would strengthen possible associations between labyrinth dances,
mummery and Morris dancers. Layard does not examine Troy dances but suggests
that the roles of St.George and the hobby horse correspond with the solo dancers in
Malekulan ritual. There is also a link in this context between the latter and the
wooden horse of Troy.

109 W.L.Hildburgh, ‘Indeterminability and Confusion as apotropaic elements in

110 C.L.Day, Quipus and Witches Knots, University of Kansas Press, Lawrence,
1967.
constituted a system of writing. Special value seems therefore to have been placed on memory and remembering in these ancient societies. If the presence of memory may have been believed to have special powers in defeating death and oblivion, then designs representing these powers would have been imbued with them, rendering Horace’s ‘Exegi Monumentum’ not just a literary device but a sacred and magical mausoleum, built with words rather than stones.

Meander patterns are also mnemonic devices, forms of narrative and like knots, were used as magical devices. Rustic mazes were made (trodden down) outside towns to give protection to the town. Troy was famed in Ancient times for its protected walls whose magic had to be undone before the city fell. Knight suggests that, as walled cities were in certain places regarded in the human image of maidens, a breach in the city wall and the capture of Troy would have been associated with the violation of a maiden. (C.G., P.126).

The accepted evidence for reading sacred cities as anatomical structures lies in the Babylonian ‘Ekal Tirani’ or ‘palace of the intestines’ tablets. These show maze-like patterns of intestines used for divination. In Egypt maze-dances were symbolic of the evisceration of the dead king whose intestines were carried in Canopic jars behind the body, to the burial chamber. The dances were based on intestinal form and functioned both as protection and as the power of divine prophetic significance, of knowledge facilitating the dead King’s passage to the other world.

Knight determines that the mazes of the ‘Ekal Tirani’ are both intestines and architectural structures; cities, temples, palaces, forts and tombs:

The labyrinthine city is imagined, either originally or later, in human shape; and the defences are directly or indirectly pictured according to human anatomy, under the influence of the symbolism of earth the universal mother, and the later development of the labyrinthine tomb. (C.G., p.126).

The seven hills of Rome were construed as a body, with the Capitoline Hill as its head. Form
therefore reads both as a determinant of sanctity and as a protective device. Pliny advocated the suitability of labyrinth design for palaces and tombs because of the protective and defensive features of the design.

Based on architectural evidence, Grinsell demonstrates the links between early dynastic Egypt, parts of the Mediterranean and Europe and the British Isles where tombs were thought of as houses of the dead. In places where journeys were frequent, the idea of a journey to the afterlife developed. This was usually by boat, ladder or stairway (pyramid), by flame, smoke and by flight. In the latter case which was originally associated with sun worship, the afterlife was located in the sky, was reached by assuming the form of a bird, flying on the wings of a bird, through the sun’s rays, or by incense and smoke. From evidence found in sarcophagus decoration, he suggests that in Crete, birds represented the ‘soul’ of the departed. Similar symbolism found in both Christianity and Alchemy is analogous to the Malekulan hawk/hunter rites and confirms a concept of the labyrinth as a life-death-rebirth journey.

Roman ‘Troys’ had a counterpart in celtic burial rituals - the spiral devices sealing the tomb probably acted as maps to direct dances performed at the entrance and as powerful protective designs. The circle on which both spiral and tomb structure is usually based, is of course the most complete form of exclusion and of containment and has a counterpart in Egyptian use of the triangle.

In a discussion on the chambered cairn of Bryn Celli Ddu, Knight draws a parallel between Bronze Age and Classical practices of differentiating between the dead and the living by enclosure and exclusion. He compares circular protection and initiation rites performed to construct magical fields of defence, grave design and spiral pattern stones at the entrance to tombs. (C.G., p.457). The gradual inclusion of goods and objects of value for use in the other world gave rise to the

111 Leslie Grinsell, Barrow, Pyramid and Tomb, Thames and Hudson, 1975.
threat of robbery. In Egypt, messages of preventative force were inscribed in writing outside and inside the tomb, threatening curses, death and eventually statutory punishments for those disturbing tombs. The message was threefold; physical, mental and sensory.

Knight emphasises the principles of exclusion and entry and links Cretan script, meander patterns and the letter ‘M’ as a determinative of sanctity. As pictorial script, the visual aspect of celtic spiral patterns is incorporated in the relevent illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages. The celtic ‘labyrinth’ is therefore arguably as visually and symbolically inscribed in these Christian manuscripts as is the Cretan labyrinth in medieval churches.

CATACOMBS

Catacombs have to some extent become identified with labyrinths both because they are tomb-complexes and on account of their shape, being long underground (obscure) passages. In fact, they owe their architectural origins to the design of circulatory rampart passages in theatres and amphitheatres which provided structural support and created areas for walking, and to their siting in disused quarries and cisterns. ¹¹²

Their linear form arose from structural and practical necessity rather than out of any sense of symbolic protection. ¹¹³ It is only subsequently that they have been termed ‘labyrinthine’.

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¹¹² These walkways formed a line of small kiosks and rooms, sometimes used as shops. Christians could not be buried with pagans and abhorred cremation, so large communal cemeteries were constructed to provide burial and memorial space. Where property values were high and space at a premium (in large cities), catacombs were constructed underground. Previous excavations for quarries or cisterns and soft rock provided ideal sites, reducing labour costs. Plans varied regionally but the basic structure was of adapted designs, forming narrow galleries with holes or niches in walls.

¹¹³ Niches and shelves are used in both celtic and in the very early Hypergium in Malta. Although the meandering passages afforded a measure of protection, I do not feel that catacombs were constructed on the basis of labyrinth designs but rather for the practical reasons described above.
MEDIEVAL CHURCH LABYRINTHS

Christian labyrinths were built in imitation of classical ones and figured on the tiled floors of churches. They were trodden as substitute pilgrimages, for penitential purposes and for rites of purification. As sacred emblems they may also have been used to afford protection and were frequently used in tile design. The earliest known example at Orleansville in Algeria dates from the 4th Century and is inscribed with a play upon the words 'santa ecclesiastica'. The maze represented the world, easy to enter and hard to leave.

In the largest of the Christian labyrinths at Chartres which is fully described in Appendix II, Ariadne represented the Virgin, the gift of Divine Grace and the necessity for purification before initiation. Purification before initiation usually involves plunging into water in mythology, later in baptism and also in alchemy.\textsuperscript{114}

Knight suggests that the labyrinth was read as a manifestation of the 'universal myth', and that the windings represented man's journey on the road to religious truth. He deduces that the notion of associating the labyrinth with Christian pilgrimage derives from the view that Crete, like Cyprus, was associated with the Virgin through the preexisting virgin/mother cults of initiation and fertility.\textsuperscript{115}

15th and 16th century labyrinths were pious emblems of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Chartres

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\textsuperscript{114} The king-god, the virgin queen and the symbolic bird are also common to labyrinth mythology, Christian religion and alchemy. There is possibly therefore, a direct parallel between the philosopher's stone sought in the earth which needs an influx from the sky to be achieved and cosmic mythology. See Jung, \textit{Man and his Symbols}, Melusine's role as water nymph in \textit{Arcane 17} and the death of Perdix - 'partridge' (Daedalus' sister).

\textsuperscript{115} Knight, \textit{Maze Symbolism}, See also Carl Jung, \textit{Man and his Symbols}, Aldus Books Limited, London, 1979 for a discussion of symbolism common to cosmic mythology, Christianity and alchemy.
was itself a premier centre of pilgrimage. Abbé Bulteau quotes the Chanoine Auber’s 1850 statement, affirming this view:

*il faut voir dans les labyrinthes .... un moyen de dévotion, une forme speciale de prières dans laquelle le Chrétien s’acquittait en esprit du voyage à la Terre-Sainte.*

The idea of achieving religious ecstasy and absolution by means of symbolic pictorial representation was fundamental to the decoration programmes of religious buildings in the Middle Ages. Few members of medieval society were literate and so the ‘logos’ -the divine word- was represented pictorially in order to inform those who couldn’t read, what they should believe.

Gombrich states that ‘The Middle Ages had inherited the view from late Antiquity that, rightly understood, the fables and myths of the poets must yield up the same meaning as the contemplation of nature’. Pagan lore was considered to contain the secrets of the universe hidden in mysterious tales and images to prevent profanity.

The labyrinth was read as an icon of this belief in secret and hidden texts whose meanings need to be unravelled. According to this belief God had made these truths manifest in the

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117 With the exception of palace decoration (primarily on furnishings), pictorial art was generally reserved for religious subject-matter until the middle of the Renaissance.

118 The stained glass windows at Chartres functioned as a substitute for the scriptures. Suger of St. Denis explained - ‘Les tableaux des verrières sont là avant tout pour montrer, à ceux qui ne savent pas lire les Saintes-Écritures, ce qu’ils doivent croire’ - Dierick, A., *Les Vitraux de Chartres*, Payot, Lausanne, n.d. Church goers were supposed to read the windows in sequence, touring the church after anointing themselves with water and praying. These images were used for meditation and reflection.

Scriptures. The labyrinth was therefore a sacred devotional emblem, part of a programme for reading the faith. Its developmental history incorporates this ancient religious significance.

GARDEN MAZES AND LABYRINTHS

In early times, garden mazes had very low hedges so that 'the whole maze could be seen at one view and the divisions stepped over'. Whilst the low form suggests an adaptation of turf-cut 'troys', both meander patterning of flower beds in France (dédales) and that of English mazes, were associated with Daedalus - and therefore with the Cretan labyrinth.

In Medieval and Renaissance times enclosed gardens symbolized female virginity - because of established links between Crete and the Virgin, between women and girdled cities and because enclosure was seen to equal protection, privacy and secrecy. Closely allied to notions of property (ownership of women), this symbolism was widely used in paintings of that period. One of the first mentions of a garden maze relates to Henry II who was reputed to have hidden fair Rosamond in a 'house of Daedalus'.

The protective design of mazes can also be associated with Elizabethan herbal knot gardens. In the 17th Century, maze designs became more intricate and were based on the symbolic geometry of divine and moral remembrance; presumably, an extension of the earlier Christianizing of labyrinths for devotional purposes.

THE BODY

In historical terms, reading intestines in the image of labyrinth reverses the order of its assumed

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120 This can also be read as a convenient political umbrella of incorporation and reinterpretation of old religions within the new.

Egyptian origins. The contextualisation is complex; the dialogue of similarities is disrupted by the discourse of inversion of previous signification, and the murmurings of preceeding knowledge. Although the model is used to expand our understanding of these parts and of ourselves, it comprises a post-myth discourse and as such represents anatomy in the context of the male body, even though at origin the body of the earth with its caves was viewed as female.

In classical times, when the city was imagined as a body, its intestines were, not unnaturally, identified with sewers: in nineteenth century France, Hugo's 'égouts de Paris' led back to the 'cloacea maxima' in Rome.

Freudian theory reads labyrinth imagery in dreams as the image of anal birth. The libidinal aspect involves the transfer of anal eroticism to the penis and substitutes lack of desire for money (for men) and babies (for women) in terms of possessions and gifts, for faeces. Women's existence is defined as 'lack', as 'not men'. Their identity is therefore established only through a negatively marked binary opposition. A further extension of the intestinal labyrinth is also evident in 20th century critical work on text as excrement, as (waste) product of the body.

The inner ear canal has been named 'labyrinth' on account of its spiral passage and the mythology of the labyrinth has been used as a model for understanding the workings of the brain. These comparisons are initially made on account of their common shape; the meandering passage form and, in the case of the brain, on account of the notion of secrecy, of exploration of the unknown in the mind, this being equated with the cultural significance of the twisting pattern.

The auricular labyrinth stands at the threshold of the brain. It is the locus of access from the outer world, a 'snail shell' house complete with 'vestibule', 'windows' and 'chambers'. The tympanum membrane (drum beat) transmits vibrations to hammer, anvil (smithing) and stirrup. Appropriately, the instruments of the smith and of the dance beat are linked with the labyrinth in this place. The
vibrations are carried through the fluid (water of initiation) of the cochlea (snail) whose winding canals are called ‘labyrinth’ and from there the vibrating mechanical energy is transformed into the nerve impulses which reach the brain.\textsuperscript{122}

THE MIND

Jacques Derrida reads the inner ear canal as a house of being in speech, as an ontology of philosophical thought:

\begin{quote}
Tympanon, dionysie, labyrinthe, fils d’Ariane. Nous parcourons maintenant (debout, marchant, dansant), compris et enveloppés pour n’en jamais sortir, la forme d’une oreille construite autour d’un barrage, tournant autour de sa paroi interne, une ville, donc (labyrinthe, canaux semi-circulaires - on vous prévient que les rampes ne tiennent pas) enroulée comme un limaçon autour d’une vanne, d’une digue (dam) et tendu vers la mer; fermée sur elle-même et ouverte sur la voie de la mer.\textsuperscript{123}
\end{quote}

The use of the name ‘labyrinth’ to denote the inner ear canal incorporates the oral tradition and identifies the rhythmic beat of the dance with the orifice through which it travels to the brain. Narrative was, after all, primarily an ‘aural’ perception, a reading by and through the ear.

The oral tradition was constantly regenerated during the recording process in the passage from listening to interpreting, from interpretation to utterance. Mnemonic patterns uttered and perceived by mouth and ear, record regenerative energy. Détienne suggests that ‘la mouvance sonore dénonce une activité constante qui semble inséparable du mouvement d’une histoire à faire de manière incessante’. \textsuperscript{124} As such it is read as the energy and magnificence of a forgotten or lost voice.

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\textsuperscript{122}Harvey Richard Schiffman, Sensation and Perception, John Wiley and Sons, Toronto, 1982, pp.44-50.  \\
\textsuperscript{123} Derrida, Marges, p.XI.  \\
\textsuperscript{124} Détienne, Mythologie, p.27.
\end{flushright}
Levi-Strauss examines the close ties between music and mythology in terms of shape. These share similar layered structures which enables them to be read both vertically and horizontally within the context of the whole. This is also true of the méander pattern; all three combine similar movements; linear sequence, interruption, recall and projection.

Since Classical times, the Cretan labyrinth has been read as a model to illuminate the workings of the mind and its products, particularly philosophical and literary discourse. The Minotaur represents the beast in man, the unconscious, the irrational and the unknown, the image of a world ‘pre-logos’ and ‘pre-logic’. Theseus treads the path of reason, and of scientific rationale in true heroic tradition.\(^{125}\)

Concurrent with myth (an individual’s reinvented narrative of the deeds of his hero, related to the group), these steps may be read in freudian psychosanalytic theory the emergence of the individual from the group. This rationale contextualises heroic success in terms of the individual in patriarchal society: for the male, it is a question of monetary success, for the female, it is that of perceived reproductive efficiency. So the social culture of the intestinal city state, the working of the minds reflecting that culture and the image of social function could be described as meeting in excremental confusion in a psychoanalytic reading of social values contextualised by their own mythologies.

Paul Diel reverses the direction of psychoanalytic interpretations of labyrinth, using it as a model to explore the relationship of conscious and unconscious mind, and reading it as an emblem of Minos’ psyche. He imposes a familiar language of morality, in terms of perversity, on unlawful,

\(^{125}\) It may be speculated today that the popularity of this myth gained from patriarchal promotion and definition of masculine heroism. The Minotaur has long been read as the product of an irrational feminine desire (Pasaphae) and Ariadne as the sacred Virgin. Hence success and order in the world has a masculine personification and the feminine is portrayed as divided and lost, the Madonna/whore problematic.
irrational and animal acts. Bachelard, writing the preface to Diel’s study, points out that interpretation of myth will vary according to the objective.

Hence a rational historian, a psychologist, a sociologist and a linguist will follow totally different paths and these are inscribed in the grammar of myth:

_Etes-vous linguiste, les mots disent tout, les légendes se forment autour d'une locution. Un mot déformé, voilà un mot de plus. L'Olympe est une grammaire qui règle les fonctions des dieux. Si le héros et les dieux traversent une frontière linguistique, ils changent un peu leur caractère, et le mythologue doit établir de subtils dictionnaires pour déchiffrer deux fois, sous le génie de langues différentes, la même histoire._

Michel Foucault uses dual spatial concepts of the labyrinth - ‘joindre et retrouver sont les deux versants mythiques d'une seule et même figure’ - to explore the work of Raymond Roussel, illustrating a structural maze of interlocking parentheses, extraordinary constructs and juxtapositions, which emphasise the disintegration of language. He describes the labyrinth as a passage which is also an enclosure, as ‘l’espace rigide, barré, enveloppé dans la recherche, du retour et du trésor (c’est l’espace des Argonautes ou du labyrinthe).’

This space is interwoven with the other space, that of the metamorphosis which he describes as:

_comunicatif, polymorphe, continu, irréversible... du changement à vue, des parcours instantanément franchis, des affinités étranges, des remplacements symboliques (c’est l’espace de la bête humaine)._  

For Foucault, if the labyrinth is a path, it is also the other of that path, an image of lost direction,

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127 Gaston Bachelard, Preface in Diel, _Symbolisme_, p.5.


129 Foucault, _Roussel_, p.102.
a return to the entrance of the world of the dead located in the cave where the waters of memory and forgetting flow.

Deep within the labyrinth lies the secret of its nature; the minotaur. It was built to hide and protect the minotaur and is the cyclical source of his death and rebirth, a symbol therefore of metamorphosis, of the passage from life to death and of the maintenance of death in life and life in death. Indeed Foucault contextualises the labyrinth in terms of its reason for being, the Minotaur:

*le labyrinthe ce serait à la fois la vérité et la nature du Minotaure, ce qui l’enferme de l’extérieur et ce qui, de l’intérieur, le met au jour. Le labyrinthe tout en perdant retrouve; il s’enfonce en ces êtres joints qu’il cache et guide vers la splendeur de leur origine.*

The body of the Minotaur is read as a manifestation of ritual substitutions, a personification of metaphor, the force of the image, the destruction of logical science by the disturbing power of signification over meaning. This combining of forms is exemplified in different attitudes to

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130 Foucault, *Roussel*, p.102.
grotesques in literature from Horace\(^{131}\) and Montaigne\(^{132}\) and in art from Bosch, to the Surrealists.\(^{133}\)

The image of the labyrinth is familiar in Western literary tradition. As Mary Ann Caws observes, Bachelard lists and contrasts most uses of the image in his chapter entitled ‘Le labyrinthe’ in

\(^{131}\) ‘Supposing a painter chose to put a human head on a horse’s neck, or to spread feathers of various colours over the limbs of several different creatures, or to make what is a beautiful woman tail into a hideous fish, could you help laughing when he showed you his efforts?’ Horace, ‘Ut Pictura poesis’ in Classical Literary Criticism, (trans T.S.Dorsch), Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1983, p.79. This text which constitutes a set of guidelines and a defence of poetry, determines that poetic licence should be restricted by a civilised appreciation of what is appropriate. It may also be contextualised as a movement away from the functions of oral poetry (myth narrative) and a devaluation of the ‘fantastic’, towards an appreciation or valuing of ‘art’ and style.

\(^{132}\) In his eulogy on Estienne de la Boitie, Montaigne quotes Horace’s description of fantastic forms, reading it as a positive decorative attribute. The literary conventions of modesty inscribe his discourse with circumlocutions of differentiation and humble protestations of denial in identification with the subject. He describes fantasies in the context of painting as ‘crotesques et corps monstrueux, rappiechez de divers membres, sans certain figure, n’ayants ordre, suite ny proportion que fortuité....Descinit in piscem mulier formosa superne’. In painting their value lies only in variety and strangeness, whereas in writing they revive a renaissance perspective of Antiquity: ‘si...il eut pris un tel desseing qui le mien, de mettre par escrit ses fantasies, nous verrions plusieurs choses rares et qui nous approcheroient bien pres de l’honneur de l’antiquité: car notamment en cette partie des dons de nature, je n’en connois point qui luy soit comparable’. Michel de Montaigne, ‘De L’amitié’ in Essais, (Chapman and Mouret eds.), Athlone Press, London, 1978, p.46.

\(^{133}\) In the work of Giorgio de Chirico: ‘se figer le lion à la tête de femme fut autrefois poétique. J’estime qu’une véritable mythologie moderne est en formation’. Breton, Littérature, No.11, Jan.1920. ‘Chirico n’appelle pas imagination cette faculté qui consisterait à unir la queue d’un poisson au torse d’une femme pour en faire un monstre séduisant. La première sirène apparut dans son esprit aussi loin de la femme et du poisson que sont les deux êtres l’un et l’autre et je suis tenté de croire qu’il les retrouva, l’un et l’autre, en partant de cette divinité. Je crois, comme lui, qu’il n’y a aucune mécanique de l’imagination’. Roger Vitrac, Georges de Chirico. For the Surrealists the desirability of such images was a function of their incongruity. Juxtaposition was a result of chance, not a product of determinism. De Chirico called it fatality.
La Terre et les Rêveries du Repos, thereby establishing his own place within the tradition.\textsuperscript{134} The archetypal status and encrypted regenerative energy of the image of the labyrinth ensure its continuance as a fertile source of textual and artistic exploration.

Revitalisation and regeneration of surrealist language is brought about by the juxtaposition of disparate images and illogical sequence. The Minotaur reads as an image of the surreal world, accessed through the texts.

In February 1933 Masson and Bataille proposed the name Minotaure as the title of the new surrealist review. For them it represented a fascination with the black myths and sombre mysteries of Ancient Greece.

Picasso made a marvellous and appropriately hybrid collage of corrugated card, papers and doilies as the cover for the first issue (Plate VI).\textsuperscript{135} Many artists such as Miró\textsuperscript{136} and Man Ray\textsuperscript{137} made images of the Minotaur for the review and both Masson and Dali expanded on the theme but it was Picasso who adopted it for his own, using it as a mask or to disguise artistic and autobiographic personalities.\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{134} 'Huysmans' vision of the hard labyrinth with petrified walls (is) contrasted to the softened labyrinth in Gérard de Nerval's Aurélia and to Michel Leiris's nightmare of a hardening one; after a cursory glance at Loti, George Sand, Kafka and Mérimée, among others, Bachelard reminds us that Hugo identified labyrinths with sewers'. Mary Ann Caws, Surrealism and the Literary Imagination, Mouton & Co., The Hague, 1966, p.20.

\textsuperscript{135} Picasso, 'Minotaure' (1933), Museum of Modern Art, New York.

\textsuperscript{136} Miró, 'Twenty drawings on Minotaur', 1933. Nine of these were published as 'Legend of the Minotaur by Joan Miró' in Minotaure, Nos.3-4, December 12, 1933.

\textsuperscript{137} Man Ray, 'Minotaur', silver print, 1936.

\textsuperscript{138} See Appendix II.
The psychoanalytic interpretation of the Minotaur as the symbol of irrational impulses, the beast in man, hidden deep within the labyrinthine recesses of the mind, and its image as a living, albeit mythological, manifestation of metaphor accorded well with surrealist theory.

It is an image of the operation of fragmentation within a whole, of metaphor within the sentence. An image of this tension, the labyrinth represents the dialectic between narrative and pre-logical sequence and the relationship between disparate elements in metaphor. It is constructed in this image of which it is a ‘diagram’ (‘twice written’) of cohabitant dualities, a pictorial representation of mythical quest and a mythogram, a symbolic icon of textual rebirth.

The Surrealists fascination with the labyrinth alters the image of the ‘other’, reading fragmentation as desirable but ultimately inconcile, a dangerous desire. Their creative use reads within the parameters of its engendered history, a projection to the limits of masculine textual identity, of textual self-affirmation. Breton’s textual references situate his discourse within this historical context of patriarchal heroic culture and textual affirmation.
FIFTH DREAM TEXT

Labyrinth mythology describes the archetypal journey as a construct. It may be read as the archetypal mythogramme and its linear graphic outlay as the image of progressive narrative sequence. The meander pattern of archetypal quest is inscribed in narrative sequence; it is the 'path' or 'thread' which allows both entrance and exit. The energy of the symbolic rites of cyclical regeneration are written into its form and it is the territory where the world of the dead and the living meet, encounter and displace each other. The thread or path is the only means of journeying through the unknown and of returning from it. The structure and inscribed significance of this frame provides a rich map as model and symbolic substitute for the modus operandi of the masculine text.

This reading inscribes the frame of reference indicated by the myth-like journey described by Breton’s fifth dream text. As logic is textually constructed, it functions internally and bears little relation to western concepts of its function as verifier of external Truth. Only the linear meanders remain as traces of the quest journey and the marks by which the other of linearity is inscribed. The reading contextualises the dual aspect of the text as narrative quest (linear progression) and locus for the creation of new myths by displacement of symbolic references.

The surreal is an encounter with the 'other' of logic - a different and definitive manner of perceiving the world: a world of strangeness within reality, a world beyond reason (in the sense of logic) but with its own internalised system of truth, similar in structure to those of myth and madness.

139 As myth writing, 'mythogram' incorporates the symbolic location which fuses known and unknown images of being in the world. It inscribes the diagrammatic form of regeneration, encrypted in written text.
The story-telling device with which the fifth dream text begins is a pictorial mise-en-scène starting with the names of the characters present, setting the general context and focusing more and more precisely on where they are - 'à la campagne..... dans une pièce' - and what they are looking at. The effect reads as a telescopic cinematic pun on the sequential nature of reading and writing.

The narrative focus shifts from a diffused perspective of the general setting to a more and more detailed examination of objects observed in the room. Eventually it settles on the third object, whose identity and purpose are of little concern ('dout j'ignore l'usage') since the object itself is 'brillant' - a source or reflector of 'la lumière surréaliste'. (M., p.49). The object, an 'appareil métallique', probably owed its existence to its original suitability for a specific purpose. However, the useful is now replaced by the wondrous as it becomes a kind of 'objet trouvé', a point of departure for a surrealist journey. (N., pp.62-3). The object may be read as a literary representation of surrealist perception: losing its denoted function, it becomes a sign of free signification, thereby symbolising dislocation and displacement.

In the preface to the first issue of La Révolution Surréaliste, Breton states that any discovery changing the nature, the destination of an object or a phenomenon, constitutes a surrealist fact. He describes a fascination with such objects seen in dreams in his 'Introduction au discours sur le peu de réalité'. He suggests making such objects and affirms that they will not have a practical application: 'il y aurait des machines d'une construction très savante qui resterait sans emploi'. (P.d.J., pp.24-5).

Despite his call for the construction of such objects in 1925, it was really only in the 1930s that they came into vogue. (P.d.J., p.24).140

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140 The objet trouvé had a precursor in Duchamp's ready-mades which served as illustrations for the nihilistic and anti-art principles of Dada. The surrealist object had an inherent poetic value as the source of imaginative departure. In the early 1920's Man Ray pursued the development of Duchamp's displacement techniques in objects such as 'Gift' (1921), (private collection), 'La Manche dans la Manche', (Hirshhorn
'Breton' wants to possess the object but cannot do so. The reason is banal: it has a price tag. However, the assumed logic of the reader's deduction that it is too expensive, is displaced by the negligible amount indicated on the tag. Repetition of the number nine in '9 fr.90' suggests that this could be a symbolic number particularly which apparently relates to the other numeric value found later in the text: the height of the small men - '1m 10'. Logically, the two are not at all related, being measures of height and money, but a series of numerical relationships between the two can be constructed within the decimal system. The later figure recalls the repeat format of the earlier number.

At this point the object disappears and is replaced by 'Philippe Soupault' who is going on a journey. 'Philippe Soupault' and his 'wife' are described as both dressed in white - 'comme lui toute habillée de blanc'. It is left open to speculation whether this is because Breton habitually uses white as a colour to represent journeys, or because white, like light, is the resultant combination of all colours, or because of possible alchemical associations between colours in the text which appear in a sequence of white, golden, rose, blue, black, blue or because white is commonly associated with both initiation and death. The apparent effect of the importance of white clothing is reinforced by the amount of emphasis it is given: 'en grand pardessus de voyage blanc, chapeau blanc, souliers blanc'.

'Breton' follows another poet, 'Eluard', on a different journey which takes the form of a hunt. 'Eluard' and 'Breton' leave the house, 'Eluard' carrying a bow and arrows. The anachronism of

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Gallery Washington) and in the film 'Emak Bakia'. Emphasis was placed on significance and poetic rather than visual value, and meant that such objects could be made by anyone. Object making of this type reached its peak at the 1933 Pierre Colle and 1936 Charles Rattan Gallery Exhibitions which showed sophisticated examples such as Meret Oppenheim's fur covered cup, saucer and spoon 'object (fur breakfast)' (1936), now in the Museum of Modern Art, New York. The 1930's also saw the introduction of objects dependent upon techniques of illusion exemplified in those produced by Dali and Magritte.
the bow and arrows imparts the flavour of a medieval, folkloric and mysterious era. Further displacement is evident on arrival at the lake.

Pheasants are normally land birds. By situating them on a lake they are transferred to the realm of the unnatural or fantastic. Female pheasants are floating on the lake and 'François', the golden pheasant, eventually appears in their midst. Calling him by name suggests familiarity, heightening the horror of shooting and eventually killing him. Only speculative interpretation can suggest why François is so named. It could be the result of surreal abstract text-generation practices. It could be a nationalist reference to the Gallic symbol, the 'Coq de France'. It could also be read that as 'doré' he is king among the pheasants, a reference to François 1er and his many mistresses.

In the context of mythology and of mythical beasts, the golden pheasant from Japan and China was the most colourful of its kind and was associated with the famous phoenix. As discussed, it may be associated with the quest for Golden Fleece, with ritual king-killing, matrilineal bird cults and with labyrinth dances. Like the phoenix, the pheasant rises but from water, not from ashes. He is replaced by a woman.

'Breton' the dreamer is linked with the golden pheasant since he later replaces the beautiful singer which had replaced it. 'Faisan' is a word which Desnos associated with Breton, albeit pejoratively and with 'peacock' implications, after his exclusion from the Surrealist group:

Et la dernière vanité de ce fantôme sera de puer éternellement parmi les panteurs du paradis promis à la prochaine et sûre conversion du faisant André Breton. 141

There is a series of sexual transfigurations which operate a female-male-female-male sequence during the hunt: the female pheasants reveal François, he is replaced by the beautiful female singer

and she is, in turn, replaced by ‘Breton’, in a cycle structurally similar to that of the magic symbolism of early Celtic poetry, in which the hunter becomes the hunted.

Before the woman appears, two rectangular boxes of pink paper take the place of François’ wings. The transmutation of François’ wings into rectangular boxes of pink paper leads the reader into an area of confusion by its very incongruity. Elsewhere in his poetry Breton uses rose (signifying both colour and plant) as a symbol of displacement. In Greek mythology, the rose was sacred to Aphrodite. In alchemy the red and white roses represent the Red King of sulphur and Isis or the White Queen respectively.¹⁴²

The image of paper floating on water has an ephemeral effect. Like the golden pheasant, paper constructions have oriental connotations. The reader’s interest is diverted from the sinking bird to the image of the boxes and the narrative reflects this temporal and spatial displacement. The bird disappears like a change in direction of the narrative sequence, sinking into the water.

On their arrival at the lake, ‘Breton’s’ remark to ‘Eluard’ is an interjection with no apparent contextual relevance. ‘A la bonne heure’ stands in typographic isolation and may refer to the hunters’ luck in having come at that time although the effect of the statement is atemporal, inviting a plurality of referents. It seems detached from the narrative sequence. There is also a sense of naivety in contrast to Eluard’s more knowing response. The grammar becomes confusing and the imagery more immediate: ‘Alors toutes les faisanes d’appeler’ has no main verb.

Similarly ‘trop court’ is separated from the sentence surrounding it by inverted commas indicating that it is either a quotation or reported speech like ‘à la bonne heure’.

¹⁴² See Joseph Campbell, The Mythic Image, p.254. Breton uses many alchemical references elsewhere (Hôtel des Étincelles, L’Union Libre, both in Clair de Terre). These are examined in the section on pornography. The marriage of the king and queen is often shown with both of them naked, winged and surrounded by liquid - red married to white - rose.
The notion of ‘maladresse’ which affects the aim of the arrow, recurs later as a kind of thematic device, taking possession of the dream or at least of narrative events. It constitutes a textual explanation of dreamed events and effects a temporal shift; reminding the reader that this is the present account of a past dream, the commentary on that dream and a part of the ‘dream work’ in the Freudian sense. ‘Clumsiness’ recurs when Breton is trying to tie up the men in blue jersey who are chasing him: ‘mais la maladresse ne me permet que de leur prendre la corde et d’en faire un noeud extrêmement lâche’. The idea is personified into a force to be reckoned with and may be read into the next mishap, the inelegant evolutions turned by the plane ‘qui boucle la boucle avec peine et inélégance’.

The submersion of the dying bird in water and the floating pink boxes followed by the appearance of the naked woman in the lake suggest a symbolic rebirth. Many mythological figures are born from water and many initiation rites include bathing in water. Freud reads water as symbolic of uterine waters, of birth imagery in dreams, as in mythology. (P.F.L., IV, p.526).

The woman rising from the water is reminiscent of the lady of the lake in Arthurian mythology and of the birth of Venus/Aphrodite although the association of ‘belle’ and ‘chanteuse’ makes one think more specifically of the Sirens.

Breton is aware of the connotative power of these symbols and the poetic relationships between them. In Les Pas perdus he describes Apollinaire’s poetic voice in terms of birds and sirens: ‘en lui, comme au moyen age en certains oiseaux semble être réincarné l’âme des antiques Sirènes’. Elsewhere he uses birds imagery to connote sexuality and poetic power: ‘Le sexe de plumes’; ‘Devant ton sexe ailé comme une fleur des Catacombes’; ‘L’aigle sexuel’. (C.d.T., pp.147; 153; 163).

