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**Toward a phenomenology of the self: Marcel Duchamp's *Etant  
Donnés***

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City University of New York, 1994

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**Toward a Phenomenology of the Self:  
Marcel Duchamp's Etant Donnés**

By Mason Klein

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
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1994

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## Preface

At the age of seventy-five, Marcel Duchamp had his first solo retrospective, at the Pasadena Art Museum in 1963. As friend and Duchamp scholar Richard Hamilton has noted, the exhibition, organized by Walter Hopps, was significant for many reasons not the least of which was its lesson that Duchamp's oeuvre must be seen "as a whole: as an entity so infinitely complex that his work resists attempts to transmit adequate experience of it."<sup>1</sup> We know from Duchamp's long-standing assistance in the acquisitions, preservation and multiple "assemblages" of his oeuvre, both for the Philadelphia Museum of Art and his "portable museums" entitled Boîte-en-valise (Box-in-a-Valise) (Fig. 1), that he would have been sympathetic to this perspective. And, in his tableau-assemblage, Étant Donnés: 1. la chute d'eau 2. le gaz d'éclairage . . . (Given : 1. the waterfall 2. the illuminating gas . . .), 1946-66 (Figs. 2 and 3), the artist provides yet another recapitulation of this point of view and extends the perimeters of his seminal work, the Large Glass (properly known as La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même [The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even]), 1915-23 (Fig. 4).

As a literal "con"-figuration of the Glass as well as that of most of the oeuvre, the tableau embodies much of the heterogeneity that has come to define the Duchamp myth.<sup>2</sup> What is "given" ("donnés") in this dissertation

is the multiplicity of themes that the tableau-assemblage reenacts. This multiplicity is compounded by Duchamp's confusion of artistic and sexual identity and his fascination with paradox, myth-making, and iconoclasm--factors that all contribute to the idea of an "infinitely complex" subject that is resistant to essentialized meaning. Unmoved by the aloofness of the readymade and Duchamp's shifting of the balance of aesthetic power towards the spectator, many art historians have veered towards problematic allegorical or esoteric interpretations of his work. Thus, the last section of this dissertation will place Duchamp's tableau in its art historical context--a prismatic setting already appropriately shaped by the Glass and the variable methodologies through which Duchamp has been interpreted. In this way, I will more sharply isolate and clarify the theoretical and formal issues of the artist's last major work.

It is important to stress that my argument is not incommensurate with recent scholarship on Duchamp--discourses that have begun to suggest alternative readings of Duchamp other than the poetics of courtly love, n-dimensional geometry or Neoplatonism. While I outline, in Chapter One, the methodological spectrum of Duchamp studies that might inform Etant Donnés . . ., this variety of critical approaches affirms what Hamilton implies in the above quotation: no model will ever be sufficient for comprehending the totality of Duchamp's oeuvre. This is not to say that the hegemony of one interpretation must yield to a kind of "elementary parallelism," to employ a typical Duchampian neologism, reinforcing a pluralistic approach to understanding the artist's late work. Rather than

try to synthesize or reduce the extraordinary diversity of the oeuvre through consistent reference to Duchamp's notes and proposed conceptual projects, decoding both in the service of a particular point of view, there is in my argument a renewed emphasis on the visual and phenomenological aspects of the work.

It is in this sense that my discussion will first-and-foremost examine the complex relationship that the artist himself establishes between art object, vision, and the body. One need only look at the tableau itself and its relationship to the viewer to understand this crucial interconnection. The makeshift mixed-media environment that Duchamp secretively built, often utilizing found scrap materials, functions holistically as a framework through which the oeuvre can be better understood.<sup>3</sup> This final declaration of Duchamp's ideas may have been meant simply to confirm the impossibility of a transcendent subject, or it may be seen as an attempt to integrate the central dialectics of the oeuvre--of language, eroticism, the body--within a meditative inquiry into the issue of subjectivity, exploring the tenuousness of perception and identity. The latter critique, founded on the problematic nature and limits of language--its inclusion of, yet inability to express, a person's subjectivity--is pivotal to understanding Duchamp's synthesis of these issues in the tableau. This underlying aspect of language is so central to the artist's programmatic self-inquiry that I believe even the titular construction of Etant Donnés . . . might be said to concern the spatio-temporal representation of the self.<sup>4</sup>

Duchamp's effort to bring together these various dialectical themes

within such a symbolic framework hinges on his understanding of the unconscious, or of subjectivity, as functioning within an arbitrary but structural system. I would thus claim for the artist a proto-structuralist understanding of language (that meanings are arbitrarily constructed, either through social convention or through a language system whose terms are entirely defined through their differential relation to one another), inasmuch as most of Duchamp's oeuvre seems to develop or be shaped by a certain theoretical linguistic view. Such an arbitrary construction of the subject might appear to contradict a phenomenological investigation of the self. But I believe that following Duchamp's rejection--beginning with the ready-made--of notions of artistic creativity, such as intentionality, causality or rational narrative, a certain analytic strategy or deliberate structuring of the subject increasingly became a part of the perceptual character of his work. In other words, Duchamp gradually sought to formalize his very understanding of language as alienating, as marking a radical otherness that may be felt throughout the oeuvre and culminates in the tableau.

It is for this reason that I have turned to the work of Jacques Lacan, whose post-structuralist methodology accepts an arbitrarily constructed self without necessarily attending to a Freudian reading (based on The Psychopathology of Everyday Life) of possible repressed material in Duchamp's wordplays or aesthetic operations that has served as the basis for interpreting the artist in all the early major monographs on Duchamp.<sup>5</sup> Such a neo-Freudian method, moreover, offers a phenomenological

dimension for understanding the way language might inform the tableau-assemblage. I also have found Lacan's distinction of subjectivity--the framing of a "symbolic" self as opposed to the imaginary and ego-oriented subjectivity of most psychological theories--applicable not only to Duchamp's profound attack on identity but to the specifically phenomenological perceptual situations that the artist sets up--from his early readymades to his "Precision Optics" to Etant Donnés . . .. Furthermore, such an approach has facilitated my consideration of the tableau's supremely visual and conceptual presentation as a meditation on the formation or, more specifically, deformation of the self. This becomes most apparent when one considers, for example, the applicability of Lacan's theories of the self based on his idea of the "Mirror Stage" of childhood development. For at the heart of Duchamp's theoretical critique of identity is the artist's understanding of the "self" as an imaginary construction.

The initial forming of one's image and idea of oneself as an individual, as Lacan argues in his writings on the "moment" of development, takes place at the point before the child can achieve a unified and coordinated sense of his or her own body. There is, in other words, an assumption of one's image that is other than what one feels oneself to be; one struggles henceforth to maintain this model of the self, the ego. But in acquiescing to the symbolic command of language, the linguistic entity "I" that comes to stand for the self, one submits to further alienation. For it is precisely this gap in reality between the child's internal and unintegrated experience of the body and outwardly manifest mirror image that the

continuing series of illusory constructions to form an "I" seek to overcome. The difficulty of the child's visually constituted identity is therefore transposed to the symbolic construction of the subject--one's necessary accession to a preexisting system of language, which further diminishes the individual's sense of being whole and autonomous. It is this alienation (visual/linguistic), which the ego constantly negotiates, that reverberates throughout Duchamp's oeuvre, and that functions in Etant Donnés . . . as the essential mechanism in decentering the viewer.

Following the Large Glass' foundational exploration of the symbolic and illusory nature of the self--as always involving outside identification--it is Duchamp's intuitive psychoanalytic understanding of such a construction that informs his later work; this understanding would seem to further justify a revisionist Lacanian reading of the artist. I believe that such a methodological approach can also expand our understanding of the dissolution of the subject that characterizes the artist's entire oeuvre from 1911 on. For it is at this point that Duchamp--rather than concentrate on the formal issues of representation or on the nature of the perceived subject in space--establishes an analytic and semiotic approach to the subject that permitted him to go beyond the formal properties of objects and of various media then being investigated by his Cubist-inspired colleagues.

Ultimately, it is a gendered, textual, carnal, and visual Duchamp that emerges in this dissertation. As I suggested before, there is in recent Duchamp scholarship a somewhat unconscious urgency to confront the totality of his psycho-physiological being and, consequently, to expose

gender as socially constructed rather than biologically given. Another important trend, much in evidence in this dissertation, attempts to examine visuality in Duchamp's work in relation to the quintessentially modernist understanding of the "retinal"--a concept far more complex than the mere optical effects of Impressionism. Indeed, the issue of Duchamp's "optics" plays a central role in the following pages, as I address the nexus between vision and desire--a long-ignored issue that is critical to understanding Duchamp's complex optics.

On an art historical level, we cannot ignore Duchamp's relationship to the one medium that has historically come to represent the ultimate idealization of vision and visuality: painting. Duchamp's rendering of art as a "cosa mentale," or ideative process, tends to overstate the case of the artist's retirement from painting. Yet, Duchamp's dim view of painting was not absolute, centering as it did on only two areas of contention: for one, the artist rejected the practice of painting, the notion of being a painter with all of the sensual accoutrement of the physical and olfactory medium of oil paint. And secondly, it was the ideology of "subjectivity" in modernist painting--exemplified, for example, by the Impressionists' reification of a seemingly autonomous retinal field onto the canvas surface--that Duchamp could no longer abide.<sup>6</sup> With his attack on bourgeois subjectivity and its abiding role in the discourse of high modernist painting, Duchamp was able to more radically advance his inquiry into the construction and ultimate dissolution of the subject; this attack would also involve the coherency of vision itself. Moreover, Duchamp's privileging of the idea/word art over

the imagist and visceral act of painting, following his early philosophical inquisition of art ("Can one make works which are not works of 'art'?"<sup>7</sup>), may have engendered the readymade. This epistemological shift may also have led to the reconception of art as more than just a mental process; rather it involved an understanding of the discourse of the artist or of the object's meaning as a dialectical process, subject to the effects of speech and language.<sup>8</sup>

The attention to the issues of symbolization and desire, then, suggests another level of discourse crucial to understanding Duchamp's late work: language and the linguistic order. Thus the artist brings together the visual and the linguistic into a single paracritical construct. Duchamp's deployment of language as illusory and alienating--an idea that informs his conceptual formulation in Etant Donnés . . . of the body-as-language--underlies his particular manner of depicting the figure in the tableau. While the artist actually uses no words at all in his tableau, it is possible to understand the process of viewing the tableau as analogous to the function of language. Most dramatically, as Chapter Two suggests, Etant Donnés . . . engages the viewer in a phenomenological and visual experience that is remarkably similar to the sensibility of loss and castration that along with the "Mirror Stage" accompanies the acquisition of language.

In exploring the artist's realistic rendering of the Bride as a symbolic castration, I attempt to explore the way in which Duchamp relates and transposes the Glass' failure of "jouissance" to the symbolic terms of the "phallic signifier"--the fact and consequences of speech and language--

that disrupts the wholeness of identity. Rather than present the Bride veiled in the fantasy of love and the desire to achieve the union or completion that is withheld in the Large Glass--an approach that would have been natural in the practices of mainstream Surrealism--the tableau's Bride may be seen to represent the "almost whole" male's desire to be complete and undivided, and whose symbolic castration sustains the imaginary unity of the "ego." Representing this desire as unfulfillable, Duchamp refuses the fantasy of clearly defined gender roles. Within the Surrealist movement to which the artist was at the very least peripherally identified--principally through the critical efforts of André Breton--Duchamp's project of self-inquiry is virtually unique among his colleagues.<sup>9</sup> This is particularly true in terms of the artist's interrogation of the masquerade of masculinity: by equating the phallus with language as the signifier that is always repressed, Duchamp reveals language as functioning metonymically to cover up this fundamental lack-of-being, and renders, beyond the essential ambiguity of speech, the ungraspability of "being" within speech.