In Classical mythology the sirens were bird-sought women who had lost their wings in a contest
with the muses (symbolising the adaption of pre-olympian cults, the muses being daughters of Zeus). Birds represented the dead on their journey to the afterlife (as in the labyrinth dance) and sirens were priestesses of mourning; servants of the Death-goddess and of the birds haunting the island on which they lived. They lured sailors to their death by the magical power of their singing. Under its spell, listening sailors leaped off their ships, seeking to join the sirens, perceived as beautiful women. On reaching the island, they were torn to death by their now visably monstrous captors.

Sirens who therefore symbolised the perils of desire and the false appearance of women, originally received the souls of Magnesian sacred kings. Like the Cretan kings, they were ritually killed by an arrow in the foot. (G.M., p.249). Elements of the myth can be read into the attack on Breton by the little men: ‘l’un d’eux, ayant l’air d’accomplir un rite, s’apprête à m’enfoncer dans le mollet une très petite flèche à deux pointes’.

Progression is generated by the flight and path of arrows which provoke travel and parallel the reading compulsion of of narrative sequence: ‘ Toujours est-il qu’une flèche indique maintenant la direction de ces pays et que l’atteinte du but véritable ne dépend plus que de l’endurance du voyageur’. (M., p.29). These images of linearity therefore have a counterpart in the sequentiality of poetic imagination and are inscribed in the weaving of textual structure.

The narrative of a ritualised death, rebirth and death, creates a cycle of continuity. Reading is a circular activity and winds backwards and forwards through the text as displacements create new versions of mythology based on, and altering, the old. Narrative devices and mythological references detail and interrupt each other:

\[ si\ \text{la dictée automatique peut être obtenue avec une certaine continuité, le processus de déroulement et d’enchaînement de ces dernières images est très difficile à saisir. Elles présentent, jusqu’à nouvel ordre, un caractère éruptif. (P.d.J., p.185). } \]
The small men (‘mesurant environ 1m10 et habilis de jersey blue’), invade the mythological environment, performing appropriate rites which connote another mythopoetic text in Gulliver’s Travels. Like the Sirens, ‘those who bind with cords’ - they try to tie up ‘Breton’ who has become the sacrifice to be killed. The narrator confirms this link: ‘il me semble qu’on veut m’unir dans la mort au faisan doré et à la belle chanteuse’. The dreamer has become the sacrificial substitute.

‘Breton’ escapes on a journey represented by a ‘voie de chemin de fer’. The more contemporary reference leads to a different mythical landscape - an industrial one. The factory is described as ‘charmante’, both pretty and magical on account of the incongruity of the adjective/noun combination. The position of the factory and its relationship to the surrounding landscape, is complex. It seems that unless the building is very low, the telegraph wire runs through the middle of it, being perpendicular to the railway and only 5 or 6 metres above ground. The detailed description of the relationship between the dreamer’s position, the telegraphic wire, the railway track and that of the man, presents a linear view which intersects pictorial unity. The reality of the landscape is a textual creation.

The narrative of the man’s task of placing goblets on the wire, imparts the quality of a ritual performance to the event.

The two glasses are special, ‘du type goblet’, a word with poetic, archaic and contemporary significance. They are empty, transparent and disassociated with their container purpose, yet they are described as being for the birds (‘pour les oiseaux’). The definite article grammatically implies that ‘birds’ signifies ‘pheasants’, these being the only previously mentioned birds in the text but the changed landscape and strange task have a dislocating effect which is compounded by the logically questionable purpose and significance of the glasses. ‘Birds’ can therefore be read in isolation, like the task and the purpose of the glasses.
After this descriptive passage, ‘Breton’s’ journey narrative continues: the text returns to the railway as he tries to reach a station from which to catch a train to Paris. When he arrives, the place is familiar but not wholly recognisable. There is a sense of Nantes and of Versailles, of places north and south of Paris, of suburb and provincial town and of incongruity in the familiar. ‘Breton’ recognises this as a place to which he has travelled before and from where he knows what direction to take. There is a sense of ‘déjà vu’, which is elsewhere associated with dream and with that provoked by the appearance of certain objects:

_Le mouvement spécial, indéfinissable, que provoque de notre part la vue de très rares objets ou de notre arrivée dans tel et tel lieu._ (N, p.21).

In this surrealist place, ‘Breton’, although catching a train, walks along the river. ‘Quai’ signifies both platform and quay; the railway/river substitution affirms the coexistence of both signifieds.

‘Breton’ watches the turning and twisting flight of the plane as it loses height, looping the loop, in what could be read as a paradigmatic, micro- emblematic image of the reader’s labyrinthine dance through the text. The acrobatics are not displays of prowess but of ‘peine’ and ‘inélégance’ recalling the earlier notion of ‘maladresse’. ‘Boucle’ recalls ‘noeud’, each being associated in different ways with circularity, but more importantly both being forms of closure and enclosure.

The ‘plane’ is a plane, a large black van, a hearse, and a death machine which crashes (successfully) into the river, recalling the earliest scenes at the lake.

The reappearance of the little man in blue recycles his previous image and that of the ritual substitution. ‘Breton returns to his position of observer as he watches the little man walk off in the opposite direction’ to that of the dreamer, back into the text through the reading of textual association, returning whence he first appeared and journeyed from. The mythical narrative is contained, the dream narrative has ended.
CONCLUSION

The labyrinth represents a sacred quest, more specifically a ritual life-death journey between different worlds and that the meander pattern with its conditions of entry and exclusion, is a visual representation, a mythical image of that quest.

The myth and mythology of the Cretan labyrinth provide the fullest indication of the hypothetical significance of these threshold rites which incorporate the development of built tombs from early cave burial practices. Indeed the only means we have of understanding myth lies in tracing its socio/historical development as mythology within our own system of thought. Concepts of myth have an ever-changing and cumulative effect on our perception of myth and the traces of archetypal patterns have recreated themselves in the form of the image explored:

_Myths in general, and perhaps myths of creation and death in particular, arose in at least some places in a remarkable way. They describe ritual, which itself describes the world, and action designed to 'create' the world for certain special purposes._ (C.G., P.44).

If myth has been moralised, it has also been read as an articulation of scandalous aspects of man’s primitive behaviour, as a disease of language and, conversely, as the tragedy of nature, as the primordial state of childhood. It has been searched for consistency - the only factual historical ‘reality’ of the ages of which it is the latent documentation.

For Détienne the etymological and political history of myth determines the tone of the voice presenting its discourse, a voice rationally analysed and formally displaced: ‘Grammairiens et lexicographes interprétent le mot ‘mythe’ par rébellion, insurrection, guerre civile (stasis).’

Myth is therefore:

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143 Détienne, Mythologie, p.93. For ‘muthos’ as political opinion and guidance (‘avis’) see Michel Foucault, Les Mots et les Choses, p.303.
It may equally be described as a space written and delineated by philosophical discourse. Readings of myth follow a linear quest pattern, traversing this space and therefore form a vital part of the inherited shape and form of quest narrative.

Mythology combines ‘muthos’ and ‘logos’ and is read as the capture of a transitory state which Détienne describes as:

Écriture de l’intérieur parlant dans la plénitude de la tradition que le stylet du logographe travaille délicatement par éraflures, y inscrivant les tatouages subtils de la vraisemblance, sans jamais céder au désir de tailler ni à l’envie de mutiler. Et c’est dans cette activité logographique, entrelaçant le ‘muthos’ et le ‘logos’, l’écrire et le raconter, qu’apparaît le plus nettement la nature graphique de ce qui s’appellera la ‘mythologie’ à l’époque de Platon. Avant de se penser, avant de se parler, le ‘mythe’ grec, cela s’écrit, et la ‘mythologie’ qu’il passe pour être florale comme les chemins de la mémoire, elle est, au contraire, jeune et neuve, une silhouette à peine levée et si fragile en la fin du VIIe siècle qu’elle aura besoin pour naître et se déployer du travail têtu....

Plato’s work determines myth as fiction but his dialogue is permeated with its form, setting up its own myths about the soul. Philosophy is a written alternative to the ‘wisdom’ and knowledge of ancient societies based on visual verification of ‘truth’. ‘Logos’ was originally a spoken word. In narrative terms ‘muthos’ was even used neutrally as a synonym for ‘logos’. The culture to which myth belonged was based on speech, depending more on the ear and on memory than on letters and writing. ‘Myth’, like ‘logic’ or ‘reason’ has been read as a way of seeing the world, constructing the language appropriate to its organisation. It is another language, rather than a complement to the universalised concept which, perhaps inevitably, anchors Détienne’s philosophical discourse:

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144 Détienne, Mythologie, p.94.
The rituals of this era form the structure of subsequent narrative forms. The power of linear inheritance was transferred to ‘memorial’ writing by illustrating genealogy, tracing from stone to stone the represented ancestors.\(^{147}\) Citing and enumerating ancestors guaranteed both the place of the individual within the social structure and the authenticity of narrative. The supposed supremacy of writing over the social memory maintained in the oral tradition is given by Herodotus, writing of Hecataeus in Egypt, who is shown many more ancestors than he can remember, thanks to their being written down.

The visual marking system of writing genealogy superceded earlier systems as guarantor of knowledge as ‘truth’ by ancestral verification.

Narrative writing encrypts the socio-cultural need for its own ancestral literary identification to authenticate its value. For Breton, whose texts can be seen to break with standard literary tradition, the need for identification and authenticity is problematic and contradictory.\(^{148}\) His myth references and other intertextual associations are the ‘recognisable’ stones in the landscape of the text, operating a similar function to those of kinship rituals. They embody the energy of regeneration, the ‘rebirth’ or revisiting of old text within the new.\(^{149}\)

\(^{146}\) Détienne, Mythologie, p.194.


\(^{148}\) ‘Aucun de nous ne doit avoir besoin d’ancêtres’, Breton, M., pp.37-8. Despite Breton’s avowed refusal to cite a literary history for political reasons, he does so. His theoretical texts are crammed with positive and negative references to other authors and texts of various types. He also cites long lists of names, expressing solidarity with, or rejection of, members of the Surrealist group, reinforcing his leadership position.

\(^{149}\) Intertext is inscribed with the energy of recognition and remembrance. It ranges from direct to indirect quotations of text, images, and stylistic devices. Exact identification is not necessary for recognising the significance of intertext whether
Myth is both palace and tomb, house of the living and of the dead, a creation and translation which protects the sources which guarantee its authenticity by fragmenting, disguising and concealing them. Traces of the Bronze Age culture exist in the fragmentary imagery of myth inherited by writing and logical discourse to establish its mnemonic supremacy. It is deeply buried and entwined in our cultural system which has, by its logical nature, dismembered that which proceeded it by a disruptive structural analysis, perceived necessary to its own formulation:

Les Grecs ont, semble-t-il assuré avec tant d'efficace le triomphe de la raison, du 'logos', qu'ils ont miné l'ancien système de pensée, au point de n'en rien laisser subsister que des bribes, des phrases intelligibles.\(^{150}\)

Breton seeks to reverse the process to achieve the fragmentation of logic, to recapture the mythical world and the gold of time:

je contribuerai peut-être à ruiner ces trophées concrets, si haissables, à jeter un plus grand discrédit sur ces êtres et ces choses de 'raison'. (P.d.J., p.24).

This liberty is sought within the confines of the language it wishes to liberate and is conversely bound by its values.

Breton’s texts, by which he seeks to glimpse and present the surreal world, are quests which follow the archetypal pattern. They are narratives, albeit in a different medium, which function in a manner similar to primitive labyrinth, maze and meander dances, with shared principles of exclusion and entry only to the initiated. As quest narrative, they inherit and combine the

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\(^{150}\) Détienne, Mythologie, p.226.
continuous and circular structures of the ritual origins of epic and poetic narrative tradition.

By using myth reference and suggesting the hermetic symbolism of a different (and not logo-centric) world, André Breton enters the patriarchal labyrinth whose winding path leads to the rebirth of mythical text in the light of the surreal world. His myth references contain the regenerative energies of their origins but are expanded, combined and changed, engendering ‘universality’ and non-specificity.

Writing is a hermeneutic activity. Memory is a function of the brain. The eye transmits the written text. Graphic pleasure in the alphabet is minimal; meaning is more important than visual appeal. The oral tradition, dependent on the ear, indulges the pleasure of the senses.

In the surrealist text, the eye listens ‘l’œil écoute’ and listening is visual, ‘l’audition colorée’. (P.P., p.139). Emphasis is placed on sensual rather than logical appeal:

un homme...qui, à travers le bruit de mes paroles distinguera un courant d'idées et de sensations pas très différent du sien. Je dis : d'idées et de sensations parce que j'agis moi-même dans un monde où les sensations ont plus de part que les idées... (P.P., p.150).

Breton’s quest for the surreal (‘un certain automatisme psychique qui correspond assez bien à l’état de rêve’) as a corresponding search for a mental, rather than a spiritual or physical state is constantly overshadowed with the threat of madness, the result of being lost in the world of the other, of living in it rather than travelling through it. (P.P., p.124). Indeed the danger of death, in the sense of permanent absence from the logical world, is inscribed in the desire for that absence. The surrealist traveller/reader is only saved from this compelling force, the disfigured form of irrationality in an all-too-close-to-human shape (the reader’s fictive textual creation), by the continuity of the meander.
The surrealist author holds firmly onto the safety line of grammatical science as verifier of textual ‘truth’ while indulging the desire to explore the illusory internal world of the surreal, glimpsed through the gaps in language and made manifest in metaphor. Without this guiding thread, text and language and author are seduced and threaten to disappear into the chasms bridged by lexical sequence, by dialogue (the linear movement between words - ‘dia’ + ‘logos’).

Writing and reading trace graphic lines, beginning and ending letters, words and sentences. These opening and closing movements guide the traveller from entrance to exit, through a space inhabited by the narrative and communicative lines of thought generated by the reading. The marks on the page issue an open invitation to the reader to participate. They beckon and seduce, instigating desire and demanding completion, combining and interweaving the graphically inscribed rituals of fertility, death and rebirth. In this process, narrative is recreated. The meander is therefore also an encrypted emblem of regeneration and narrative marks the presence of past in the present inscribed in its mythogrammatic fabric.

Grammatical coherence disguises the fragmentation of rational thought, leading the reading to the brink in order to glimpse the surreal, combining sensual and intellectual pleasures, reality and illusion, life and death, and creating a mythogrammatic linguistic labyrinth of words to mark the traces of a disappearing landscape.

The Fifth Dream Text is a particularly apt model with which to describe the surrealist text which deliberately sets out to explore these areas, exploiting the hermetic and apparently logical frame of narrative to engender the coexistence of disparate systems of reference within a coherent structure. Even more appropriate than the relevant myth references are the circular structures of recall which interrupt linear progression and the narrative device by which ‘Breton’, the dreamer, escapes into territories beyond the text:
Like Theseus, he exits thanks to the powers of the magic thread, the compelling force of narrative sequence. Like Daedalus, trapped in the labyrinth of his own invention, he escapes by his skill into a world constructed by the masculine heroic.
APPENDICES

I: The Cretan Labyrinth

II: Chartres, Christian Labyrinths

III: Picasso’s Minotaur
APPENDIX I

THE CRETAN LABYRINTH

According to Classical mythology, the labyrinth was built by Daedalus the famous craftsman noted for his intelligence and cunning, who had fled to Crete from Athens after having murdered his nephew Talos through jealousy.\textsuperscript{151}

Daedalus had built a hollow wooden cow on wheels for Pasiphae (the wife of Minos, ruler of Crete) to enable her to satisfy her lust for a white bull with which Poseidon had caused her to fall in love, in revenge for Minos' substitution of an inferior sacrificial bull. Minos was advised by an oracle to have Daedalus build a retreat at Knossos to house Pasiphae and her resultant offspring, the Minotaur ('bull of Minos), a monster half-man and half-bull. Apparently angry at the part which Daedalus had played in this, Minos locked him and his son Icarus in the labyrinth. Pasiphae let them out, and Daedalus built himself and his son Icarus the famous pairs of wings held together with wax, to enable them to escape from the island.

Every ninth year - at the same time as Minos' traditional renewal of kingship - seven youths and seven maidens were sent in tribute from Athens to be devoured by the Minotaur in the Cretan labyrinth.

In the Cretan version, the labyrinth was merely a well guarded prison where youths and maidens were kept in readiness for funeral games and sacrifices. Minos' general, Taurus ('bull'), was the prime winner of these games and Ariadne (Minos' daughter) was supposed to have fallen in love

\textsuperscript{151} This is a brief outline of the myth as told by Robert Graves in \textit{The Greek Myths}, Vol.1, Penguin, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1965.
with Theseus, when she saw him toss Taurus three times in succession. In the Classical version, Theseus killed the Minotaur with the help of Ariadne who had fallen in love with him. She gave him the magic ball of thread which Daedalus had given her to enable her to enter and leave the labyrinth. Theseus took Ariadne away with him but abandoned her on Naxos, where she eventually married Dionysus.

By middle Minoan times, the dominant deity in this Bronze Age matrilinear society was 'The Great Minoan Goddess'. (C.C., pp.76-89). She was a moon goddess and a fertility goddess on account of the special lunar relationships between fertility and crop cycles. She was identified with the cow, signifying its importance in the daily life of the community. (G.M., p.346). Her partner, the bull, was identified with the sun. The life cycles of these animals represented the seasons measured by the sun and moon. Certain social customs identified with the behaviour of these animals have been shown to be reflected in myth narrative. (C.C., pp.45, 66, 100). The relationship between the moon and sun, cow and bull, were enacted in ritual mimetic dances - as is discussed later.

One of the symbols of the Goddess was the double-headed stone axe. Robert Graves describes it as 'shaped like a waxing and waning moon joined together back-to-back and symbolizing the creative as well as the destructive power of the Goddess'. (G.M., p.297). The form could also be read as representing the totemic cycle of birth and death over which the moon was all powerful.\footnote{154}

\footnote{152} In a Cypriot version. Theseus overthrew Minos’ son and the throne passed to Ariadne, whom he then married. He was forced by a storm to leave her behind at Amathus, where she died in childbirth.

\footnote{153} It is suggested that the bovine cult superseded a partridge cult. Certainly the two are interwoven, but which precedes which is debatable and probably varies from place to place.

\footnote{154} As a vegetation goddess, the moon was the means of measure of cyclical death and re-growth of crops.
The sign of the sacred double-axe appears frequently at Knossos. (C.C., p.82). Evans suggested that the palace itself whose intricate ground plan varied considerably from indigenous dwellings, was the Cretan labyrinth - the name labyrinth being derived from ‘labrys’ which he reads throughout as ‘double-headed axe’. It is now widely accepted that the word has a pre-Indogermanic root and means ‘stone’ rather than ‘double-headed axe’.

The palace was a sacred house and Minos held a sacred kingship. The ruler of Knossos was a ‘priest-king’ of the type found in oriental cultures. (C.C., pp.82-3). According to Graves, the ruler of Knossos ritually married the moon priestess and took his title of ‘Minos’ from her. (G.M., p.295).

In the matrilineal society, male titular rights were assumed only by marriage to the priestess of the relevant (female) deity and inheritance passed through the female, rather than the male line. The ‘king’ was cyclically replaced at the end of a set period of time. In Crete, the king was normally renewed every nine years. This is perhaps the ritual represented in myth by the meeting between Minos and his divine father Zeus, which took place on Mount Ida every nine years, to account for and establish laws.156

With the gradual succession social changes leading towards patriarchy, worship of the Mother Goddess was succeeded by the bull-worship associated with Minoan kingship. Minos was reputedly the son of Europa and Zeus (disguised as a white bull - his conception therefore also similar to that of the Minotaur). The Athenian youths may have been sacrificial substitutes for the King. As in Egypt, the bull was associated with the sun and with fertility. (C.C., pp.44, 100).


156 Nine was the sacred number in Minoan religion. Nine years in the Minoan calendar represented eight in ours, because of the different system of counting intervals. (C.C., pp.97-99). The loss of the king’s testes in these matrilineal rituals may account for the semantic connections between male genitals and law in legal terminology; testament, testify, intestate.
Frazer reads the Athenian tribute as part of this ritual of kingship renewal and Frazer suggests that the victims were perhaps roasted alive in a bronze image of the sun represented as a bull with a man’s head. Talos, mythic guardian of Crete, was a bronze man with a bull’s head and a single vein stopped by a pin in his foot who reputedly clutched people to his breast and leaped into a fire.

Both Willetts and Graves suggest that Talos is a narrative personification of the cire-perdue method of bronze casting. (C.G., pp.100-1, G.M., p.138). The former’s version gives an explanation of the method: the hole in the statue’s foot was for the evacuation of melted wax, once the mould was heated.

Graves links the myth of Poea (the Argonaut) shooting Talos in the foot, with that of Paris shooting Achilles and the deaths of the centaurs, Pholus and Cheiron, and suggests that the Thessalian sacred kings were ritually killed by an arrow smeared with viper venom which their successor drove between their heel and ankle at the end of their period of office.

Both Willetts and Graves remark on some of the possible associations between Talos (Daedalus’ nephew), Icarus (Daedalus’ son), Talos (the bronze man), the partridge as symbol of the smiths and sacred to Aphrodite, the lost wax method of bronze casting, ritual king sacrifices, the advent of the Bronze Age and Daedalus and Hephaestus as personifications of technical advances in the Bronze Age. The myth of Perdix (Daedalus’s sister), cliff deaths (Talos and Aegeus - Theseus’s father), bird worship, Icarus wings, labyrinth as bird dance, Aphrodite, Ariadne, tree cults and matrilineal customs, can be added to these associations. Amid such confusion, it seems evident that many interrelated rites and customs, of local social and cultural events, are temporarily fixed or fused as fragments in myth narrative, which itself represents those relations in a global way.

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Talos, Minos’ bull-headed bronze servant, and the Minotaur may represent the same identity or era or different elements of ritual, and presumably share a common source. Graves suggests that Theseus’ killing of the bull-headed Minotaur also called Asterius (‘starry one’)\(^{157}\) the wrestling competition with Minos general, Taurus, and the capture of the white Cretan bull ‘are all versions of the same event’: -the revolt by the Athenians against a Cretan overlord, the sack of Knossos and a subsequent peace treaty ratified by marital alliance. (G.M., p.345).

The suggestion that the labyrinth was the palace of Knossos was popularised by Evans excavations and may in part be accounted for by the complex design of the palace in which the king would have been relatively difficult to find (and perhaps kill) on the occasion of such a raid by the Athenians. The remainder of the myth, the story of Ariadne and of the dances would seem to be rooted in religious rites performed at Knossos and elsewhere in Crete.

In the Iliad, Homer describes a patterned dance floor depicted on Achilles’ shield: ‘Hephaestus wrought a dancing floor like that which Daedalus once fashioned in spacious Knossos for Ariadne of the lovely hair’.\(^{158}\) It seems likely, as Willetts suggests, that the labyrinth at Knossos was an area in which mimetic dances, whether based on older bird cults or enacted by dancers wearing bull masks and representing movements of the sun, were performed. The latter links the labyrinth at Knossos with the Egyptian maze and labyrinth tradition known and recognised in Antiquity as sacred to the sun.

It is reasonable to suppose that in the Bronze Age Knossos, the lunar priestess (Pasiphae) disguised as a cow would have ritually coupled with the priest-king Minos, representing the sun and

\(^{157}\) It is possible that ‘Asterius’ or ‘Asterion’ was a previous title of the kings of Knossos. (G.M., pp.296-345). See H.J., Rose A Hindbook of Greek Mythology, Methuen, London, 1953, p.130 - Asteria, sister of Leto (mother of Artemis) turned into a quail and plunged into the sea to avoid Zeus’s pursuit and became Delos, location of the Crane Dance brought there by Theseus returning from Crete.

\(^{158}\) Homer, Iliad, Book XVIII, Penguin Classics, p.352.
disguised as a bull. This sacred marriage would be performed every nine years in the Great Year, the year of kingship renewal and would embody the killing/death of the king and his replacement by a successor. Graves suggests that 'Minos' seduction of nymphs, in the style of Zeus, doubtless records the Cnossian king's ritual marriage to the Moon-priestesses of various city states in his empire'. (G.M., p.301).

However this is only a partial exploration of the Cretan myth and does not account for the wider origins and significance of the labyrinth, nor for the structural complexity of its winding movements/passages, nor its relationship to the cult of Ariadne and to the Crane Dance at Delos which, it is supposed, imitated that learnt by the Athenians at Crete. The associations between all of these lie buried in the past and can be glimpsed only in fragmentary allusions. In the ritual dance, as in its narrative representations, several cults and traditions overlie and mingle with one another. Prior to bull-worship, a partridge cult and an earlier vegetation cult are distinguishable and intermingle with original practises of cave religions.

Ariadne, read by Willetts as 'very holy maid', is suggested by Graves to be a Sumerian name (Ar-ri-an-de) meaning 'high fruitful mother of the barley'. (G.M., p.306). Whether or not this is so, she is certainly associated with the lunar vegetation Minoan Mother in her aspect of mother and maid, personified in mythology as Demeter and Persephone.

Knight asserts that the etymology of the name 'labyrinth' is 'place of stone' rather than 'double-headed axe' and that the term is used in ancient literature to refer to caves and systems of caves. (C.G, p.132). Matthews also makes the association between the Cretan labyrinth and the rock caves of Gortya. Caves were connected with marriage rites, being clefts, 'keadas', made in the earth by lightning or by meteorites at places where earth and sky 'married'. They

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were associated with the female generative organs and thereby with threshold rites and with funereal rites as the place where the dead were returned to the body of Mother Earth.

Linked to the cult of Ariadne are those of Dikynna (marriage of the sun and moon) and Britomartis (who hid from Minos/Zeus for nine months). The concept of the disappearing virgin (Ariadne, Persephone, Britomartis) belongs to the cults of initiation and fertility - many of which involved plunging into water. Ariadne’s marriage to Dionysus at Naxos is compared by Willetts to Plutarch’s description of the Oshkophoria at Athens, and seems to form a similar fertility ritual. The festival celebrating her death on being abandoned by Theseus can also be read within the cycle.

Like Daedalus’s sister, Perdix (partridge), Ariadne is said to have hanged herself. (G.M., p.109). Ariadne dolls, made by Daedalus, were hung from trees to ensure fertility of the crops and presumably denote earlier tree cult practices. (G.M., p.238). Partridges were symbols of fertility, sacred to Aphrodite, and can be linked to the developing notion of an afterlife - flying birds often represented the idea of a life/death journey.

Ariadne gave Theseus a statue of Aphrodite, fashioned by Daedalus, which he set up and consecrated at Delos with the Crane dance whose movements represented the windings of the Knossian labyrinth. Homer’s description of Ariadne’s dance floor suggests that the dance movements were performed in relation to the pattern on the floor. These movements are likened to the circular spinning of a potter’s wheel. The ball of twine which Ariadne gave to Theseus to guide him through the maze can be read as the cord sometimes held by dancers to enable them to measure distances correctly and can be associated with the rope dance or ‘cordax’ which was performed at Athens. It certainly seems as though this and elements of the Dionysus/Ariadne marriage travelled to Athens from Crete. (C.C., pp.123-5, 196-7; G.M., pp.347-8).
Symbols such as these recur frequently in myth but are usually not central to the narrative. They are used specifically but are decentralised, perhaps to protect their sacred and secret significance. It may equally hold true that, in the later recording of myth, they act as tags of authenticity, of communally acknowledged ancestry.

In his introduction to *The Greek Myths*, Robert Graves defines ‘true myth’ as the reduction to narrative shorthand of ritual mime performed on public festivals. These narratives are often pictorially recorded in decorative work and ornamentation on artifacts and in architecture. For Graves, the labyrinth pattern originated in:

*the traditional brush wood maze used to decoy partridges towards one of their own cocks, caged in a central enclosure, which uttered food-calls, love-calls and challenges; and the spring dancers will have imitated the ecstatic hobbling love-dance of the cock partridges whose fate was to be knocked on the head by the hunter. (G.M., p.136).*

Partridges were fertility symbols and therefore sacred to Aphrodite. They are also, as previously mentioned, associated with smithing - Hephaestos (the lame god) married Aphrodite. At Athens, Talos (murdered by Daedalus) was closely associated with the partridge. Willetts suggests that the bird may also have been linked with the bronze Talos, the sun-god half-man, half-bull. (C.C., p.101).

Graves believes the partridge dance to be a symbolic love dance in which love lures the king to his death at the hand of his tanist/sucessor, representing the sacred marriage cycle of matrilineal customs, in which the ruling king met his death after a set period of time (usually nine years) and

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160 Talos’s mother, Daedalus’s sister, was called Perdix - ‘partridge’. His soul flew off as a partridge and a partridge also appeared at the burial of Icarus, Daedalus’ son.
a new ruler took his place. The means by which the king was killed (whether literally or symbolically) varied from place to place. In the labyrinth dance and related cults, ‘killing’ involved shooting the king in the ankle with a (presumably) poisoned arrow.

Graves concludes that the partridge dance was an erotic spring dance in which (originally) the male dancers wore wings and hobbled, imitating the mating dance of the male partridge - hence the links between limping, smithing, Hephaestos, bronze casting, Talos’ ankle and Icarus wings. These have also been associated with the ascending sun cult (and maze dance) from Egypt. A similar fertility bird dance called the ‘pesach’ (the ‘hobbling’) is recorded in the Old Testament and was well known in Palestine. (G.M., p.316).

Graves focuses on the fertility aspect, John Layard on the ritual life/death journey. Layard’s interpretation is based on a labyrinth dance recently found in Malekula in the New Hebrides. According to local myth, it was brought to that place a very long time ago by fair-skinned people who built pyramid-shaped tombs. The dance and the beliefs it embodies bear striking similarities to those found in Western mythology. Moreover since they are complete, they demonstrate the functioning of the fractured rites represented by myth and in turn provide a kind of key to myth as discourse.

The Malekulan rituals are based on the belief in a home of the dead; a place reached only after a very difficult journey. The dead man had to know a design, a continuous meandering line known as ‘the path’ to complete the journey and have a future life. It is suggested that performance of funereal rites outside the tomb lead to the idea of a mortuary temple as the place

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161 A similar parallel may be drawn from the relationship between Aphrodite (born of Uranus’s severed genitals), killing by ritual severance of the king’s genitals on Mount Ida and mimic dances performed by moon priestesses at Knossos with severed bull genitalia.

162 John Layard, Maze Dances and the Ritual of the Labyrinth in Malekula, in Folklore, Vol.XLVII, June 1936.
where the living king-god renewed and strengthened his own vitality.

The dance is composed of several dances, acts or movements roughly described as follows:

**SETTING:** Stones are erected - some represent ancestors, others form tomb structures. A large number of tusked boars are tied to these for later sacrifice.

**CHORUS:** A central body of dancers act as a chorus, representing ghosts and confusion. Their dances form a running commentary on the action.

**FIRST DANCE:** This is composed of four dances. The first, a hunting sequence, is performed by men and has four solo dancers representing two hawks and two bowmen. The second has a female solo and two bowmen. The other dancers are women. The third is danced by men and boys, the latter being dressed as women with skirts and false breasts. The men have a freshly killed cock attached to their loins; some dance as husbands, others as lovers. In the fourth dance women form a fence hiding the stone monuments (concealing and protecting the place of the dead). Sacrifice of the tusked boars follows.

**MAIN DANCE:** Thirty days later the main labyrinth dance is performed again with the four solo dancers. It is composed of ten lines of ten dancers each who dance a series of circles and squares in a serpentine movement to a one-and-a-half dance beat. There are three parts: a dance of lamentation, a protection dance and a fertility dance associated with The Sacred Marriage. The principle hawk dancer represents the ghost of the dead man on his journey to the world of the dead. The second is his introducer, a magician, one already initiated. The archers represent bridegrooms. It is not necessary for them to pass through the labyrinth (formed by the central body of dancers) to reach the women but after the marriage they do have to pass through it. Their plunging movements and the single arrow are sexual and indicate the marriage, as do the women’s movements. After the hawk/ghost has danced and a sacrifice has been made on behalf of the neophyte, the man who shoots the ghost pretends to shoot at the main body of dancers in a rhythmic advance/retreat sequence.

This dance represents the battle between that figure and the guardians of the labyrinth who are the minions of the (female) Guardian Ghost who controls the design. Sometimes represented by a stone, she is a figure whom man must pass to enter the tomb. Her defences are so strong that he must resort to arms (always a bow and arrow) to break in. In the dance the attack is foiled and the labyrinth remains in place. Then while singing a song whose words mean ‘forever’ and ‘remain’ the neophyte threads the columns of the labyrinth returning to his original position. He then passes through the labyrinth again and once within the sanctuary, ‘gratifies his desire by visiting all its occupants’ and returns identifying with the labyrinth/guardians who follow him as leader of the dance.

Although the Malekulan dance was obviously a labyrinth variant at origin, it has perhaps evolved less than might be expected, being to some extent an isolated alien import. Elements of the dance and their signification can be comparatively read into the labyrinth dances recorded in Western mythology. The Malekulan dance is performed very rarely and only on the occasion of a royal
marriage, as would have been the case in ancient Crete. Other striking similarities lie in the structure of the chorus, the one-and-a-half (dithyrambic/hobbling) dance beat, the dancers dressed as birds and archers, a sacred marriage, shooting of the 'king', a serpentine meander dance, a guardian of the labyrinth, a house of the dead marked by stones etc.

Leaving aside specific correlations and interpretation, this dance clearly demonstrates that dance was a form of narrative. Myth-narrative contains traceable elements of the evolution of these ritual narratives but combines them with historical elements (which conversely often became danced narratives), creating a fragmentary kaleidoscope of individual references contained within the whole.