In contrast to the way that desire principally functions within Surrealism, Duchamp's relationship to desire was singularly restrictive, scientifically analytical in its delimiting of "convulsive beauty" as an activity to be observed. Although, like Breton, Duchamp relativized a notion of the beautiful, displacing it from the realm of "good taste"<sup>10</sup> toward an active state of aesthetic arousal, his engagement of eroticism even in his final phase of realism is sublimated, tempered by his indifference to

jouissance and, especially, his embrace of mortality.<sup>11</sup> The artist's "suspension" and dissection of the perceptual moment would contrast vividly with its idealization, in Breton, for example, who would write in the Second Manifesto, that "Surrealism . . . believes, and it will never believe in anything more wholeheartedly, in reproducing artificially this ideal moment when man, in the grips of a particular emotion, is suddenly seized by this something 'stronger than himself' which projects him, in self-defense, into immortality."<sup>12</sup>

If, as I discuss in Chapter Two, Duchamp's development of the dissolution of the subject underlies his continuous fracturing of the self into a unresolvable gender instability, the artist's idea of identity or of the subject was founded on a particular understanding of desire as alienating. In Chapter Three I will explore the various ways the dialectic of desire is realized early in the oeuvre. Examining Duchamp's early work, I will investigate its nascent understanding of the alienation of language. This work also suggests a profound dialectical identification with otherness. Such an effect functions, for example, in the readymade, the pun, the mechanical drawing or in his gender reversal as Rrose Sélavy as well as in the artist's "Precision Optics," which may be said to exploit a psychoanalytical account of fantasy, that is, of desire's satisfaction, based on a libidinal relationship to the maternal body and the issue of a primal "lost object."<sup>13</sup>

Chapter Four explores the various ways the tableau posits its burden of perception and meaning within the visual field. Duchamp's subsumption

of the erotic into the symbolic and formal conditions of language was succeeded, with such works as To Be Looked at (from the Other Side of the Glass) with One Eye, Close to, for Almost an Hour, 1918 (Fig. 5), by the transposition of language's dynamic to the perceptual terms of the optical. This reorientation resulted in Duchamp's further investigation into an "optical unconscious" and approach to visuality that concentrates on what Lacan refers to as the scopic drive--the unconscious that functions in our looking and being looked at--as the modality through which he could further extrapolate his structural conception of language. Thus, Duchamp's surrealist "convulsion" of appearance--as no longer static and a priori but dynamic, contingent, and re-constituted by the spectator on many levels--is underscored by his initial questioning of perception or of the apprehension of identity and difference in representation (readymade, gender). This understanding is further elucidated in his experimentation with stereoscopy (spatial differentiation), and evolves subsequently still with the optical writing/automatism of his short film Anémic Cinéma in 1926 (Fig. 6), a work whose meanings are indispensable to understanding Etant Donnés . . ..<sup>14</sup>

Chapter Four will also explore Duchamp's graphic return in the last years of his life to figuration, in the form of a series of elegant, fine-lined etchings on the theme of "The Lovers." This significant, often overlooked, series anticipates the artist's abiding interest in the corporeal in Etant Donnés . . ., and reflects his emphasis--throughout the post-war gestation of the tableau--on the concept of "infra-thin."<sup>15</sup> While this neologism has

been freely interpreted to refer to Duchamp's various procedures of "projection," from the multi-dimensional association of one form and another, such as cast shadows, molds, mirrors, photographic negatives, to the temporality of "infra-thin moments," I attempt to show how such a concept, represented through the artist's very line, eloquently mediates the artist's phenomenological return to the body, as a form of "corporeal envelope."<sup>16</sup> Duchamp's specific attention to the boundaries of the figure or of the object had been established earlier with works such as Door for Gradiva, 1937, a glass doorway whose design is a silhouetted pair of lovers (Fig. 7); with the back cover of VVV, nos. 2-3, 1943, for which, in collaboration with Frederick Kiesler, he drew a woman's torso that is cutout, with chicken wire inserted in the opening (Fig. 8); or with his supplementary cover (couverture-cigarettes) for the special edition of George Hugnet's La Septième Face du dé/Poèmes-découpages, 1936, consisting of a color photograph of two "stripped" cigarettes (Fig. 9).

In the series on "The Lovers," Duchamp's reversion to figuration and a reductivist, albeit nongeometric, line focuses our attention on the most elementary aspect in art. It is in fact the line itself that defines visibility as mediating the equation of the particular and the universal; the line that both demarcates and defines our subjective view of the world. The artist's embrace of figuration and the past (seven of the series of nine etchings comprising "The Lovers" are entitled Morceaux choisis (Selected Details) (Figs. 10, 11, 12, and 13) appropriations of various icons from the history of art) is also telling: In presenting that which was "already-known,"

Duchamp was rehearsing the ultimate "given," Etant Donnés . . ., as the posthumous "unveiling" of the Bride and what would become his own cultural tombstone.

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1. Richard Hamilton, "Duchamp," Art International (Lugano), vol. 7, no. 10 (January 1964), p. 28.
  2. By fragmenting the word, I call attention to the centrality of the "con," or French slang for the female sexual organ, that Duchamp specifically employs in his instruction manual, entitled "Approximation démontable." Thus the tableau's con-figuration, as the sexually explicit revelation of the Bride, is also the con-version of the Large Glass. The sexual occupation of the focal and vanishing point assumes added significance in the artist's equivalence and undermining of "linear" perspective and gender; gender is thus presented as as perspective, illusion, which "cons" the viewer (as in anamorphosis). Duchamp in fact suggests in his notes that the woman would serve as a vehicle for deconstructing conventional perspective: "the Pendu femelle is the form in ordinary perspective of a Pendu femelle for which one could perhaps try to discover the true form--This comes from the fact that any form is the perspective of another form according to a certain vanishing point and a certain distance." See The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: Da Capo Press, 1989), p. 45 (hereafter referred to as Writings); an unabridged republication of the edition Salt Seller: The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).
  3. To produce the illusion of the waterfall, for example, Duchamp mounted behind the landscape a discarded Peak Frean cookie tin that houses a motorized, perforated aluminum disk and fluorescent lamp. Duchamp constructed almost all of the tableau-asemblage over the course of two decades in his studio on the top floor of 210 West 14th Street. When his lease expired at the end of 1965 (Duchamp was asked to leave the building because of plans for its renovation [see Jennifer Gough-Cooper and Jacques Caumont, Marcel Duchamp (Milan: Bompiani, 1993), n.p.; see catalogue entry for March 31, 1968] ), he was to forced to vacate his studio. He then moved and completed Etant Donnés . . . in a small commercial space at 80 East 11th Street, where it was posthumously dismantled and installed in Philadelphia according to Duchamp's wishes and specifications elaborated in his

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handwritten manual of instructions, entitled Approximation démontable. His wish for near-total secrecy for the project was given an added dimension by the anonymity of his studio at 11th Street: Duchamp's next door neighbor was the Salesmen and Poultry Union, Local 662 A.F.L.-C.I.O. See Denise Browne Hare's early photographic documentation of the tableau in situ, in Sites, no. 19 (1987), pp. 17-31, as well as Dennis L. Dollens' interview with the photographer, *ibid.*, pp. 7-16; and of course see Approximation démontable, which includes drawings, diagrams, and numerous photographs, and serves as the only directly related textual material to Étant Donnés . . .. Adding the explanation, on the title page, "(par approximation j'entends une marge d'ad libitum dans le démontage et remontage)," Duchamp provided for the logistical guidance in deconstructing and mounting the tableau. The manual was published in facsimile in 1987 by the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

4. An examination of the words "étant donnés" reveals what I believe is lost in its English translation, Given, and an even more insistent sense that Duchamp's questioning of "being," of "not believing in 'I am,'" is rooted in the existential problematic of language that articulates the mirrored, imaginary formation of the self. ("I don't believe in the word 'being,'" Duchamp stated to Pierre Cabanne. "The idea of being is a human invention. It's an essential concept, which doesn't exist at all in reality, and which I don't believe in." Consequently, his response to the Cartesian cogito is to pose a query, "No one ever thinks of not believing in 'I am,' no?" Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, trans. Ron Padgett (New York: Viking Press, 1971), pp. 89-90) By its very construction in French, the words étant donnés express the fact that so much is given (Et tant donnés), as well as in the plural, in the tableau-assemblage/oeuvre. (This has also been observed by Rudolf E. Keunzli, "Introduction," Dada/Surrealism, no. 16 [1987], p. 7; and Mary Ann Caws, "Ladies Shot and Painted: Female Embodiment in Surrealist Art," in The Female Body in Western Culture [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986], p. 269.) What an English translation also fails to address is the French's encapsulation of the spatio-temporal transitivity of the erotic "disrobing," the stripping bare of the Bride, that is reflected grammatically. While the revelation of the nude suggests a conclusion to the Glass' narrative of seduction, an action already completed, Duchamp's use of the present participle, étant, for example, engages the

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temporal through the exploration of tense. For such usage conveys both a present action in relation to a certain time expressed by a finite verb (the action of the bride "being stripped") and, as a participle, a word possessing the characteristics of both verb and adjective (especially, to quote Webster, "a verbal form that has the function of an adjective and at the same time shows such verbal features as tense and voice and capacity to take an object."). Thus even Duchamp's titular construction--given the importance of the temporal and the specular in the oeuvre--pushes us into a heavily-inflected philosophical discourse, principally bearing on phenomenology, which may shed light on Duchamp's idea of the possibility only of an incipient "being" that, as Heidegger put it, "has to do with an origin that always comes to meet us from the future." The present, in other words, is always an illusion for Duchamp. Thierry de Duve refers to the past participle in the context of language as well as that of the name. He also suggests that Duchamp's "abandonment" and replacement of painting with the idea of pictorial nominalism involves a temporal registration, a transition from a present to a past participle--following the idea that literal nominalism assumes that language, both in its repetitiveness and active condition, defines the present through an established past. Thierry de Duve, Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade, trans. Dana Polan with the author (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), pp. 129, 140. Martin Heidegger, On the Way to Language, trans. Peter Hertz (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 10; see also Heidegger, The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1982), pp. 298ff.

5. I refer to Robert Lebel's Sur Marcel Duchamp (Paris: Trianon, 1959); rept. Marcel Duchamp (Paris: Belfond, 1985), with revisions and additions, but without texts by André Breton and Henri-Pierre Roché; original English trans. George Heard Hamilton, Marcel Duchamp (New York: Grove Press, 1959); Arturo Schwarz' The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1969); and Lawrence D. Steefel, Jr.'s The Position of Duchamp's 'Glass' in the Development of his Art (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1977).

6. Duchamp specified a certain historical development, from Impressionism through Fauvism, Cubism, and abstraction, that had determined an "arrêt à

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la retine," or a kind of self-sufficiency and objectification of the retinal. See his interview with Alain Jouffroy, in Une Révolution du regard: A Propos de quelques peintres et sculpteurs contemporains (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 110. For further discussion of this aspect of the visual in Duchamp, see Rosalind Krauss, "The Blink of an Eye," in The States of Theory: History, Art, and Critical Discourse, ed. David Carroll (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 175-99.

7. Writings, p. 74.

8. Indeed Jacques Lacan employs the phrase "dialectical punctuation" in reference to the psychoanalytic dialogue, in Ecrits, A Selection, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), p. 95. Duchamp often utilizes, as in the comma and adverb même in the title of the Large Glass, idiosyncratic punctuation throughout the oeuvre as a form of expression circling back on itself and, more important, as a temporal device that breaks the discourse, fragmenting it and one's sense of knowing.

9. See, for example, Breton's preface, "Testimony 45," to the Marcel Duchamp issue of View, series 5, no. 1 (March 1945), p. 5; and his essay in that issue, "Phare de la mariée" ("Lighthouse of the Bride"), pp. 6-9; originally published in the sixth issue of Minotaure (December 1934).

10. At the "Western Round Table on Modern Art," held on April 8, 9 and 10, 1949, Duchamp emphatically distinguished between "taste" and "aesthetics": "Taste gives a sensuous feeling, not an aesthetic emotion. . . . Taste presupposes a domineering onlooker who dictates what he likes and dislikes, and translates it into "beautiful" and ugly." See "Western Round Table on Modern Art" (1949), ed. Douglas MacAgy, in Modern Artists in America (First Series), ed. Bernard Karpel, Robert Motherwell and Ad Reinhardt (New York: Wittenborn Schultz, 1951), pp. 27-37.

11. The sense of prevailing enigma in Etant Donnés . . . would be consistent with the artist's earlier explicit efforts--at the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme, in Paris in 1938, and the exhibition First Papers of Surrealism, in New York in 1942--to problematize the act of comprehension and to signify the difficulty of penetrating and understanding the subconscious. Despite the tableau's hyperrealism, however, its quality of illusion may be

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distinguished from that of mainstream Surrealism, or from what Breton called the hallucinatory kind of image, in that its enigmatic affect militates against the poetic image or object to function as an intoxicating and liberating force. What is central to Duchamp's "eroticism," therefore, as Georges Didi-Huberman has pointed out, is "perhaps not the erotic but the undecided vacillation of an eroticism that constantly states its negation." Marcel Duchamp: Tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition?, ed. Jean Clair, Colloque du Centre Culturel Internationale de Cerisy-la-Salle, 10/18 (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1979), p. 228. Duchamp expressed his acceptance of his own mortality through various channels. Given the waterfall in Étant Donnés . . ., for example, one cannot overlook his continuing concern with the symbolism of running water. Two works, for example, that Duchamp made in 1964, Mirrorical Return and Bouche-Evier, reiterate this theme. The former, an etching, includes among other things, the reinvocation of a text (deriving from the artist's Gotham Book Mart window display entitled Lazy Hardware, 1945), which reads, "Un robinet qui s'arrête de couler quand on ne l'écoute pas" (A faucet which stops dripping when nobody is listening to it"); this expression was reprinted in The Box in a Valise, on his optical discs, and in André Breton's Anthologie de l'humour noir with the change of "le" robinet. See Writings, p. 106. In Bouche-Evier, a lead sink stopper Duchamp made for his shower in Cadaqués, the symbolism is obvious.

12. "Second Manifesto of Surrealism," in Manifestoes of Surrealism, trans. by Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), pp. 161-62.

13. The symbolic dynamic that follows the child's separation from the mother has been noted by Jean Laplanche: "The real object, milk, was the object of the function, which is virtually preordained to the world of satisfaction. Such is the real object which has been lost, but the breast--become the fantasmatic breast--is, for its part, the object of the sexual drive. Thus the sexual object is not identical to the object of the function, but is displaced in relation to it; they are in a relation of essential contiguity which leads us to slide almost indifferently from one to the other, from the milk to the breast as its symbol." "The Order of Life and the Genesis of Human Sexuality," in Life and Death in Psychoanalysis, trans. Jeffrey

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Mehlman (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 19-20.

14. For a discussion of this film and its optical concerns, and Duchamp's cinematic "statement on the nature of cinematic illusionism in complete independence of the representational codes preserved in Surrealist film and painting," see Annette Michelson, "'Anemic Cinema': Reflections on a Emblematic Work," in Artforum, vol. 12 (October 1973), pp. 64-69; reprinted in Amy Baker Sandback, editor, Looking Critically: 21 Years of Artforum Magazine (Ann Arbor: U.M.I. Research Press, 1984), pp. 143-48.

15. A significant grouping of the artist's notes that deal with this term have been collected and appear together, under this heading, in a posthumous publication in facsimile, entitled Marcel Duchamp, Notes, trans. Paul Matisse (Boston: G.K. Hall & Company, 1983), n.p.; henceforth referred to as Notes, followed by note number.

16. This concept, put forward by Jean Laplanche, in Life and Death in Psychoanalysis, pp. 80-1, derives from Freud, who situated the ego within the terms of the body. In The Ego and the Id, Freud defines the ego as "first and foremost a bodily ego"; see The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), vol. 19, p. 27. I believe that Duchamp viewed the body/gender as a sort of imprisoning enclosure or screen. The body's definition through clothing or the latter's symbolic role functions in a number of Duchamp's works, such as the life-size wax mannequin of Rose Sélavy, dressed in the artist's own clothes (with the lower part of the body revealed) for the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme, 1938; Jaquette (Jacket), 1956; or Waistcoat, 1958; Couple of Laundress' Aprons, 1959. For more on the subject of the bodily ego or on the role of clothes, see Kaja Silverman, "White Skin, Brown Masks: The Double Mimesis, or With Lawrence in Arabia," in Male Subjectivity at the Margins (New York and London: Routledge, 1992); and "Fragments of a Fashionable Discourse," in Studies in Entertainment: Critical Approaches to Mass Culture, ed. Tania Modleski (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 139-52.

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## Introduction

Despite André Breton's early observation, in Les Pas perdus, in 1924, about Marcel Duchamp's "disdain for the thesis," perhaps no other artist has elicited more critical interpretation. Most art historians, however, have underestimated the visual, epistemological, and psychosexual implications of Duchamp's oeuvre, and do not address the increasing relevance of Duchamp's project of self-inquiry--a discourse driven by his interrogation of meaning and identity in general, and sexuality in particular.<sup>1</sup>

Recent critical efforts to reassess Duchamp's philosophical or systematic approach to the questions of representation and of the self, notably by Jean-François Lyotard and Rosalind Krauss, have begun to broaden our understanding of various Duchampian themes and problems. While Lyotard has begun to translate what he calls Duchamp's "politics of incommensurables," which informs everything from the artist's spatial multidimensionality to his improvisational grammatical rules, into a philosophical system of "hinges of logic," Krauss has illuminated Duchamp's theories and works by focusing on the multiplicities of vision and its complex relation to the self. Commensurate with this revisionism, I have considered Duchamp's last major work, Etant Donnés . . ., as the final outgrowth of his series of "Precision Optics," as the artist's final statement on the difficulty, if not impossibility, of a unified position, both in terms of one's relation to the visible and to a notion of the self. Indeed, I have

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understood the tableau-assemblage as the artist's ultimate self-portrait and depiction of the human subject--the individual's relation to the world that is mediated in a variety of ways by one's relation to the Other, that is to say, the domain of language, principally represented by sexuality.

Before we can understand how Duchamp's complex dialectic of sexuality developed throughout this period, it is important to establish the art historical backdrop for his inquiry: the Surrealist exploration of sexuality, a sensibility that he often questioned or rejected. Vested in the traditional symbolist-derived division of the female as either muse or femme fatale, Surrealist artists and poets such as Breton, Salvador Dali, André Masson, Paul Eluard, Hans Bellmer and others generated a symbolism that merely suspended deeply seated masculine conflicts about women. It could be said that the woman, although occupying a central role as muse, played at best a marginal part in the development of the movement, beyond that of providing its powerful theme of "amour fou" ( or "mad love"). This problem was particularly evident in the early stages of Surrealism. Take, for example, an image published in the final issue of La Révolution surréaliste (1929): surrounding a painting by René Magritte of a nude female figure bracketed by the words "je ne vois pas la (femme) cachée dans la forêt" ("I do not see the [woman] hidden in the forest") is a border of photographic portraits of various male surrealists with their eyes closed (Fig. 14). Similarly, in the first issue of the same review (1924), a portrait photograph of Germaine Berton, the anarchist who assassinated the reactionary editor of L'Action Française, appears similarly surrounded entirely by men,

accompanied by a text by Charles Baudelaire that reads, "La femme est l'être qui projette la plus grande ombre ou la plus grande lumière dans nos rêves" ("Woman is the being who throws the greatest shadow or the greatest light on our dreams") (Fig. 15).

Duchamp's psychosexual gambit in Etant Donnés . . ., for example, differs from that of mainstream Surrealism as well as from Breton, hinging on a more complex and liberatory understanding of the place of woman in the sexual and political economy of Western culture and the complexity of sexuality in general. This difference is fundamental to understanding Duchamp's oeuvre, having been broached with the Large Glass (Fig. 4), and later foregrounded in that work's pendant, Etant Donnés . . ..<sup>2</sup> On a certain level, it is clear that Duchamp intended the Large Glass as a kind of self-portrait. Such an understanding is made explicit, for example, by a margin sketch from the the Green Box, a collection of notes and diagrams, published in facsimile in 1934, that provides the Glass' narrative as well as its various conceptual underpinnings. In a margin note, Duchamp sketched the Glass, adding the abbreviations Mar (for MARiée, or Bride) and cel (for CELibataire, or bachelor) to the two sections (Fig. 16). In effect, Duchamp was reconstituting his first name through the registration of the first syllables of each word. By constructing a self through the conflation of male and female parts, the artist also alludes to the other type of self-portrait that emerged toward the end of the Large Glass' decade of development: his ubiquitous female alter ego Rose Sélavy (Fig. 17).<sup>3</sup>

The co-existence of sexual difference illustrated in the Glass is

further developed in Étant Donnés . . ., as Duchamp directly questioned the clearly defined sexual roles sanctioned by bourgeois society and culture. Rather than the Surrealist androgyne--in which sexual differences are merely blurred--the artist allowed signifiers of male and female sexuality to maintain their integrity within the same body, an oscillation rather than a mere uniting of the components of gender.<sup>4</sup> Here, the simple biological division between male and female is subverted: the left side of the figure speaks of the socially-encoded standard of woman--the ample breast, the gracefully-curved thigh, the elegantly bent knee, the attenuated, uplifted arm--the right, with its absent breast, massive structure, and earthy weightiness, appears as male.

This kind of male-female juxtaposition has many precedents in the oeuvre, including the rectified-readymade L.H.O.O.Q., 1919 (Fig. 18). In this work, the artist highlights the inherent androgyny of Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa by adding a goatee and a mustache. He also captions this signifier of ambiguous sexuality with an anagram in French--L.H.O.O.Q.--that phonetically reads "elle a chaud au cul," which translated means "she has a hot ass." Instead of being merely androgynous, however, Duchamp's Giocanda is literally marked by a sign of masculinity: an inscribed patch of facial hair that belongs to the order of male-identification. Beyond its mysterious anagrammatic meaning, L.H.O.O.Q. presents at once the registration of language and gender as arbitrary categories whose identities are often ambiguous. Significantly, the most famous precedent for an image of uncertain sexual identity is, of course, Leonardo's drawing

depicting an anatomical section of the sexual act (Fig. 19).<sup>5</sup>

The intense interest in gender roles and their representation was also exemplified by Duchamp's ongoing fascination with what may be one of the most primal depictions of gender division in Western thought: Adam and Eve. The significance of this theme's convergence of vision and sexuality and the consequent problematization of the latter can not be overlooked, as it highlights a pivotal issue in Etant Donnés . . . and the oeuvre: the revelation that the simplicity of sexuality was lost in the paradise of Eden, and that the Fall involved our progenitors' self-consciousness, their ability to see themselves.<sup>6</sup> Indeed the subject of primal self-awareness is vividly felt in the artist's initial depiction of Eden, aptly entitled Paradise, 1910-11 (Fig. 20). A seeming meditation on solipsism, the painting depicts the two figures, Adam and Eve, facing in each other's direction. Neither, however, sees the other. Depicting an ashamed, self-conscious Adam, hiding his sex, gazing away from a mature and preoccupied Eve, there is a curious sense, both in the different landscape that surrounds them and in the disconnectedness of their gazes, of bifurcation. While the background of rolling hills and round bushes that encompasses the rotund Eve is curvilinear, the background cluster of trees that enframes the less developed Adam is rectilinear and phallic.