Knight suggests that in Crete the similarities between the cults of Ariadne, Persephone and Britomaris could substantiate the theory that thread and labyrinth dances were originally performed at the entrance to caves (being the place where earth and sky 'married'). As noted, the word 'labyrinth' was also used in Antiquity to denote caves and systems of caves.

Both in caves and later in many built tombs, bodies were buried in prenatal positions awaiting rebirth. To assist the process of fertilisation from the sky magically, double-headed axes - the almost universal symbols of thunderbolts - were thrown into them. Axes 'split' like lightning, thus symbolising the marriage of earth and sky.

The age of cave religions is indeterminate and Knight draws analogies between prenatal burial postures and maze diagrams asserting exclusion and conditional entry as signs pointing towards a symbolic rebirth describing the sanctity of caves for burial purposes, for access to the Mother Earth, for initiation ceremonies, access to ancestral wisdom and myths of descent into the underworld. As as entrances to the body, caves represented the female generative organ. As source of access to ancestral wisdom, they issued wisdom in the form of oracles.
APPENDIX II

THE Labyrinth AT CHARTRES

The largest of the Christian labyrinths was that of Chartres known locally as 'le lieu' or as Abbé Bulteau describes it, 'un lieu de chemin'.¹⁶³ He gives the dimensions and describes the now missing plaque at the centre, which subsequent historians have suggested was inscribed with the names of the builders of the cathedral as at Amiens and Reims. Bulteau does not mention this but reconstructs on the worn plaque two figures (an Ariadne and a Theseus) and a Minotaur; a bull with four hooves and a man's head. This reversal of classical representations of the Minotaur (a man's body with a bull's head) was common in the Middle Ages in keeping with Satanic iconography of the cloven-hoofed animal.¹⁶⁴

The labyrinth is situated in the principle knave of the church and, according to Bulteau, represented the church itself, to which people came after taking many wrong paths in life;

*L'Église a moralisé le labyrinthe payen. Enfermé dans les avenues inextricables d'erreur et du vice, on ne peut en sortir à moins que la grâce ou une Ariane divine ne nous mette à la main gratuitement le fil conducteur.*

The labyrinth at Lucques was inscribed with a similar message, indicating that Ariadne represented the Virgin Mary, interceding with the gift of divine Grace;

*Hic quem Creticus edit Dedalus est Labyrinthus de quo nullus vadere quivis qui fuit intus ne Theseus gratis Arianae stamine jutus.*

¹⁶³ Abbé Bulteau, Monographie de la Cathédrale de Chartres, Librairie R. Selleret, 1892.

¹⁶⁴ Bardon, Henry, A propos D'Une Gravure Florentine (Thésée et le labyrinthe), in Gazette des Beaux Arts, July 1961.
APPENDIX III

PICASSO'S MINOTAUR

In the two series in which Picasso uses the Minotaur image (‘The Vollard Suite’ 1933-41 and ‘The Artist and his Model’ 1963-5), the women represented are both muses and symbols; in the first case, Marie-Thérèse and in the second, Jacqueline. In each case the symbolism is erotic although in the latter, passion is less primely destructive, concentrating on the puissant manipulation of the body on canvas, creating an eroticism based on artistic eloquence ultimately inclined to voyeurism.

Picasso’s ‘Minotauromachie’ (1935) is usually read in terms of the crisis he was facing in his life at that time - Olga’s departure and Marie-Thérèse’s pregnancy. It is the culmination of the violent iconography of the Minotaur, who is shown leaving the stage. Picasso did no more painting for almost a year after this work and only returned to the theme of the Minotaur in his late erotic series ‘The Artist and his Model’, in which the artist/model/Minotaur relationship has become a game controlled by the artist. The atmosphere is one of erotic entertainment and adventure rather than of desperation, violence and raw emotion.

Drawings and paintings of bullfights can be associated with the Minotaur theme and yet they stand apart from it, since they involve a more distanced observation of a cultural phenomenon. These do not appear to be autobiographical but rather an expression of Picasso’s national and cultural identification with Spain which is indicated in a more intimate way by his choice of the bull as a representational mask.

This is particularly clear from the first of two versions of a ‘Still Life with a Black Bull’s Head’ (1938) in which Picasso depicts the head flayed and in pain. Its physical state has been read as
representation of the artist who at that time was suffering from particularly bad attacks of sciatica.  

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LABYRINTH REGENERATING: BRETON AND MYTH

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INTRODUCTION

A politicised reading of the labyrinth raises new problems for a feminist analysis. The problem of ‘the other’ is that a definition based only upon binary opposition results in the sacrifice of recognisable independence from that which originally identified it. If the ‘other’ of the path is originally definable only as a binary opposite, as ‘that which is not path’, it is also a space which exists outside linearity and beyond the notion of linearity. Therefore binary definition is wholly dependent upon and may only be perceived as ‘not being’ that from which it originated; its origins being a site of alienation and conflict, a dynamic process of collusion and repulsion.

Surrealist language can be read as the product of a process which is other than that of binary opposition, since by definition opposites relate to each other in a logical bind. Avoiding logic therefore, the relationship between words is one of distance rather than direct opposition:

*Lorsque cette différence existe à peine comme dans la comparaison, l'étincelle ne se produit pas. Or, il n'est pas, à mon sens, au pouvoir de l'homme de concéter le rapprochemant de deux réalités si distantes. Le principe d'association des idées, tel qu'il nous apparait, s'y oppose. (M., p.49)*

The resulting conflict arises from the writing reader’s actual textual perception and his or her traditional cultural and social perception of the relationship between the image and the real world, or between reality and textual presentation. In the linguistic revolution, ‘text’ no longer represents or mirrors the world. Rather it presents a surreal world which is a textual construction of the reading, a world alienated from traditional denotative and descriptive language values. Due to the challenges made to cultural values as presented through language in text, this discourse of repression engenders a structure of conflict, a fight for freedom, which can be read in a manner comparable to other discourses of repression.
The similarities between Surrealism and feminism, such as they are, may be said to lie in the area of the concept of freedom and of otherness or difference, a territory related to opposition but not delineated or described by it, a territory outside or beyond traditional conceptualisation. However, any feminist analysis of Surrealism will conclude that it is sexist, often chauvinist and sometimes utterly misogynist, since desire for the ‘other’ is conceived and constructed in masculine terms, often using and abusing women’s bodies as vehicles or modes of transport and violently reinforcing inherent gender stereotypes.

A gender analysis of text writes its own argument outside of that which is presented by the text. For unless the text is presenting an argument about sexuality, a theory of sexuality or explicit sexual references which can be opposed, such sexuality as is present exists as an assumed and unquestioned permeation of text, an implicit and affective structure through which authorial dialogue is presented. Masculine textuality is prescribed ‘normative’ under patriarchy. The written product testifies to phallocracy, the single party state. Gender difference was not an ‘issue’ but is now a question in which feminine textuality can be foregrounded as ‘other’ by politicising marginal representation, voicing and contextualising the sexuality of cultural production.

MYTHOMANIC TENSIONS

Breton’s general vocabulary ranges from mundane expressions to obscure poetic words. Within this range, the proportion of words of myth origin, such as the names of gods and heroes with whom he identifies (Theseus, Jason, etc.), of goddesses whom he invokes and uses as muses (Melusine) and of fabulous creatures and concepts (siren, labyrinth, etc.), is relatively small and yet there is an overwhelming kinship with myth in surrealist texts. His writing encrypts two main types of myth: the regeneration of previously known myths and the creation of new myths, of a surrealist language filled with metamorphoses and transmutations, with strange objects, places and images.
This quotation may be read as an exemplum of Breton’s attitude to surrealist quest which is referred to within traditional patriarchal form. Breton situates his text firmly in this conceptualisation of the ‘masculine’ heroic, identifying with it and indeed ‘invoking’ it to contextualise his own cause and status as a writer, perceived within tradition as poetic questing.

Myth words and proper names operate textually in the same way as non-mythic ones. They are placed in new and unfamiliar contexts and, by means of the textual connotations created on reading, gain new life from the transitional process. Thus Breton’s ‘labyrinthe de cristal’ is primarily a surrealist construction, translucent in the light of revelation. In such a labyrinth, traditional perception is inverted: obscurity and darkness are absent as is the idea of a secret heart or centre of the labyrinth. In the transparent structure, the outside and the inside have become identified with each other, thereby emphasising the locus of the traveller who is the only object within.

Breton’s intertextual references allude as much to the investigative study of myth as to myth itself. On the one hand, he uses words associated with a specific myth source, creating entirely new surrealist myths and recreating old ones by giving them different connotations; on the other, he seeks the lost gold of time - the specific and precious time of myth - a return to a time of

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166 Cf. ‘Pour moi je continuerai à habiter ma maison de verre, où l’on peut voir à toute heure qui vient me rendre visite, où tout ce qui est suspendu aux plafonds et aux murs tient comme par enchantement, où je repose la nuit sur un lit de verre aux draps de verre, où qui je suis m’apparaîtra tôt ou tard gravé au diamant’. Breton, N., pp.18-19.

167 As in quest tradition, the focus is on a masculine hero and his perception of the world as he travels in pursuit of the quest. He is central to the text which emits from him, testing and proving his heroic status by his mastery of the trials created by the environment and the narrative of his quest world.
childhood perception, to a purer and more sacred form of language, in short to the socio-cultural era (as understood by subsequent perception) of which latent documentation of recorded myths is read as a series of tombstones or markers, fixing death in memory and therefore inscribed with the power of regeneration.

Words such as ‘labyrinth’ whose referents are mythic in origin belong to the hermetic language of myth. By fusing them with non-mythical associations, Breton breaks the barriers, the system of closure of that language. He identifies his text with the system, creating a literary counterpart to the aspect of the oral tradition which saw a constant regeneration of myth, a changing record of socio-cultural events.

Regenerated myths provide a frame of reference for the creation of a non classical mythology, a surrealist mythology based on composite images and events whose strangeness is acceptable within that context - ‘Il ne tient peut être qu’à nous de jeter sur les ruines de l’ancien monde les bases de notre nouveau paradis terrestre’. (P.d.L, p.25). Encrypted in these myths is the emotive appeal of narrative truth as verification of that which cannot be verified, of the unknown and the irrational: the hybrid Minotaur concealed in his labyrinth.

In a gendered reading, the basis of myth as a system of recording the evolution of sexual stereotyping calls into question our own readings of myth as representative of fundamental and ‘natural’ truths about human nature in the context of gender. Psychoanalysis since Freud has read myths as representations of sexual truths and as behavioural models for the psyche. If however myth is read as a translation, recording and inscribing the rise of patriarchy and the imposition of a male dominated culture, then the personification of the gods and their attributes can be read as
a subtle propaganda, a theft of oracular power like that which denoted Apollo (male) as replacement for Delphi (generative organ of female earth).\textsuperscript{168}

Recreation of new myths and of a new language from the old by means of a journey - reading of text or 'mythogramme' - situates Breton's texts within the regenerative traditions of quest myth. The journey metaphor is doubly reinforced by Breton's perception and evaluation of poetic endeavour as a journey in his more theoretical writings: '...d'accorder au témoignage poétique une valeur égale à celle qu'on accorde, par exemple, au témoignage d'un explorateur'. (P.d.I., p.24).

This is compounded by his frequent use of images alluding to journeys (trains, railways, hotels etc.) and by direct and indirect intertextual references to other journey narratives such as Gulliver's Travels and The Holy Grail, and to their authors.\textsuperscript{169}

Breton's texts combine images of this type from Western literature, classical to contemporary, with the familiar images of daily life. In the connotative correspondence, the surrealist quest gains myth status and conversely transforms reading into a process of surrealist exploration. Reading therefore creates its own environment and audience. The reader/writer treads the labyrinth, emerging from the text as Breton's Theseus, the hero from the labyrinth. The hero is therefore both the creator and the created of the labyrinth, and Breton's hero is both male and masculine. The condition of entry is not merely knowledge, but knowledge of and identification with a masculine tradition - that of heroic quest.

Anna Balakian reads Breton literally as 'the man within the labyrinth' but sees the labyrinth as 'the cosmography of analogies that seem confused only to the mind that is out of focus', as an

\textsuperscript{168}This is a reference to the substitution of the mnemonic power of natural forms to embody Truth as knowledge about the world by acting as places of access to death, by the written alphabet of logocentric civilisation.

\textsuperscript{169} See Breton, M., pp.37-8, p.54, p.161, p.165-6.
image of this world which is out of focus.\textsuperscript{170} However it is not focus but light that concerns Breton. In surrealist terms his labyrinth is a positive image, made of crystal and receptive to light.

For Balakian, the labyrinth is an image of the difficulty of the text, a result of reading the text rather than an encrypted structure - which perhaps reveals more about her reading than about the text. In short, her analysis may be read as an expression of her problems in reading Breton’s text and lacks depth, cosmeticising its appearance:

\textit{His imagery is constructed with the intricacy of a labyrinth, new chambers are revealed with every reading, and new difficulties of meaning. As he calls life a cryptogramme, so is his poetry.}\textsuperscript{171}

Balakian also observes that ‘Breton aspires to a notion of art which would essentially be myth-creating on a level free of specific cultures and therefore with an open end, leading to infinite provocations’.\textsuperscript{172} His imagery is a product of his own textuality and is liberated from denotative reference, but ‘universality’ as such is inscribed in views of the natural world which myth presents.

However, the old can be identified with the new and the new with the old - ‘labyrinthe de cristal’ - only if they fall within a pool of knowledge common to both reader and original author - a condition of entry and principle of exclusion to the uninitiated. In general terms, the language of the text must be able to be read by the reader in order that the reading enter the space/house/labyrinth of the text and move/dwell/write within.

\textsuperscript{170} Anna Balakian, \textit{André Breton: Magus of Surrealism}, Oxford University Press, New York, 1971, p.72.

\textsuperscript{171} Balakian, \textit{Magus}, p.128.

\textsuperscript{172} Balakian, \textit{Magus}, p.153.
A system based on judging right and wrong reading and founded on reconstitution of the original author, institutionalises a system of singular ‘dominance’ in which man is master of the house and his territory is protected by a necessary obeissance to ‘authority’ on the part of those who wish to enter.

Despite his constant assertions about the openness and accessibility of the text, Breton often plays on the power of being the original author and of denying the reader entry programming the text with obscure and poetic words whose signifieds do not readily fall within the reader’s scope of knowledge. In other words the conditions set may neccitate the acceptance of a power structure. Intrinsic to the structure, the first principle is that of a common understanding of language; words must be recognisable:

\[ \text{Les mots... rien ne sert à les modifier puisque, tels qu’ils sont, ils répondent avec cette promptitude à notre appel. (P.d.L., pp.22-3).} \]

The second is that of shared imagery, of the verisimilitude and dislocation of graphic representations should read as recognisable perceptions of the world, which a gendered reading will construe as masculine.

Images are combined in a grammatically correct fashion but in ways which do not ‘visually’ reflect the real world but rather present reality as a linguistic construction. Verification is

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173 Cf. the alchemical language of ‘L’Union Libre’ (C.d.T., p.93), discussed in the section on ‘Pornography’. The use of obscure references such as these, highlight Breton’s ambivalent attitude to authorship and constitute an elitist reading programme. The author’s need to program may be one explanation for the failure of automatic writing, did not prevail as the supreme method of text generation.

174 Breton is a writer who uses phallic expressions to perpetuate masculine attitudes and traditions which form his linguistic, textual and literary inheritance. His broadening of cultural references reads within this context as masculine game demonstrating intellectual superiority, and his attitude to things female and feminine is one of textual subordination and appropriation for the purpose of regeneration through masculine conceptualisation of desire.
transferred from representative value to the mechanisms of grammar. In this state, words may be read as graphic symbols of structural truth. Disruption of traditional denotation facilitates a surrealist metamorphosis of image, language and reading which are projected into the realm of the imaginary to substantiate textual reality:

*Les mots, les images ne s'offrent que comme tremplins à l'esprit de celui qui écoute.* (*M.*, p.47).

Breton appeals in a symbolist parody to the East - ‘toi qui n’as qu’une valeur de symbole’ - to inspire his poetic Orphean endeavours:

*...dispose de moi, Orient de colère et de perles!...Toi qui es l’image rayonnante de ma dépossession, Orient, bel oiseau de proie et d’innocence, je t’implore du fond du royaume des ombres! Inspire-moi, que je sois celui qui n’a plus d’ombre.* (*P.d.J.*, p.29).

Poetry and sensuality are allied in the decadent symbolist echo which belies and reinforces their message. The Orphic power that Breton seeks is a liberation and a loss (dépossession), both positive and negative. His attitudes to the muse are, as usual, ambivalent. The call to the East reads as an agonised and somewhat ironic plea for divine intervention to change, by means of poetry, Occidental perceptions of tangible truths and verisimilitude. The Baudelairian quality and rhythms of the lines hearken back to the 19th Century, while the rich sensual imagery evokes that of Moreau and Redon. The bird image functions both as traditional poetic subject, and in its traditional symbolic function, as an image of transcendence, a bird whose flight connotes masculine textual sexual potency.

The golden pheasant of the fifth text of the ‘Cinq Rêves’, is a bird such as this, native to China the mythical phoenix, an image, like the woman, to be killed. Orpheus’ journey to the underworld is both another narrative of ritual, an heroic journey to the afterlife, and a manifestation of the power of poetic vocalisation. It formalises the identification of poetry with
quest, promotes the image of poetry as heroic and may be read as locating the oral tradition, poetic
deavour and the spirit world in one place.

In consequence, these lines mark an appeal to ancestry which Breton is claiming as his own line.
Since the text is also an invocation of death (Orpheus, 'celui qui n'a plus d'ombre', represents the
triumph of life over death by the power of poetry), the lines read as an affirmation of the
dominance of language over nature. As markers or memorials of death in living text they
constitute a literary counterpart to threshold rites of regeneration.

In the world created by the text reading/writing text is an 'aventure poétique' (M., p.29), a
pleasurable exploration of the senses encompassed by a set of rules pre-programmed as an
'authoritative' system of verification:

_Le fétichisme humain, qui a besoin d'essayer le casque blanc, de caresser le bonnet de
fourrure, écoute d'une oreille tout autre le récit de nos expéditions... Les créations
poétiques sont-elles appelées à prendre bientôt ce caractère tangible, à déplacer si
singulièrement les bornes du soi-ditant réel?.....En réalité, est-ce que je dors sur un lit
de moelle de sureau? Assez! je ne sais pas : ce doit être vrai en quelque sorte, puisque
je le dis. (P.d.L, pp.24-26)._

The surrealist text is built upon these principles and is conversely bound by them. Whatever
global/universal truths seem manifest in the text arise naturally from the similarity of motifs,
totems and symbols, shared by totally different cultures - the communicable signs which evolve
from the ontological exploration of nature represented in myth. In this way, Balakian points out,
Breton was able 'to utilise the symbols that in their original sense supersede Christianity and fall
into a common pool of myth identifiable with the natural mysteries of the world'.175 Reading
myth as a repository of truths about the world is an element of our culture which mythology has
sought to incorporate or translate into a system based on reason and logic:

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175 Balakian, _Magus_, p.129.
It looks as if the need to intellectualize these attributes has arisen together with the desire to rationalize mythology. For as soon as the myths were interpreted as fables which both concealed and revealed the truth about nature, the demand must have arisen to explain not only the actions but also the appearance of the gods in symbolic terms.  

Although Breton is dealing with archetypal images and with concepts of a universal time, it has to be said that, like the concept of the ‘natural mysteries’, that of ‘universality’ is a product of culture. The literary and cultural emphasis of Breton’s texts is, naturally enough, specifically Western. Furthermore, it is a culture which privileges superiority as mastery and appropriation of other cultural references as ‘war booty’, as part of the quest for status. Gendering is inherent, an accepted and unquestioned political discourse.

Surrealism, like myth, has a concealed symbolic language of its own, a kind of secret code or key for unlocking a privileged reading. Breton’s use of words relating to light and its relation to objects (their perceived translucency or opacity), are signs indicating surrealist activity and its powers of illumination. They function as codified elements which in turn operate a system of closure. This hermetic cabala goes beyond the personal symbols and themes generally found in a writer’s work, reflecting the mystic presentation enshrined in ‘L’Art Magique Surréaliste’, a game whose structure and rules are defined by the author. (M., p.41). The poem, ‘Tout Paradis n’est pas Perdu’, like his crystal labyrinth, is a very clear instance of the linguistic liberation of things receptive to light and of the didactic functioning of such images within the surrealist canon. (C.d.T., p.67).

Detective work can compile references to houses, windows, curtains, veils, masks, and windows, glass, mirrors, crystal, dew, determining their function within the text as references to the text and operating a system of archeology based on memory recall. These encoded words (when read as


177 ‘Lumière de l’image’, Breton, M., p.49. ‘L’illumination systématique des lieux chachés’, Breton, L.R.S., No.12, p.5.
such) engender a series of images which in each instance act as a mise-en-abîme and conversely as a guide (for those who wish to follow) to Breton’s attitude to his text. A constant dichotomy between liberation and restriction is therefore built into the text.

Hence, the underlying symbolism, for example of Breton’s house, is a dwelling, a text. There are many types of houses, of rooms and their uses: temporary dwellings, hotels, house/home, house/tomb, château (parties, formal visits, museum). ‘House’ becomes all houses or things which could be considered houses by the inhabitant but as mentioned earlier, this is a masculine house, the ‘domus’, dwelling of its master. Programming dictates that the ‘maison de verre’ (‘greenhouse’) has a glass bed with glass sheets, surrealist properties which exhibit the author at home. (N., pp.18-19).

As habitations rather than homes, these houses are places of masculine fantasy in which the objects of everyday life are erotic, whether dining table or telephone, in which acts such as meals are, eating and sleeping are objectified and eroticised. It is also one in which participation in chores and housework is miraculously absent and one in which women are objectified and eroticised along with the brooms buckets and vacuum cleaners of which they have an entirely different experience!

References to places, such as Nantes, which have a particular subjective importance in the life of the biographical author, are restricted by contextualised significance. In the fifth dream text of ‘Cinq Rêves’, the description of the railway platform (‘un peu Nantes’) can be read as a sign. Nantes is a subjective choice, whose significance is given in another text:

_Nantes: peut-être avec Paris la seule ville de France où j’ai l’impression que peut m’arriver quelque chose qui en vaut la peine._ (N., p.33).

When such a reference is carried over into the text, it does not usually fall into the general pool
of shared language associations and can be read as 'significant' only in an interpretative reading. Textual repetitions and explanations create sets of associations in the mind of the writing reader whose intertextual associations then become constructions designed by memory rather than imagination. This memory recall is determined by the author's text in collusion with the reader's linguistic textual experience, and it is almost as though the textuality of the writing reader were manipulated by that of the written author, the patriarchal figure of the 'Exegi Monumentum' whose quest for everlasting life has led him to create a living mausoleum in which his presence is fixed. The tradition in which this develops is also that which upholds it, sustaining or negating dialogue with authorial discourse. Hence, text privileges its own significant truths and a system of double entry similar to that of myth/mythology is in operation.

Images are the embodiment of power and energy; springboard and light providing access to the mind through the labyrinth - internal passages of the ear. Ideas, the flow of thought ('le fil des idées') are generated by sensory perception. Imaginative organisation and active participation, are textual guides for the traveller in the labyrinth - 'le fil tendu d'hirondelles' - and in the dance - 'fils qui soutiennent les pas des danseurs de corde et des gouttes d'eau'. (C.d.T., pp.136, 109).

Hence Breton's labyrinth is crystal in the world of the text and he is 'sans fil'; the thread is unnecessary since the labyrinth is transparent. (P.d.I., p.7).

In 'Incompatabilités sémantiques dans l'écriture automatique', Michael Riffaterre demonstrates the inherent dichotomy between narrative and discourse and narrative and lexical sequences in automatic writing. 178 He analyses 'poem 29' of Poisson Soluble, the fabulous hunting narrative which presents a constant conflict between unity and fragmentation and between the manner and subject of representation. Distinguishing two distinct ways in which this is done, Riffaterre takes 'reality' as a yardstick for acceptable representation. However, it is the text itself which provides the only 'reality' since it is, arguably, the only available constant to the reader. Yet the text, while

178 M.Riffaterre, La Production Du Texte, pp.235-249.
morphologically presenting a unified whole, is composed of fragmented elements which, although linked together in a form of textual reality (semantically, grammatically, linguistically, etc.), bear no relation to each other in the 'real' world of the reader's experience.

If language is a reflection of the world, then it is also the representation of the 'other' world. This 'other' is both fictional, being unverifiable and abstract (taken 'from' the real world and 'removed'), that which is lost or forgotten but which by definition had a previous existence. Hence the 'invention' of myth in the Jungian sense as that which is found and therefore previously existed.

Myth, like language, is a partial reflection of its own world, designed to create that world, and has a fictional and abstract existence within those terms. It originates in the cave, the pool or place where memory and forgetting meet. The world inscribed by myth is described by its translation into this world. The histories and practices of totemic societies have been written as myth, as unreal.

If Truth is conceived in the Heideggerian sense described by Karl-Otto Apel as an 'opening' which is at the same time 'concealing', then 'each word of a living language can ... be considered as a paradigm of that opening and concealing of being that fixes itself in so-called natural language as "house of being" and "house of the human being" and as such precedes and makes possible the truth and falsehood of propositions'.¹⁷⁹ The house of being is a house of masculine being, a textual construction of a ruling subject who encrypts and censors previous history, generating his line.

The world of the real has, by virtue of its presence, also an absence. The unreal reflection has both a fictional presence and absence, both subjectively determined, as indeed Breton remarks:

*On peut affirmer la présence ou la perception d’un objet quand il est présent et perçu, quand il est absent et perçu, quand il est ni présent ni perçu*. (P.de.J., p.187).

If language represents the world, then it must also hold true that language is a house of ‘non-being’ in the real world, and as a reflection of the global ‘other’ (the space ‘off the path’), a fictional house of being and non-being. Language as mirror of the world constitutes the quadrilateral discourse of any axis of reflection. It constructs all four houses and the reading moves between them simultaneously in a constant state of flux.

Reflection, text (that which is constructed in the mirror) and language (process of representation) appear whole but are in reality fragmentary by this definition. Breton’s texts explore the other by associating it with images of childhood and childlike perception:

*L’esprit qui plonge dans le surréalisme revit avec exaltation la meilleure part de son enfance.* (M., p.52).

As representation of other, language can be read in psycho-social terms as an enactment of the moment of trauma when the child distinguishes self and other. According to Lacanian theory, the infant of several months has no concept of self. Instead it has a global view of the world and makes no distinction between itself and others. Seeing itself in the mirror, however, enables the child to grasp the idea of physical wholeness and to begin the process of differentiation. But this event is not without trauma; the newly perceived Gestalt is a fixed ‘orthopaedic form whose
illusory stability and exterior falsify the child’s perception of itself. This Gestalt painfully contradicts psychic reality.

By seeking a return to the world of childhood perceptions, to a time when language is not bound by logic, to a time in which language is all powerful, to the world of the ‘other’, of the surreal, Breton’s language and texts constantly evoke this point of crisis:

\[ L'obscurité de nos paroles est constante. La devinette du sens doit rester entre les mains des enfants. (P.P., p.76). \]

Breton’s belief that childhood offers one of the closest approximations to the marvellous differs from the concept of myth as representative image of a childhood of the race, in that it is a state which can be linguistically ‘invented’ or ‘found again’:

\[ L'homme, ce rêveur définitif...S'il garde quelque lucidité, il ne peut que se retourner alors vers son enfance...Là, l'absence de toute rigueur connue lui laisse la perspective de plusieurs vies menées à la fois. (M., p.14). \]

The concept of ‘childhood of the race’ is one which belongs to the history of myth discourse and is therefore one of the ways in which our culture has perceived myth.\(^{180}\) In an article on the film ‘Zéro de Conduite’ by Jean Vigo, Allen Thiher observes:

\[ In one sense this turning towards the past caused the pre-modernist writers to assimilate the classical myth of a golden age, or the childhood of the race, into the myth of childhood or the golden age of the individual before his fall into time.\(^{181}\) \]

The idea of a ‘fall into time’ is also a cultural notion allied to that of the ‘childhood of the race’.

\(^{180}\) See Détienne, L’Invention de la Mythologie, Gallimard, Paris, 1981, p.34.

Concepts of time changed from circular to linear with the advent of the alphabet. In returning to the 'other' of perception, the world of myth and childhood where imagination is all powerful, Breton disrupts both linear time and meaning. He seeks à return to perceptions of the world which may be read as similar to those expressed in the mirror stage which Lacan sees as the threshold of the visible world, in the dislocation of the self-image of masculine textuality.

Myth time is circular and constantly fluid with regenerative energy. In Lacanian terms, according to Wilden, both myth and mirror image of the child can be read in three ways at once: backwards - as a symptom of or a substitute for a much more primordial identification; forwards - as a phase in development; and timelessly - as a relationship best formulated in allegorical forms.¹² Textual time is eternal, simultaneously fixed and continuous. Linear unidirectional time and omni-directional time combine past, present and future. Breton conceives of mental perception as a similar state:

_Tout porte à croire qu’il existe un certain point de l’esprit d’où la vie et la mort, le réel et l’imaginaire, le passé et le futur, le communicable et l’incommunicable, le haut et le bas, cessent d’être perçus contradictoirement. (M., pp.72-3)._¹²

Breton seeks this eternal timelessness of poetic immortality as treasure to be possessed: ‘je cherche l’or du temps’. (P.d.J., p.7).

Riffaterre describes ‘normal meaning’ in relation to linearity:

_La signification normale étant discursive, c’est-à-dire manifeste dans la linéarité et référentielle, la signification ne peut se différencier du sens qu’en dehors de la linéarité._¹³


¹³ Riffaterre, _Production du Texte_, p.75.
Since Breton’s texts seek to remove the denotative aspects of reference, linear movement is transferred from meaning to form, wherein one word follows another in a grammatical sequence. Semantic expansion is unified only by narrative sequence (‘le fil des idées’). The reading is situated within an open space delimited by the beginning and end of the text (temporally constant), a space which is the other of linear narrative discourse, the other of the ‘thread’ or ‘path’ which marks direction.

In the surrealist text, the path or thread is that of the sequentiality of narrative, the desire for continuity of form as opposed to logic, the material of which the text is woven. Thus the presentation of path can be read as a matrix - path, non-path, absence of path and absence of non-path; language is both a means of presenting forms and a formal object in its own right.

As the archetype of threshold rites, labyrinth (the fixed pattern followed by the dance) may be read as a dialect of identification with the Other and of the objectification of the perceived primordial ‘I’. Breton’s textual identification with assumed myth images is a particular function of the masculine ‘imago’ permeated with libidinal dynamism.

Automatic writing exploits the fragmentary and abstract in language by removing linear denotative logic. Readers’ cultural perceptions of the world, of themselves and of language, are therefore under constant attack. The surrealist dissatisfaction with the limits of reality (‘ce peu de réalité’) is quoted by Lacan in apposition as recognising an ‘insuffisance organique de sa réalité naturelle’ in the mirror stage. Lacan describes the internal pulsion of the mirror stage as driving the subject and operating ‘les fantasmes qui succèdent d’une image morcelée du corps à une forme que nous appellerons orthopédique de sa totalité’. Breton’s texts are impelled by a similar desire for the fragmented body and this desire is conceived and equated with a masculine

perception of sexual desire as an urge or expression towards an out of control experience:

La croyance en un temps et un espace absolu semble prête à disparaître ... Mais la faculté merveilleuse, sans sortir du champ de notre expérience, d'atteindre deux réalités distantes et de leur rapprochement de tirer une étincelle; de mettre à la portée de nos sens des figures abstraites appelées à la même intensité, au même relief que les autres; et, en nous privant de système de référence, de nous dépayser en notre propre souvenir, voilà qui provisoirement le retient. (P.P., p.87).

Guiding thread and weaving thread, Breton’s text is a fabric woven for sensual effect. ‘un fil qui se repète et se croise fait la soie’.

The text is woven with the language of a masculine sexual desire, with traditional views and viewing of women as the object of desire, transferred onto that which is sought in the quest. Ideas and women are both read in terms of the effects they produce (on men) rather than as subjects equal to the writing subject:

Telle idée, telle femme lui fait l’effet.....cette idée, cette femme le trouble. (M., p.23).

Within this hierarchy, women are to be dominated, men are in control:

Puis l’essentiel, n’est-il pas que nous soyons nos maîtres, et les maîtres des femmes, de l’amour, aussi? (M., p.28).

Female attributes are projected onto language as object of desire, in a manner recognisable as cultural biological determinism: ‘il faut que le nom germe pour ainsi dire, sans quoi il est faux’.

(M., p.167). Images are seductive, instigating desires and providing access to them, stimulating vision:

Il prend conscience des étendues illimitées où se manifestent ses désirs. (M., p.49).

Automatic writing is the expression of a cerebrated visual eros, a stimulus and a sensual

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186 Breton’s cloths are always luxurious, sensuous and sensual and are usually those associated with women’s dresses (‘taffetas’, ‘mousseline’, ‘soie’, ‘velours’).
aphrodisiac which summons the world of the ‘other’:


Text-production process is also presented in a similarly exciting and pleasurable manner and as a means of engendering excitement:

*D’autre part, une inévitable délectation après coup dans les termes mêmes des textes obtenus et, très spécialement, dans les images et figurations symboliques dont ils abondent, a contribué secondairement à détourner la plupart de leurs auteurs de l’indifférence et de la distraction, où, tout au moins en les produisant, ils doivent se maintenir par rapport à eux.* (P.d.J., p.184).

Surrealist discourse is to be rewarded by praise and female passion is offered by Breton as a ‘reward’ (the traditional war booty). In the following quotation ‘douce’ is placed in apposition to ‘violence’, replacing one type of masculine fantasy by another, a perceived feminine ‘quality’ by a perceived attribute. The text therefore reads as an enunciation of the effect of surrealist discourse, described in the language of a masculine potency fantasy:

*Il fera communier les plus irréductibles adversaires en un désir secret, qui sautera les patries....il jouera sur le velours de toutes les défaillances. Il sera vraiment élu et les plus douces femmes l’aimeront avec violence.* (M., p.43).

Automatic writing and myth are read as sharing the same source which is described as the locus of a continual unrestrained erection, an image of desire which is the violent focus of surrealist writing:

*On a surtout fait valoir jusqu’ici que la confrontation des produits de cette écriture avait braqué le projecteur sur la région où s’érigé le désir sans contrainte, qui est aussi celle où les mythes prennent leur essor.* (M., p.167).
Satiation of desire is 'sans intérêt' by comparison with the knowledge of ownership as self-affirmation: 'Le tout, pour le surréalisme, a été de se convaincre qu'on avais mis la main sur la 'matière première' (au sens alchimique) du langage'. (M., p.167). Breton reads seduction as something for which he is not responsible; the seduced is a prey to be carried off:

*Il va, porté par ces images qui le ravissent, qui lui laisse à peine le temps de souffler sur le feu de ses doigts.* (M., p.50).

Breton is ambivalent in attitudes of desire; the fabric woven is also a trap, an emblem of bad faith projected on the female, linked to masculine perceptions of reproduction and loss. The innocence of the young girl and the gift of thread is also therefore the deadly intent with which the spider weaves her web: 'du fil de la vierge à la toile d’araignée'. (N., p.20). The black widow spider lures her mate to his death, biting off his head whilst in the act of copulation to enhance his performance and to ensure fertilisation by the death agony in this 'marriage' rite. It is perhaps little wonder that Breton's labyrinth is built of crystal and that he needs no thread! The spider lurking in the corner (perhaps the threat of madness) is an inevitable and dangerous part both of the surrealist experience and of that desire which he describes an an absence of peace and a pleasure in incomunicable sensations:

*Il y aurait à hiérarchiser ces faits, du plus simple aux plus complexes, depuis le mouvement spécial, indéfinissable, que provoque de notre part la vue de très rares objets ou notre arrivée dans tel et tel lieux, accompagnées de la sensation très nette que pour nous quelque chose de grave, d’essentiel, en dépend, jusqu’à l’absence complète de paix avec nous-mêmes que nous valent certains enchaînements, certains concours de circonstances qui passent de loin notre entendement, et n’admettent notre retour à une activité raisonnée que si, dans la plupart des cas, nous en appelons à l’instinct de conservation......Ainsi en va-t-il de ces sensations dont j’ai parlé et dont la part d’incommunicabilité même est une source de plaisirs inégalables.* (N., pp.21-2).

It seems as though pleasure is inevitably tainted by a sense of loss and that this is something to
be feared. Thus while sensuality is something to be seized, it is also something to be mastered
and tamed and controlled something inherently dangerous:

La sensualité la mieux ordonnée y trouve sa part et je sais que j’apprivoiserais bien des
soirs cette jolie main qui, aux dernières pages de L’intelligence de Taine, se livre à de
curieux méfaits. (M., p.15).

The effect of the feminised masturbatory hand is reminiscent of the appropriation of words such
as those relating to women’s body parts and to perceived feminine adornments (clothes, textiles,
jewellery), for sensual appeal. The hand forms part of the subtext of Breton’s projected sexual
fantasies and fears presented through his text. Not only are desire and sensuality sought and
feared, but safety lies in exhibiting (thereby confirming) masculine phallic ex-pression, an
experience denied to those who are not initiated in the quest:

Chacun d’eux poursuit simplement son soliloque, sans chercher à en tirer un plaisir
dialectique particulier. (M., p.47).

C’est à nous, en effet, sans pour cela tolérer que s’émousse la pointe de curiosité
spécifiquement intellectuelle dont le surréalisme agace, sur leur propre terrain, les
spécialistes de la poésie, de l’art et de la psychologie aux fenêtres fermées, c’est à nous
de nous rapprocher, aussi lentement qu’il le faudra sans à coups, de l’entendement
ouvrier... (M., p.81 note).

Derrida discusses metaphor in terms of a seductive power which can engender ‘la perte provisoire
au sens’. The surrealist text is based on a similarly perceived pleasurable power to lead logic
astray; to divert the reader from the path of language as representative of verisimilitude, of the
real world. It is a web of desire for the other, being a labyrinth of the other space in which the
thread is not woven of logic, of reference to the world but by the text itself.

The labyrinth is an image of fragmentation, designed to bewilder the uninitiated who, unable to

187 Derrida, ‘La Mythologie Blanche’ in Marges, pp.249-324.

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perceive the whole and count the lines, will not be able to unravel its mysteries. It is a journey, created through movement and exploration, an archetype of the space inscribed in language, of the cyclical renewal of life and death. The ‘path’ is linear in form. It is surrounded and interwoven with the other polymorphic, space. This other space is the domain of the Minotaur, of fragmentation, of the unknown and of surrealism metaphor.

The ritual marriage, passage through the labyrinth, is an expression of death and rebirth inextricably linked by desire. It is the state of desire (which by its nature cannot be fulfilled without the loss of that state) which is sought. The pleasures of surrealistic experience are equated with the cultural language of desire, the conceptual expression, the outward manifestation, a masculine culmination of desire.

Climax is all-important, the means to attaining that state are secondary to it, they are objects or catalysts. The thread is a necessary lifeline for safe withdrawal. Without it ‘sans fil’, Breton is firmly locked and lost in the self-pleasuring exhibitionist crystal labyrinth of his own creation. Holding the thread he perceives the source of all things as accessible, accessed through possession:

\[ \textit{je ne touche plus que le coeur des choses je tiens le fil}. (\textit{C.d.T.}, p.138). \]

His authority dominates his textual creation whether his labyrinth is crystal or because he holds the thread.

Desire is conceptualised in patriarchal terms. Breton identifies with a masculine textual heroic which externalises desire, reading it as a rival force, a power. Self-affirmation is a discourse of control and dominance, through possession and ownership:

\[ \textit{Posséder est un tréfle auquel j'ai ajouté artificiellement la quatrième feuille}. (\textit{C.d.T.}, p.88). \]
CONCLUSION

The presentation of myth as a true reflection of a natural state of being, is a distorted image reflecting patriarchal culture. The image is a self-perpetuating verification of the social, textual, sexual, economic and political dominance of masculine organisation, a textual ideal, universally imposed. The primacy of sight to consubstantiate truth, affirms the image as verification of that culture, an ancestral inheritance which guarantees and validates the substitution of writing and text for previous systems of remembering.

Appropriation of myth reference for the purpose of regeneration can be contextualised with heroic quest, with memory and naming and with writing as the means of achieving immortality. Death is of prime concern in human society with reincarnation, rebirth, Paradise, Heaven, Elysian Fields and the Underworld being only a few of the ways of searching, exploring and seeking to understand this dilemma. The quest for immortality as narrated in the heroic tradition from the Epic of Gilgamesh, combines the search for everlasting life with the powers emanating from access to ancestral wisdom, through memory and mnemonic devices and the institution of restrictions and limits.

Labyrinth, diagram of duality, palace and tomb of the Minotaur who personifies its nature and inhabits the space around the path. Half man, half beast, regenerated text, product of the wearing, of the meandering, of the journey, the surrealist image mixes sensual and intellectual verification. Breton's surrealist quest presents images as seductive, as reproductive, as the means to achieving release and inevitably represents the world as created through patrilineal textual inheritance. A gendered reading has to conclude that such a quest exhibits the author's position and relation to quest, displaying the identification and dissemination of the textual masculine 'I' within its field of cultural combat determined by appropriation and possession, by concepts of desire which fix and mark progression, to control, determine, capture, confine and dominate traditional objects, women and unknown territory.
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INTRODUCTION

This chapter was conceived as a demonstration of the application of a specific theoretical model (the eating disorder known as ‘bulimia’) to a similarly perceived structure - the production of text. The psychodynamics of the traumatic possessive relationships between author and text seemed likely to benefit from their ‘transference’ and comparison with human psychological experience in another field. I was concerned with the author’s drive to use and abuse language in order to liberate it from the confines of reality and found a similar pattern and more approachable context in definitions of masochistic eating disorders relative to abuse inflicted on the body and distanced perceptions of it.

The basic parallel which gave rise to the comparison was the process of consuming and disgorging. The process developed as a traumatic and neurotic obsession of a ritualistic nature, resulting in abuse or violence directed towards the alienated body and a distanced perception of it, which seemed an appropriate method for exploring questions of ‘authorship’ and reader/writer politics which can be read in a similar manner as areas of contention, alienation and conflict.

In Breton’s work the complexity of these relationships is compounded by his tripartite persona, comprising the biographical person and the poet, but also the omnipresent theoretician and philosopher. The authority and dogma of the writer of the Manifestes has tended to create a frame of reference and intentions for the reading (and the writing) of his poetry.

Two processes, writing and ‘binge purging’, share certain similarities and leave resultant products which bear the marks of forces of possession and the conflict of alienation. I wish to explore the issue of language as food, in a model which deals with questions about the use and abuse of food and to see what this offers for understanding demonstrably parallel sadomasochistic relations
between those of the model and those of author/language/text/reader.

In the bulimic model, food is consumed and regurgitated in a changed but recognisable form. It bears the marks of possession and of release and in the purging process the bulimic’s digestive system is slowly destroyed by amino acids; the release of the object is also then a cause of its ‘author’s’ death.

In the literary model, language is the consumed and regurgitated object. It bears the marks of authorial possession and of the trauma of its release as text. The release of the text as an object in a form independent of its original author, has parallels in the more familiar concepts of text as child and text as excrement and may be associated with those which write the death of the author. As I am essentially concerned with describing the binge syndrome and identifying its symptomatology as present in text, I intend this application as a general one, referring to writing and reading as communication disorders.

Bulimia is an eating disorder closely associated with anorexia nervosa, the more familiar wasting disease.\(^{188}\) The classification of anorexia has facilitated identification of earlier references to it which can be traced back to the Middle Ages.\(^{189}\) Such evidence of living without eating was often seen as miraculous, particularly in societies whose religions included ritual purification through fasting and various forms of purging.\(^{190}\)


\(^{189}\) William A.Hammond, Fasting Girls: their Physiology and Pathology, New York, Putman, 1879.

\(^{190}\) See Peter Dally and Joan Gomez, Obesity and Anorexia Nervosa, Faber and Faber, London, 1983, p.65.
With the advance in medicine of psychological studies, anorexia was described as 'nervous atrophy' in 1689, identified as a form of hysteria in the 19th century, and included by Freud in his *Studies on Hysteria*. The case cited by Freud is that of a twelve-year old boy who can not swallow. A significant incident which took place in a urinal is identified. Freudian theory consequently reads anorexia (more common in women than in men), together with female sexuality and psychoanalytic theory, in mainly masculine, phallocentric terms. When referring to Freudian theory, I have accordingly used the masculine pronoun 'he' to designate the gender determinism imposed on this understanding of the anorexic. The rising number of cases, the identification of social factors, the recognition of the limitations of Freudian and post-Freudian theory and the classification of 'types' of anorexia have subsequently contributed to a wider understanding of the illness.

In the first section I use a Freudian psychoanalytic approach to anorexia to address the problem of text as regurgitation and to provide an historical masculine context for reading psychodynamic energies posited as marks of passage, the signatures of the nowness of absent presence, in the text. This is therefore a psychoanalytic examination of personality disorders manifested as textual symptoms. Breton himself quotes from Freud, affirming the potential symptomatology of artistic creation:

*Plus on approfondit la pathologie des maladies nerveuses, dit Freud, plus on aperçoit les relations qui les unissent aux autres phénomènes de la vie psychique de l'homme... qui réussit, c'est celui qui parvient à transmuter en réalités les fantaisies du désir. Quand cette transmutation échoue...l'individu...se détourne du réel; il se retire dans l'univers plus heureux de son rêve; en cas de maladie il en transforme le contenu en symptômes..... il peut encore trouver un autre moyen de passer de ses fantaisies à la réalité.....; j'entends que s'il possède 'le don artistique', psychologiquement si mystérieux, il peut, au lieu de symptômes, transformer ses rêves en créations artistiques. (M., pp.109-110 note).*

This method of reading held several implications for me as a critic of text. I was attempting to

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comprehend my own response to the text but within a frame of reference which my reading assumed as a veil or mask through which to observe the text and beyond it, the author. I was doing this with a borrowed Freudian mask, one which conformed more to the dictates of established critical behaviour since the both the model and the method of reading it could be ascertained to be appropriate and to have demonstrable links with the author. At the same time the effect of the model is, in feminist terms, extremely appropriate. It uses a masculine psychoanalytic reading to confront a male, gender orientated author within that frame to evaluate the autonomy of authority. By revealing marks of authority, the reading subverts its power without establishing a new form of authority as interpreter of textual meaning.

It is only in the past twenty odd years, with the increase in both illnesses, that bulimia has been begun to be properly diagnosed and differentiated from anorexia. The most apparent difference between the two is the physiological symptom: the wasting factor. While the anorexic binges and purges, she starves her body. The bulimic on the other hand does not necessarily show outward manifestations of her illness, is often overweight or even of apparently normal weight and will

\[192\] The cover of *L.R.S.*, No.11, 1928 juxtaposes the texts with four surrealist publications. An extract from *Nadja* (one of the four publications) appears in the same issue in defence of the validity of hysteria, redefining it as 'un moyen suprême d'expression'. In response to the ideas set forth in the *Manifestes* and to statements made by Breton in *Nadja*, a transcript of a conversation between Dr.de Clérambault and M. Pierre Janet of the Medico-Psychological Society, was published in *Annales Médico-Psychologiques*, Nov.1929. This is reproduced at the beginning of Breton's *Seconde manifeste du surréalisme*.

M. Janet, one of whose patients was Raymond Roussel, demonstrated a knowledge of surrealistic writing process, and launched a scathing critique of them. Breton's equally scathing reply was published in *L.S.A.S.D.L.R.*, No.2 (Oct 1930). In 1919 Janet had published an authoritative work on obsessional neuroses entitled *Les Obsessions et La Psychasténie*, (Felix Alcan, Paris). One of the case studies was of a 27 year old unmarried woman called Nadia and the coincidental similarity of names in the context of Breton's defence of hysteria, underlying *Nadja*, is astonishing. 'Nadia' was a well-known anorexia case history. Janet underlined the toxicity of excessive dieting followed by gorging, pangs of conscience and obsessive thoughts about food. Janet was aware that Nadia suffered a gluttonous compulsion and connected her fear of obesity with a rejection of her mother, inferring that she wanted to remain a child and thereby reject her femininity. Marguerite Bonnet has confirmed that Breton's 'Nadja' was an actual person and Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron has affirmed that much of Breton's text derives from letters which have not been released.
generally purge her overeating by self-induced vomiting rather than the use of laxatives. The bulimic will recognise bingeing as abnormal behaviour and will follow it with self-criticism and depression. The behavioural patterns of each are markedly different and while some anorexics may also be bulimic, the reverse is not the case. Bulimia is therefore a binge-purge syndrome with a clinically problematic pattern, a 'complex, multi-determined disorder with social, cultural, familial and individual contributing factors'.

Perhaps because it has only more recently been identified, bulimia has to some extent avoided both the notoriety of anorexia and escaped the need for it to be reconciled with a history of Freudian psychological approaches. The emergence and treatment of this extremely complex syndrome has therefore greatly helped the development of other means of understanding and treating anorexia and has begun to liberate it from the confines of phallocentric oral impregnation theories.

The rising incidence of eating disorders and the fact that they now mainly involve women provide justification for an appropriate re-reading of the model.

The second part of this chapter deals with the text in psychosocial terms, demonstrating that interpretation does not have to privilege authorship and that reading does not have to 'erect' a singular monument to authority nor to constitute any kind of definitive hierarchical discourse. It therefore constitutes a general discussion of critical contexts and of the socio-cultural implications of writing and reading processes as manifestations of conflicting energies of alienation and control.

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194 The work of Hilde Bruch contributed greatly to seeing anorexia in terms other than those of the psychoanalytically orientated theorists. She conceived the falsification of early developmental learning experiences and ego and personality deficits to be of primary importance. See Strober, 'Anorexia Nervosa' in Handbook of Eating Disorders, p.236.
Reading many different methods of interpreting and treating the same symptoms, all of which appear to be successful within their own terms, has convinced me that the coexistence of contrasting methods of interpretation is not only necessary but essential. The preference for one method rather than another is matter of personal choice and individual situation within the healing process.

By reading the structuring of the model, I have found my innate alienation and rejection of Freudian theory to stem from understanding the system of dominance and control which it operates and which is consistent with externally imposed historical patriarchal values. This rejection of 'bad food', in the sense of its being inappropriate for the nourishment of my textual and sexual well-being, created the necessity for determining methods of reading more in tune with a personal feminine social contextuality. My reading therefore aims to contextualise various interpretations without determining a specific 'authoritative' procedure to be followed.
PART ONE

In the Manifestes, Breton's intentions to liberate language from its denotational function and the text from the workings of referentiality lead to a conflict between the author's alienation from the text and his unconscious desire for continuing possession and control over it. A similar conflict is recognisable in the reader's desire and inability to possess the text. Breton, as author, recognises the inapplicability of traditional methods of criticism and reading, to the surrealist text - which will elude him too as reader. (M., p.53).

In a literary text, images are presented by the original author to the reader in a narrative linear structure through the medium of language. The process is the same with regard to a work of art. Images are presented through the medium of paint, metal or whatever, and as this medium is also a medium of communication, it can be called a language: 'Qui dit expression dit, pour commencer, langage'. (M., p.101). 'Text' thus applies both to the artwork and to the literary work and these may be read as parallel within the reader's frame of reference.

I am dividing language into two categories - visual (imagistic) and verbal, which Freud terms 'linguistic instruments' - and intend these categories to apply to all textual media. (P.F.L., II, p.48). With surrealist art providing parallel commentary, the visual and verbal language of both types of texts are read as symptomatic of anxiety syndromes, paranoia and narcissism relative to notions of possession and conflict.

'Language' is subordinate to the controlling factor of the use made of it. An 'usage surrealisté' of language denotes it as a medium for the expression of surrealism, a tool under the control of man. (M., p.44). Conversely, this 'usage' is intended to liberate language - as an ideal form (object).
Contradictions such as these are part of Breton’s idiosyncrasies and may be read as expressions of conscious wishes and unconscious fears, of conflicts between Breton’s poetic voice, his theoretical/philosophical voice and his authorial position as leader of the Surrealist group. Such conflicts are inherent in writing and reading any text - and particularly the surrealist text which pushes questions of possession and authorship (of both the original author and the reader-author) to the limits.

The eating disorders, anorexia nervosa, bulimia and to a lesser extent, chronic obesity, can be read as psychoneurotic illnesses whose common cyclical pattern is one of desire, repression and regression. A similar conflict is recognisable in the relationships between the original author and the reader-author and the text.

Commenting on these paradoxes, I wish to concentrate on how the verbal language functions in the text, operating a linguistic control over the ‘despotic’ spontaneous surrealist image. (M., p.48).

I propose to examine the anorexia cycle, the significance of food and the resultant split in psychic activity in the context of Freudian theory. The anorexic’s relationship with his body will be compared with that of the original author and the reader-author to the text. Food will be compared to language, and the split psychic personality resulting from repression will be examined as the forming of distinct personalities; a biographical identity with an oscillating theoretician commentator and a poetic voice. I have termed the commentator ‘the biographical author’, as the controlling ego repressing the desire for possession through the positing of words which inhibit possession, and read the poetic voice as the repressed impulse striving for release. As the cycle progresses, language like food, determines the shape of the text/body which manifests the

195Obesity has been read as having a similar causality to anorexia and bulimia although when it is a metabolic or genetic disorder, this is obviously not the case. For a full discussion of the question see Brownell and Foreyt, Handbook of Eating Disorders.
symptoms of a site of conflict between cathexis and anti-cathexis posited in visual and verbal language.

ANOREXIA CYCLE

In Freudian theory, the anorexic's initial impulse is to be possessed (by the father). Under the rules of the pleasure-unpleasure principle an anxiety signal is released by fear of the super-ego which determines social aspects of behaviour. The initial impulse is repressed or rendered unconscious, which also signifies a withdrawal of libido. Unconscious guilt at the 'bad' impulse and fear of loss of the self are converted into self hatred and assuaged by punishing and ultimately destroying, the body.

This 'death instinct' enables such punishment to be correctly termed 'masochistic' and is enacted by the ritual of consuming food, purging and usually rinsing the mouth. Vomiting is read as an hysterical defence against eating and a symptom of the return of the repressed.

The father fixation (desire to be possessed) and elimination of the mother (rejection of nourishment) determine the anorexic's regression to the oedipal phase of development. In this phase the determinant of anxiety is fear of castration. The ideal body is seen to be one from which all signs of sexual maturity and growth have been removed. The anorexic's body is that of a pre-pubescent child; such asexuality can be read as a defence against the initial impulse for/fear of possession.

This anorexic unconsciously desires castration (=loss of sexuality) as a method of retaining possession over the body and of repressing the initial impulse to be possessed, (resulting in loss of libido). The repression regression cycle continues as the anorexic regresses to an earlier stage of development.
Fixation centres around food which becomes the sole preoccupation; regression has reached the oral stage. Once again the anorexic seeks to repress the determinant of anxiety - loss of object\love\nourishment\mother. Food is no longer used as a control, it is eliminated.

The death instinct takes over since the anorexic has now lost conscious control over the body. Physically, the digestive tract has been gradually destroyed by the amino acids brought up in vomiting and the digestive system deteriorates through abuse to a point at which it can no longer fulfil its functions. The anorexic regresses to a state of helplessness - the immaturity of early ego - in which withdrawal of libido is manifested by a total disinclination to eat. The continuous momentum of the death impulse energies against which the immature ego has few defences, overrides the libidinal energies and results in rapid deterioration and death.

**SPLIT PSYCHIC ACTIVITIES**

Repression presupposes the presence of two opposing energies; that invested in the repressed impulse and striving for release and that invested in the repressing agency and striving to maintain the repression. (P.F.L., pp.142-3). Anxiety acts as the stimulus for repression of the 'bad' impulse. The opposition results in split psychic activities, a division in personality and the alienation of a part of the self - the repressed impulse.

In the functioning of the three illnesses with which I am dealing, the subject's body is alienated as a part of the self on which punishment can be enacted. The split in psychic activities results in the divided perception which the anorexic has of his body. The first 'real' perception of his actual physical aspect is increasingly dominated and ousted by the second 'distorted' perception which reads the anorexic's body as 'too fat', despite its actual appearance, thereby justifying the course of destruction.
FOOD

In Freudian psychology, food as 'nourishment' represents 'mother' and is the medium through which love is expressed to the suckling child.

The infant's demands for love are immoderate, his avidity for nourishment (proof of love) excessive, and he never gets over the pain of that which he most fears: losing the breast. In the infant mind, insufficient milk equals insufficient love and results in frustration and anger.\textsuperscript{196} Competition for (possession of) love, due, for example, to the birth of another baby in the family results in jealousy. Lack of nourishment leads to death, thus fear of lack of nourishment is the determinant of anxiety at the oral stage.

Food is necessary for functioning, development and survival. It has also been shown to be a medium of communication for the expression of love or lack of love. However ritual acts of consuming food and the factor of appetite open up perspectives of the concept of food as object. As an object, food can be consumed, played with, abused, rejected, and so on. In other words the subject (perpetrator of the action) can have a dialogue with the object, and eating and its functions can be read as dialogue. Since the original function of eating is nutrition, disturbances of function can be read as 'inhibitions' symptomatic of anxiety, 'symptom' denoting a change or new phenomenon arising from a function.

Freud describes the following inhibitions of the functions of eating in terms of their causes:

\textbf{Disinclination to eat} - result of withdrawal of libido;

\textbf{Increase in desire to eat} - fear of starving (compulsive);

\textbf{Refusal to eat} - anxiety, comitant of psychotic states/fear of being poisoned.

\textsuperscript{196} This particular aspect of Freudian theory confirmed culturally determined social and moral views which condemned mothers who do not remain in the home to nurture their children, in contrast to Renaissance attitudes which saw babies farmed out to wet nurses because sex was supposed to taint the milk and the appeasement of the husband’s sexual desire was esteemed the primary function of the wife.
Vomiting is described as an 'hysterical defence against eating' (P.F.L., X, p.239), as a symptom of hysteria (P.F.L., IV, p.780) and as a defensive and punishing impulse against the fulfilment of an unconscious phantasy. (P.F.L., IV, p.724). It is a symptom of the return of the repressed and a manifestation of the conflict between ego and id. As a defence against eating’ (which can therefore be read as an act of aggression and a desire to possess), vomiting is a regurgitation of food, as opposed to a destroying of it.

By regurgitating, the subject is attempting to recreate the original form of the food, to regress or return to the time at which the food was an object of desire, before the perpetration of the act of aggression. Of course this is impossible since the original, now perceived as ideal, state of the food has been irreversibly metamorphosed by the process of eating. It is interesting that the food will, however, retain most of its nutritional content during this process and a recognisable resemblance to its original content. Since the digestive processes have barely had time to begin, this is especially true in psychoneurotic illnesses.

Vomiting, like eating, is the means by which the subject expresses himself towards food. Food is nutrition, a means/medium for punishing the body, a control for attaining an ideal form and an object in its own right. It is the primary object of desire and its terminology has been appropriated to express other desires.

**TEXTUAL SYMPTOMATOLOGY**

The body is the prime possession from which all notions of possession derive. Products of the body, be they of a physical or a mental nature, are also possessions of the self. Previous to writing, the text is a possession of the original author but being written, it is the potential possession of the reader. The act of reading is therefore an act of consuming or possessing and the act of writing or interpreting, one of regurgitation. Since the reader rewrites the text as he reads, he takes over as author, consuming and regurgitating.
All authors write to be read whether by themselves as reader or by other readers. As an author, Breton acknowledges this inherent desire to be read (or possessed) by the reader:

Je voudrais dormir, pour pouvoir me livrer aux dormeurs, comme je me livre à ceux qui me lisent, les yeux bien ouverts; pour cesser de faire prévaloir en cette matière le rythme conscient de ma pensée. (M., p.22).

He advocates writing quickly to avoid conscious intervention in the text:

Ecrivez-vite...pour ne pas retenir et ne pas être tenté de vous relire. (M., p.41).

Yet despite the surrealist author’s function as a recording machine for registering spontaneous images, Breton suggests he will always be in control of his texts:

S’écouter, se lire n’ont d’autre effet que de suspendre l’occulte, l’admirable secours. Je ne me hâte pas de me comprendre (baste! je me comprendrai toujours)’. (M., p.45).

It is evident that two distinct personalities are inscribed in the conscious ‘je’ subject and the poetic ‘me’ object and the alienation of ‘me’ from ‘je’ is implied.

Surrealism deliberately sets out to free the poetic voice as ‘la pense parlée’ from the confines of conscious logical intervention and organisation. Personal (biographical) creative genius is interpreted as an inhibition of the function of liberated language.197

There are other, more explicit, references to a poetic personality/voice/muse separate from and yet

197 ‘N’est-ce-pas nous, an effet, qui demandons les premiers, non la déstruction des musées et des bibliothèques, mais - ce qui est plus grave - l’abolition des privilèges artistiques, scientifiques et autres et, pour commencer, la libération désintéressée, l’isolement de cette substance mentale commune à tous les hommes, de cette substance souillée jusqu’ici par la raison’. (L.R.S., No.2, p.24 and M., p.41).
contained within the biographical author and striving for release. (M., p.108). The following phrase describes the poetic voice as writer and the person of Desnos as reader, 'Il lit en lui à livre ouvert'. (M., p.40). 'Lui' is both text and a perceived externalised and separated part of the body.

The text embodies evidence of the presence of both personalities as manifestations of attempts to retain control and possession of the text. As the biographical author is alienated from the text, the poetic voice surfaces as author, establishing control over language and a specific social identity. Just as separation of the two perceived anorexic personalities can never be absolute, so the poetic voice is not any poetic voice but that of the biographical author. Similar themes and metaphors will inevitably be employed by different authors and will be used in different ways, bearing the marks of the relevant author’s appropriation and regurgitation of language. In surrealist terms, however, automatic writing will reveal the poet’s individual nature in universal terms:

...rappelons que l'idée de surréalisme tend simplement à la récupération totale de notre force psychique par un moyen qui n'est d'autre que la descente vertigineuse en nous, l'illumination systématique des lieux cachés et l'obscurissement progressif des autres lieux, la promenade perpétuelle en pleine zone interdite. (M., p.86).

While Desnos possesses the facility of allowing the poetic voice to surface and control the text, Breton more than any other surrealist author is present throughout his texts as a theoretician. This is in part due to his commitment as author of the Manifestes to demonstrate its workings and such didacticism may also be read as an expression of his need to restate and retain his place as leader of the surrealist group. Examples of this conflict between theoretical and poetic ideals are found throughout Breton’s texts; references to sparks, light, transparency and translucency, are read by the cognisant reader as signs of surrealist activity rather than as free signifiers.

Such evidence of a specific identity posited in text corresponds to written 'signatures' and function in the Derridian sense of positing the transcendentai 'maintenance', the nowness of the past
presence of that writing identity.\textsuperscript{198} These signatures of presence posit ownership of the text and may be read as symptoms of the repressing agency. They inhibit the reader's possession of the text by exercising control over the reading.\textsuperscript{199}

Abstract judgmental or conceptual adjectives suggest the presence of the theoretician author who as reader, qualifies images in terms of perceptions which read as evaluations. The difficulty of defining abstract terms permits the reader to link the term and the image in a rational manner relative to the author's perception as reader of the poetic voice. Three brief examples form Breton's poetry are:

\begin{quote}
poitrine inimitable (\textit{C.d.T.}, p.117);
la belle inconnue (\textit{C.d.T.}, p.86);
\end{quote}

**HÔTEL DES ÉTINCELLES**

The full text is given in Appendix I. This reading demonstrates the programming functions of visual and verbal language in the poem. Certain words are read as mediums for the expression of anxiety about castration by the biographical author, the controlling theorist and the poetic voice.

These are symptoms of the conflict between the need to maintain possession through control and the desire for liberation and fear of alienation.


\textsuperscript{199} The critical reader will read such references in the context of the \textit{Manifestes} and other writings. This tends to make the surrealistic text an elitist one only readable by a cognisant reader, perhaps the type of reader described as 'exigeant'. The text or 'book' is accorded an anonymous persona - with human qualities and capable of action - distinct from the author and yet it is the author ('je') who evaluates the reader: 'C'est aussi la grande faiblesse du livre que d'entrer sans cesse en conflit avec l'esprit de ses lecteurs les meilleurs, j'entends les plus exigeants'. (\textit{M.}, p.47).
Biographical references are posited in ‘names’ of objects and places which can be traced autobiographically as having particular significance in Breton’s life. The presence of the theorist is signified by images which refer to the workings of surrealism as explained in theoretical texts. These signifiers are often also enmeshed with images which through repetition give identity to the poetic voice. The poetic voice is present in theoretical texts and intervenes in metaphoric explanations of theoretical concepts; the poems are not merely illustrations of theory.

For the critic, ‘Étincelles’ refers back to Breton’s well-known definition of the surrealist image as a spark, ‘étincelle’, which gives off the lumière de l’image and is the product and revealer of surrealist activity:

*C’est du rapprochement en quelque sorte fortuit des deux termes qu’a jailli une lumière particulière, lumière de l’image, à laquelle nous nous montrons infiniment sensibles. La valeur de l’image dépend de la beauté de l’étincelle obtenue.... (M., p.49).*

In a cognisent reading this association will always be made, thereby interpreting ‘étincelle’ as a specific sign word in a surrealist vocabulary, as a metaphor determined by reading rather than writing. Through its association with Breton the theoretician, ‘étincelle’ can be identified as a signature of his past textual presence and a means of retaining didactic authority or control.

‘Hôtel’ is an example of a metaphor which the poetic voice often uses to mean ‘text’. The metaphor is in fact part of a system of metaphors which may be loosely entitled ‘buildings’ and which ranges from hotels, town houses, chateaux, houses and nests to rooms and corridors. Breton is conscious of his use of the metaphor and comments on it in the Manifestes:

*On sait que le Surréalisme s’est préoccupé, par l’appel à l’automatisme, de mettre à l’abri de ce torpillage un bâtiment quelconque: quelque chose comme un vaisseau fantôme (cette image, dont on a cru pouvoir se servir contre moi, si usée soit-elle, me paraît bonne et je la reprends). (M., p.108-9).*

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It is easy to read the parallel drawn between building and text in terms of constructions and types. Two examples from other poems are the title and text of ‘Une Maison Peu Solide’ and the poetic evocation of ‘Amour Parcheminé’ - ‘J’appelle une fille qui rêve dans la maisonnette dorée’. (C.d.T., pp.31-2, 54).

As a title, ‘Hôtel des Étincelles’, makes use of a standard naming formula such as appears elsewhere: - l'Hôtel des Grands Hommes (N., p.24) and le Sphinx-Hôtel (N., p.122). Some of these names refer to actual places which Breton has visited, in others, biographic and poetic voices appear hand in hand. Hence the ‘City Hôtel’ is located close to the Place Dauphine and described in the following terms:

...J'ai habité quelque temps un hôtel voisin de cette place, 'City Hôtel', où les allées et venues à toute heure, pour qui ne se satisfait pas de solutions trop simples, sont suspectes.\(^{200}\)

However the note on the building (‘l'hôtel Henri-IV’), several lines later, describes its location with an ambiguity which overturns the validity of real locations while the familiar and particular identity of this ‘town house’ subverts the single referent of the previous use of the word ‘hôtel’:

Lequel fait face à la maison dont il vient d'être question, ceci toujours pour les amateurs de solutions faciles. (N., p.96, note).