Compared with Duchamp's bi-gendered self-representation in the Large Glass or with his rearticulation of the self as Rose Sélavy, a "self-portrait" of Breton, for example, reads as a sacred text from which an historically bound, egotistic construction of the self emerges. The work, a

poem-object entitled Portrait of the Actor A.B. in his Memorable Role in 1713, 1941 (Fig. 21), reveals Breton's gender-specific search through history to find identifying events that could create an intellectual as well as spiritual precedent and armature for explaining the moral imperatives of his being. Here, Breton freely fuses reality and mysticism. As Nicolas Calas writes:

[Breton] had been prompted to learn what significant events had occurred in the year cryptically evoked by his initials, as in his signature A looks like 17 and B resembles 13. Among the events of that year he attached considerable importance to the Bulla Unigenitus of Pope Clement XI, which marked the triumph of the Jesuits in their struggle against the Jansenists. Breton noted that this bull, by depriving Pascal and Racine of the possibility of appealing to a higher court, provoked a moral crisis whose consequences are still, more than ever, being felt.<sup>7</sup>

Breton's goal is clearly incommensurate with that of Duchamp. While Breton chooses to embellish his identity with a male-identified footnote from history, Duchamp refuses even to identify himself as male. For in Duchamp's belief that the subject is always multivalent and ungraspable, the narrative of history could never offer a means for establishing a tangible sense of self, no matter how much the selected narrative might reveal the unconscious paradoxes and multiplicity of the human condition.

Of course, given the fractured, imprecise and allusive nature of language, the self becomes an almost indescribable phenomenon at best; like everything else, it is subsumed by the infinite divagations of the word--the inherent desire in language that for Duchamp leads not to a greater

articulation of the self but rather to a sense of uncertainty and confusion.

As Rudolf Keunzli writes:

The frustration, exasperation and puzzlement of Duchamp interpreters seems to be due to largely to their persistent but hopeless attempt to find something which does not exist: a consistent meaning in a work by Duchamp. In order to avoid this futile search, we might shift our focus from a fixation on meaning to an analysis of Duchamp's strategies, through which he precisely explodes the notion of a single meaning, identity. . . . In his interview with Pierre Cabanne, Duchamp states: "I don't believe in the word 'being.' The idea of being is a human invention. . . . It's an essential concept, which doesn't exist at all in reality, and which I don't believe in." His works and texts can be seen as machines that de-essentialize essentialist concepts of art, sexual identity, the self, meaning in language and iconography. His chief strategy consists in multiplying identities in order to undo any kind of fixity. He therefore takes on the alter egos of Rrose Sélavy, R. Mutt, Marsélavy, marchand du sel. In the poster Wanted (1923) he parodies the wanted, desired ability to identify a person by taking on a multiplicity of identities: "George W. Welch, alias Bull, alias Pickens etcetery, etcetery. Operated Bucket Shop in New York under name HOOKE, LYNE, CINQUER. . . . Known also under name RROSE SELAVY." He significantly used this work again in 1963 as exhibition poster for his first retrospective--an oeuvre of and by a multiplicity of contradictory identities.<sup>8</sup>

Beginning with the readymade and its assault on the stability of language--through discourses that function both symbolically and literally, consciously and unconsciously--Duchamp reveals a fundamental incommensurability in our understanding of the dialectical nature of

sexuality and identity. In the manner of the readymade or the personage of Rose Sélavy, he continued to relinquish his position of mastery, to define himself through his feminine side, to deny his phallic position or authority. This is clearly the case, for example, in his Self-Portrait in Profile, 1958 (Fig. 22)--a work he produced by tearing a piece of paper around a metal template of his profile--through the realization of his profile in the negative space of the contour of the paper. It is not coincidental that the "positive" of the artist's profile clearly resembles his most profoundly female-identified work, Female Fig Leaf, 1950 (Fig. 23). Whereas the fig leaf traditionally covers the genitalia, suggesting phallic presence, the artist reverses this procedure, exposing phallic presence as symbolic, illustrating as well what the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan meant when he wrote, "[the phallus] can play its role only when veiled."<sup>9</sup>

Not uncoincidentally, it is the rendering of the female genitalia, in Etant Donnés . . ., that further produces this inability to read the scene in other than the symbolic terms of representation, that is, involving a certain absence. This impression is predicated, in part, on the severe, absolutely unnatural manner in which Duchamp has depicted the female pudendum--almost, in its morbid pallor and waxen sheen, as a castration. Insofar as a castrated figure is genderless, its sexual signification is, of course, always ambivalent. While the theme of androgyny is central to Surrealism, there it functions as a myth that suppresses underlying conflicts and divisions. However, there is a considerable variance between the way sexual division oscillates in Etant Donnés . . . and the manner in which it is blended into

idealistic perfection in Breton's last major literary work, Arcane 17. Commensurate with the ideal of Surrealism, Arcane 17 advocated the unity of man and woman in the ideal bond of love. As Breton himself observed, "in the most general sense, love lives only in reciprocity."<sup>10</sup> Throughout Duchamp's oeuvre, on the other hand, there is no final resolution, no epiphanous jouissance, no metaphysical bonding of man and woman. There is only an oscillation, a discomfort, a sense that while union may come close, it will never happen. Duchamp's world is permeated with the strange, discomfiting din of solitude: in the end, he (like the bachelors of the Large Glass or the voyeur/observer of Etant Donnés . . .) remains alone, content to celebrate onanistically the man and woman that exist side-by-side within him.

Interestingly, Duchamp attempted to impose this bivalent identification on his colleague Breton. Shortly after Arcane 17 was published, the artist designed the cover and dustjacket for Breton's book Young Cherry Trees Secured Against Hares (Fig. 24). Cutting out just the face of a jacket-cover rendering of the Statue of Liberty, Duchamp then attached a photograph of Breton's face to the book's binding, thus uniting binding with cover, and Breton with his female opposite. While this tribute clearly signaled Duchamp's deep alliance and gratitude to his dear friend, and was a reaffirmation of Breton's message of hope founded upon liberating love in Arcane 17, of a "liberty not subject to any contingency," it was also an opportunity for the cunning Duchamp to mitigate his friend's heterodoxy, and to amplify his own more radical ideas regarding sexual

liberty.

One might see in the free play of Duchamp's representation of gender (as others have, such as Lyotard) a reciprocity that could be aligned with the general erasure of sexual difference in Surrealism. Unconcerned, however, with reaching the high Surrealist ideal of a reconciliation between the sexes, Duchamp focused instead on the difficulty of sexuality and identity. As such, castration served for him as the ultimate metaphor of the self as a compendium of questions rather than answers. This metaphor reaches a dramatic, if short-lived, level in Duchamp's 1945 design for the window of Brentano's, Fifth Avenue bookstore in New York, and then for the nearby Gotham Book Mart (Fig. 25), created to honor the publication of Breton's Arcane 17 (both spring of 1945). The window displays announced Duchamp's well-known "mirrorial return," a renewal of the specular theme begun with the Large Glass, of engaging the viewer through the capture of his or her reflection.<sup>11</sup> But this implication of the observer in the transaction of the artwork would hardly achieve the "reciprocal love" endorsed by Breton. Rather, through these installations, Duchamp manages to undermine the observer's autonomy and clearly defined sense of sexual identity. In the viewing of the Brentano's and Gotham Book Mart windows, respectively, the viewer became identified with the female mannequin, providing the headless form with its missing part, and, then, through certain precise mirrorial effects, "lost" its head in the genital area. The acephalous theme, as I will discuss in Chapter Two, is not only present in the Large Glass, where the nine malic moulds are doubly threatened, but also

reappears in other works, such as Obligations pour la Roulette de Monte Carlo (Monte Carlo Bond), 1924 (Fig. 26).

Ultimately, this complex understanding of sexuality and self-identity makes its way into another, seemingly incongruous, yet no less significant, aspect of Duchamp's cultural exploration: the vicissitudes of vision. The fractured self--so central to Duchamp's symbolic construction of sexuality--eventually manifests itself as part of the artist's examination of the equivocation of vision. This new focus first appears during the final stages of executing the Large Glass, when the artist continued to distill the work's narrative of desire (and its saga of physics) into a strategy of optics--a shift that more clearly projects the Glass' uncertain denouement.<sup>12</sup> This transition to a more phenomenological position is made explicit in a work that Duchamp initially intended to include in the Glass but never did, entitled A regarder (l'autre côté du verre) d'un oeil, de près, pendant presque une heure [To Be Looked at (from the Other side of the Glass) with One Eye, Close to, for Almost an Hour], 1918 (Fig. 5).<sup>13</sup> In titling the work, Duchamp also calls attention to a symbolic situation of alterity, of "looking from the other side," that is suggestive of gender's "otherness."

It is significant that the pseudonymous, literary presence of Rose Sélavy--representing the artist's "otherness" in language--appeared in 1920, at a time when Duchamp was seeking to synthesize his psychosexual and linguistic discourse in the area of optics (an achievement that doesn't really occur till Etant Donnés . . .). For in his final "assemblage," the artist conflates the daunting act of "writing" gender with that of visualizing it, a

relationship metaphorically suggested by the stylus that first appears in To Be Looked at . . .. In the latter work, the viewer is presented with various historical symbols of exactitude and perspective--geometry, a stylus, and with the actual mounting of a magnifying glass, a tool whose promise of enhanced vision collapses in distortion and loss of perspective. With its titular instruction to employ a monocular rather than binocular vision, and its equivalence of the former with linear perspective, To Be Looked at . . . suggests the limitation of a disembodied perspective exclusively limited to a single point of view. Indeed, in challenging the rational and ideative system of linear perspective, Duchamp offers an alternative, phenomenological experience of the visual--one that, in addressing the dialectical and subjective complexities of vision, questions the normative status of any given position, ultimately rendering the notion of perspective itself inadequate.<sup>14</sup>

The true relevance, then, of To Be Looked at . . . to Etant Donnés . . . begins at the very "point" at which the stylus--whose function it was to organize vision in the manner of the camera obscura--signals a thematic crossroads in Duchamp's oeuvre between sight, language, sexuality, and the equivocal formation of subjectivity. This critical synthesis becomes illuminated by the artist's implicit reference in Etant Donnés . . . to Albrecht Dürer's woodcut Draftsman Doing Perspective Drawings of a Woman, from De Symmetria Humanorum Corpum, 1532 (Fig. 27)--an art historical allusion that will be discussed more fully in Chapter Two. The reference to Dürer further reechoes the significant juncture in Duchamp's oeuvre when the

narrative of eroticism was being transposed within the terms of optics (through various studies such as Oculist Witnesses, 1920 (Fig. 28), Handmade Stereopticon Slide (Hand Stereoscopy), 1918-19 (Fig. 29), or To Be Looked at . . .), melding his earlier narrative of desire in vision around the symbolic axis of language.

Of course, the subject is also defined through language itself. Duchamp's nude--as the figure upon whom lack, the engendered mark of castration, is projected, is depicted embodying, marking--boldly suggests the very terms of language's phallic order. Because language is always built on representing things that are themselves absent, Lacan, for example, has postulated that the word is always marking the lack of the thing it represents, metaphorically reinscribing the perpetual castration of the phallus itself. The woman's status as Other, as the place of symbolic phallic support, is thus made visible, constituting her as both object and fantasy. It is this representation of woman as sign, as both material and concept--the simultaneous embodiment of woman's requisite, supportive role in the privileged function of the phallus and her resistance to such a substructure--that further articulates Duchamp's correlation of the body with language.

This correlation furthermore serves to illustrate the dependency of the phallic signifier on the maternal or female body in order to secure self-knowledge and a sense of identity. It is at the instance of the letter, at the place of speech, however, that that armature and the authority of the phallus collapse. The loss of language's capacity to represent the world is

subliminally registered and mirrored in the "incapacitation" of the spectator in the act of viewing Etant Donnés . . ., a manipulation the artist explicitly intended. The compounded inefficacy of the voyeuristic view/position was another way for Duchamp to convey the strength in his own unwillingness to assume a place, identity, or meaning in his work. "You see, I don't want to be pinned down to any position," the artist told Arturo Schwarz. "My position is the lack of a position, but, of course, you can't even talk about it, the minute you talk you spoil the whole game. I also mean that words are absolutely a pest as far as getting anywhere. You cannot express anything through words."<sup>15</sup> As a voyeur, the viewer is forced into a passive role, a position of inadequacy. The confusion that arises from viewing the artist's fragmented tableau effects a sense of absence that can only be compensated, supplemented by language, a need which the viewer cannot easily fulfill. Unable to see the face of the nude, and particularly her mouth, the sense of communal existence or relations with others is suddenly impeded, replaced by mute solitude. For a moment brute vision exists, its autonomy unalleviated by language.

This disorientation of the viewer is suggested as well by the work's supra-naturalistic allusion to the space of the dream--a realm of sensory disjunction, of almost a montage-like piecing together. By involving itself in a concentrated, almost entirely private act of uncomfortably peering into the depths of Duchamp's intense landscape, the viewer's body is immobilized--a temporary condition that mimics the dream's resolute visuality, a state of near bodily paralysis that actually occurs

physiologically during the REM or rapid eye movement stage of sleep. One could almost say that during this moment of extreme visual absorption, there is a momentary loss of a total sense of one's own body. This sensory displacement contributes to a fragmented, diminished sense of self, as the viewer negotiates a range of experience from frustration and momentary speechlessness to embarrassment.

Ultimately what the viewer of Etant Donnés . . . witnesses is bifurcated and enigmatic--a field of glaring light and confusing optical cues as well as ambiguous references to gender, sexuality and place. In this sense, Etant Donnés . . . represents a radical rejection of the traditional cultural markers of identity; even at the level of self-portraiture, as a skewed and multi-layered articulation of Duchamp's own sexuality, what the viewer sees can never confirm a complacent sense of who he or she is as a sexual being. The tableau-assemblage, then, stands as the ultimate refusal of what most cultures have generally taken for granted: that sexual identity can be visualized through the standard division between male and female--an equation that harks back to Adam and Eve and other primal scenes of Western art history.

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1. My argument is not incommensurate with recent scholarship that have begun to provide alternative readings of Duchamp. The spectrum of revisionism in Duchamp studies is well represented by two recently published anthologies. See Dada/Surrealism, no. 16 (1987); rpt. as Marcel Duchamp: Artist of the Century, ed. Rudolf E. Keunzli and Francis M. Naumann (Cambridge, Mass. and London England: The MIT Press, 1989); and The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, ed. Thierry de Duve (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1991).
  2. For further discussion of the relationship between Duchamp's two major works, see Chapter One, below, and n. 56 for further bibliographic reference.
  3. During his interview with Pierre Cabanne in 1966, Duchamp related the adoption of his alter ego, Rose Sélavy, to a play of words, names. "In effect, I wanted to change my identity, and the first idea that came to me was to take a Jewish name. I was Catholic, and it was a change to go from one religion to another! I didn't find a Jewish name that I especially liked, or that tempted me, and suddenly I had an idea: why not change sex? It was much simpler. So the name Rose Sélavy came from that. Nowadays, this may be all very well--names change with the times--but Rose was an awful name in 1920. The double R comes from Picabia's painting, you know, the Oeil cacodylate . . . I don't remember how I signed it--it was photographed, so someone knows. I think I put 'Pi Qu'habilla Rose Sélavy'--the word 'arrose' demands two R's, so I was attracted to the second R--'Pi Qu'habilla Rose Sélavy.' All of this was word play." [It actually reads, "en 6 qu'habillarrose Selavy."] Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, trans. Ron Padgett (New York: Viking Press, 1971), pp. 64-65.
  4. Although both water and gas are identified with the bachelor apparatus (in the Green Box), in Étant Donnés . . . the horizon, or ideal vanishing point of vision, is prominently seen appointed with clouds, which, as Ulf Linde has pointed out, is the shape of the Top Inscription, the means by which the Bride transmits her commands of "alphabetic units" to the bachelors. The connection of language and gender, as formless or cloudlike, has been
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suggested by Linde, "the striking nakedness of the Glass consists in the part known as the Top Inscription. In this part, the Bride is shown at the moment of orgasm; she has the shape of a cloud nue--she is naked (which is also nue)." See Linde, "MARiée CELibataire," in Hopps, Walter, Ulf Linde, and Arturo Schwarz, Marcel Duchamp Readymades, etc. (1913-64) (Paris: Le Terrain Vague, 1964), p. 54; see also Schwarz' The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1969), p. 559; henceforth referred to as CW.

5. The drawing today is only partially attributed to Leonardo, see Rose, Sexuality in the Field of Vision (London: Verso, New Left Books, 1986), p. 225, n. 1.

6. The theme of Adam and Eve and the garden of Eden is alluded to both overtly and indirectly throughout Duchamp's oeuvre. Its best known and explicit identification was the artist's appearance in the ballet Relâche (staged by Francis Picabia and René Clair at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées [December 31, 1924] with music by Eric Satie) in which he appeared as Adam with Francine Picabia (under the alias "Brognia Perlmutter") as Eve. Duchamp's impersonation of Adam derives from Cranach's painting Adam and Eve (Alte Pinakothek, Munich) that Duchamp first saw during his stay in Munich in 1912 while he was working on the Bride. Both Brognia Perlmutter and Duchamp were later photographed in their roles for the performance, entitled "Cine-Sketch," by Man Ray, who later recalled that "at one moment of the production the theatre was in complete darkness, then a few flashes gave one the impression that he saw a living tableau of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. It was a striptease in the most literal sense." See also Charles Stuckey, who suggests a similar thematic reading of self-consciousness and visual shame in relation to Duchamp's "mirrorical" strategies, in "Duchamp's Acephalic Symbolism," Art in America, vol. 65, no. 1 (January/February 1977), p. 97.

7. Nicolas Calas, "Freedom Love and Poetry," Artforum, vol. 16, no. 9 (May 1978), p. 23.

8. Rudolf E. Keunzli, "Introduction," Dada/Surrealism no. 16 (1987), p. 5; rpt. in Marcel Duchamp: Artist of the Century, ed. Rudolf E. Keunzli and

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Francis M. Naumann (Cambridge, Mass. and London England: The MIT Press, 1989).

9. Jacques Lacan, "La Signification du phallus," in Lacan, Écrits (Paris: Les Editions du Seuil, 1966), p. 692. Translated as "The Signification of the Phallus," in Écrits: A Selection, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), p. 288; also translated as "The Meaning of the Phallus," by Jacqueline Rose, in ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1985), p. 82.

10. Breton, Arcane 17 (New York, 1944), pp. 42-43.

11. See Ulf Linde, "MARiée CELibataire," in Walter Hopps, Ulf Linde, and Arturo Schwarz, Marcel Duchamp Readymades, etc. (1913-64), p. 66; and Stuckey, "Duchamp's Acephalic Symbolism," pp. 94-99.

12. See Chapter Four.

13. For further discussion of the juggler of gravity, see Jean Suquet, Miroir de la Mariée: Essai (Paris: Flammarion, 1974), pp. 186-216.

14. For further discussion of Duchamp's analysis of perspective (or his "rehabilitation of perspective [in the Large Glass]," as he referred to it to Pierre Cabanne), in terms of its delimitations rather than only as a part of an overarching interest in n-dimensional geometry, and the implications of this regarding the tableau, see Chapter Four. Pierre Cabanne, Entretiens avec Marcel Duchamp (Paris: Editions Pierre Belfond, 1967), p. 65; rept. as Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, trans. Ron Padgett (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. 38. See also Jean Clair, "Marcel Duchamp et la tradition des perspecteurs," in Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques (Paris: Musée National d'art Moderne, Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, 1977), pp. 124-59; revised and translated as "Duchamp and the Classical Perspectivists," Artforum, vol. 16 (March 1978), pp. 40-49.

15. CW, pp. 194-95.

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## Chapter One

### Given and Not Given: Etant Donnés . . . in the Realm of Art History

To interpret is futile. You might as well try to circumscribe the true effect of the Large Glass and hence its true content; the Glass is made precisely in order not to have a true effect, nor even several true effects, according to a mono-, or polyvalent logic, but have uncontrolled effects; the true is only the controllable, like the false, whereas Duchamp is aiming for a space beyond truth-values: inability and power.<sup>1</sup>

Jean-François Lyotard, Duchamp's TRANS/formers

Approaching a dimly-lit annex off the far end of the large gallery housing the Arensberg's Duchamp collection at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, one reaches the artist's final work--a terminal point that stands apart, removed from the rest of the gallery. Here one encounters an aged, solitary and permanently closed door (Fig. 2).<sup>2</sup> The door, which comes from the Empordà district of Catalonia, was stripped by the artist of its fittings (hinges and handle) (Fig. 2a). Beyond this imposing portal, framed by a Catalonian-style masonry arch set in plaster (Fig. 2b), lies the content of Duchamp's tableau-assemblage.<sup>3</sup>

The work's architectural setting helps to further contextualize the

exterior of Etant Donnés . . . as definitive, permanent and, in its solemnity or funereal aspect, tomblike.<sup>4</sup> This impression is heightened for those viewers informed of the work's history and the predetermined manner of its disposition. Any sense of conclusion to the artist's oeuvre, however, is deferred as we peer through the door's peepholes, into the installation's dramatic interior --an experience not unlike that of viewing a camera obscura.<sup>5</sup> But, unlike the safely removed space of the camera obscura, whose historically dominant role and function was to clarify and stabilize the visual, the experience of Etant Donnés . . . (Fig. 3) is decidedly confounding; it is at once hallucinatory and distanced, removed physically by its separateness or, more specifically, its contiguity with the world. Blatant yet inscrutable, the tableau suggests the hermetic space of the dream: the viewer is engaged privately, disconnectedly. A mixed-media assemblage, constructed of a wide variety of elements such as bricks, twigs, a wooden-table, black velvet, cotton, a stretched vellum covered armature, electric lights, electric motor, iron, Plexiglas, and linoleum, the tableau-assemblage reads almost as an aesthetic laboratory, a mise-en-scène for exploring various psychological and physiological phenomena such as sexuality and vision. Despite the "reality" of much of these materials, "the assemblage . . . is painstakingly fabricated," as Anne d'Harnoncourt and Walter Hopps point out, "from materials that are made to look like an approximation of the real thing, but that retain a sense of artificiality. Even the reality of the twigs and bricks is subtly contradicted by their most deliberate placement in the total picture (Fig. 30)."<sup>6</sup>

If one practice of past art history has been to track down a work's sources, determined to trace their trajectories toward possible new influences, then Duchamp's Etant Donnés . . ., a tableau-assemblage on which he worked secretly from 1946-66, begs for such a task. Duchamp's title, however, is perhaps even more literal than it at first seems. For by entitling and literally captioning Etant Donnés . . . with what one might call a key (the tableau's title is taken directly from the prefatory note in the Green Box<sup>7</sup>), Duchamp's annotation to the Large Glass, 1915-23 (Fig. 4), Duchamp directs the viewer to his personal lexicon, iconography and, typically, his oeuvre.<sup>8</sup> As in another earlier work, To Be Looked at (from the Other side of the Glass) with One Eye, Close to, for Almost an Hour], 1918 (Fig. 5), the artist also directs the viewer's line of sight: Through the two apertures, "les trous de voyeur," drilled into the aged Spanish door, Duchamp provides the eyepiece and perspective through which the viewer must negotiate his work. Since the reproduction of Etant Donnés . . . was prohibited, the relation of the work to a critical position, furthermore, became conditional to a certain presence--claiming for the work both an aspect of distance and, thus, of aura, as well as an intimacy that denied the critic a safe remove from which to objectify the tableau.