An hotel is the type of building where people come and go, and the guest/hotel/town house relationship may be read as a mirror image of the reader/text relationship.

The name ‘Hôtel des Étincelles’ is almost certainly a poetic invention with particular signification when read within the authoritative context of the Manifestes. The fabric of the poem is loosely

\(^{200}\) L.R.S., No.1, p.10 and Breton, N., p.94 (‘voisin’ is substituted by ‘jouxtant’ in Nadja).
based around this theme and its connotations - hotel, text, place of sleep, dream, night, the time of surrealistic activity. Words such as 'fenêtre', 'meubles', 'pièce', 'quatre murs', 'lit', 'guéridons', 'rideau', are all therefore signatures of the poetic voice as programmer of the text. They establish a potentially coherent pattern and a specific frame of reference.

On the other hand words such as 'philosophique', 'savants', 'inimitable', 'charmants', 'bizarre' express abstract concepts. They read as value judgements and tend to define images in the text in terms of textual working. Their application is subject to the author's perception, almost as if they were the marks of the presence of a reading author, determined to invest the words they define with special significance or the appearance of special significance. In this way they inhibit textual possession by the reader which is in conflict with Breton's expressed theoretical ideals.

The reader’s control of textual time is usurped by the use of phrases such as 'est toujours debout devant', 'qu'on a oublié d'éteindre', and 'qui vient de s'asseoir'. These are subversive since they refer to narrative outside the textual present, to events to which only the poet is privy, to a secret view or image. They are symptomatic of the poetic voice dictating events which cannot be experienced by the reader and they operate in different ways:

\begin{quote}
\textit{toujours debout devant} - programmes constant factor, 'toujours', into text. Implied timeless of image directs reader outside of textual narrative - control operated by poetic voice.

\textit{qu'on a oublié} - implies light is lit because someone has forgotten to put it out. Textual directive to deductive reasoning controls reading.

\textit{qui vient de s'asseoir} - information about events affecting text but previous to it. Undermines reader’s apprehension of textual events, time removed outside textual present and contrasted with 'maintenant' subverting linear presentation of images and function of reader as author.
\end{quote}

The following phrases and words may be read as repositories of an awareness that the reader’s linear progress through the text is controlled through narrative and by the poetic voice’s creation
of that narrative: 'se pose sur'; 'glissent comme' + sentence inversion; 'entraîne'; 'à l'intérieur desquelles'; 'passe par-dessus'. All of these can be said to describe the way in which they function in the text and can therefore be read as concrete enactments of the working of the text and as 'comments' on the writing and reading process.

In the text, several images are associated by using 'et cela fait une' and 'comme'. Since these verbal links suggest the reason for association, they may be read as symptoms of a surfacing of the poetic voice's perception of the images involved. They demonstrate a subjective analogy establishing a comparative textual parallels between images. The words 'maintenant' and 'aussitôt' comment on the temporal passage from writer to reader in that they posit the immediacy of textual time and its elusive quality and also therefore stand as markers or stones of remembrance and loss.

The book entitled 'Point de Lendemain' which is referred to in the last four lines of the poem, appears to be an allusion of the ideal and eternal dream states of the poet's world: 'Le Surréalisme ouvre les portes du rêve à tous ceux pour qui la nuit est avare'. (L.R.S., No.1, preface). It also reads as an overt reference to Point du Jour and to the biographical author and poet, Breton, named by this connotation.

PERSONALITIES
The reading of Hôtel des Étincelles has shown how elements of text may be read as symptoms of repressing agencies, as manifestations of the writing author's presence, and how biographic and poetic identities merge in the 'Point de Lendemain' reference.201

201 Hence 'Nantes', N., p.33, C.d.T., p.45, L.P.P., p.16. Other evidence of the biographical author working within the text is to be found in 'Tournesol': 'André Breton a-t-il dit passe'. (C.d.T., p.86). The explanation of 'poisson soluble' (M., p.53) reads as a repossessing of text by the biographical author.
The poetic voice is the ‘other’ author personality resulting from the act of writing and comparable to the distorted perception/death impulse which overrides the anorexic ego/super-ego. The extent of overriding is a function of the impulse to alienate or castrate the biographical (and in Breton’s case the theoretician) author personality. (M., p.45).

Desnos’s poetry exemplifies a biographical persona almost submerged by the poetic voice which establishes an identity through the use of recurring poetic themes and metaphors and a presence, whether direct or indirect, as author of the textual narrative. In Desnos’ poetry the sea and its contents, shipwrecks, bottles and seaweed function as metaphors for text and writing in a generic manner similar to Breton’s use of building metaphors. Both authors write statements of poetic presence:

\[ J\text{’}h\text{’}abite au coeur d’un de ces chardons. (C.d.T., p.159). \]

\[ Je t’apporte une petite algue qui se mêlait à l’écume de la mer et ce peigne. (C.e.B., p.110). \]

Linguistic control is necessary to the survival of the text as communication. Desnos’ use of linguistic and grammatic innovation is marked, yet total lack of control would lead to poetic madness, a state to which he almost succumbed.

Symptoms of repressing agencies can be read as inhibitions of fulfilment of the desire to be possessed. In the text, they control reading by inhibiting the reader’s possession of the text.\(^{202}\)

\[^{202}\] Titles can be read as textual generators, as commentary on text, as parallel text and as subversions of these functions and symptoms of the need to maintain possession, as signatures. When read as illustrations of method or as commentary of the surrealist message as in ‘L’Union Libre’, ‘Hôtel des étincelles’, and ‘Tout Paradis n’est pas perdu’, they convey the author’s perception of his text or serve a programming function. Subversion can equally be read as a controlling voice presenting images since, like the ready made objects, it undermines traditional readings: ‘Ma Mort par Robert Desnos’ (Breton, C.d.T., p.70), subverts traditional reading of ‘author’, ‘signature’ and of the ownership of a name.

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They can be interpreted as signatures left behind by the author and the poetic voice, as marks of presence. Like the warm glove, symbol of desire and eroticism, they suggest the reading author’s presence through absence and by inhibiting possession, instigate ongoing desire which is read as a function of the eroticism of possession, a construction determined by the author.

The prime symptom of the resurfacing of the repressed Id impulse to be possessed, is the act of writing. The surrealist image is therefore a discernable symptom of the return of the repressed and of the ensuing conflict. As Breton’s surrealist texts progress in time, invitations to possess become more frequent. This is a feature of Desnos’s poetry and may be read as symptomatic of the desire to free language from institutionalised controls. This symptom is exhibited in subversion of grammar, structure, (C.e.B., p.120), format, (C.e.B., pp.151,66), logical sequence, (C.e.B., p.79) and even punctuation (C.e.B., p.100) and typography (C.e.B., pp.66-68).

L’UNION LIBRE

One of the criticisms of Surrealism concentrates on static non-surrealist use of language, particularly in automatic texts. This is an ‘easy’ type of criticism to make, as it takes the ideals expressed in the Manifestes and uses them to judge poetic texts in a rigid, defining and derogatory manner. Breton also recognised a certain necessity for static linguistic constructions such as ‘il y a’ but he hoped that the textual narrative would in time evolve away from such structuring:

*Je ne crois pas au prochain établissement d’un poncif surréaliste. Les caractères communs à tous les textes du genre, parmi lesquels ceux que je viens de signaler et beaucoup d’autres que seules pourraient nous livrer une analyse logique et une analyse grammaticale serrées, ne s’opposent pas à une certaine évolution de la prose surréaliste dans le temps.* (M., p.53).

presenting images since, like the ready made objects, it undermines traditional readings: ‘Ma Mort par Robert Desnos’ (Breton, C.d.T., p.70), subverts traditional reading of ‘author’, ‘signature’ and of the ownership of a name.


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Surrealism, as discussed in the _Manifestes_, seeks to liberate language for the purpose of multiple possibilities of reading. In the context of the analysis of possession which I have given, I would like to examine the working of the verbal language in the poem ‘L’Union Libre’ to demonstrate the maximised use of an apparently static structure.

The poem is ostensibly a litany of associations between parts of the body of ‘ma femme’ and a wide variety of images which ‘describe’ the body. Despite the thirty repetitions of the words ‘ma femme’, her identity is that of an object of desire prefaced by a possessive pronoun. ‘Ma’ is a poetic statement signifying that the poet’s desire is inextricably linked with possession; in this instance the imagery of the sexual act is used as a vehicle for the expression of poetry.

The text of the poem is reproduced in Appendix III with the verbal language underlined. The connotative and possessive values of the images are fully discussed in the section on pornography. The ‘union’ is read as a metaphor for a variety of dialogues between images, set up by the discursive nature of the verbal language.

The basic structural framework of the text is: _Ma femme au à la laux .... de\d’ ...._

This structure facilitates direct comparison between images, as in ‘ma femme aux jambes de fusée’. However the apparently simple format is complicated by lack of punctuation and use of repetition. Repeated use of ‘de’ forms a series of slightly different strings of possessive defining relationships which vary from the basic

‘au...de...’ - to - ‘au...de...de...de...’ - and - ‘au...de...et de...de...de...de...et de...de...’.

The structure places emphasis on linearity and the position of words in the litany. In the
following phrase, while the ‘thoughts’ can be read grammatically as those of the ‘wood’, they read as being those of the woman because of the repetition and change of line. However, since Wood produces sparks, this is not necessarily the case. My reading internalises an identification with the objectified woman and the need to read a positive image into some aspect of her fragmented being, even if only as a poetic possession and ‘illuminator’.

Ma femme à la chevelure de feu de bois  
Aux pensées d'éclairs de chaleur

The case is less obvious in the following:

Ma femme aux jambes de fusée  
Aux mouvements d'horlogerie et de désespoir

Ma femme aux hanches de nacelle  
Aux hanches de lustre et de pennes de flèche  
Et de tiges de plumes de paon blanc  
De balance insensible

The reader wonders whether ‘mouvements’ refers to ‘fusée’, to ‘jambes’ or to ‘femme’. There is a similar grammatical confusion with regard to ‘balance’.

The apparently rigid structure of the text subverts the logical functioning of grammatical control. If prepositions mark the relationships between words, the identity of the players is dependant on lay-out, on the appearance of the text and on reading.

Other images are more obviously defined by the use of adjectives, past participles and adjectival or prepositional phrases. These effectively portray the image concerned, in a certain manner:

A la langue de poupée qui ouvre et ferme les yeux

Aux yeux d'eau pour boire en prison

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‘De’ is a marker of possession of the relationship between the body part and the poet’s view or presentation of it. However, the many repetitions of this word yield examples the other ways in which it is read, in the sense of origin, location, measure, tense, use, movement and appearance:

- moelle de sureau
- gorge de Val d’or
- yeux pleins de larmes...niveau d’air
- on vient de boire
- sexe de placer et d’ornithorynque

Variations on structure have been created to lend surrealism meaning to the format of the text. While changes in the meaning of the prepositional structure subvert that structure, their relevance is confined to the internal politics of revitalisation. The hermetic unity of the text is compounded by the circularity of the imagery of wood and fire in the first and last two lines. This discourse of presence is expresses in terms of control and release, of possessive relationships, a poetic desire, heightened, defused and awaiting rekindling.

FOOD

In the general quest for communicating Truth (art as representation), language is possessed and regurgitated in a state irrevocably altered by the primary act of possession. Its form is determined by its social function, so that regurgitation is a form of interpretation. It retains its nutritional value as food for the mind of the reader who by inference will feed on this regurgitated matter. The poetic voice constantly strives to restore it to a conceptual ideal form, seeking by that to capture an experiencing of Truth.

Desnos, whose texts most radically depart from traditional language, maintains an extremely strong poetic presence throughout which usually takes the form of ‘je’ but is also indirectly inscribed at
various levels in narrative discourse. The poetic voice constantly reminds the reader that it is
guiding and instigating deviations from the norm, that language bears the marks of its
regurgitation. Any text will illustrate this point, which is particularly evident in both 'Idéal
Maîtresse' and 'L'Idée Fixe'. (C.e.B., pp.75, 110). The poetic voice fuses objects of desire.
Throughout texts, 'tu' functions as a pronoun with an unspecified referent. Consequently it is
readable as multi-referential - as woman, text, reader, language, as any object desired by the
'author's' dialogue.

Many of Man Ray's photographs such as those from the series Électricité and much of Max
Ernst's work such as his collage illustrations for Une Semaine de bonté demonstrate the same
principle by offering the reader a fused representation of (traditional feminine) 'tu' objects of
desire in a subject-object dialogue.\(^{204}\)

Although controlling elements of the text, 'je' and 'tu' will be consumed in turn by the reading
author in his rewriting of text, simultaneously inviting and repelling a directed interpretation.
Possession evaporates the writing, leaving marks or traces of passage. Desire is indeed an
unfulfillable discourse by definition, and may be located discursively between loss of possession
and potential repossession.

As the surrealist author alienates the text masochistically and deliberately, seeking his own death,
so language replaces it as the object of desire, to be manipulated in a series of games. Whilst this
liberates language from the socially learnt structural controls shared by the reader and writer, it
is also interpretable as controlling the method of reading.

\(^{204}\) Man Ray, Pierre Bost, Électricité, Parisienne de Distribution d'Électricité,
Max Ernst, Une Semaine de bonté: ou Les Sept Éléments capitaux, Éditions Jeanne
Bucher, Paris, 1934. See Max Ernst: Beyond Surrealism, New York Public
Regression beyond this point, corresponding to the pre-death phase in anorexia is impossible, since the poetic voice is dependent on the communicative medium of language/food and the text constitues the expression of symptoms. Unlike the anorexic body, the text (as communication) cannot regress beyond the oral stage. Verbal language exercises control over the surrealist text, so that the narrative remains accessible to the reader/author who shares the same socially learned relationship to linguistic structures with the original author.

The communication desire institutionalised in verbal structure is therefore acting as a kind of super-ego control or repressing agency on the undefined, unbounded Id impulse surrealist image. Rather like Breton's definition of the combined surrealist image, energies may be read as potentially invested in visual and verbal divisions of language. In the text, these are opposing forces which constantly strive for supremacy making it a place of conflict like the anorexic's body.

The issue is complicated by efforts to liberate linguistic controlling elements such as grammar and structure and to give free rein to uncontrolled Id elements. An 'usage surrealist' which denotes language as a medium for the expression of surrealism under the control of the author is intended to liberate language as an object (ideal form) from both authorial and linguistic control. (M., p.44). Paradoxically, this 'usage' which would liberate language would eventually render it un-useable (beyond control) except as the expression of poetic madness, as 'word salad'.

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SUMMARY

I wish to conclude that the text is a site of conflict between liberating and controlling impulses on two levels. On the level of biographical and poetical presence and absence posited in the text, the repression and regression cycle, as in anorexia, is relative to possession and dis-possession of the object of desire. Thus the text, like the body, is the alienated part of the self in which the manifestations of this conflict are revealed as physical symptoms. On the level of language, writing is a process symptomatic of the regurgitation of the desire to be possessed. The opposing energies invested in this process constantly strive to control or possess each other. The visual language, as the part of the text which the reader can most easily re-write using his own vocabulary of image reference, may be read as symptomatic of the Id impulse or desire to be possessed. The super-ego or controlling function is manifest in the verbal language or linguistic instruments which, as expressions of the subtler relations of thought, are representative of the socialising of language as communication.

I have referred to the use of various parts of language which, by controlling or directing how the text is read, reveal themselves as manifestations of possession. These are personalised uses of language which have been programmed by the biographical author and the poetic voice as defences against their inevitable exclusion as the reader takes on the position of author of the text. This exclusion however can never be complete, since parts of the text have been invested with the potential to inhibit possession as a function of reading as well as of writing.

When the biographical author is expelled from the text, the poetic voice establishes a controlling identity and manipulates the text to make it readable as his own communication. Like the anorexic, the surrealistic author perceives childhood as a desirable state of being. It is a state which can be relived through the text and is seen as one upon which social and behavioural controls have
yet to be imposed. It is also a state in which possession by another is potentially avoided.

The poetic voice seeks to liberate language from the verbal structures which act as social controls on the text. It initiates deviant impulses to inhibit these controlling functions, attempting to return language to its ideal unrestricted form and to liberate the reader from learnt use of language.

Breton recognised that the evolution of a new reading of language would have to be a gradual process - he is still voicing his disappointment at the unrealised potential of the automatic text in 1953. (M, p.167). However the evolution of a new language would involve its institutionalisation and accessibility only to devotees, which runs contrary to the politics of surrealism, but then so too do Breton's biographical signatures.

Like food, language cannot be returned to a former state but will bear the marks of its evolving consumption as a possession under man's control. In conclusion, Breton states, 'L'homme est ce qu'il mange' (M, p.91). The reader consuming the regurgitated text will imbibe the opposing energy potential and perpetuate the cycle.
PART TWO

POSITIONS AND CONTEXTS

Anorexia and bulimia are eating disorders which primarily affect women. It seems important therefore to address them from a feminine standpoint rather than from one which speaks more of the male psyche. Whether the changing climate of sexual politics has any bearing on the rising instance of the illness, it has certainly opened the way for its assessment in different terms. It is rapidly becoming possible to read eating disorders in terms of changing socio-cultural conditions, in terms of the individual’s social context, in terms of projected 'ideal' body shapes and of the changing status of women in society and displaced relationship to it. In other words it seems relevant to address the questions about these illnesses from within the discourse of 'minority' issues established by women.

Masculinity is inevitably written into the language upon which feminist writing depends for expression. Our own culture is permeated with diluted Freudian theory which is difficult to determine and distinguish and so the 'otherness' of discourse veils and constrains perception with the eroticism and ugliness of the infinite 'corset mystère'. I am taking the Foucauldian stance of criticism being a 'putting into crisis' and using the complex socio-cultural issues highlighted by recent studies of bulimia and their implications for anorexia to examine a parallel between feminist discourse and surrealist discourse as dialogues in conflict with the language on which they depend for the purpose of communicating.

205 Other factors include the wide availability of fattening food, consumer orientated advertising and the implications of junk food culture.


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I would like to outline the causality and background for the reading of elements of text as symptomatic of the purging process and to differentiate between form and content. In so doing, I am returning to the question of the politics of critical interpretation and refusing the notion of an ‘authoritative’ cure, imposed by such a reading. Arguably the reader cures themself and not the writer, nor the textual object, by attempting to comprehend the make up of the mask or veil which clouds and limits perception, rather than adopting it as a medium through which to ‘see’ the text. This examination is based on the understanding that ‘language’ and ‘culture’ are read as inherited systems determined by a linguistically instituted patriarchy.

In order to illustrate these restrictions, I wish briefly to discuss a reading of anorexia which remolds and appropriates a masculine psychological structure. In a chapter entitled ‘Interpreting Anorexia Nervosa’, Noelle Caskey seeks to reconcile a variety of approaches to anorexia within a Jungian frame. Although she states that anorexia is ‘in a misguided and paradoxical way...a search for autonomy, independence, and spiritual growth’, her argument ignores the implications of the increasing incidence of the illness, which she notes in her introduction.

She addresses questions of fat and shape and analyses anorexia in feminist terms as communicative disorder, a response to a social politics of shape. However, she is unable to leave the issue at this level and introduces the concept of a masculine Animus, carrier of the woman’s Logos, to project the theory of a sexual relationship onto a psychic one. She reaches a conclusion whose content is as homocentric as Freudian theory; incest is transported to the realm of the psyche and is the model used for determining conflicting relationships between the anorexic and the ‘senex’ and ‘puer’ aspects of the animus. This manifestly does little to further understanding anorexia in female terms.

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Ideal form is intimately connected to perception of sexuality and changing socio-cultural conditions. This well documented history can be rather crudely described as having two main branches: a literary and figurative aesthetic of cultural values derived from the philosophy of the Academia in Ancient Greece and a sociological aesthetic of shape values based on issues such as wealth, class and population needs.\(^{209}\)

It seems to follow from the historical appropriation of logos since the beginning of the 'civilised' world that reading, writing, laws, politics, religion and philosophy were taught as preeminently male domains. It is hardly surprising that a society which describes itself in masculine terms should have to reconcile female psychology and female sexuality in univerisably phallocentric terms.

Paradoxically, the closest historical equivalent to the wasting female anorexic with her markedly high incidence of desire for academic achievement must be the male scholarly, or poetic, melancholic in his ivory tower who subsisted on a diet of books. Although the latter 'neglected' his bodily needs, rather than actively purging himself, it is interesting to note that this romantic illness was given a feminine form - Melancholia - and that during the Renaissance her attributes were depicted by Albrecht Dürer as those of architecture and geometry, closely allied to reason and logos.\(^{210}\) It would seem clear from this that shape and behaviour are determined as gender specific in the ideology of representations.

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\(^{209}\) The arguments on women's subordination as fundamental to the formation of culture and the meaning of systems of society, Bachofen's concept of 'mutterrecht' and ensuing debates are discussed in Lerner, *Creation of Patriarchy*, pp.15-35.

\(^{210}\) Albrecht Dürer, 'Melencholia I', catalogued in *Pollaiuolo To Picasso*, catalogue of Master Prints from the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, 1980. As Panofsky comments: 'it fuses, and transforms, two great representational and literary traditions, that of Melancholy as one of the four humours and that of Geometry as one of the seven liberal arts... It epitomises the neo-Platonic theory of Saturnian genius as revised by Agrippa of Nettesheim'. Erwin Panofsky, *Albrecht Dürer*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1948.
It is likely that the portrayal of the thinness of the scholar and poet bears some relationship to his usually impoverished status. Certainly in late Medieval/early Renaissance times, this would have contrasted with the courtly poet (of salaried or independent means) and the non-academic wealthy (fat) burgher.

The scholar was seen as a non-sexual person, like the religious aesthete, with appetites of the mind or soul, rather than the body. The Romantic Poets’ fascination with tuberculosis, a different wasting illness, may be seen as a later facet of the ‘aesthetics of frailty’ in which search for spiritual and poetic ideals comprehends the purification of physical appetites by their transference to the soul or the mind. Another facet is that of religious purification through purging and starvation. Indeed, most religions incorporate ritual purifications and abstinence in their beliefs, and rites have determined the sanctity of these practises. Records which are now read as early cases of anorexia, including heavenly visions of divine inspiration, should be read within these contexts.

The relationship between shape, beauty and value in Western society is immediately evident from any study of the painting of female nudes throughout the Ages which of course reflects a catalogue of both personal and social views of female body shapes.

Fat has represented social standing - being a sign of wealth - and femininity - being a sign of motherliness. Society has long instructed women in the femininity of fat and shown them the desirability of rounded female forms as evidence of breeding ability and fulfilment of function.

\[211\] In contrast to this example but in confirmation of the argument, is the case of the Metaphysical poets in whose works the soul is vitalised and given human dimensions by conveying upon it the urgency and power of physical appetites.

In today's Western society, with a stable population and no shortage of food, almost the reverse is true. The sexual revolution has, of course, been a contributing factor and it is somewhat ironic that the desirability of thinness has gone hand in hand with the evolution of equality on the cultural and social front. The history of the meaning and significance of fat for the feminine figure facilitates an understanding of contemporary attitudes.

ANOREXIA AND BULIMIA

Anorexia is clearly perceived in terms of the physical manifestations of the illness, as a means of avoiding sexual maturity. One of its distinguishing features is amenorrhea since body fat and menstruation are intimately connected in female physiognomy. While the result of purging and fasting is a child-like body, the main issue in anorexia does not seem the need to be more masculine but rather not to be female, or conversely to have a perceivedly feminine appeal in terms of thinness and frailty, without the physical attributes of a sexually mature female.

Delusions of perception of an almost schizophrenic nature are the primary psychological differentiation between anorexia and bulimia. Many bulimic patients have a prior history of anorexia and there is a very strong case for the hypothesis that the two eating disorders are intimately connected. While the anorexic's problems mainly concern obsessions with food and low self-esteem, bulimia is seen to have causes of a more familial and cultural nature but these generalisations are by no means mutually exclusive. Until 1976, most bulimics were clinically identified as anorexic because the diagnosis of the former involved binge eating. In fact it is now clear that while anorexia nervosa is an extreme form of purging which involves bulimic behaviour and in which the symptoms are more outwardly manifest, its primary objective is to


214 Root, Fallon and Friedrich, Bulimia, pp.16-19.

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attain an ideal shape.

The anorexic's mirror is neither that of Lacan which gives a desirable perception of masculine unity to the fragmentary child, nor the speculum of Irigaray which implies a female maturity. Rather it is the most extreme form of the fragmenting multi-faceted mirror of patriarchal culture, that which externalises her form in terms of an alien other, a masculine pornographic view, a projected image whose distortions she assumes in a neurotic and terrified bid for escape.

In assessing Bulimia, Craig Johnson and Darryl Pure have highlighted the difficulties of operating controls in a variety of areas. The bulimic has difficulty in identifying and articulating internal states. In the constant shifting of focus and undervaluation, communicating becomes an empty or disorganising experience. The tools with which to navigate interpersonal and intrapsychic conflict are inadequate and so, therefore, is the ability to acknowledge, identify and express that conflict. Food related behaviour is the means by which such conflicts are expressed. The bulimic often assumes a 'sick' role in response to separation fears, thereby constructing dependency. Bulimia frequently occurs at times of breaking with the 'family'.

Fairburn, Cooper and Cooper focus on the bulimic's intense concern with shape and weight. They identify the symptom of loss of control over eating as central to the disorder, discussing eating habits such as dieting, controlled vomiting and rapid consuming of 'fat' foods. Cognitive and behavioural conceptualisation of bulimia regards the patients attitudes towards weight as central to the maintenance of the disorder and determines dysfunctional styles of reasoning since beliefs and values exercise influence as thoughts which habit causes to be viewed as reality.

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216 A more comprehensive assessment of family circumstances is contained in Root, Fallon and Friedrich, Bulimia.

The rising incidence of bulimia in the last twenty years, coincides with identity confusion in young women attempting to reconcile traditional feminine roles with the growing opportunity for self definition and autonomy. The conflict is compounded by the identification of the latter with thinness while the absence of weight control is socially discriminated against in a society which views this accomplishment as evidence of a drive to achieve.

Significant parallels may be drawn between these issues and those surrounding the problems faced by alternative discourses such as those presented by Surrealists and feminists. Similar factors occur in terms of the alienation from social and cultural norms, the search for individual identity, constant insecurities and internal quarrels among the ‘family’ groups. However, the prime source of the experience of internalised and externalised alienation lies in cultural identity expressed by the relationship to language.

SURREALISM AND FEMINIST ‘FOOD’

The most immediate difference between the eating disorders and the discourses is that anorexia and bulimia are illnesses and that feminism and surrealism are not! This may seem obvious but in determining that the model is appropriate only in as much as it corresponds to the system it is describing, the difference of evaluation must be stated. In consequence it should be clear that I am reading the discourses of both feminism and surrealism as symptomatic expressions of the difficulties imposed by the contexts from which they seek to be liberated.

Unlike eating disorders, the surrealist and feminist conflicts with society are expressed in verbal communication and the primacy of the communication is established and through its continuance; altered perceptions of the value of ‘otherness’ are gradually becoming part of our culture.

The form or ‘shape’ of feminist discourse which seeks to express womens’ experience is
constrained and bound by ineffective or inappropriate tools with which to operate, since both the form and the content of representations of the world are read as patriarchal. 'Perception' is therefore structured by gender dominance. This restricts ability to express anything which is felt to be different and to recognise difference which has not had an acknowledged existence, when the feelings of difference have been so tempered by imposed and accepted nonexistence.

The problem of the 'shape' of discourse can be compared to alienated discourse of body shape in anorexia and bulimia and read in terms of feminist perceptions of the history and contextualisation of female eroticism and concepts of desire. Acknowledgement of altered shape or form is gradually defined through the rethinking, stating and recognition of 'other' experiences.

The issue of shape has situated feminist discourse in a cul-de-sac, a form of womb, from which the only exit is through the entrance. The 'birth' or 'rebirth' of a feminist language is dependent on the regurgitation of language determined as patriarchal and inappropriate. It is therefore not a rebirth but an awareness of imposed perceptions, an altering of textuality of shape which is required. The language of feminist discourse is therefore a language of tension, the locus of conflict between the search for feminine expression within a patriarchal language system with the ever-present threat of a pre-alphabet silence as punishment for inability to 'express' the conflict.

Surrealism is not concerned with the issue of the sexual politics of language but is concerned with that of an ideal surrealist form or shape. The destructive anti-art violence of Dada is usually related to contemporary political events. Following the First World War, the birth of a newly defined Europe has a parallel in the surrealist movement which sought to give new meaning to language, to find a new way of being and of communicating, and establish a new concept of the work of art. Breton himself has been read as a poet in whom the poetic values of Apollinaire
were at war with more destructive values upheld by Vaché, Duchamp and Picabia.\footnote{218}

If Dada may be said to have sought to destroy the concept of a work of art, then Surrealism may be said to have sought to rebuild from the ruins a perception of art which deviated from the cultural norm.

Surrealism seeks to liberate language from denotational values and in order for language to function as a communication it is dependant on recognisability. Breton realises the conflict of dependency, establishing the boundaries of a language without boundaries: ‘sans réserves’. (M., p.45-6). He states the premises of the conflict between individual and collective thought in artistic and literary production and the need for its recognition, citing Engels:

\textit{la seule attitude philosophique observable en pareil cas consiste à faire valoir ‘la contradiction (qui existe) entre le caractère de la pensée humaine que nous nous représentons comme absolue et la réalité de cette pensée en une foule d’êtres humains individuels à la pensée limitée—c’est là une contradiction qui ne peut être résolue que dans le progrès infini... En ce sens la pensée humaine possède la souveraineté et ne la possède pas; et sa capacité de connaissance est aussi illimitée que limitée....’ Cette pensée, dans le domaine où vous me demandez d’en considérer telle expression particulière ne peut qu’osciller entre la conscience de sa parfaite autonomie et celle de son étroite dépendance. (M., pp.103-4).}

In Breton’s theory of language, reason is seen as repressing the imagination which needs to be freed. Seeking to liberate imagination, Breton seeks solidarity in the languages of dream and madness and sense in non-sense, in communication of the ‘other’ of discourse. Thus the ‘shape’ of the text reflects marks of constant conflict between desire for the ‘other’ of its significance and the rules and restrictions necessary to render that shape recognisable as a communication.

\footnote{218 See Ferdinand Aliqué’s reference to Breton’s internal conflict between poet and nihilist: ‘Chaque fois que se fait sentir l’influence de Vaché, on sent chez Breton une sorte de duel intérieur, et un phénomène assez analogue à une possession: le dialogue du poète ravi et du négateur qui, en 1916 se moqua de ses admirations littéraires, s’est longtemps prolongé, en Breton lui-même, après la mort de Vaché. Aliqué, \textit{Philosophie du Surréalisme}, Flammarion, Paris, 1955, p.69.}
The violence and aggression of the conflict are posited in the text in terms of alienating and controlling elements. In this way the author expresses conflict by writing, in a manner similar to the bulimic's response to resolve affective states by the relationship with food - the action of vomiting being an aggressive means of expressing or resolving anger and conflict. Aggression is inherent in the concept of the surrealist image, which expresses surrealist discourse within the frame of the conventional language from which it seeks to liberate itself.

Breton's catalogue of types of images in terms of their perceived effects in the Manifestes is an expression of conflict between the impulse to define and establish boundaries on a form of language construction which itself rejects such boundaries. (M., pp.50-51).

If language is read as an expression of the conflict between opposing states of real and ideal perception of form, the surrealist image may be read as a microcosmic system in which signatures of liberation and alienation, of control and dependency maintain this dialogue of tension. J.H. Matthews concurs with Bailly's view that in the surrealist sense 'image' means the 'image-making activity', the operation of the mind expressed in various media, broadening the working definition of poetry.\(^{219}\)

The idea that hidden levels of human sensibility are of poetic significance, is central to reading Surrealism as a philosophy of the mind and to understanding both the influence of Freudian theory and its limitations for Breton's poetic theories. Matthews discusses Breton's indebtedness to Freudian theory for the realisation that unvoiced desires found expression in dream and in verbal form.\(^{220}\)


\(^{220}\) Matthews, André Breton, pp.87-104.

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By seeking to illuminate the hidden recesses of the mind and relay thought processes in a manner which reason cannot resolve, Breton’s purpose differs fundamentally from Freud’s. Surrealist poetry is, by definition, that which reason cannot define. Thus the fundamental evaluation of the resultant communication differs. Matthews describes Breton’s debt to Freud in terms of selective borrowing of fruitful stimuli which aided Breton in his search to resolve the dilemma of poetic communication and values.

In his theoretical writing, Breton borrows from many sources and adapts fragments to mask the form of his own theoretical identity, or to substantiate the argument by adding authoritative weight. He is not concerned with debating these authorities or with questioning or opening his views to argument. His concern lies in communicating his own theories and borrowing from those which he feels to be effective, in selecting good food and dismissing bad, as he nourishes his own authoritative textual identity. In terms of a ‘masculine’ patriarchal concept of presence, this type of structure is perhaps one of the most liberated and creative aspects of his work. It has also been a source for negative traditional criticism of Breton’s value as a philosopher in terms of the perceived ‘originality’ of his thinking.

However, establishing a theoretical position of authority has created tension and conflict in his poetry. In this sense Breton the theoretician is responsible for the consuming of Breton the poet, since the former establishes the rules by which the value of the latter’s communication will be assessed.