Although it is not clear whether Duchamp intended for there to be a prohibition, one can only assume that the agreement between the Cassandra Foundation, to whom Duchamp had "sold" the tableau, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art was in accordance with his wishes. The agreement, established between Duchamp's designated representative, the Cassandra

Foundation, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art--signed on July 1, 1969, one week before the tableau's unveiling--had been previously discussed between Duchamp and William N. Copley, in whose hands and foundation Duchamp had entrusted the disposition of the work and who had been one of the few people to visit the artist's studio and see the tableau during the early part of the decade.<sup>9</sup> (See Appendix.)

Ultimately, Etant Donnés . . . is about the way we see and the way we understand ourselves through the act of vision. To an unprecedented degree the tableau problematizes spectatorship, turning the spectator into an almost unlimited field of inquiry. As such, Etant Donnés . . . is prototypical of a central issue in the intellectual avant-garde of much of recent art: the tableau-assemblage refuses to take for granted the repressive, historically-encoded field of vision--a legacy of principally French-derived abstraction whose optical concerns essentially equated the canvas with vision itself. Because he could not accept the hierarchies and a priori visual field of much of the last century of Western European painting, Duchamp inverted the entire optical relationship between viewer as subject and the work of art as object. In the end, both literally and figuratively, the spectator is placed at the center of Etant Donnés . . ., becoming at once a viewer and a player, the subject and the object of Duchamp's remarkable tableau.

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Although housed in a separate room, the presence of the work, ironically, is only obscurely indicated by a label on the opposite wall. Hence, the museum visitor either completely ignores it or "invariably [approaches] it," as Octavio Paz has written, "after a moment of hesitation and disorientation."<sup>10</sup> Peering through the door's apertures, the spectator is immediately, albeit subliminally, seized. Through a secondary, larger breach in what one realizes momentarily is a brick wall, one sees a faceless nude female figure lying recumbent on a bed of branches, her legs spread open. A gas lamp, held slightly aloft in her left hand, illuminates her anatomy. Beyond the intimacy and detail of this immediate scene lies an enchanted Eden, replete with dense bush and forest, a waterfall that runs off into a mist-laden pond, and a blue sky lightly dappled by clouds. A vision at once revelatory and enigmatic, its beholder is gripped by the dream's paradoxically concentrated sense of richness and indefiniteness; and, as in the dream's composite sense of the subject, the image is also one of dislocation such as that projected in the wedding of the Bride's flesh against the coarse underbrush. (In the parlance of venery, the broken branches, or "brisées," on which the Bride is "embedded" refer to the snapped twigs that indicate the presence of game. Duchamp undoubtedly was also playing with the second meaning of venery: the pursuit of sexual pleasure.)

Duchamp's analytic conception of the self produces a new schema for the observer--ironically accentuated again by the tableau's "precisely indifferent" placement of the spectator--repositioning him or her as subject in a construction that involves the interdependence and co-

existence of the verbal and the visual "at the level at which the subject constitutes himself out of the effects of the signifier"--at the level of the unconscious.<sup>11</sup> In the active and multiply-significant roles that Duchamp designed for the viewer to experience in Etant Donnés . . ., none is perhaps more ironic than that of the reenactment, through the observer's extremely defined placement, of the illusion of exactitude and specificity of meaning in language. For just as Saussure defined the arbitrary and differential terms of language, "in the linguistic system there are only differences, without positive terms," Duchamp sought to define the space and identity of the spectator as dependent both on an eccentric source of information and a system of differences that are themselves arbitrary.<sup>12</sup>

The trials of seduction that occur between the Bride and her bachelors in the Large Glass are really the labors of self-identification, and depend on a certain apprehension of the "gaze" or of an exterior position to the self (the Bride, after all, sees herself only through the eyes of the bachelors). And the Bride's desire to be seen, or to secure her identity, as psychoanalysis has proven, involves a process of internalizing the outside world; as Lacan's account of the mirror stage illustrates, this procedure of self-definition increasingly becomes dependent upon an exteriority, on taking in what is "other." What occurs in Etant Donnés . . . is that the observer's experience of this relation to the world, of subjectivity--whether manifest in the dialectic between the "look" and the "gaze," within the symbolic function of speech, or through Duchamp's symbolic construction of woman---remains one of division or formlessness.

Duchamp often defined the manner and sometimes even the position and angle by which the spectator should view his work--as in Rotative plaques verre (Rotary Glass Plates), 1920 (Fig. 31), subtitled "point de vue à 1m dans l'axe." The first of his optical machines, which he also called "precision optics," Rotative plaques verre was composed of five recessed glass plates, each painted with black and white concentric segments of circles (together forming a spiral) that, when seen rotating around a motor-driven axle, form continuous circles that seem to oscillate in depth.<sup>13</sup> The objective of Duchamp's prescriptive viewing, however, was to endow the spectator with a sense of self-determination. As with his various optical works, machines, and especially (in his opinion) with his experimental film of 1924-26, Anémic Cinéma (Fig. 6), Duchamp was able to achieve a three-dimensionality "not with a complicated machine and a complicated technique, but in the eyes of the onlooker, by a psychophysiological process."<sup>14</sup>

The only filmic work that the artist would complete among several collaborative efforts with Man Ray, the seven-minute long Anémic Cinéma represents Duchamp's desire to wed the verbal and the visual. Duchamp's specific address of the contingent, subjective aspects of perception--the chance effects of optics, the arbitrary semantic interpretations of the viewer--defined a "precision optics" that delighted him: "It was a scientific phenomenon which existed in another way than when I found it."<sup>15</sup> Paralleling such a discovery was Duchamp's use of language, as "objets trouvés," and of the unexpected gestalt that would result in the

unpredictable and ironic inflection of words that soon became an added component of his optical work.<sup>16</sup> In Anémic Cinéma, for example, Duchamp demonstrates the ambiguity of the visual field as tied to that of language: Juxtaposing nine verbal discs (alliterative punning phrases in spiral form) with ten abstract optical discs (spiraling circles), he intersects formal and conceptual aspects within a dialectical--repetitive (linguistic/circular) yet unpredictable (illusionist/semantic)--perceptual experience of meaning and form. As he would recall in 1966, the year Etant Donnés . . . was completed, what had interested him most (with Anémic Cinéma) was "the concept that two different people watching a disc at the same time would not be perceiving it in exactly the same way all the time."<sup>17</sup>

Etant Donnés . . . is about vision. And it is this subject that will be the starting point of my dissertation as I consider some of the recent shifts in art historical thinking on the issue of vision and viscosity. I believe that such discussions can be most illuminating when thinking about a work like Etant Donnés . . .--a voyeuristic experience that reconfigures the very act of vision itself as involving, in contrast to the preponderance of the "retinal," the analytical process--"the grey matter of our understanding" as the artist would say.<sup>18</sup> For Duchamp, as Jean Clair has observed, that which constituted optical experience was not always readily perceivable, since such optical effects as stereoscopy or anaglyphy require mental operations beyond certain peoples' capability.<sup>19</sup> Beyond the readymade's obvious opposition and/or transcendence of the institutional hierarchies that defined art at the time, and in contrast to its expressive neutrality, Duchamp

was concerned with the notion that vision, no less than meaning, was arbitrary, constructed and subjective--a belief that "visuality" was not simply "given" to the spectator but was produced autonomously by the viewer as well as by other cultural formations.

Another area of his production, the rotary devices of the 1920s, permitted him to eschew the seemingly obligatory and traditional role of the artist as interpreter of nature.<sup>20</sup> By specifying the conditions of observation--as in his Rotary Glass Plates--Duchamp to an extent parodies the very presumption of the artist as the master of perception or the arbiter of objectivity. Just as he had done with the readymade, Duchamp again was challenging the standard criteria that defines the experience of art. Now, even more pointedly, he would address the critical apparatus of the viewer, undoing any sense of objectivity. Duchamp, late during the second decade of this century, gave up painting and turned instead to optics: he was now interested in producing not just a more abstract or mutable object of perception but a more autonomous viewer. He would now see the critical frame of subjectivity as involving more than the physical operation of seeing or the acquisition of aesthetic taste; it was a complex set of social and psychophysiological determinants.<sup>21</sup>

This is what I believe, at least in part, Duchamp was thinking about when he developed his optical "inventions" as remedial optics. With such corrective devices, visuality is examined in order to determine whether it has become "fixed"<sup>22</sup>--treating only appearance and not apparition, the dimension that Duchamp set against it. Through this oppositional scheme,

Duchamp would define the viewer's complex relation to the visible-- between that which is "given" or seen and something "other" that is absent or invisible. What the tableau's "stripping of the nude" reveals, voyeuristically (since that which is seen is not known as such), is the unveiling of visibility at the level of the configuration of the sign.<sup>23</sup> It is not just the conceptual duality of the sign that ultimately permeates and defines the texture of the image, of all that is visible and beyond, but its formal and anamorphic condition as well: its double spatial condition of surface and form. Duchamp extended this concept into a formal category through his descriptive term "infra-thin" (infra-mince) and its relationship to the formal properties of the mold: "infrathin separation - better/ than screen, because it indicates/ interval (taken in another sense) - separation/ has the 2 senses male and female."<sup>24</sup>

There is, of course, an abstract side to the concept of "infra-thin," and its implications go beyond the reciprocal accommodations of  $n + 1$  dimensional configurations. Duchamp's will toward neutralizing opposition--such as art objects "which are not works of 'art'" or his devising a non-referential language--must be extended to his demonstrable inquiry into subjectivity and identity. Duchamp's semiotic perception of the faceless nude thus enacts what the artist sought throughout his oeuvre (with the readymade, stereometry, much of his literary work, themes such as androgyny): a neutral subject or semiosis whose erasure of difference still maintains an irreducible trace of infra-thin division. As such, gender or language becomes disembodied and fashioned as negative or ambivalent

space, and form seeks to divest itself of the material world, such as in Door of Gradiva, 1937 (Fig. 7), or The, 1915 (Fig. 32), both indeterminate spaces that remain ambiguous and wholly undefined. But this conflict generally concerns the individual, as in the crude conflation of identity and language in the portrait of Carl Van Vechten's wife, Fania (Profile), 1916 (Fig. 33).<sup>25</sup> Whether it is the 9 Malic Molds, 1914-15 (Fig. 34) of the Large Glass (referred to by Duchamp as "uniforms or hollow liveries . . . [who] will never be able to pass beyond the Mask"), whose forms contain the unstable illuminating gas, or Written Rotten, 1939 (Fig. 35), Duchamp's "musical" words without notes, or the readymade's display of indifference, this literal hollowing out or abstracting of the subject increasingly prevails.<sup>26</sup> What the "eye" sees staged in the tableau's theatre of representation, is the mold--a fundamental theme in the oeuvre<sup>27</sup>--the root symbolization of the figurative "I"--an "I" that can never be more than a linguistic illusion, a figure of speech that marks our hopeless descent into language and our illusory attempt to name ourselves in this sea of words.<sup>28</sup>

The above ideas suggest another important aspect of this dissertation, one that will bring the issue of vision into another vital and contiguous area: the relationship between the way we see and the way in which we attempt to construct a sense of ourselves. The tableau extends the epistemological project of the readymade--wherein the meaning/function of a "patently" known, public object, whether a urinal, coatrack or bicycle wheel (Figs. 36, 37 and 38), is realized anew by the individual; now, the artist relates the readymade's phenomenological imperative to the idea of a

contingent and constructed "self." Duchamp cultivated and formalized this "infra-thin" difference through various plastic means, such as the plaster mold on which he forged the vellum skin of the Bride of Etant Donnés . . ., which in its "inside/outside" formation rearticulates the work's dialectic of subjectivity between optical and psychic space. (This differentiation of internal and external has been further enriched and dramatized by the psychoanalytic topographies of the ego, id, and superego which map the self's complex engagement of reality.)