Surrealist evaluation of text is a function of its expression. Combining chance and objectivity, the poet is urged to be as neutral as possible, a recording instrument for the poetic message. The paradox of defining spontaneity and freedom within a rigid theoretical system are evident. Since all mankind is predetermined to have potential poetic possibilities, this creates a further conflict.
between the authority of the theory, the existence of the poet and the value of his communication.

The language with which the poet expresses himself is therefore also that which condemns him. Matthews states that the tone of overwhelming confidence of the Manifeste du Surréalisme must mark the resolution of inner conflict and the assertion of Breton’s individual belief in his chosen poetic medium after a decade of searching. Since the discourse of conflict manifestly continues, despite an authoritarian voice, I would suggest that the need to perceive a resolution derives more from a wish to place and categorise that voice, rather than from Breton’s text.

Although the language of surrealism expresses an alternative perception of poetry, it operates within the same system of socio-sexual orientation and is pre-eminently a masculine discourse which draws on the imagery of violence and aggression, of authority and dominance towards women and feminised objects. Surrealist texts embrace images of conflict and read them as beautiful, undermining accepted concepts and judgements of morality and aesthetics. Violence and aggression are central to surrealist philosophy:

\[
\text{l'acte surréaliste le plus simple consiste, revolvers aux poings, à descendre dans la rue et à tirer au hasard, tant qu'on peut, dans la foule. (M., p.74).}
\]

\[
\text{Il y a bel et bien torpillage de l'idée au sein de la phrase qui l'énonce, quand bien même cette phrase serait nette de toute charmante liberté prise avec son sens. (M., p.108).}
\]

The discourse of the Second mani\text{f}este du surréalisme is that of revolutionary politics. It is a discourse of power and control, determining what is and what is not surrealist, a discourse of masculine authority in which woman’s place is relegated to a footnote where she is described both as ‘le problème’ and as ‘tout ce qu’il y a de merveilleux et de trouble’. (M., p.129). Whilst Breton’s discourse is seductive in its presentation of an idyllic love in which woman plays an equal part, she is always construed in service to the idea, to the man, to the poet, to the work.

\[221\] Matthews, André Breton, pp.147-9.
The textual construction of woman as an object of desire imposes the violent reinforcing of traditional patriarchal politics of possession.

As a possessed object, language is consumed and regurgitated as a text which presents and even celebrates the violence and aggression done to it. Prime importance is placed on the act of aggression and the eroticism of images. The altered view is dependant on the structure of ownership, of the primacy of altered perception, akin to altered states of consciousness.

In the first half of this chapter, I described the relationship between language and food. Indeed the analogy of the products of the arts as ‘food for the soul’ is commonplace. During the Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance, just as flowers and animals symbolised Christian virtues and vices, so food particularly symbolised appetites, desires and fruition. Venturi quotes Tolnay on this aspect of temptations in ‘The Garden of Earthly Delights’, now in the Prado:

*Les cerises, les framboises, les fraises et les raisins qui leur sont offerts et qu’ils dégustent avec délice, ne sont autres que les symboles impies de la jouissance sexuelle. La pomme-barque qui sert d’abri aux amoureux évoque le sein de la femme, les oiseaux symbolise la luxure et la honte, les poissons de mer la volupté ou l’angoisse, la moule est l’emblème féminin.*

In the work of the fifteenth century artist Jerome Bosch, whose fantastical visions led him to be claimed as an ‘ancestor’ of Surrealism.

Another aspect of the relationship between food, art and religion, lies in the abjuration of food for the purposes of hallucinatory inspiration. Food is used like a drug by bulimics and on occasion by artists. Starvation or fasting can produce an altered state of consciousness, of heightened awareness or perception and even visions.

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De Chirico’s view of the object in his metaphysical paintings were later ‘explained’ by Apollinaire to Breton as being the result of ‘l’influence de troubles cénesthétiques (douleurs abdominales, migraines)’. (L.S.E.L.P., p.63). In L’Anthologie de l’humour noir, Breton describes Alberto Savino and his brother in terms of their beliefs in food:

C’est ainsi que l’un et l’autre gardent vivace la croyance primitive que les propriétés de la chose mangée se communiquent à celui qui l’a absorbée et forment son caractère, d’où toutes sortes de prohibitions... Hebdomon...réprouve formellement la consommation des mollusques et des crustacés. Il considérerait comme très immoral le fait de consommer des glaces dans des cafés... Il considérerait la fraise et la figue comme les plus immoraux des fruits. Freud a souligné la relation qui existe entre la persistance de cette croyance, à savoir que l’absorption orale pourrait tirer à grave conséquence, et l’angoisse à l’occasion du choix de l’objet sexuel.223

The persistant beliefs of Renaissance symbolism, much of which derives from earlier sources, recurr in this twentieth century extract, demonstrating the weight of cultural acquisition invested in food-related language. Michel Tournier describes a binary opposition in the work of André Gide, between a sensuous and sexual pleasure in nature’s products and a complete lack of interest in life, as an ‘orexie-anorexie’.224 He quotes from Gide’s Ainsi soit-il, written in 1941:

J’ai fait la connaissance d’un mot qui désigne un état dont je souffre depuis quelque mois; un très beau mot: anorexie. De ‘an’, privatif, et ‘oregomei’, désirer. Il signifie absence d’appétit (‘qu’il ne faut pas confondre avec dégoût’, dit Littré). Ce terme n’est guère employé que par les docteurs; n’importe; j’en ai besoin. Que je souffre d’anorexie, c’est trop dire: le pire, c’est que je n’en souffre presque pas, mais mon inappétence physique et intellectuelle est devenue telle que parfois je ne sais plus bien ce qui me maintient encore en vie, sinon l’habitude de vivre. Il me semble que je n’aurais, pour cesser d’être, qu’à m’abandonner.225

Tournier continues with a patriarchal masculine definition of anorexia as ‘un trouble que les psychiatres observent chez certaines jeunes filles chlorotiques et névropathes qui semblent vouloir


s'enfermer dans leur virginité. He compares Gide’s anorexia (‘la mauvaise fée’) with the intellectual lack of interest suffered by Germaine de Staël in the sleepless nights preceding her death. Tournier makes clear that Gide died of anorexia and lived and wrote ‘orexically’, which he describes in terms of:

l’amour de la vie, depuis la faim charnelle et la soif de tendresse, jusqu’à la curiosité intellectuelle et la volonté d’apprendre toutes choses notoirement condamnables…aux yeux de la morale catholique.  

The discourse discusses Gide’s written output, his texts, as expressions of oral pleasure and displeasure. This equates with the binge-purge syndrome associated with anorexia but now more clearly identified with bulimia, and may be linked in Gide’s case to his disparate sexual, social and intellectual identity, expressed through his use of language.

The author’s attitude to language can be read in a manner similar to that of the bulimic’s attitude to food. Since the regurgitated language of the text is inscribed with the author’s marks, the ‘shape’ of his identity may be directly related to evaluation of the language content and to the method of regurgitation in the same way that the bulimic perceives her shape as determined by the fat content of food. Thus poetic value is defined by the shape of the text, the surrealist use and effect of language.

In this equation, the ‘bad’ or ‘fat’ content reads as static expressions, stereo-typed images, a kind of ‘staleness’, the institutionalisation of language as a defining, rather than a liberating experience of the world.

For the feminist reader the question of ‘fat’ content poses severe problems with regard to language and to concepts of universality. The issue is that of inscribed gender stereo-types and of an

inherited patriarchal culture. Breton’s use of alchemical imagery and of the act of union, the ‘conjunto’ imply a balance and equality towards women. Yet, historically much of the imagery of alchemy is based on systems of binary oppositions whose union the (male) alchemist directed from his omnipotent position.

It seems that in the escape from image stereotyping, surrealism facilitated apparently ‘alternative’ perceptions of women, yet many of the images of women’s body parts as flowers and animals which are common to surrealism have a counterpart in white magic and feminine symbolism. The use of shock tactics in images of women which are often violent and sadistic, is ironically not new since women’s bodies have been historically appropriated and abused by men as a ‘god-given’ right. The authoritative discourse and the marks of possession in Breton’s texts, together with the language of violence expressed towards the object of desire - woman/language/image - manifest a manipulative and violent masculine fantasy of domination.

In ‘Ladies Shot and Painted: Female Embodiement in Surrealist Art’, Mary Ann Caws discusses representations of the female body in photography and painting. She reads the politics of the part and the whole in terms of eroticism and dominant views. The fundamental issue is that of the submissive object, as generator of surrealist activity. Like the found object, her miraculousness is a possession of the viewer and the politics of the view are masculine. As Caws describes, woman has the choice of submitting or being forced, so the view is ‘taken’.

I have always wondered about my ambivalent attitudes to Breton’s poetry, which can perhaps be best summed up in a fundamental question about the sexual monologue of ‘L’Union Libre’ - ‘What does she get out of it?’

Caws sees the redemption of the fragmentation imposed by the object position as being achieved through choice and the gift of women’s readings of representations of ourselves. Certainly this would seem to be the only way of avoiding the silence of the object position, of instituting a dialogue of difference. She surmises:

Refusing totalisation as a masterly concept and preferring integration in its place, we are already making a strong statement about how we can deal with fragments and how we do not have to deal with tyranny and its currency of forced consumption.230

The sensuality of Helen Cixous’ discourse in her novel LA is reminiscent of Gide’s in its evocation of oral pleasures. Yet the language which returns and rewrites is totally dissimilar in the evocation of starvation for food which permeates the text with which woman seeks to nourish and feed her unknown internal feminine self:

Une faim parle d’elle-même, les muscles serrés, tremblants articulent la violente prière qui spasme toute la nef aux tissus surexcités. Elle dit le vide enragé qu’elle est, le non-fruits, le tourment des entrailles...Crie Femmine. Et c’est de faim qu’elle fait la femme.
Le creux autour duquel s’empresse la viande qui dit: encore.
Donne, donne. Dis-moi les mots, les mères, les choses que je demande, que je dois demander. Le creux au corps qui s’emplit d’une faim, d’un creux, qui la fait vivre, l’affirme, l’émue, l’envahit d’elle-même, lui fait sentir sa non-fin et comme elle s’ouvre et se laisse sans répit...
Nourris-moi avec les nourritures bonnes pour moi afin que ma faim ne cesse pas, ne m’apaise pas, ne permet pas que je t’oublie, donne, donne, les trois désirs insatiables et les quatre corps qui disent : pas assez.231

Although the text of ‘L’Union Libre’ reads as discursive movement all over the woman’s body, Breton’s act of love, reads to me as a celebration of phallic pleasure. The singularity of his authority, mastery, possession and dominance, in which the woman’s pleasure has no part leads


to an equally singular aim; the satiation of his physical and textual desire. The girl-child is left screaming, undernourished and starving.
SUMMARY

The patterns thrown up by research into bulimic patients reveal factors shared by the general background circumstances of surrealism and feminism. These may be read as alienation from the dominant social order with which they are in conflict. The difficulty of comparing the models is heightened by the evolution of circumstance and the change of attitudes to perception of 'ideal' shapes.

The consequences of Breton's application of theoretical arguments to substantiate surrealist discourse lead to a series of impasses since those very arguments stem from the inherited past which he is seeking to undermine and yet they are necessary for the acceptance of his alternative discourse within the culture he is altering. Reading these conflicts, both his theory and his poetry may be seen as expressions of tension equally affected by his political and philosophical position as leader of the Surrealist group and his desire for the poetics of liberation.

The position is inherited by the critic whose traditional tools are clearly inadequate for the task. By taking the theoretical arguments to their logical extreme, the ideals of Surrealism are determined to be as impossible as the absolute divorce of language from thought. By attempting to define the poetry in terms of ideal values of representation, the critic enters into the situation of conflict and annihilates herself and the text. The critic has therefore to search for new ways of approaching the text, to survive the crisis.

For the feminist critic one of the greatest paradoxes in Breton's work must be the establishing of an alternative discourse amid a plethora of gender stereotypes which in themselves undermine her concept of 'alternative'. Since she is already writing from within a situation of conflict and is examining and assessing the effect of the boundaries imposed on her, she is writing from a privileged position, returning answers to questions previously deemed rhetorical and questioning the acceptance of situations. The form of this dialogue is a recognition of the states of conflict,
and of the inherent impossibility of a hierarchical structure of authority.

I am aware that certain 'bad' foods have to be consumed and regurgitated to communicate my text. I am also aware of the dangers of 'good' and 'bad' value judgements, of repeating the patriarchal structure and of the value of the masculine view. To determine an issue as 'good' or 'bad', projects an external morality as to its worth in view of the aim envisaged; that is masculine determinism. To sense good and bad through the comprehension of contexts and their active rewriting, is a digestive process affirming global and individual identity. A complete reversal of gender roles could only result in the total sacrifice of the difference of woman's experience, sexuality and shape and ensure the continuity of the intolerable cycle of repression and regression within a system of binary oppositions.
APPENDIX

HOTEL DES ETINCELLES

Le papillon philosophique
Se pose sur l’étoile rose
Et cela fait une fenêtre de l’enfer
L’homme masqué est toujours debout devant la femme nue
Dont les cheveux glissent comme au matin la lumière
sur un réverbère qu’on a oublié d’éteindre
Les meubles savants entraînent la pièce qui jongle
Avec ses rosaces
Ses rayons de soleil circulaires
Ses moulages de verre
A l’intérieur desquels bleuit un ciel au compas
En souvenir de la poitrine inimitable
Maintenant le nuage d’un jardin passe par-dessus la tête de l’homme qui vient de s’asseoir
Il coupe en deux la femme au buste de magie aux yeux de Parme
C’est l’heure où l’ours boréal au grand air d’intelligence
S’étire et compte un jour
De l’autre côté la pluie se cabre sur les boulevards d’une grande ville
La pluie dans le brouillard avec des traînées de soleil sur des fleurs rouges
La pluie et le diablo des temps anciens
Les jambes sous le nuage fruiter font le tour de la serre
On n’aperçoit plus qu’une main très blanche le pouls est figuré par deux minuscules ailes
Le balancier de l’absence oscille entre les quatre murs
Fendant les têtes
D'où s'échappent des bandes de rois qui se font aussitôt la guerre
Jusqu'à ce que l'éclipse orientale
Turquoise au fond des tasses
Découvre le lit équilatéral aux draps couleur de ces fleurs dites boules-de-neige
Les guéridons charmants les rideaux lacérés
A portée d'un petit livre griffé de ces mots 'Point de lendemain'
Dont l'auteur porte un nom bizarre
Dans l'obscur signalisation terrestre
Ma femme à la chevelure de feu de bois

Aux pensées d'éclairs de chaleur

À la taille de sablier

Ma femme à la taille de loutre entre les dents du tigre

Ma femme à la bouche de cocarde et de bouquet
d'étoiles de dernière grandeur

Aux dents d'empreintes de souris blanche sur la terre blanche

À la langue d'ambre et de verre frottés

À la langue d'hostie poignardée

À la langue de poupée qui ouvre et ferme les yeux

À la langue de pierre incroyable

Ma femme aux cils de bâtons d'écriture d'enfant

Aux sourcils de bord de nid d'hirondelle

Ma femme aux tempes d'ardoise de toit de serre

Et de buée aux vitres

Ma femme aux épaules de champagne

Et de fontaine à têtes de dauphins sous la glace

Ma femme aux poignets d'allumettes

Ma femme aux doigts de hasard et d'as de cœur

Aux doigts de foin coupé

Ma femme aux aigüilles de martre et de fènes

De nuit de la Saint-Jean

De troène et de nid de scalares
Aux bras d'écume de mer et d'écluse
Et de mélange du blé et du moulin
Ma femme aux jambes de fusée
Aux mouvements d'horlogerie et de désespoir
Ma femme aux mollets de moelle de sureau
Ma femme aux pieds d'initiales
Aux pieds de trousseau de clés aux pieds de calfats qui boivent
Ma femme au cou d'orge imperlée
Ma femme à la gorge de Val d'or
De rendez-vous dans le lit même du torrent
Aux seins de nuit
Ma femme aux seins de taupinière marine
Ma femme aux seins de creuset de rubis
Aux seins de spectre de la rose sous la rosée
Ma femme au ventre de dépillement d'éventail des jours
Au ventre de griffe géante
Ma femme au dos d'oiseau qui fuit vertical
Au dos de vif-argent
Au dos de lumière
A la nuque de pierre roulée et de craie mouillée
Et de chute d'un verre dans lequel on vient de boire
Ma femme aux hanches de nacelle
Aux hanches de lustre et de pennes de flèche
Et de tiges de plumes de paon blanc
De balance insensible
Ma femme aux fesses de grès et d'amiant
Ma femme aux fesses de dos de cygne
Ma femme aux fesses de printemps
Au sexe de glaïeul
Ma femme au sexe de placer et d’ornithorynque
Ma femme au sexe d’algue et de bonbons anciens
Ma femme au sexe de miroir
Ma femme aux yeux pleins de larmes
Aux yeux de panoplie violette et d’aiguille aimantée
Ma femme aux yeux de savane
Ma femme aux yeux pour boire en prison
Ma femme aux yeux de bois toujours sous la hache
Aux yeux de niveau d’eau de niveau d’air de terre et de feu
THE PORNOGRAPHY OF REPRESENTATIONAL STRUCTURES

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Ma femme au sexe de miroir
Ma femme aux yeux pleins de larmes
Aux yeux de panoplie violette et d’aiguille aimantée
Ma femme aux yeux de savane
Ma femme aux yeux pour boire en prison
Ma femme aux yeux de bois toujours sous la hache
Aux yeux de niveau d’eau de niveau d’air de terre et de feu. (C.d.T., pp.93-5).
INTRODUCTION

This section examines the relationships between representation, objectification and authority, in terms of the pornographic structures inherent in the use of women’s bodies as objects of desire. The premise is that sexuality and sexual stereotypes pervade our language based upon the subject-object dialectic. These have dictated the basis of language as we know it and therefore the representative structures of myth, symbol and signified meaning. They are also therefore inscribed in, and inherent to, the inherited structure of criticism and theory of text.

In surrealist theory, words like people make love: ‘les mots font l’amour’. (P.P., p.141). ‘L’Union Libre’ is a love poem whose title may be read as signifying a free and equal relationship both between lovers and between words. Furthermore, this freedom applies to physical lovemaking, and to the verbal conjoining of images, particularly in metaphor, whose presence is physically manifest on the page. Images, in the famous quotation from Lautréamont are depicted in terms of sexual relationships, engaged in sexual activity and are also rewritten and personified by Breton and Soupault, as the ‘characters’ in a short sketch entitled ‘Vous m’oublierez’. (C.M., pp.163-182). By establishing that words, like people, make love, Breton is firmly situating his text within the context of sexual traditions and using the parallel discourse of physical relationships to illustrate and contextualise the mental complexities of internal and external textual relationships.

If woman’s body is the prime locus for the perpetration of violent sexual acts which serve to rob her of self, representations of her body mirror a similar process of objectification. Images of women have, for the most part, been presented in accordance with male views and ideals which women have assumed: beauty is both a sexist and a socio-cultural construction, with woman taught to objectify; to observe herself as another person would and to observe the image of her desirability. She is therefore situated outside of herself within the masculine mirror construction.
The politics of representation may be read as those of pornography and group rape, by involving the objectification and abuse of the represented and by the necessary presence or potential presence of a third party participant. In the production of text, it is the author who as subject, manipulates the object, language. The reader/author repeats this objectifying process, marvelling at the original author's ejaculation, the Barthesian 'émission, while emitting his own.

There are two main structures in question: (a) a structure which is inherently sexist and the representation within that structure of the model; (b) the manner in which the female body is presented. I will examine these structures to elucidate their operation, contextualising Breton's poem 'L'Union Libre' with female socio-cultural history in order to explore its inherent permeation of our cultural experience.

Breton's text depicts the body of his lover, Suzanne Muzard, who is also the woman to whom he is writing at the end of Nadia. However her only identity as a person, is as the property of the poet, as 'ma femme', which reads as a poetic rather than a biographical identity. The separation of her body into a list of parts externalises her presence, communicating her appearance in desirable language, with an effect similar to that of a pornographic rape. Her original identity is effaced, her body itself fragmented, and she plays no part.

Breton's linguistic manipulations of these female body parts are authorial word games on an imposed system of alchemical metaphors. The fragmentation and manipulation of parts is reminiscent of Bellmer's grotesque doll 'Die Püppe' (Plate I) and of his photographs and drawings which display a preoccupation with the obscene, a culturally determined erotic voyeurism, knowingly constructed for the viewer.\footnote{Dawn Ades, Dada and Surrealism Reviewed, pp.295-6.} Indeed, surrealist images of women are some of the
most cruel since they reify the women they represent, often using them to reflect the creative process.

My intention in reading this text is not to give an alternative meaning, since the value of one interpretation over another is a politically questionable issue and follows standard critical tradition. Instead I hope to illustrate how the surrealist text, which intends to liberate language from traditional misuse, relies upon that very misuse in order to function. I am using the subject pronoun ‘I’ as a political stance against the rhetorical and textual devices of pseudo objective critical positions which disguise and conceal individual presence. I cannot change these inherited structures by refusing to engage with them; such binary opposition would be self-defeatist leading rapidly to non-verbalisation.

Patriarchy has promoted the univeral singular to dominate and authorise masculine cultural and social values; it seems to me that confrontation may force a change by questioning values, so that gendering and delimiting that which reads as singularly ‘masculine’, will connote the ‘différence’ of its polyvalent ‘others’. I believe that these will recover and are recovered by voices which have been systematically excluded, repressed and obliterated from cultural identity.

Textual equality is therefore in this reading, a process of recovering presence through a political contextualisation of gender, a raising of questions. Thus I can question the inevitable politics of representation and of the text and suggest how Breton’s writing like Freud’s or for that matter any other male writer’s, reveals a discourse with a deeply rooted phallocentric inheritance which is fundamental to the representational structures of a culture which authorises masculine viewing as normative.

RAPE AND PORNOGRAPHY

In her comprehensive study of rape, Against Our Will, Susan Brownmiller shows with lengthy
documentation that there is a social history of rape which posits rape and the psychology of rape as a product of masculine concepts of power and authority. Rape was constitutionalised in accordance with property law. (A.O.W., pp.119, 141-2). In the patrilinear society not only is one woman the possession of one man but all women are the possession of any dominant and aggressive man, to be used at will:

...rape became not only a male prerogative, but man’s basic weapon of force against woman, the principle agent of his will and her fear. His forcible entry into her body, despite her physical protestations and struggle, became the vehicle of his victorious conquest over her being...the triumph of his manhood. Man’s discovery that his genitalia could serve as a weapon to generate fear must rank as one of the most important discoveries of prehistoric times. (A.O.W., p.14).

The major gender symbols and metaphors of western civilisation are, for the most part, originally derived from Mesopotamian and later Hebrew sources. In her book, The Creation of Patriarchy, Gerda Lerner traces the establishment and instutionalisation of patriarchy in Ancient Mesopotamia and clearly documents the historical sources and original structures of the subordination of women to men.233 She demonstrates that the appropriation by men of women’s sexual and reproductive capacity lies at the foundation of private property and the development of concepts of dominance and hierarchy.

The value of a woman within such a structure relates directly to procreation, and proof of sole ownership centres, of course, on the unbroken hymen. Virginity and chastity became cultural and social issues, subsets of ownership concepts and a means by which to guarantee the origin of offspring and subsequent rights of inheritance.

The importance of virginity as a sign of female value is enshrined in most monotheistic religions. Of its elevated position in the mind of society, Voltaire noted: ‘C’est une des superstitions de

233 See Gerda Lerner, Creation of Patriarchy, Passim.
‘Virginity’ or ‘girlhood’ not only has no masculine equivalent but the word has been somewhat ironically hijacked to indicate a man who has never had sex. When applied to men, however, this sexual state is seen as ‘inexperience’ or lack, a negative value. Before marriage it was customary for young men to go (or be taken by their fathers) to a ‘disreputable’ woman to gain knowledge and experience superior to their brides, enabling them to perform ‘authoritatively’ on their wedding night. Sex was something which men ‘needed’ and enjoyed. For women, sex was

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235 ‘Virgin’ originally means a young girl but is now used to indicate a female who has never been sexually penetrated. It is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as a ‘person esp. woman who has had no sexual intercourse’. Not only does the word refer to both sexes, but it describes a female in terms of the state of her hymen, which then becomes a measure of value and virtue. ‘Hymen’ means ‘marriage’ and is a clear instance of how the naming of women’s body parts has been ‘branded’ by patriarchal dominance. One has only to point out the irony of the value of the unbroken hymen as one of the only acceptable means for a woman to have her marriage dissolved, to realise the onus on both men and women to obey the laws of patriarchy. A woman therefore was able to ‘escape’ her husband’s authority if he did not penetrate her - he was not a man if he did not fulfil his masculine sexual function defined as penetration of the woman, and therefore undeserving of that property right. This means of exiting marriage, was however often also seen as the woman’s inability to attract her husband, or as something no ‘unwed’ woman should know about. In either event these ‘sexual’ rights of women are defined as lack, absence of sex whose exposure (except where marriage is a state used for political ends by mutual agreement) was constrained by shame, failure and ignorance.

The word ‘virgin’ as when applied to the temple virgins of Ancient Greece and Rome, originally signified gender and age and was not generally used to indicate sexual experience. Within the patriarchal system, the repression of female sexuality is fundamental to property law both in terms of the institutionalisation of dominant male power and for the purpose of inheritance or controlling reproduction. Chastity and virginity became important moral virtues, invested with social significance and the rites of passage from girl to woman focused less on the onset of menses than on marriage and inevitably on the ‘hymen’ and therefore sites ownership within the woman’s body itself.

236 Perhaps this notion could be linked to the idea that ignorance of sex and sexuality, of those parts of the body and how they operated, was in the last century commended as honourable and virtuous in women and may be directly related to medical practise in gynaecology and maternity in that century. Similar attitudes may be traced as having been institutionalised in legal language, particularly in that relating to sexual offences. See Susan Edwards, *Female Sexuality and The Law*, p.27.
a duty required of them by their husbands and necessary for procreation ('motherhood' being socially determined as woman's fulfilment and purpose in life). Although today such ideas are labelled 'old-fashioned' and even associated with a specific past era (Victorianism) they still continue to influence our socio-cultural concepts of sexuality, marriage, the family and child bearing.\textsuperscript{237}

In many societies women were and are regarded as property; a property with no separate will of its own, and one which could be acquired through violence.\textsuperscript{238} Bride-capture still existed in England in the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{239}

Violence is closely linked to sexual pleasure in the conceptualisation and importance given to the breaking of the hymen; blood, not the woman's word, is physical proof of primary ownership. Today this would seem lie at the root of the popularised sadomasochistic/masochistic notion that sex should and does 'hurt' (at least on the first occasion) which, as a universal concept appears to be a masculine myth, often, ironically, linked with the objectification of women as passive, fragile, non-sexual objects of adoration. After all, if for women sex is associated with pain and duty, and pleasure is denied by rigid moral codes, religion, society and the legal system, there is little space left for a positive view of female sexuality and indeed for concepts of individuality,

\textsuperscript{237} Whilst social concerns such as population needs, demographics, the need for women in the workforce, wars, the growth of the welfare system and many other factors have affected and changed attitudes to women and their sexuality, changing fashions of etiquette may be read as a history of human sexual relationships within society. Such fashions reflect the tone of societies more and are often recorded in popular fiction and culture in stereotyped, 'idealised' forms. They therefore continue to reflect and confirm attitudes to sexual behaviour which remain deeply ingrained in the cumulative experience of social and cultural inheritance.

\textsuperscript{238}Gerda Lerner, \textit{Creation of Patriarchy}, Chapters 3-5. The marriage contract is founded on property law - 'obey'.

\textsuperscript{239}Brownmiller sites Eleanor of Aquitaine (\textit{A.O.W.}, p.17). Until very recently, rape within marriage was not a crime in anglo-american law, a persistent prejudice. the history of this aspect of the legal system evidences the protection of property law as tenet of 'rights' in marriage. Susan Edwards, \textit{Female Sexuality and the Law}, pp. 31-6.
little space left for a positive view of female sexuality and indeed for concepts of individuality, let alone ‘différence’.

Women were divided into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ according to their sexual practice. Originally temple priestesses and attendants of the Gods, prostitutes were later categorised as ‘bad’ (although a ‘necessary’ evil in a male dominated society which outlawed promiscuity in women). Today, evidence of a rape victim’s past sexual life as well as her attire, may be produced by the defence to mitigate the rapist’s crime, whereas his past sexual activity is not generally an issue.\(^{240}\)

Although rape is sexual (as opposed to social) subordination, it is often politically and socially motivated. Women’s bodies have been used endlessly for political ends, as a source of political pressure and for property gain, as a field of combat between men. (A.O.W., pp.140-173). Women have also been used as the innocent victims of man’s power struggles against man, as a means of revenge against the ‘enemy’ and an accepted ‘right’ of victory.\(^{241}\)

During both World Wars and many other wars, conquering soldiers effected mass rapes, helping themselves to the ‘spoils of war’ the property and possessions (women) of the vanquished enemy. The ‘rape’ of a city has become a familiar term. War propaganda often links the defeated country, represented as a woman weak (vanquished) and beautiful (desirable), with images of the conquering hero, the all powerful male, thus reinforcing and promoting the sexual stereotypes of warrior tradition.

\(^{240}\) Perhaps this rather jaundiced view of female sexuality which is inscribed in legal practise, is inherited from the 19th century notion that for women, sexual ignorance was honourable and virtuous. This appears to have led, not only to legal ‘malpractice’ but also to medical malpractice. See Edwards, Female Sexuality and The Law, p.27.

\(^{241}\) This is common currency, as evidenced by references such as those to Chryseis and Briseis in Homer’s Iliad (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1975) and to the infamous and aptly named ‘Rape of Nanking’ which refers not so much to the sack of the city, as one might assume, but to the mass rape of its female citizens.
Women are trained from childhood to be victims, and that victims are beautiful is the message in stories such as Cinderella, Snow White, The Little Mermaid, The Sleeping Beauty and the famous metaphorical rape - Little Red Riding Hood.

Female sexual behaviour and psychology has been modelled by the institutionalisation of patriarchy. The victim is discriminated against in laws which seek to protect the rapist from false accusation (a particular male worry and refuge, exemplified by Potifar’s wife in the Bible). She is discriminated against, not only because she has to prove herself as non-sexual (in masculine terms: past life, clothes, manner) and that she was coerced (and resisted physically) or tricked (innocence), but also because of the peculiar prejudices inscribed in legal language, can not herself ‘commit’ rape. Proof of rape depends, by law, on the presence of sperm - not only on penetration (by the penis, rather than other objects) but on ejaculation - proof of sexual masculine ‘success’.

Freudian psychology suggested the idea of a not unwilling victim, the passive masochist, who therefore carries some responsibility for the act. Such beliefs have often been man’s defence (a typical rapist’s fantasy) and are enshrined in laws and unfortunately often in male reactions to rape victims.

Diluted versions of Freudian theories on woman’s masochistic nature and the pleasure/pain principle were publicised and spread through their incorporation in social welfare systems and popular culture and became the public perspective of ‘femininity’. The mass media and popular female literature are constructed around such theories and have converted men’s ideas and fantasies of women into women’s belief that this is what they are and so they have become.

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242 Female passivity is written into the legal system. In legal terms, women can only ‘permit’, not ‘commit’ rape. Similarly women cannot be convicted of indecent exposure, since this offence relies upon exhibition of the male genitals. Women are prosecuted for like offences under public order acts, (pp.21-48). Edwards Female Sexuality and the Law, pp.47-8, 21-48).
Brownmiller distinguishes between unconscious and conscious fantasy and concludes that the latter is a culturally induced and culturally encouraged manifestation.\textsuperscript{243}

As a sexual exploitation of female bodies, pornography is closely allied to rape in the similar power structures that it represents and can be read as a visual rather than physical rape.\textsuperscript{244} There are two origins inscribed in the Greek root of the word ‘pornography’ - ‘Porn’ comes from ‘porne’ meaning ‘harlot’, ‘graphy’ from ‘grapho’, to write. The first word indicates the objectification of women’s bodies in the service of men. The second embodies the sexual politics of writing and representation as a whole which are based on the genderised subject/object power structures of institutionalised patriarchy.

The primary objectification of women by the representation of their bodies as catalysts for sexual desire is compounded by pornography’s dependence on the viewing of physical attributes and acts. Individuality is read within the structure as a matter of physical attributes and their market appeal (to men). In terms of psychology, character and mental attributes, it is absent. The represented woman is effectively a dehumanised female body, whose psychological anonymity leaves her with a purely physical identity, one with which women viewers identify biologically and culturally.

Each instance of pornography is therefore a microcosm of stereotypical structuring for an equally stereotypical masculine structured desirability. Susan Brownmiller clearly states the response that many women feel as a ‘gut distaste’, perhaps because feminine textuality is constructed to identify with the conceptualised desirability integral to it:

\textsuperscript{243} Brownmiller reads the marking of rape symbols in dreams, regarded as evidence of ‘normative’ fantasy, as Freud’s subjective, masculine, interpretation. \textit{(A.O.W., pp.309-346)}.

\textsuperscript{244} A comprehensive study of pornography as violence against women, together with the comparative analysis of its effects is given in Andrea Dworkin, \textit{Pornography: Men Possessing Women}, Women’s Press, London, 1981.
The gut distaste that a majority of women feel when we look at pornography, a distaste that, incredibly it is no longer fashionable to admit, comes, I think, from the gut knowledge that we and our bodies are being stripped, exposed and contorted for the purpose of ridicule to bolster that 'masculine esteem' which gets its kick and sense of power from viewing females as anonymous, panting playthings, adult toys, dehumanised objects to be used, abused, broken and discarded. This, of course, is also the philosophy of rape. (A.O.W., p.394).