The visual dynamic of the narrative of the Large Glass--that the Bride sees herself through the eyes of the Bachelors--is then protracted in the tableau: now that which is rarely seen, the female genitalia, and which the Bride cannot see herself, is revealed to the voyeur/viewer. The invisible brought to light? But as what? The enigma of sexuality, of symbolization, and of the notion of privacy or of a private self, addresses the overriding issue of Duchamp's solipsism and conversely whether the notion of a self is viable at all. Whereas the Large Glass is literally reflective of our material environment, it also suggests our ephemeral existence in the world: Etant Donnés . . ., in its x-ray-like "extra rapid exposure" and focus on the scopic drive, penetrates and reveals the "optic unconscious" as a space in which the self, with all its "eccentricities" and layered subjective registrations, is constructed.

In a talk delivered in 1957, in Houston, entitled "The Creative Act," Duchamp not only cited subjectivity as the "mechanism that produces art in the raw," but he continued to devalue the mythic status and power of the

artist by increasingly validating the spectator; it is the viewer, he argued, who "brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications . . . adds his contribution to the creative act."<sup>29</sup> The idea of Duchamp's "dispossession" of the self, a concept derived initially from the decision-making principle of the readymade and later from his conferral upon the viewer of an extraordinary independence and arbitrariness in determining the meaning of his work, remained at odds with the "self-determined," existential and gestural surfaces and meanings of Abstract Expressionism. Indeed, the timing of Etant Donnés . . .'s unveiling could not have been more auspicious: Throughout the 1960s, Duchamp's ideas had helped forge a minimalist, Pop, and conceptual aesthetic that was an alternative to the hyperbolic, self-absorbed machinations of Abstract Expressionist painting.

From the recondite, abstract and textual domain of the Large Glass, Duchamp's narrative of eroticism steadily surfaced, although obliquely; its trajectory progressed from the sexual, undulating illusions of his rotating optical disks to the facticity of fragments of the body either mirrored or molded to the final phenomenal encounter with the "real," the "oculist witnessing" of the Bride in the tableau. The body's dissemination--a defining concept in Duchamp's oeuvre (the total output of which became uniquely the artist's surrogate, "I am nothing if not an artist")--at times assumed literal proportions, as with Paysage fautif (Wayward Landscape), 1946 (Fig. 39), one of the deluxe edition of the Boîte-en-valise, 1936-42 (Fig. 1), composed of his seminal fluid, or another of the edition that included

head, axillary and pubic hair taped to a piece of Plexiglas, Untitled, 1936 (Fig. 40).<sup>30</sup>

Duchamp's dissolution of the self functions on several levels: we see it, for one, both in the dispersion of his gendered and nominal self across the surface of the Large Glass and in the progeny of disembodied plaster molds produced throughout the 1950s (such as Torture-morte, 1959, or With My Tongue in My Cheek, 1959 [Figs. 41 and 42]), themselves reminiscent of the quasi-abstract, erotically corporealized visual effects of the "precision optics" just mentioned above . This dissolution is also evident in the readymade, where the artist's playing-out of the female role, Rose Sélavy (Fig. 16), compounds this mythologization of the body by further emasculating the creative individuality of the artist or "Supermale" through the annulment of the notion of mastery and by the integration of his female side.<sup>31</sup> And invariably this experience of ambiguity, loss or limitation involves language, and the subject's status as determined through the function of the Other, which, according to Jacques Lacan, whether "latent or not, is, even beforehand, present in the subjective revelation. It is already there, when something has begun to yield itself from the unconscious."<sup>32</sup> Through such a dialectical, "infra-thin" perspective, and seeming deconstruction of a centered and knowing subject, Duchamp manages to present the "self's radical ex-centricity to itself."<sup>33</sup>

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Before I can consider the two central issues of this dissertation--the complex role of the visual in Duchamp's work and its complicity in the formation of selfhood--I must first digress to a brief overview of Duchamp studies in general and the critical writing on Etant Donnés . . . in particular. Through the textual appendage of its title from the Green Box (Fig. 42), Duchamp invites us to consider the image, or "extra rapid exposure," as an "allegorical appearance," a "state of Rest" in all its innumerable "eccentricities." Thus, for the critic, he provides a kind of conceptual free play--a textual space for examining, questioning, and interpreting his motives and ideas. Because of the ostensible diversity of both his oeuvre and writings, much of the literature on Duchamp has focused on one or another of his various strategies in order to discover an essential meaning and continuity to his work.

But these thematic strategies--whether they be chance, fourth-dimension, alchemy, non-Euclidian geometry, puns--must be called into question as a unifying force for understanding Duchamp. Some writers have tended to observe Duchamp's own embrace of contradiction and his attack on the notion of identity by avoiding a systemic reading of his work. This view, expressed, for example, by Duchamp's stepson, Paul Matisse, rests on the belief that a systemic approach to Duchamp's work precludes understanding the fundamental contradiction and polyvalence in his work: "Instead of altering our structure of understanding so that this work and words could make sense to us just as they are, we have tried again and again to translate his expression into a form that will fit into our own structure of

understanding just as it has always been."<sup>34</sup> Even close friend Robert Lebel, as late as 1985, concluded that there is no ultimate meaning and that such a search was futile because Duchamp's work "insolently rejects any solution, any key which might be applied."<sup>35</sup> Or as Rudolf Keunzli has written, "the endlessly multiple and contradictory meanings in Duchamp's work challenge any interpretative discourse as perhaps no other work has done."<sup>36</sup> The vast critical response the oeuvre has generated is a testament both to Duchamp's thematic and intellectual range and to the degree to which the oeuvre profoundly anticipates the critical discourse that has emerged throughout the period of structuralism and poststructuralism.<sup>37</sup>

In viewing both of Duchamp's major works as part of a monumental philosophical enterprise, Paz, for example, presages a shift from an iconographic approach to alternative, cross-disciplinary methodologies.<sup>38</sup> Though his own approach sees the *Bride*, and the *tableau*, ultimately, as continuing in the line of mythopoetic structures of twenty-five hundred years of Western and Eastern cultural tradition (he locates Duchamp's concepts in various esoterica, such as Tantric and Classical myths, Eleusinian mysteries, Neoplatonism, and the erotic traditions of courtly love, none of which he notes need have been a "direct or consciously sought influence"), Paz argues for a broader context for reading this convertible semiotic dimension of meaning beyond that metaphorized in the oeuvre by the theme of n-dimensionality (on which the critical literature has tended to focus since the publication in 1966 of *A l'Infinif* (Fig. 44), the collection of Duchamp's mathematically-upgraded notes from 1912-20, also called the

White Box).<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, according to critics even as diverse in their critical methodology as Rosalind Krauss and Paz, Duchamp's conceptual and formal diversity--the semiotic status of his early work,<sup>40</sup> the function of chance and its relationship to intention as well as to other of his concepts such as the readymade,<sup>41</sup> the position of the viewer and the reversibility of gender position,<sup>42</sup> the speculations on the homologies of thought and representation, the interaction of the literal and the figurative, n-dimensional geometric relativism, to name a few--defines not a system but a philosophical model of theoretical inquiry (a precursor of deconstruction that in many ways paralleled Duchamp's critical project). The resilience of this model can be seen in the way his oeuvre engenders a discursive framework, one which does not attempt to establish a coherent position. But rather, in its analytical, deconstructive strategies, Duchamp's work holds out the possibility that art can serve as a vehicle for examining such notions as identity or the a priori formulations of meaning.

One work that presaged such a critical approach was Lebel's early monograph on Duchamp, in 1959, which was exceedingly influential and has been underestimated in this regard. Although superseded by Arturo Schwarz' definitive catalogue raisonné a decade later, Lebel's book became the initial vehicle through which a diverse group of artists received Duchamp, and its publication precipitated an avalanche of Duchamp-oriented aesthetics and scholarship in America. Lebel's analysis centered on the erotic narrative of the Large Glass, its multiple themes of

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communication, gender, identity, as well as the artist's disfigurement of language and his involvement in strategies of self-inquiry and even of self-portraiture. As such, he combined more hermetic, iconographic readings of the artist's work with psychological and analytical methodologies, arguing that Duchamp's confrontation with the erotic "plunged him into the depths of the organic unconscious" and plunged his work "into the domain of intersubjective relations." Lebel emphasized Duchamp's tendency toward "disassociation," his obsession with "the distance, the separateness which exists between individuals," and his intent to recreate the erotic in the mechanomorphic paintings of 1911-12.<sup>43</sup>

By the time Etant Donnés . . . appeared, however, Duchamp's oeuvre had already been interpreted according to various, often arcane, hermeneutic designs, such as the fourth dimension or non-Euclidian geometry<sup>44</sup>, or the esoterica of alchemical symbolism (a legacy of hermetic interpretation begun by André Breton, but given wider advocacy throughout the 1950s by Jean Reboul and René Alleau<sup>45</sup> and later by Ulf Linde, Arturo Schwarz and Nicolas Calas).<sup>46</sup> Perhaps because of this, the effect that the unexpected tableau and its hyperrealism had was indeed startling.

The seeming revelation of a puzzle whose parts have all been seen before, the amalgamated Etant Donnés . . . is similar to another collected "lifework" of the "artist-respirateur"<sup>47</sup>--the Box-in-a-Valise, 1941, a work itself initially viewed through a peepshow format designed by Frederick Kiesler for the exhibition "First Papers of Surrealism," at Peggy

Guggenheim's Art of this Century Gallery in 1942 ( Fig. 45).<sup>48</sup> Kiesler's installation design for viewing Duchamp's Boîte-en-valise prefigured the voyeuristic experience of the tableau. The installation consisted of an enclosed "peepshow" display into which the individual viewer had to privately peer.

Yet unlike the latter, a scaled-down and multiple "portable museum," the singular, life-size Etant Donnés . . . is an enlargement of previous works, an erotic and immobile environment meant to be disassembled ("approximation démontable") and mounted but once--marking, appropriately, the passage from the virgin to the bride.<sup>49</sup> The Bride, as it essentially appears in the tableau, does derive, at least in its plastic conception, from the two initial studies that Duchamp made in the mid- to late 1940s--a pencil drawing on paper, Etant Donnés: Maria, la chute d'eau et la gaz d'éclairage, 1947 (?) (Fig. 46); and an elaborate vellum on plaster relief, Etant donnés le gaz d'éclairage et la chute d'eau, 1948-49 (Fig. 47)--both of which Duchamp gave to his close friend, the Brazilian sculptor Mme Maria Martins, and were subsequently bequeathed to the Moderna Museet in Stockholm.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, as Francis Naumann has recently suggested, so strong is the connection between these studies and Mme Martins, with whom Duchamp was perhaps romantically involved, that her role in the evolution of the tableau and its ultimate interpretation must be taken into account.<sup>51</sup> Further evidence of intimacy between the two artists may be deduced from the fact that Duchamp also dedicated Paysage fautif to Maria Martins; the artist included this work in one of his deluxe editions of the Boîte-en-valise,

which he inscribed to Maria Martins and gave to her on April 6, 1946.<sup>52</sup>

Whether or not Duchamp's relationship with Maria Martins, who, as Naumann suggests, may have served as the model for the initial figurative conception of the tableau as well as its muse, was a principal influence, source or impetus for the tableau's being made is unimportant. For the work's thematic contextualization lies unquestionably bracketed by the Large Glass and the Green Box; this Duchamp made perfectly clear. But the significance Naumann ascribes to the unfulfilled love that Duchamp appears to have felt for the unavailable Mme Martins, living in Rio de Janeiro married to a Brazilian diplomat, is indeed relevant to the theoretical issues of desire and sexual frustration that are central to Etant Donnés . . ..