Woman's concern with pornography is a concern with self image, with the sexist portrayal of that image, rather that with what constitutes obscenity or indecency for those are changeable moral judgements.

The image of women in pornographic culture as bodies/objects, defined by physical attributes but with no individual inner presence, is mirrored by descriptions of women in popular culture. For example, tabloid headlines refer to women in group terms as 'Blonde' or 'Brunette', or to their position in the family as 'mother', 'wife' or 'fiancée'. (A.O.W., pp.338-42). The more externalised the description becomes, the further removed from reality is the woman. The more associated with objects and exotica (fur, feathers, animals, habitat) 'unnatural' to her surroundings, the more objectified and therefore in the power of men, women's bodies are read. With the exception of gay subculture and child pornography, it is woman's objectified body that pornography has represented:

..the graphic descriptions, the meat and potatoes of porn, are of the naked female body and of the multiple acts done to that body. (A.O.W., p.393).

Whether the representation is in 'high' or 'low' culture is irrelevant to this, whether the art is in the brothel or depicts the brothel, is irrelevant. Female bodies displayed and masculine perceptions of what is desirable permeate our literary and artistic heritage.

'Art' as propaganda is a familiar theme, it is less familiar to realise that appreciation of art is rooted in concepts of desirability directly related to sexist power structures. For example, the
majority of portraits of women were made because they were either someone’s mistress or someone’s wife, or because the women were considered beautiful. Social title was as dependant upon men as representation of ‘beauty’ and its market value. Portraits of men on the other hand, were often tributes in recognition of social standing and integrity, rarely solely of their physical attributes.

Representations of male and female nudes reflect a different histories, combining contemporary aesthetics, perceived excellence through allusion to classical ideals, the study of human form as an artistic accomplishment and the changing shapes of eroticism.

Suzanne Kappeler defines pornography as ‘representations, word- or image- based, or, to be more precise, representational practises, rather than sexual practises’. Pornography and group rape, to which it is closely allied by the inherent sharing and bonding process inherent to it, are taken as models for the structure of representational practices. I wish to examine the sexual politics

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245 The economics of commissioning such works means that such portraits were in general commissioned or painted for a male admirer, lover or husband to purchase.

246 For an evaluation of the work of women artists and their exclusion from the writing of art history, see Roszika Parker and Grieselda Pollock, Old Mistresses, Pantheon Books, Random House Inc., New York, 1981.

247 A major exception to this are representations of ugliness such as those by 15th, 16th and 17th century Dutch and Flemish artists and caricatures such as those done by Leonardo da Vinci. In gay subculture and child pornography, the images are different but the representational structure of the objectification and presentation of physical desirability is the same.


249 Statistics on group rape today are sparse and vary widely. According to the only available American statistics, a study in Washington revealed that in 30% of rape cases, the victim had two or more assailants, whilst in Toronto and Philadelphia the figure was 71%. Brownmiller sees in this a deliberate and premeditated proof of intent to rape, a proof of male bonding (sharing) and 'proof of a desire to humiliate the victim beyond the act of rape'. Brownmiller, A.O.W., p.187. I think it may even be arguable in historical terms that the structuring of pornography with its dependence on a shared concept of desirability, may derive from the early practices of group rape and bride capture.
of these structures, primarily in the light of the female body as represented object within the model but extending this field to include all represented objects, all representations and all stances of ‘authority’.

Pornography requires the presence of a third party to complete the purveyor, displayed object, participant/onlooker structure. Its functioning relies upon male bonding and shared perceptions of sexual/erotic politics. The relationship of pornography to rape is concealed by the complicity between purveyor and participant. Solicitation of pleasure is a gift offered by man to man, a sharing and bonding process. The object exposed for the viewer’s pleasure is penetrated by his view and active ‘jouissance’.

In the most obvious form of textual presentation, the ‘vanitas’ genre, the women’s admiration of herself in the mirror is an image wholly constructed to legitimise the voyeuristic titillation of the artist whose resultant ‘emission’ in the peep-show bucket shared by the reader, is the captured canvas image.

‘Representation’, therefore implies the necessary presence of a ‘third party’ for whom the view is constructed. Inevitably self-objectification is written into the process, following the primary model and inherited in woman’s self-perception as desirable.

However, an object cannot freely consent or participate, she is the slave of the purveyor and her ‘consent’ to objectification is on his terms. Like rape victims, women have to some extent assumed this stance in a mistaken notion of self-defence or of protection by acquiescence, often taken as participation. Pornography, like rape, is about power and authority and about sex as a weapon.
The text is an authoritative communication in which representation and conceptualisation are mutually dependant:

*Representation is... one of the most fundamental structures of conceptualization, centred on the subject.*

The representational practices of pornography exemplify those of group rape, by the inherent necessity for cultural complicity and the performance related positions of authority which they institute. The subject/object power structure is the model for all representational structures among them, art and literature.

Words and images ‘mirror’ the object which is accordingly distanced, distorted and offered for view irrespective of the gender of the purveyor. The possession of one man/author is perceived as the ‘right’ of every man/author by its transition from subject to object. The reader assumes an ‘authoritarian’ stance with regard to the text, indulging in a dialogue with the original author of the text, rewriting the meaning of his communication, re-abusing the objects presented for abuse. Critical authority merely indulges in a more public display of this ‘power’.

The critic stands in a difficult position in the subject - object dialogue. This is a binary relationship and ‘his’ text is a visible ‘emission’, provoked by an authoritative and knowing penetration of the represented object. The female critic is in a double bind since she will both identify with the (female) object and be a reading author.

The structure of representation is no easy matter to examine within an inherited system which institutionalises gender principles. The root of the problem lies in the system: since for the object (female) to become a subject it has to assume a dialogue with the author but in so doing, the

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female risks adopting a masculine stance rather than challenging the status of her position. Silence is not a solution since this has never had much effect.\textsuperscript{251}

Representational practices depend on the principle of a shared cultural inheritance. For women to take a masculine authoritarian stance only partially solves the problem, for we need an equal balance and not another hierarchy. By establishing that woman’s inheritance is different from man’s, we can disrupt the authoritarian dialogue which participates in the re-abuse of the object.

When the object represented is a female body, it is easier to comment on the representation. Women should look at the images which have represented them and learn from the way in which they have been handled, objectified, captured in words and images and publicly displayed. This is only one aspect of the work which needs to be done - although I believe that where it doesn’t attack or condone the author’s image but delineates the positions contextualised by the reading, it incorporates a more radical breakdown of the subject/object system of representation.

There is no alternative to representation as we know it. The represented object, whatever it is, will always exist within the work as an object under the control of its ‘presenter’. As subjects, however, we can act independently. We can refuse to dialogue with the author on his terms. We can refuse to ‘interpret’ the ‘meaning’ of the text. Instead we can comment on its images and our reactions to them, illustrate its operation and its functions. Subjective dialogue is with the object and with the self and is therefore other than an authoritarian re-interpretation which Kristeva, as Caws points out, notes as a combination of indebtedness through presence and through the gift of an object, a currency.\textsuperscript{252} This is precisely the political economics of bonding in both pornography and group rape.

\textsuperscript{251} See Brownmiller on the difficulty and necessity of learning to struggle against aggression, \textit{A.O.W.}, pp.374-404.

\textsuperscript{252} Caws, ‘Ladies Shot and Painted’, p.269.
BRETON'S IMAGES OF WOMEN

I would like to examine at the text 'L'Union Libre' within the context of the politics of representation to read it as a microcosmic image of those politics, an act of violence on the object, a rape performed for political motives, to illustrate the surrealist message.

In order to do this I wish briefly to establish a context of surrealist abuse of the body and ambivalent attitudes to women. Within the process, the body is subject to language (particularly to surrealist concepts of language) which is itself subject to the author's use. The language of 'L'Union Libre' is further subject to the imposition of a cabbalistic alchemical programme which is in turn subject to the 'ruling' author, Breton. There is no 'freedom', merely a series of imprisoning structures, each built around the other, the represented and fragmented body at the centre.

Surrealism seeks to give new life to language and deliberately sets out to destroy the stereotypes of image association. In feminist terms, this seems a positive step, particularly for female gender stereotyping. The surrealist text relies heavily on the female body as an echo-image of the text and destroys many of the familiar clichés associated with such imaging. However, Surrealism perpetuates and celebrates the more sinister image of the female body as an ideal locus of violent acts.

Breton recognises that images of relationships between men and women have become stereotyped in poetry and even seeks a liberation from this type of language:

Il n'en reste pas moins que l'amour de l'homme pour la femme, par delà les immémoriales et séniles pleurnicheries auxquelles il a littérairement donné lieu, si nous nous attachons une seconde à l'observation du monde sensible, persiste à encombrer le ciel de fleurs géantes et de fauves. Il demeure pour l'esprit, qui éprouve toujours le besoin de se croire en lieu sûr, la plus terrible pierre d'achoppement. (P.d.I., p.79).
The emphasis, however, is not on gender but on language stereotyping. The Surrealists attitudes to women were notoriously chauvinist and the act of violence associated with liberation was ultimately more important than the female figure represented. Working within the patriarchal system and with men (for the most part) as authors and authorities on surrealist texts, these texts inevitably reflect their author’s psychological attitudes towards woman as an object to be confined, manipulated, disfigured and effaced.

Women are seen in new ways, all of which are however often equally authoritarian. Woman is no longer untouchable, instead she is a sex object to be mauled at will. Mary Ann Caws describes the handling of the image as ‘management’. This however does not cover the intentional violence, the manual mauling, of the representation act. Woman is an object of liberation. She is a tool, a means by which language can be freed:

..partout la femme n’est plus qu’un calice débordant de voyelles en liaison avec le magnolia inimitable de la nuit. (S.A., p.143).

She is therefore subordinate to language, its slave and that of the author. Moreover the ideal woman is une inconnue’, faceless (‘disfigured’) and anonymous, with physical (ie. external) rather than mental attributes:

Chaque nuit, je laissais grande ouverte la porte de la chambre que j’occupais à l’hôtel dans l’espoir de m’éveiller enfin du côté d’une compagne que je n’eusse pas choisie. (P.P., p.12).

The fact that Breton did not choose his companion is, in the above quote, more important than her lack of identity. It is essential that the female body in the bed constitute this lack and she is therefore devoid of character and personality, an object of sensual perception:

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The naked woman is not enough to arouse Breton’s desire; the occasion or the setting, like that of the peep show, has to be extraordinary. For him, desire resides in the incongruous rather than in the sight of the naked woman and is titillated by the unnatural:

*une femme nue ... allait bien d’un rang à l’autre, très blanche. C’était déjà bouleversant. Loin, malheureusement, d’être assez extraordinaire, ce coin de l’Électric était un lieu de débauche sans intérêt. (N., p.45).*

For Breton, women are the possessions of men, their idealised and objectified ‘muses’, whose physical attributes (once again) inspire surrealist visions and texts. Desire is a masculine prerogative, the driving fire which instigates the text. The female body is sectioned, dislocated in all parts, fragmented and denied a sense of presence in all surrealist portrayals of it.\(^{254}\) The object is again captured in paint and in words and shot by the camera but the act has become more violent, concentrating on the act and further alienating the object.

Ironically the surrealist text also describes the imprisonment and violence which it sets up. Even more ironically, surrealist texts mirror the ambivalent stances on liberation and imprisonment in which woman as sex object is sacrificed or ‘consumed’ by language:

‘*la femme de plaisir, objet de consommation*. (L.S.A.S.D.L.R., No.4, p.14).

\(^{254}\) Except for the work of some surrealist women such as Valentine Penrose whose texts impart a sense of presence by veiling and masking the image, rather than an enforced exposure, a more masculine image. Her delicate rendering of images of women conveys a sense of inner presence which differs more obviously from works by such as Bellmer, Ernst and Man Ray. Those of Frida Kahlo convey a definite statement of presence, personal, physical and intellectual. They are confrontational but not impositional and direct rather than indirect.
Liberated from one type of stereotyping, she is imprisoned by another, more violent and autocratic one:

*La beauté sera CONVULSIVE ou ne sera pas.* (N., p.190).

The text which follows amounts to an enjoyment of the powerless situation that the woman is in. Cruelly it recognises her situation and is, in that respect, extremely sadistic - which is perhaps not entirely surprising given the Breton and Peret definition of rape as ‘l’amour de la vitesse’. (L.R.S., No.11, p.8).\(^{255}\) The text denies the female narrator (Breton’s impersonation) a voice to rebel and suggests that she is in compliance for although the ‘oiseau’ is an ‘aiguilleur’ (with a very sharp and painful phallus), he attains all sorts of poetic and surrealist strengths in this phallic position. It therefore reads as a masculine fantasy of woman’s version of the position in which she is put by the author:

*FEMMES ENCELERLÉES PAR LE VOL D’UN OISEAU*

*Il est sur mon talon, il en veut à chacune de mes boucles, il me traite comme un violon qu’on accorde, il m’oublie dans son labirintrhe où tourne l’agate oeilée! - Où ai-je déjà vu cette plume en fronde de capillaire filer vermeille dans l’éclair d’un fleuret? - Tous les soirs que fait l’engoulevent, il regagne, moi en croupe, son poste d’aiguilleur, d’où il a haute main sur les cônes, trompes, lanternes, balises, pavillons et flammes.* (S.A., p.159).

The ‘bird’ in the labyrinth with the watching (‘eyed’) agate (the Apollonian poet’s stone) bears a strong resemblance to Breton the poet: ‘.je dois être Thésée, mais Thésée enfermé pour toujours dans son labyrinthe de cristal’. (P.d.J., p.7). The description of the birds’ sexual dominance and ‘poste d’aiguilleur’ also resembles Breton’s biographical persona who, as Caws reminds us, could not conceive of consulting women on their sexual preferences as something appropriate: ‘Je trouve

\(^{255}\) Although the definition is Péret’s, the question is Breton’s and as the magazine was published under Breton’s direction, I think that this is a fair comment.
In the following quotation from Nadja, Breton refers to an instance in which a woman is insulted by being anonymous but his complaint is less motivated by the individualisation of women than by a possessive and egocentric identification of the object in his own surreal texts in order to identify them with ‘real’ life. His textual objects are presented as real and often have a biographical existence. They are combined with ‘invented’ characters and situations and in the combination of the two, the real serves as guarantor of the authenticity of the surreal. It is noticeable that the author mentioned is not named:

Quelqu'un suggérerait à un auteur de ma connaissance, à propos d'un ouvrage de lui qui allait paraître et dont l'héroïne pouvait trop bien être reconnue, de changer au moins encore la couleur de ses cheveux. Blonde, elle eût chance, paraît-il, de ne pas trahir une femme brune. Et bien, je trouve cela scandaleux. Je persiste à reclamer les noms, à ne m'intéresser qu'aux livres qu'on laisse battants comme des portes....je continuerai à habiter ma maison de verre, où l'on peut voir à toute heure qui vient me rendre visite... (N., p.18).

Breton's disgust with the author who disguises his heroine and therefore 'hides' her identity underlies a problematic and equally possessive controlling solution in his own texts and perhaps stems from his contradictory desire for the unknown woman. Breton (the poet) includes in his texts, real people and events, whose personal significance he explains elsewhere in an autobiographical style, perhaps to protect his authoritative position as writer of the Manifestes.

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256 The document 'Recherches sur la Sexualité' is an extraordinary exposé of individual male attitudes within the Surrealist Group, to sex and sexuality and of their assertions about female sexuality. There were, of course, no females present. The whole discussion is voyeuristic and, as Aragon observed on the second day to Breton's incomprehension, extremely sexist. Breton's personal sexual preferences were 'shared' in the above mentioned discussion: 'La femme assise de face perpendiculairement à l'homme couché, le 69, la sodomie'.
Such details from his autobiographical life subverts the reader's freedom to write the text, since the reader has to be an 'initiate'.

These intertextual references may be read as an attempt to control the reading by a series of artificial marks of possession which act as erotic invitations to the reader to 'participate' in universalisation of the personal Bretonian and therefore 'right' understanding of the text. Breton reads language as a possession under his control: 'posséder est un trêfle auquel j'ai ajouté artificiellement la quatrième feuille'. (C.d.T., p.88).

Other marks of possession or signs of handling, are inscribed in the way in which the image is depicted. The surrealist use of language is a fragmentation of reason. It breaks the logical associations between images, establishing a new referentiality in psychic automatism. The measure of truth lies not in perception of the image but in the physical structure of the text, in the grammatical and physical relationship between words. Images are therefore fragmented, both identified with their signifieds and violently separated from previous conceptions of them for positive ends in surrealist terms.

As author of the Manifestes, Breton theorises about what he is doing and then uses the images with which he describes these activities to 'point' to them in his poetic texts. Such 'authoritative' statements act as documentation of intervention by which words mentioned become 'signs' of surrealist activity rather than free signifiers.

As previously discussed, sexual activity is the model commonly used by the Surrealists to illustrate the relationship between words both in terms of physical proximity and of mental associations. The surrealist text which depicts a woman's body is a microcosmic image of the sexual politics, of the pornography, of representation. One which depicts the author making love as an image of the reading and writing process; expresses the original author's capture and use of words
representing the now objectified body and their re-capture and re-use by the subsequent reader/author.

Breton's poem, 'L'Union Libre', falls into both these categories and further to that is an illustration of surrealist language processes which Breton has defined in terms of this sexual image throughout his theoretical writings. An examination of his treatment of the woman's body, his possessiveness and his subjugation of that body to his dominant will, reveals language as an object, locked in a cabbalistic chastity belt to which only Breton and those who choose to dialogue with him hold the key.
The meaning of the title as ‘free association/union’ is a positive surrealist statement in terms of the politics of writing. The coexistence of the dual significance of the phrase which can be read as referring both to the act of love and to the relationship between words and images in the text, is a paradigm of the workings of surrealist language. (M., pp.45, 48-51). It is therefore a political statement(a sign) of surrealist ‘truth’ and as such colours the text. It is emblematic of the text and, in the manner of religious emblems, instructs the reader in his reading/writing, casting a veil over the words which it precedes. It is a symbol of authorial power and it is only after a conditional erotic dalliance - a dialogue of ‘understanding’ and accepting authority - that the writing reader enters the text, as a veiling/unveiling voyeur tracing a discourse of authorial intent, rather than creating a free dialogue with the text.

‘L’Union Libre’ is a love poem, a poetic recreation of the act of love, by a male author. I wish to examine how the woman’s body is used by the author to provide a textual structure and to provide a series of starting points for images which further objectify and distance the already fragmented body.

The text presents a roaming catalogue of a woman’s body whose identity is constructed by the poet’s fantasies. The poet stands in front of the women; she is always a possession ‘ma femme’, never ‘femme’. She is therefore not identified as a person in her own right but through her relationship to the author and the words used to describe her as an entity define her as a possession rather than a physical presence. She is represented on the page as a list of separate pieces linked only by structures of repetition and by a complex system of signs. Presentation of parts is selective, ignoring some, dwelling on others in proportion to their perceived erotic possibilities, turning the body round, displaying it in the erotic textual mirror, with all the
distortions implied in the operations of the 'vanitas' emblem. As much as Breton re-presents her body on the page, so that representation reflects him in the manner and choice of portrayal. The choice and angle of display is the poet's, the woman has no say, she is never a grammatical, let alone textual, subject. She has no space, no voice, no inner being except at the whim of the man who presents her image. She is dissected and fragmented for the narrating author's purpose, structuring the text, generating physical and poetic impetus. She is the author's possession and robbed of self, she is only an extension of his desire.

Breton's vision of woman is embodied in his portrayal of her voiceless and fragmented body. The diagram below displays the body parts listed in their textual sequence and grouped in related body areas such as head, torso, and arms. The numbers refer to the number of times that the part is named in the text and there is a further comment on the view for which the body is presented, whether front or back:
List of Parts of the Body as they appear in the Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body part</th>
<th>No. of Refs</th>
<th>Viewer's position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chevelure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensées</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(the only non-physical attribute.) viewed from the front or back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taille</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouche</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langue</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cils</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sourcils</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epaules</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Body viewed from the front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poignets</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doigts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aiselles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bras</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jambes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mollets</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pieds</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cou</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seins</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventre</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dos</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Viewed from the back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuque</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanches</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fesses</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexe</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>back or front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeux</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>front</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10.

These divisions and categories reveal movement and focus of viewing. There is an obvious climax towards the end of the poem when the author handles parts of the body in more concentrated...
series of repetitions and moves up, down and around the torso (dos, nuque, hanches, fesses). There is also an earlier climax of concentration on the mouth and particularly the tongue and around the eyes (eyelashes and eyebrows) and a pattern of 4,3,2,1,2,3,4 from ‘seins’ to ‘sexe’ with a final, almost separate, culmination on the eyes.\(^{257}\)

In the poem itself, the divisions created both by the linear list format and by grammatical sequence, are subverted by the absence of punctuation. Listed items can sometimes be taken to refer to descriptions of previous parts and also to be new items:

\[\textit{Aux hanches de lustre et de pennes de flèche} \\
\textit{Et de tiges de plumes de paon blanc} \\
\textit{De balance insensible.}\]

It is not grammatically evident whether ‘balance’ refers to ‘hanches’ or to ‘femme’, although throughout the text, body parts are generally preceded by ‘à’ and their qualities by ‘de’. This is made clear by the repetition format.

The only item in the list which is not a physical part of the body and which therefore contrasts with the rest is ‘pensées’. At first I thought this was a positive element which recognised the woman’s mental value but I now feel that even this depicts Breton’s woman as a possession. Ironically, the heat-giving sparks or lightening flashes may be those of the woman or those of her wood hair, since wood gives off both sparks and warmth. The woman’s thoughts or her wood hair, like her matchstick hands function only in terms of the warmth of the surrealist inspirations which they fuel.

By fragmenting the woman’s body, the author gains greater control over its exhibition. The reading author views through the eyes of the original author in the viewing sequence. These

\(^{257}\) In 1928, the parts of a female body which Breton said he found most exciting, were ‘Les yeux et les siens.... D’autre part tout ce qui, dans l’amour physique est du ressort de la perversité’. (L.R.S., ‘Recherches Sur la Sexualité, No.11, p.39).
control presentation, selection of image (and word) order and what is perceived as exciting. In this way the textual fragmentation and objectification of the female body parts is a reflection of the surrealist fragmentation of the image systems with which they copulate. Thus, objectified, the separated parts of the body become objects to be played with. They act as springboards to surrealist images through violent dislocation and incongruous association.

The psychology of a violent and violating desire, inherent in the presentation of a fragmented female body, is taken to its extreme in Bellmer’s erotic swivel-jointed doll, 'Die Puppe', to which I have already referred. The parts of this body are playthings to be manoeuvred, contorted and distorted for the sexual delectation of surrealist viewers. Pornographic eroticism derives a sadistic pleasure in power over the object, the silent represented female child.

The original title of photographs of the dismembered doll appeared in Minotaure no.6, Winter 1934/5 as ‘Variations on the montage of an articulated Minor’. The first ‘doll’ had been conceived earlier by Bellmer and this object in its various reincarnations became a lifetime obsession, an object of penetration, an erotic curio, whose every orifice and part is designed to be abused, distorted or dismembered and offered for penetration/view.

As such, ‘The doll’ is a child’s plaything and represents a young girl, the ‘Minor’. She is a weak victim, a female child and her manipulation signifies an external rape and a loss of childhood. The object is designed to promote and offer innumerable physically unnatural contortions and distortions for the viewer’s pornographic pleasure, presenting sadism as eroticism and thereby creating a continuous restitution of abuse.

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258 Dawn Ades, Dada and Surrealism Reviewed, p.296.

The body of the doll was constructed for maximum pleasure: not only was it completely swivel jointed but it often had two sets of legs and buttocks. As suggested earlier, the politics of virginity reflect those of possession by men of woman’s sexual and reproductive rights. The image of the child doll is a powerful and sadistic image of authorial/artistic/male possession and ownership of the objectified. The image of the fragmented and objectified body in ‘L’Union Libre’ suggests a similar pleasure in sadistic power, stereotyping woman as victim.

The Surrealists, especially Breton, were interested in alchemy whose secret processes were represented by pairings of apparently disparate images to produce the philosopher’s stone, usually a crystalline, form. (M., pp.123-4). This of course corresponds with Breton’s use of light and crystal as metaphors for surrealist activity. The philosophical science of alchemy has had close links with poetry previous to surrealism. Mercury, the winged god representing Art was identified as poetic skill and the relationship between the red king and the white queen, sun and moon situates romantic ideals about the poetic ‘work’. Gender identification is problematic (mercury is a male god, read as a spirit, represented as a female image (the White Queen) while the Red King is often identified with Apollo, also god of poetry), suggesting that alchemical symbols are also signifiers of patriarchal culture.

References to white (the physical properties of mercury) are represented as female and to red (those of sulphur) as male - in Western religion and culture, white generally represents purity and virginity, red signifies power and wounding and loss of virginity by sexual possession. By using alchemical imagery Breton inherits the gendered programme inherent in this system of symbols.260

In ‘L’Union Libre’, textual linguistic games, such as ‘rubis/rose/rosée/éventail des jours’, function as surrealist images without reference to alchemy since they achieve a fragmentation of

260See Appendix I.
independent extended metaphors. The images therefore operate in a surrealist way, reacting against each other and producing surrealist sparks, for surrealist images are light-producing according to the Manifestes. Breton constructs whole systems of images whose signifiers bear a relationship to light. In this context crystal is translucent and so is water and yet both read as states of matter and signifiers of different alchemical processes. In other words, Breton may take one aspect of an image as a starting point and then combine it with another element of that image taken from another system in order to liberate it from those sources, to achieve an image suspended in a state of transformation. In this way, it is the essence of alchemical philosophy, the processes of transformation, which Breton posits in this text (written in 1931) as an exemplification of his theories on the surrealist acquisition of the ‘pierre philosophal’ which he discusses in his discourse on ‘l’alchimie du verbe’ in the Second Manifeste du surréalisme (1930). (M., pp.123-8).

In the process of possession and fragmentation, the liberation of language from the confines of logic is sought by means of poetic desire or fire. However Breton’s authorial position as writer of the Manifestes and as surrealist philosopher and theoretician involves a manipulation of images to illustrate his surrealist goals. The body, as the text, is a vehicle, a means to an end, a mirror in which prowess over language is displayed. Where this appears evident, those images become part of a symbolic system with its own internal logic, alchemical system. They read as a formula, a chemical experiment whose lies in a logic outside of the text and is largely denied to the reader.

A close textual analysis of a specific section of the poem demonstrates the structural relationship between images. The diagram overleaf shows a graphic two-dimensional representation of some of the networking of associations in a section of text. Two main structures ‘frame’ and divide the sentences. That on the left, beginning each line, is formed by the repeated use of the words ‘ma femme’ and the list of parts of her body. The second general structure (shaded on the right), is
less immediately obvious and represents alchemical references in the text. The diagram also shows a network of lines linking words and phrases. These represent the associations which may be made between words and groups of words in the text and are examined in detail below, in order to illustrate their functioning and that of fragmentation in the surrealist image. As the alchemical allusions show, images are enclosed within a rigorous 'authorial' program in which the cerebralised display and use of language as an object, further objectifies the fragmented body; the instrument used for a virtuoso performance:
Ma femme à la gorge de Val d'or.

De rendez-vous dans le lit même du torrent.

Aux seins de nuit.

Ma femme aux seins de taupinière marine.

Ma femme aux seins de creuset de rubis.

Aux seins de spectre de la rose sous la rosée.

Ma femme au ventre de déploiement d'éventail des jours.

continuing pattern of the structure of repeated body parts and word 'ma femme'.

continuing pattern of surrealist and alchemical metaphors.

Figure 11.

The other lines interwoven in this diagram indicate patterns of association made by the reading. Hence gorge/val/creuset are ‘dug out’, while sein, taupinière and creuset have similar and inverse forms. Torrent, marine, rosée relate to water; spectre, rendez-vous, lit, nuit, to night and rosée to l'éventail des jours. Rose, rubis and evantail can be associated with traditional feminine imagery, while rubis, rose and rosée are can be linked through colour and in this text, associated with nipples. Gold and rubis are both precious commodities. The fragmentation of singular denotational values encourages a plethora of associations amid which the poet digs into the body, releasing torrents, fishy salty liquids and droplets of passion! These and the alchemical associations are discussed in the text.
GORGE/LIT/VAL

‘Gorge’ meaning ‘throat’ is associated with ‘Val d’or’ and its second meaning of ‘gorge’ or ‘valley’. The metaphor is derived from a punning on these dual signifiers of ‘gorge’. Gorges are usually carved out of the rock by river channels (‘le lit du torrent’). However the extended metaphor is fragmented by the series of associations which follow. ‘Le lit’ is a place of ‘rendez-vous’ both of the sides of the gorge and of ‘seins’ since ‘gorge’ also means the area between breasts. ‘Lit’ is not only the river bed but a meeting place for lovers by its association with ‘nuit’. In this case ‘torrent’ also signifies passion.

Fragmentation of the extended metaphor throat=valley is achieved by the disruption of the logical extensions of that metaphor and by the inclusion within this system of the symbolic alchemical programmatic themes which pervade the rest of the text. The original structure of the text as a lover’s enumeration of body parts, a sexual journey (throat, breasts), is echoed in the imagery (bed, meeting place, passion). The fragmented body of the woman is echoed by this throat-valley metaphor (throat, breasts - gorge, valley, river bed, torrent - passion, lovers, bed).

‘Val d’or’ is the location of a precious substance. Taken literally, it means the valley where there is gold. The search for this metal overrides linguistic freedom and liberation, imprisoning language which in turn imprisons the represented body. The search for alchemical gold can be linked to the animal metamorphoses (the prime material for experimentation), which take place in the presence of a salt solution (marine).

TAUPINIERE/TAUPE/ORNITHORYNQUE

‘Taupinière’, meaning ‘molehill’ may be associated with ‘creuset’ since the latter shares its root with ‘creuser’ - to dig - and molehills are ‘dug’ out of the earth by the burrowing mole. The absent mole, present through the traces it has left, can be associated with ‘nuit’, being an animal which lives in the dark and is blind in daylight. It is one of many small furry mammals in the
text (otter, mouse, stoat, marten), part of an extended hunter/hunted metaphor and a series of animal transformations symbolic of 'metalinguistic' alchemical processes. When associated with 'marine', 'taupe' becomes the name of a fish. Salt water activates the metaphor and transforms animal into fish. At the same time 'taupe' retains the 'mole' referent since fish do not make molehills. It is therefore textually suspended in a state of metamorphosis.

In alchemy, the prime material is often represented by mixed animal forms. The gold mining and platypus image of the woman's crotch - 'Ma femme au sexe de placer et d'omithorynque' is a similar textual reference. The platypus is a furry mammal which lives in water but looks like a duck, having both bill and webbed feet. Her 'sex' is viewed externally as 'furry' (pubic hair) and perceived as animal and place for 'mining'. For Breton, the prime material is language, and the image, whether of animal or female body, presents possibilities of transformation by which to gain access to its 'matière première'. (M., p.167).

The molehill marks the passage of the absent digging mole. It can be associated with 'placer' - to mine (dig) for gold which is used as a locative description of the woman's sex and suggests the absent digging phallus. In the same way the woman's breasts are described as 'dug out' - bearing the marks of a now absent passion and the physical and poetic use of her body. The shape of the breast is inverted in the transfer from 'taupinière marine' to 'creuset du rubis', the molehill being the convex sign of the mole's passing and the crucible being a concave melting pot.

CREUSET

Crucibles are made of non combustible materials and used to heat metals and other chemical substances to melt or calcify. In this sense 'creuset' can be associated with 'nacelle' which is another vessel used in chemical and alchemical experiments, although it contains and separates substances. 'Creuset' therefore reads as a complex set of references to the meaning (crucible -
a chemical container in which metals are heated), shape (concave) and form (name) of the word and its signified.

RUBIS/ROSE/ROSEÉ/BLANC

‘Rubis’ is the precious red stone, the ruby. A valuable crystal, it can be produced from the crystallization of aluminium and magnesium oxides. ‘Rubis’ is also reminiscent of the red nipple on the tip of the breast whose shape is rendered concave by the crucible bowl, viewed as a container. The nipple is hard and excited, crystalline like the produced work:

L’œuvre d’art, au même titre d’ailleurs que tel fragment de la vie humaine, considérée dans sa signification la plus grave, me paraît dénuée de valeur si elle ne présente pas la dureté, la rigidité, la régularité, le lustre sur toutes ses faces extérieures, intérieures, du cristal.261

Red is the colour of the red king of fire and of desire which has hardened and reddened the nipple. The red colour links ruby to ‘rose’ and to ‘rosée’. ‘Rubis’ (translucent red crystal) is muted to ‘rose’ (pink colour, flower and cut crystal shape) and becomes ‘rosée’ (‘dew’) - a transition from crystal to flower to water (condensation/transparency).

SPECTRE

The breasts are inscribed with the spectre or ghost of the rose. ‘Spectre’ links back to night and familiar stereotypes of night associated with woman and the time for making love. ‘Jour’ links back to previous images of night, passion and lovers in bed. The breasts are not the alchemical rose but a signifier of its past presence. Its death and transience are suggested by its transformation into ‘dew’.

These signifieds form part of a complex series of images and themes in the text with both

261 Minotaure, No.5, p.13: For the relationship between fire, crystal and the human body, see Mary Ann Caws, Surrealism and the Literary Imagination, Mouton & Co., The Hague, 1966, p.49.
alchemical, and surreal significations. They constitute the binary oppositions of red and white, water and fire in the text and have counterparts in classifications of stones, metals and flowers. The transmutation process evolves through the fragmentation of denotative association, ruby/rose/(rosée)dew/dawn unfolding like a fan/feathers/white peacock's tail.

Water imagery takes over from that of fire, breaking the extended colour metaphor. Water is transparent to the light of the surrealist image. 'Rosée' as 'dew', can be linked to 'marine' and other water images in the text. As a liquid phenomenon, appearing overnight and present at dawn, it can be associated with day unfolding - 'l'eventail des jours'. This image is in turn disrupted by the continuation of the selective sequence fan/feathers/white peacock/arrows etc. The rose and unfolding fan/stomach/water images also carry connotations of alchemical birth and of fertility - the alchemical red/white, sulphur/mercury marriage is usually represented by a rose. Here it is presented, as it is often in alchemical texts, in water or surrounded by condensation ('rosée') and depicted with the passage of time (nuit-jour) and with the white peacock, influx from above.

Metaphors of the fragmented body parts are extended and disrupted to generate surrealistic images of that body. Each image is individually treated, although the extended metaphor gives an illusion of unity, in the same way that the repetition and the enumeration of parts create the illusion of a whole body. Unity is absent, perceived in fragments, present only in the thrusts of repetition. The author's desire reveals and controls the view. It is wholly possessive.

Alchemical references in this text form interlinking structures, groups of animal, vegetable and mineral classifications which relate to the elements and (often contradictory) systems of binary opposition. The many stones, metals and chemical substances described in the text can be divided into respective chemical groups, into precious and not precious, into those which conduct electricity and those which do not (for this is a surrealist alchemy). Such references describe the secret processes of the search for the philosopher's stone, whose counterpart in textual conjuring
is advocated in Les Secrets De L'Art Magique Surréaliste. (M., p.41).

The Surrealist search for the transformative powers of the stone, is situated in and by language; images are therefore at the mercy of linguistic manipulation. They symbolise the prime material concealed in language, which can be extracted through a process of linguistic 'purification'. Images therefore symbolise multiple referentiality and references are deliberately fragmented to liberate language from the represented images.

The presence of the already objectified and manipulated body is further distanced, since it only functions as a skeletal structure on which to hang a secret imagistic language. This operates textually as a series of words and referents, violently separated and manipulated an alchemical interest. Disruption of the alchemical system reveals the focus of desire as the symbols representing the images imposed on the body. Violence and possession in the text further stereotype woman and language as objects controlled by authorial desire and masculine image perceptions, and enact microcosmic images of textual violence.

I wish briefly to indicate some of the properties of these stones and metals, to demonstrate, that, by their proliferation, Breton is imposing a system on the images of the female body parts which are not freely achieved and which do not liberate it.

Amber and glass are both translucent. Amber is the stone sacred to Apollo, god of sun and poetry. It is orange-red in colour and linked to the red king, to sulphur, to fire images and signifies desire and energy. When rubbed ('frottés') amber becomes warm, it is electrified. As a conductor of electricity, it can be associated with graphite pencils ('bâtons d'écriture d'enfants') and with the slate roof of the glasshouse ('d’ardoise de toit de serre'). Both have obvious surrealist connotations with regard to childhood/writing/transparency/the electric light of the image as described in the Manifestes.
Amber is allied to wood, being petrified resin (life blood and energy of the tree). It can therefore be associated with other tree and wood references, with 'moelle de sureau', with wood to be burned ('feu de bois..bois sous la hache') and through change of state and energy transfer, with burnt wood (bois-charbons) and carbons: graphite, diamond etc. Chalk ('craie') is calcium carbonate. Glass is a mixture of silicates and carbonates. When lead is added, it becomes crystal. A variety of words are associated with glass ('verre.. serre.. glace.. verre.. nacelle.. miroir') and its chemical composition, ('grès'), clay, ('sablier'), sand in the hour glass, and rock crystal or quartz.

'Vif argent' is mercury, liquid and white. Mercury gives mirrors their quality of reflection. The white peacock, the swan and other white images in the text may be read as representations of the white queen and of mercury. Being a liquid metal, mercury can be associated with images of water and states of solution. As influx from above, the winged god can be linked to chance ('de hasard et d'as de coeur') and to images of air (birds). The winged god may also be associated poetically with Mercury's Greek counterpart, Hermes. As a precious metal it can be associated with gold and with precious stones: 'ambre..imperlé..d'or..rubis'. Since it is silver in colour, turning white on oxidation, it and forms part of the system of binary opposites of red and white which structure the text. It can be associated with 'écume de mer' which is white magnesite or oxidised magnesium, linked in turn 'amiante' which is magnesium silicate, non combustible.

Rubies can be produced from the association of magnesium oxide with aluminium oxide. Magnesium lights instantaneously on contact with air and can therefore be associated with other images of combustion such as 'fusée'. Ruby can be linked to champagne, through the famous Lautréamont reference which Breton uses as an example of contradiction in his Manifestes classification of images: 'Le rubis du champagne'. (M., p.50).

Other images in the text can be read in the traditional manner of alchemical texts, as references
to chemical processes and instruments. References to fire and water suggest heating, combustion and condensation, solution and crystalisation. Some images of heat ('feu de bois', 'd'éclairs de chaleur', 'allumettes'), can be read as the heating of matter, while images of sparks ('étoiles', 'fusée', and even 'd'écume de mer') read as references to combustion. 'Écume de mer', 'marine', 'algue' and 'larmes' can be read as references to salts and salt solutions. Seaweed ('algue') is rich in iodine. 'Violette' therefore signifies not only passion and the colour purple but also gaseous iodide vapours. 'Buée', 'rosée' and 'larmes', all water droplets, signify condensation. Champagne can be associated with bubbles and evaporation. 'Glace' can be read as cooling and as surface crusting as can 'écume de mer'. 'Écluse' can signify the controlling of water levels. Both 'creuset' and 'nacelle' are chemical instruments just as 'bâtons d'écriture', 'ardoise', and 'pennes de flèche' are writing instruments for the poetic work. 'Sablier' and 'horlogerie' are instruments for measuring time, while the luck of the arbitrary and mercurial element, chance, can be read in 'aux doits de hasard et d'as de coeur'.

Groups of mammals, birds and fish referred to in the text can be read as chemical symbols under the influence of the white queen and the red king and also as alchemical images, signifying the elements - earth, air, fire and water. The otter is an animal which lives in water and the tiger is a symbol of fire. As mentioned earlier, fire rules supreme in Breton's texts. It represents desire and the text begins and ends with an image of fire which subjugates and frames the woman's body parts:

_Ma femme à la chevelure de feu de bois....
_Ma femme aux yeux de bois toujours sous la hache....Aux yeux de niveau d'eau de niveau d'air de terre et de feu.

For Breton the matière première is contained in language. Poetic intuition becomes a rampant force, described in the language of desire, dominance and generation:
Celle-ci, enfin débridée dans le surréalisme, se veut non seulement assimilatrice de toutes formes connues mais hardiment créatrice de nouvelles formes. (M., p.173).

This force which generates the text is desire, an energy equal to sexual desire and, perhaps not surprisingly for a philosophy which expresses itself in terms of energy, an invasive force more powerful than romantic concepts of love:

_Il n’en reste pas moins que l’amour de l’homme pour la femme ‘par-delà les immémoriales et séniles pleurnicheries auxquelles il a littérairement donné lieu, si nous nous attachons une seconde à l’observation du monde sensible, persiste à encombrer le ciel de fleurs géantes et de fauves. (P.d.L., p.79)._

The new mythology offered by Surrealism is not so new and, although the types of flowers and wild beasts may have altered, the powerful and unnatural states of metamorphosis previously represented by poetic grotesques are central to conceptualisation of the surrealist image.²⁶²

The alchemical system programmes the poem. The original act of violence, of possession and objectification of the woman is repeated by the violence imposed on the language which represents her body. That language has a secret and personal codification, it is possessed by the author who, each time he uses it, leaves behind the marks of violent authorial possession on the text and on the woman’s represented body. Associations are no longer ‘free’ and the violence is calculated.

In the surrealist text, images of violence mirror the destruction of reason and logic, necessary for new surrealist perceptions. For Breton, the surrealist poet will rule supreme, with his achievement

²⁶²‘Se Figer le lion à la tête de femme fut autrefois poétique. J’estime qu’une véritable mythologie moderne est en formation’. Breton is using the familiar image of the silent Sphinx and not that of Horace’s poetic distortions of *Ut Pictura Poesis*, since the surrealist image is a dislocation of familiarity, a fragmentation of visual and verbal reality, be it the conjoining of disparate objects or in terms of temporal or spatial dislocation.
recognised by the realisation of a violent erotic fantasy, willingly and submissively awarded:

\[ \textit{il sera vraiment élu et les plus douces femmes l'aimeront avec violence. (M., p.43).} \]

The break with reason and logic which surrealism urges is a war:

\[ \textit{une guerre d'indépendance à laquelle je me fais gloire de participer. (M., p.60).} \]

Surrealism is rooted in violent acts:

\[ \textit{L'acte surréaliste le plus simple consiste, revolvers aux poings, à descendre dans la rue et à tirer au hasard, tant qu'on peut, dans la foule. (M., p.74).} \]

‘L’Union Libre’ contains several images of violence. The notion of the hunter and prey is suggested by ‘à la taille de loutre entre les dents du tigre’. The image is disorientating because otters and tigers don’t share the same habitat and are not naturally but symbolically related, as water and fire. The animal hunter/hunted theme appears in classical mythology where it is associated with the pursuit and rape of female figures by disguised gods.\(^{263}\) It is associated with early totemic religions and early Celtic poetry recreates hunts and chases in which animals change form and shape. From the Middle Ages, references to such transformations were therefore read as 'evil' or anti-Christian and evidence of witchcraft.

Both otter and tiger, like the later stoat, marten and mole, are valued for their pelts, commonly used to dress women. Furs are luxury items, often bought as gifts (a currency of exchange) from men to women. Rarity indicates value and the value of the gift often operates as an indicator of social standing and of individual worth: the fur represents the woman. As Suzanne Kappeler

observes, furs and other exotica are often used as props in pornographic films and in peep shows. They distance woman from her natural habitat, from normality and in so doing, objectify her in terms of her outward ‘possessed’ appearance.

The tiger is associated with fire and symbolises jealousy. The image of the otter’s body squeezed in the tiger’s teeth is both unnatural and violent, as violent as the scratch/claw marks left on her body (‘au ventre de griffe géante’), as unnatural as the woman’s hourglass figure which is as fashionable as the furs and the ‘cocardé’ hair ribbon.

Both tiger and white mouse are associated with teeth:

entre les dents du tigre.....
Aux dents d’empreintes de souris blanche sur la terre blanche.....

In the first instance the teeth are the tiger’s, in the second they are the woman’s. ’Souris’ is a word commonly used to refer affectionately to women. Ironically, this is an animal which is perceived to be disliked by women generally and has pejorative associations when one woman uses it of another. The mice are white (a possible allusion to the white queen), of the type bred as pets and for experiments. The metaphor does not refer to the teeth themselves as white mice, they are marks made by the now absent white mice. Both image and inversion reflecting the absence of purity (white) and the marks of sex/violence in an image like that of the molehill breasts described above.

Similar inversion of form occurs in what could be described as the most violent images in the text:

Ma femme à la langue d’hostie poignardée........Au sexe de glaieul....

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264 ‘The woman-image in the woman-zoo peep show wallows on fake tiger skins, surrounded by exotic and theatrical props remote from any woman’s real life environment’. Kappeler, Pornography, p.80.
The word 'vagina' comes from Latin and means 'where you sheath your sword'. The French counterpart of protective scabbard is 'gaine'(f). 'Glaieul' comes from the Latin 'gladiolus'(m) which is the diminutive of 'gladius' the two-edged dual function sword which wounded by both stabbing and slashing. 'Au sexe de glaieul' is therefore an inversion of the word for the female sex 'organs' - vagina. She is endowed with a phallic organ, a masculine attribute, a 'weapon' to sheath in the part so named (by men). However the image is an etymological pun, a further cerebralised cruelty based on the name 'vagina' and also on the stereotype images of women as flowers. To be fair, few flowers are without connotations but the gladiolus stands out, not as an image which implies sexual strength in its masculinisation of the woman's attributes but rather as one which demonstrates a masculine sexual/authorial power. There is no liberation for the woman here. She is a plaything, an object made of words and word-play gives the highest satisfaction. The object of erotic attention is not the presented object-woman but the manner of presentation, the relationship with language, and with the reading voyeur.

The relationship between violence and sex deeply permeates our culture and, inevitably, our language. Woman's sexual parts have long been regarded imagistically as places where violent acts are perpetrated. The language of weapons, thrusting and stabbing is used to describe sexual penetration as an act of entering the body. Knives, guns and other weapon-like implements are frequently used to abuse rape victims, to further denigrate and objectify/dehumanise them. These are symbols of dominance of sex as power and sex as a weapon. Their hierarchical organisation is perpetrated in pornography and in sadomasochistic rituals.

'Hostie poignardée' signifies violence towards one of the main rituals of the Christian religion - the receiving of the host on the tongue.

265 Deborah Cameron, Feminism and Linguistic Theory, Macmillan Press, 1985, p.79.
Breton’s use of the image also signifies the relationship between shape of the tongue and the absent pointed dagger and a violent act of oral sex, a stabbed tongue, a rape of internal space, through a comparative inversion of the absent dagger shape and softness of the tongue. The woman’s tongue is used and objectified, made in the image of invaded purity, distanced from her self. It is stabbed, violated, robbed of function, further distanced from the woman - becoming the poet’s plaything (‘poupée’) - and then gains the power of the philosopher’s stone, all at the whim of the poet to whom it belongs after being subjugated to his verbal fantasies, his poetic desire.

The woman’s consent, like her voice, is irrelevant. That Breton was wholly unconcerned with personal female sexual preferences, read in conformation. The text Hands off Love, it argues that it is a wife’s duty to accede to all the sexual desires of her husband and the view that the husband’s desire is more important than that of his wife, is still reflected in rape law.266

The text of Hands Off Love, relates to fellatio. In ‘L’Union Libre’, images of drinking and particularly the references to seaweed and old/ancient sweets (‘Ma femme au sexe d’algue et de bonbons anciens’), can be read as references to the poet’s potentially renewable enjoyment of the oral sex treasure chest.267

The stamp of possession determines woman as an object to be used for the pleasure of man. Breasts, teeth, and vagina, are stabbed and marked, rounded and hollowed out. There is no verb in the text which has the woman or her body as its subject. She is indirectly referred to through images which are defined by a series of past participles, images which are ‘used’:

266 Breton and members of the surrealist Group, first published in English in Transition, followed by publication in French in L.R.S., Nos.9-10, Oct.1927, pp.1-6.

267 Seaweed was and still is eaten as a natural ‘sweet’ (‘dulse’ in Ireland). Its wet strand form suggests pubic hair and the salt taste, vaginal juices. ‘Bonbons anciens’ can be taken as old - no longer available, or as ‘stale’. Sweets are something children like and which convey a sense of childhood pleasure. The salt/sweet juxtaposition provides gastronomic contrast.
ambre et verre frottées (worn/rubbed)
foin coupé (cut)
orge imperlé (un-pearled)
pierre roulée, craie mouillée (rolled, dampened)
aiguille aimantée (magnetised)

These participles indicate the use made (by the poet) of the image since they define the noun by a past participle, indicating a previous action done to the signified and therefore the presence of the lover and the use he makes of the object. Amber, the poet's stone, is electrified when rubbed - it becomes active. Hay is cut and pearl barley un-pearled in images of fertility and harvest. The rolled stone will gather no moss but is here associated with being worn smooth by the sea. The dryness of chalk is dampened. Eyes are magnetised needles since the only present subject is the purveyor of the text, the operator behind language. The words may be read as implications of dominance, of sexual and poetic prowess.

The following phrases indicate a similar passage of 'use' since they all imply a textually absent user and controller: 'Et de chute d’un verre dans laquelle on vient de boire', 'de bouquet d’étoiles', 'aux yeux pleins de larmes...aux yeux d’eau pour boire en prison'. Who is drinking/being given the gift/causing the tears, if not the purveyor of the body? These images marks previous possession and authorial power and the bonding between original author and reading author through a sharing, a 'selling' of the possessed object.

The woman's body is marked by the poet's violent passion ('empreintes', 'griffe'). Her textual existence is a function of the poet's desire and of the act of possession, her economic 'usability':

_la femme aura été aimée et célébrée comme la grande promesse, celle qui subsiste après avoir été tenue._ (M., p.169).

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Images of the female body inevitably follow certain sexual stereotypes besides those concealed in animal references, images of violence, sex, and fashionable clothing, mentioned above. She is not only the stereotyped victim of violence but also of fertility, combining references to seeds, harvesting and flowering (‘fênes’, ‘blé’, ‘moulin’, ‘rose’, ‘foin’), housed in textual glasshouses (fragility), nests (homemaker) and prisons (confinement and chastity). She is always perceived through glass or contained by it, a ‘reflection’ of poetic desire with no inner presence: ‘Aux yeux de miroir’. Despite the positivism which reads associated with the Black Goddess into the Romantic Gnostic, with the ‘temenos or sacred space being the canvas or the white page’, despite some recognition of her creative potential, woman is violated and captive in Breton’s text, ‘la verroterie des mots’, ‘une maison de verre’, the poet’s crystal labyrinth through which her desirable captive image is displayed in a masculine fairytale fantasy. (M., p.42, N., p.18).268

CONCLUSION

Sexism has an etymological history as a direct result of the associations between language and social history, between culture and textuality. The documentation of history has been made by men and for men. In the same way, the language of art and mythology reflects and constantly reproduces a world dominated by masculine viewing systems. Metalanguage structures are built upon a foundation of previously established significations and stereotypes. Breton’s poetic desire chooses to inherit the sexual stereotypes of representational structures and of images of women. Surrealist images based on the language of alchemy share its sexual bias as a language culturally predetermined and developed by patriarchy.

‘L’Union Libre’ is a love poem, a surrealist ‘ode’ or eulogy on Breton’s woman. However it is the textual image of her body and an act of violation, of robbery of persona. The body is objectified and treated as a possession ‘ma femme’ and that body bears the marks of violence and possession. As an object, like the language which represents it, it is manipulated by a powerful poetic voice. Possession and manipulation of the body taken together with the associations of red and white and images of violence in the text reflect a sadistic masculine psychology of sexuality which is taken to extremes in Bellmer’s doll ‘Die Puppe’.

Imposition of a structure of alchemical images on the body is a violation of ‘free association’. The body is a possessed object on which the alchemical images are imposed and the author indulges in a dialogue with those images. He disrupts and fragments them, echoing the repeated thrusts of possession ‘ma femme’ with a repetitious use of images from the same system. These in turn are possessed and fragmented by the destruction of internal logic, by using different

269 Lerner, Patriarchy, p.13.
systems of signifiers to disrupt each other, in order to capture and fix the transformative energies of poetic desire. Breton’s poetic desire therefore overrides the model of his physical desire and the body image recedes as language becomes the plaything of its author.

Sexist images of woman are reflected in the manipulation or handling of her body image. The image represents the structure it embodies. The structures of representation incorporate a masculine gender politics of presentation and viewing which is as sexist as the images which represent the female body. The objectification of woman is therefore structurally inscribed in the subject/object dialectic and in the reading author’s dialogue with the text.

The alchemical images structure the text which can then be read as an emblematic mirror of Breton’s desire to illustrate the functioning of surrealism. The imaged woman’s body is a tool, the means to an end but in pursuit of that goal the woman is dissected and discarded.

Perhaps the final word should be left to Breton’s lover, Suzanne Muzard, about whom the poem was written. In 1974, discussing Breton’s public and private personae, she wrote perceptively and sensitively of this period:

Breton encensait ses amours; il façonnait la femme qu’il aimait pour que, conforme à ses aspirations, elle devienne à ses yeux une valeur affirmée. Or, je n’ai été que le sujet d’une déception, parce qu’inadaptable à ce qu’il voulait que je sois.\textsuperscript{270}

APPENDIX

SURREALISM AND ALCHEMY

The medieval alchemist was both a scientist and a philosopher. He searched for gold which was believed to be chemically obtainable from other metals by their association with the philosopher's stone. The philosopher's stone was an element whose marvellous properties could transform base metal into gold. It was derived by a complicated series of purification processes and was the alchemical 'key'. The alchemists' gold was a gold of the spirit, released by the alchemical work in which art was essential. It was a mercurial, volatile philosopher's gold, purer and superior to that obtained in the market place.

In alchemical beliefs all things have spirits and properties. The philosopher's stone, like all matter in alchemy, was conceived of as alive, consisting of corpus, animus and spiritus. Alchemy is based on the three active principles of ancient chemistry; sulphur, mercury and salt. These can be read as both elements and as chemical processes: sulphur as fire - combustion and fusion, mercury as water - evaporation and condensation, salt - catalyst and condenser, the process by which the hydrating of an acid is replaced by a metal and usually crystallises. The philosopher's stone is read as the product of the 'marrying' of mercury and sulphur, depicted as the white queen and the red king and symbolising art and nature, water and fire, air and earth. The union of art and nature is a flowering of the spirit, conceived of as a fertilised seed. The flower which represented the flowering was the red and white rose; the seed becomes a child.\textsuperscript{271}

\textsuperscript{271} The white rose is contained by the red, as spirit within corpus. The alchemical 'flowering' image bears little relation to the reality of the act it represents, since masculine surrounds feminine. This may be read as an indication of patriarchal politics. Mercury is a male 'god' - Mercurius - and yet he is the female (usually virginal/hermetically sealed) half of the alchemist. It seems that the female image of the white queen is only a guise to make the unification equation work (two 'opposites' unite and produce) and to allow a more acceptable form of self-worship for the white queen represents art, the alchemist's skill.
Joseph Campbell reads the philosophers stone as both model and catalyst, a continuous rather than finite, process:

*Our philosopher’s stone is something midway between perfected and imperfected bodies; and what Nature herself initiates is by art carried to perfection. If you set to work on that state of Mercurius where Nature has left imperfection, you will arrive at its perfection and rejoice. What is perfect does not alter, but is destroyed. However, what is imperfect does alter. Hence the destruction of one is the generation of the other.*\(^{272}\)

As a union of opposites, the seed or child is hermaphrodite. Campbell cites Jung on the relationship between corpus, spiritus and anima in the lapis:

*The Rosarium remarks that 'the body is Venus and feminine, the spirit is Mercurius and masculine' hence the the anima...would be hermaphroditic, i.e., a coniuncto Solis et Lunae.*\(^{273}\)

In *Surrealism and the Literary Imagination*, Mary Ann Caws discusses Breton’s use of alchemical references. She remarks that the world of alchemy is a world of contradictions and it certainly seems that there are also substantial gender problems which I would suggest indicate similar historical sources as myth reference. If the body is Venus and feminine, it is also lunar, white and water yet these are properties of mercury. Similarly the masculine body is red, fire and sulphur and yet it too is mercury. Although less phallocentric than Freud, Jung perceived the mind as of a higher order and therefore masculine. Alchemy, equally a patriarchal science, seems to present Nature as source and origin, balanced by Art but with Art subject to it. Therefore Nature (and earth) are male - King - with the power to fecund Art, the fertile body.

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\(^{273}\) Campbell, *Mythic Image*, p.257. See ‘un grand vaisseau, dans lequel le Soleil et la Lune du ciel venoient se baigner’ (*M.*, p.125). The remainder of this alchemical citation from Flamel, presents women as mothers and pays an inordinate amount of attention to the decorated testes of the men!
However when the relationship is between mind and body, mind becomes masculine and is contained within the (feminine) body. It seems to me that these apparent contradictions stem from the nature of the philosopher’s stone and the inevitable hierarchies inscribed in language. The hermaphrodite child, the philosopher’s stone combines all pairs of opposites in a state of flux, within one body. These opposites do not, for the most part, derive from Classical heritage and they are therefore only logical within alchemical language system. In this, the philosopher’s stone closely resembles the surrealists image.

Alchemy is a philosophy of life which stands in opposition to Christian religion since its concept of spirit (mercurius) relates to the earth rather than to the heavens. Surrealism was equally opposed to Christianity which situates Truth in Heaven, without relation to physical, earthly reality.

Processes were related in cabbalistic images, readable only by those who knew the codes, for it was a secret art, divinely inspired by a higher 'Art', which was volatile and miraculous. Much of the imagery is derived from pre-Christian symbolism and is taken from a wide variety of early civilisations. Alchemical symbolism included all the elements, air, water, fire, earth, metal and wood. In this it is not unlike the Chinese universal symbols of life, wood, fire, earth, water and metal. Both explore the power relationships between these and in both animal symbolism is used. However in Chinese symbolism the relationship is a cyclical one of positive and negative strengths. In alchemy the system is one of pairs and of their maintenance of a state of flux. The similarity between oriental religions and alchemy is often noted.274 Breton compares similar thought processes in Buddhist philosophy and the surrealists image:

*la plus belle lueur sur le sens général, obligatoire, que doit prendre l’image digne de ce nom nous est fournie par cet apologue Zen : 'Par bonté bouddhique, Bashô modifia un jour, avec ingéniosité, un haïku cruel composé par son humoristique disciple, Kikakou. Celui-ci ayant dit : 'Une libellule rouge - arrachez-lui les ailes - un piment'. Bashô y substituta : 'Un*

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Mercury, the volatile metal, was the spirit in the matter, art sought in nature. The iconography of mercury, the metal, is derived from the Greek God of that name. He was winged and of air but sought in the earth. The metal was liquid and volatile so he also represented water but he was a gift, a spirit of enabling deformation. The alchemist’s achievement was dependant on this abstract and indeterminate element, on chance which equated well with surrealist theory. It seems that as the alchemical images represent a state of flux, they can themselves be read as totally variable sets of relationships within the focus of each reading and that these can entirely contradict each other. Mary Ann Caws gives the following reading in which water represents the poetic deforming of perceptual consciousness and fire, will or desire:

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        WATER        
             (mercury)   
                    /   
                   / 
                  |   |
               SALT    (condenser, gives form)
                  |    |
               CRYSTAL OR AGATE
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Figure 12

There are, however, inevitable contradictions in the poetic equation, for Caws reads fire as all powerful in Breton’s work but doesn’t elaborate on the alchemical problems: ‘He accepts the hermetic conception of the living fire, ‘le feu philosophale’ as the image of the ‘sperme universel’. The problems are complex. Fire/desire precedes liquid emission. Fire is only

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275 This compares with the statement ‘posseder est un trefle auquel j’ai ajouté la quatrième feuille’ since both exemplify the author’s power to alter forms and perceptions, through language. Breton’s regard for Oriental philosophy is clearly expressed in his ‘Adresse au Dalai-Lama’ and ‘Lettre aux écoles du Bouddha’. (L.R.S., No.3, pp.17, 20).

276 Mary Ann Caws, *Surrealism and the Literary Imagination*, p.46.
superior to water in the condensation process if water is contained. The balance between desire and that which is desired, poetic reality, is maintained in a state of regeneration in the textual product, the surrealist image. What the text exhibits is therefore a masculine Apollonian poetic energy, the power of the fire and of the sun, over the contained element, water, represented as a female body.

In alchemical texts, both sulphur and mercury as ‘bodies’ are usually shown in solution with a bird descending vertically to aid the flowering process. The ‘bird’ can also be read as mercury - the alchemist’s art - both water and winged, the ‘aigle sexual’, the ‘sexé aile’ of Breton’s poetic sexuality.
CONCLUSIONS
There can be no finite conclusion to this thesis in the formal hierarchical sense. As such, the introduction forms a texture of threads at the beginning of the physical text, stating of the fluidity of textual positions and its effects on the maintenance of tension. This variable form affects the weaving, it is not one which binds the sections together in any restrictive way nor one which gives them the same size, shape, form or meaning. The conclusion to the thesis is inherent in its structure by the reasoning presented in the introduction. There is no singular approach to a feminised reading of different subjects and any rigid definition of a reconstructed 'feminine' is inappropriate. To offer a set of stereotypes in expression of textual rectitude runs contrary to my own belief in the concept of 'différence' as a system of thought which presents the acceptance of concurrent individual ideas on gendered textuality and involves a process of sensing that those which are appropriate to self are not necessarily those of others. More precisely, by the visual and verbal imposition of gendered textual stereotypes, patriarchal culture has institutionalised the premise that the individual subject may be defined and categorised and placed within a gendered hierarchy.

The process of writing this conclusion, recalls the way I have worked in writing and researching. It is a process of interruption, of thinking and rethinking previous work. When I first started, I wanted to present a structure which embodied the way in which I, and many other's, mostly women, think. It relates to what is perceived as 'chaotic' and disparagingly called 'feminine logic' and presents a non-hierarchical and often intuitive organisation of the psyche. For this reason, the way in which I have worked has enabled me to combine meaningful contextual presence and given me the space to re-cognise and rethink what that means and what has been 'entailed'.

The process of recovery is a process of self-education and the time is long overdue for an educational system which legitimises the right of education for every individual irrespective of sex, to recognise that the politics of its own structures have not changed. 'Women's studies' have been
written into the curriculum in some institutions but this separate designation has also involved a
complicit marginalisation. While this has an internalised validity and there is much valuable work
which has been done and is being done, I do not feel that it in any way reflects a true sense of
'equality' since it merely includes a designated place for 'women' within the masculine system.
If we recognise the concept of 'other' as being one of plurality and multiplicity, rather than a
singular oppositional structure, then the issue is not about substituting one set of histories or
authorities for another and creating separate gendered hierarchies which are mutually exclusive.

Women and men are still being taught the authority of patriarchal culture. The concept of
multiplicity is severely disabled by the structures available within a system which perceives groups
in finite terms and alternative structures as chaotic. Within such a system the individual identified
with the group is either a leader or a dependant. I feel that there is a female power which is
creative and resides in the interlacings of multiplicity which have in some way been devalued by
the numerical organisation of plurality and singularity in self-determined patriarchal culture. It
lies outside the system and is devalued by Western cultural tradition whose patriarchal roots are
engendered by the Ancient Greek systems of logic and reason, building and constructing cities
from the measuring of masculine homoerotic ideals. Yet there within this structure lies the means
with which to undo the imprisoning function of its walls. Reading papers from the Women's
Therapy Centre, hoping to reach an understanding of the dynamics of groups, institutions and
collectives I found similar tensions in the thinking and the text. As usual this was both positive
and negative. There was a recognition and a will to reconstruct ideas about structures but the
problems of existing identities were framed in terms of existing structures, in terms of repressed
anxieties, of separation and integration, of identification with the mother and of the concept of
unity. Foucault argues that we are engaged in a struggle for language itself and from that I read
his awareness of language as the source of power and empathise with my own difficulties of
'expression' in words, terms, metaphors and structures which feel so predominantly and
patriarchally 'organised', and with my own need to not merely repeat engendered bilateral
structures. I feel it is time for change, time for a healing process and that these are both individual and collective concerns. I feel that it is only through self-education with regard to our own textual environment that we can determine what is individual and what is collective and maintain a balance between the two without fear of categorisation. Individual ‘textuality’ is not confined to any singular academic subject and individual presence therefore contextualises multiplicity in a shift of emphasis from the singular to the plural, from the eye to the ear and from legation to communication.

These processes need to be recognised at the highest level since they involve thinking outside the frame, listening to the self to recuperate a presence, with-out the structural dictates of patriarchal philosophy. Learning is a cyclical process of rereading and rewriting. Language has been held to embody ‘Truth’ but it does so within its own context since that is itself a textual construction. In its preoccupation with death and power over death (immortality), Western Culture has established the supremacy of the written word over the oral tradition. The written word is constantly rewritten. It is as developmental as the oral word. Text is only static when it is not read. If there is a ‘Truth’ as such, I feel that it is a function of contextual presence. This is an ongoing, living purpose which requires the acknowledgement of an open structure.

The fragmented body of the surrealist image presents a discourse which dislocates traditional mimetic reality and constructs a system of self-referential verification based on the text. Dislocating ‘Truth’ from the physical world and relocating it in the text, Surrealism takes the power invested in this authority to extremes, creating an other reality. It enforces the limits, demonstrating the force of textual authority but in so doing, it renders that cultural construct, the text, vulnerable. The extreme nature of surrealist images has facilitated dissent and questioning of the positions of authority and of how we identify ourselves and our images of ourselves, with that reality.
The Lacanian image of the fragmented body presented as a fictitious unity, a restorative and traumatic illusion presents his view, which can be read as the textual authority of the seeing I (eye), as an imposed universal, expressing and disseminating a 'global' view.

I feel that this eye represents a phallic imposition of perceived unity on the female psyche which denies her space. It projects a hidden discourse of authority, requiring and acquiring restructuring her being, determined to herd a self-perceived fragmented view into order, to unify the externalised product of insight as a plural, dominant experience.

Knowledge of sight and the power to construct the world through the text has maintained masculine self-determinist ability to construct the future. Viewing is, however, an individual experience. The eye is not a neutral impersonal object. Presence is a statement of the personal, of the self, rather than the appropriation of the authority of other, of all outside of self seen as self. It presents the internal I as an individual reality, rather than projecting a structure of dominance by a fictional universalisation, fragmenting the illusion of the text as a mirror and the idea that viewing could ever be a neutral, equitable or indeed anything other than a personal experience of presence.

Many of the issues which surrealism addresses in its discontent with the insufficiency of reality are those which feminism finds equally oppressive for different reasons. However, the images of women which it offers form the textual reality of Breton's view.

Positions of authority and aspects of fragmentation have been examined and contextualised relative to visual and verbal language of surrealist poetry and art to disassociate Breton's personalised use of the female body from the perceived universal response for which she is programmed, to delineate her form and shape as a textual appearance and to recover my own identity by a dialogue with that of my textuality.
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