When Etant Donnés . . . first posthumously appeared in public, its long, secretive gestation only added to its inevitable status as a culmination and a coda to Duchamp's oeuvre: Was this final revelation of the Bride a kind of resolution to the oeuvre or yet another enigma? What or whom was the voyeur/viewer/oculist witnessing in this final "state of Rest" of Rose Sélavy: Duchamp's own death? For the aspect of illumination as well as that of "still-life" is not unlike that of a vanitas or of a memento mori, reflecting the idea of the impermanence of the natural world. The  $n + 1$  dimensional, "pendu" Bride's fall into the three real dimensions? The "positive" image of the Large Glass' photographic negative? The Bride's post-coital state? Accepting the tableau as pendant to the Large Glass, most critics have seen it as representative of either the final revelation and conclusion to the putative seduction and transitive action of disrobement of the Bride<sup>53</sup> (and

that Duchamp has provided the temporal perimeters of the "moment" of both works, the "not yet" of the Large Glass and the "too late" of Etant Donnés . . .) or as a conceptual and/or perceptual in- or con-version<sup>54</sup> of the Large Glass, that is, an  $n - 1$  dimensional transformation.<sup>55</sup>

While the former issue will always remain speculative, the latter has generated a certain critical literary consensus. There is no denying that the tableau does function within the prescribed conceptual/perceptual dialectic of its predecessor: either it reads as a kind of "appearance" of the "apparitional" Large Glass or, correlatively, as a three-dimensional cast derived from the two-dimensional mold of the Large Glass.<sup>56</sup> The three-dimensional Etant Donnés . . . might even function as the second of a trilogy, anticipating a final unimagined, four-dimensional rendering of the Bride.<sup>57</sup>

Many of these issues were first addressed in relation to Etant Donnés . . . in 1969 in an essay by Anne d'Harnoncourt and Walter Hopps, published as an issue of the Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin, to commemorate the work's installation.<sup>58</sup> The essay represents the first attempt at reading the maze of cross-references between the Large Glass and the later tableau-assemblage, many of which Duchamp made explicit with works such as Eau et gaz à tous les étages (Water & Gas on Every Floor), 1958, suggesting the two natural forces that power both works (Fig. 48).<sup>59</sup>

By approaching the "multidimensional nature" of Duchamp's oeuvre through a preliminary analysis of the artist's notes, d'Harnoncourt and Hopps begin to delineate several major Duchampian themes that are echoed

in the tableau. The authors' intentionally broad-based approach examines, for example, the artist's "personal physics," as explored within his notes. This "mythic, pseudo-scientific system which utilized the tools of chance, humor, and ironic indifference," established a "meta-reality" based on paradox in which any given element is capable of contradiction and therefore suggestive of multiple interpretations.<sup>60</sup>

Emphasizing Duchamp's ability to create works that interconnect with a certain fertile but "provisional" relativity, d'Harnoncourt and Hopps' offer an insightful, albeit brief, enumeration of Duchamp's complex themes in Etant Donnés . . .. While cross-referencing these refigured ideas of perspective, molds, and eroticism--"a succession of a group of various facts seeming to necessitate each other"<sup>61</sup>--the authors choose not to discuss the new work independently but prefer to establish the contextual breath of the tableau in the oeuvre. Despite its profound correlation to the Large Glass and to many specific narrative details noted in the Green Box, they do not see Etant Donnés . . . necessarily as a "sequel in time or in narrative to the events adumbrated in the Large Glass" but rather as an "alternative vision of the same elements" narrated and executed, respectively, in the Green Box and the Large Glass.<sup>62</sup> Citing, for example, Duchamp's particular philosophy of perspective--"any form is the perspective of another form according to a certain vanishing point at a certain distance"<sup>63</sup>--the authors extrapolate on such fundamental ideas as "apparition and appearance," "negatives," and "molds" in terms of the relationship between the tableau and the Large Glass, alluding to the possibility that "perhaps the Glass and

Etant Donnés . . . are the projections of the same invisible configuration onto two different dimensional systems" or "perhaps the relationship . . . is that one is the apparition, or even the 'negative apparition' of the other-- 'negative' being used by Duchamp in the sense of a photographic negative (two dimensions) or a mold (three dimensions)."64

Recognizing the many ways in which the stylistically anomalous Etant Donnés . . . interlocks with numerous other of Duchamp's works, the essay makes a substantive contribution as it views the oeuvre almost atemporally. The tableau thus at once yields a profile but resists an autobiographical or conventional formal morphology: "The limited number of things Duchamp made constitutes an oeuvre of such concentration and density that it reads not only forward in time with the chronological progression of his career, but backward and even sideward (to the written notes and puns). Objects that appeared forty years earlier are now seen to foreshadow Etant Donnés . . .; and the tableau begs us to examine earlier objects that formerly appeared incidental, casting them anew as ciphers of a central preoccupation."65

While enumerating Duchamp's lexicon and theoretical speculations, d'Harnoncourt and Hopps' focus on an alternative universe of "plastic" ideas. Their expressed task, however, is not to definitively decipher Duchamp's heavily encoded work and ideas but to lay the interpretive groundwork for future investigations; in the end, they faithfully adhere to Duchamp's refusal of closure, his wish that his work ultimately be freely interpreted by the viewer.<sup>66</sup> For this is part of the creative process

Duchamp bequeathed to the spectator: "Ce sont les REGARDEURS qui font les tableaux."<sup>67</sup> "The assemblage is what we make of it," the authors write, "much of what it means is how we react." D'Harnoncourt and Hopps thus see Etant Donnés . . . and the twenty years of its idiosyncratic evolution as Duchamp's final embodiment of this philosophy. Returning "art to its etymological source in the verb 'to make,'" and, most important, in completing this artistic cycle, Duchamp returns creativity to the viewer as well.<sup>68</sup>

While d'Harnoncourt and Hopps refused to isolate definitive "motives" for Duchamp's work, some critics initially suspected that the artist had a specific agenda. They argued that his reformulation of earlier elements and issues germane to the Large Glass now needed to be decoded (based on various works from the 1940s and 1950s related to the theme of the Large Glass, to which Duchamp had returned upon arriving in New York in 1942, up to Eau & gaz à tous les étages [Fig. 48], which appeared in 1958).<sup>69</sup> After seeing the painted relief Given the Illuminating Gas and the Waterfall, 1948-49 (Fig. 47), at the Tate Gallery retrospective in London, in 1966, Arturo Schwarz, for example, states in his catalogue raisonné that he suspected that Duchamp was secretly working on a major piece. The title of this work, its chronological position in the oeuvre (appearing just before Female Fig Leaf, 1950 [Fig. 23], itself an apparent detail of the relief, and other additional "casts" that appeared to be details of some larger work), and Duchamp's confirmation in 1966 that this small work was the Bride, all contributed to Schwarz' sense that Duchamp was secretly planning a larger, inclusive variation on his earlier themes.<sup>70</sup>

Ascribing to the work a proscriptive union--the incest theme that dooms the Bride and her admiring Bachelors of the Large Glass to their solitary sexual resolution--Schwarz sees the tableau as a further elaboration of a central theme: the murderous consequences of an unchecked eros. This pleasure-principle, in contest with Thanatos, is avoided by the intervention of the reality-principle.<sup>71</sup> For Schwarz, Duchamp's note from the Green Box is both an explanation and a confirmation of the necessary prohibition of the artist's incestuous desire (for his sister Suzanne).<sup>72</sup>

The note also employs the kind of stylistic repetition that Schwarz uses to confirm his narrative reading of Etant Donnés . . .. Emphasizing that the Notice in French (avertissement) means warning, Schwarz states that the Notice is "a fuller and more elaborate version of the Preface," without, however, analogizing this element of repetition to Duchamp's two major works or further elaborating on this and other elements, such as desire or danger, in the broader context of Duchamp's formal or linguistic themes.<sup>73</sup> Though, in relating his interpretation of the above to the following note in the Green Box, entitled Algebraic comparison, which further expounds on the idea of a "sign of accordance,"  $a/b$ , Schwarz emphasizes that Duchamp was formulating these ideas while "striving for a form of art as dry and impersonal as possible . . . that of mathematics." In other words, while all of this relates to a particular repressed signified, the "immaterial incest"--the numerical ratio or a given number--is unimportant. Schwarz is instead concerned with the psychodynamic, relational aspect of the sign, the conciliating "accordance" between the pleasure and reality principles.

Schwarz continues to read the incest theme as the cause--the prohibiting reality principle--for the failure of fulfillment in both works. As such, he signals an important dimension of prohibition: the threat of death. In both works the dynamic of pleasure does not exceed desire; desire is a condition that exceeds the demand (for love?), and even when apparently fulfilled, is a solitary and thus questionably satisfying pleasure.<sup>74</sup> By exposing the futility of this fundamental dynamic within pleasure--the repressed desire that is related to death--Schwarz, despite his problematic iconographical approach, presages a theoretical analysis of Etant Donnés . . . in terms of sexuality as representation, as "pictorial nominalism."

The maintenance in the tableau of the arbitrariness of meaning and measurement (spatial and temporal), of gender, of perpetually redefining "stoppages"--has reinforced the view that Etant Donnés . . . establishes a Neo-platonic perceptual system that operates within a topological universe of equivalent, reciprocal form.<sup>75</sup> "No symbol has an immutable meaning," Paz has observed in reference to Duchamp, "the meaning depends on the relation."<sup>76</sup> Certainly, the recontextualization of the Large Glass, as restated in Etant Donnés . . ., represents the oeuvre in general, one which has been described as "a discourse ruled by rational syntax and delirious semantics," a Rousselian journey that "begins where it ends."<sup>77</sup> This fundamental idea of conversion, of Duchamp's "distended" physics, furthermore, underlies Duchamp's philosophical approach--his idea that what we see as appearance, or what Paz has referred to as "universal anamorphosis," is

simply a projection of another projection. The apparent paradox is clarified inasmuch as Duchamp, as a nominalist, did not attempt to represent reality either as unequivocal fact or truthfulness, but rather, again, as an apparitional projection or hinge.<sup>78</sup>

Jean-François Lyotard advances this analogy to the hinge as part of an argument that sees Etant Donnés . . . as a continuation of the metaphysical inquiry of space, time, and representation begun by the Large Glass. Although the tableau represents a "popular, pornographic, pagan formulation" of the earlier "ascetic and critical plastic formulation . . . both [works] are formulations of one and the same object . . . a name, the name of the woman laid bare."<sup>79</sup> "A hinge or a projection operating between two times," the name "La mariée mise à nu . . ." produces an equivocal temporality, a stripping that has not yet taken place; whereas in the tableau, this action has already happened.<sup>80</sup> The tableau, as Lyotard has written, is yet another of Duchamp's "spaces" in an oeuvre in which the symmetries Kant called "incongruent" abound--another of "a multiplicity of apparatuses that transform units of energy into one another." Erected on a foundation of "hinges in logic," such as "and/or," Lyotard notes how such "paradoxical operators" upend notions of congruence, "if p, then q," defeating in the name of "ironic causality," anything "serious," such as "logical causality."<sup>81</sup>

Lyotard maintains that such "neutral" and "programmatic" mechanisms above all characterize the general connection between Duchamp's two major works. This overriding "hinge," however, if not

necessarily playing a subordinate or exponential role for the tableau in the oeuvre, virtually contextualizes the latter work within the terms of the Large Glass. This perhaps can be explained by Lyotard's determination that Duchamp's various Boxes of notes essentially pertain only to "the conception and realization of the Large Glass" ("We know of no text analogous to the Boxes for Given").<sup>82</sup> His examination of the artist's morphological development of the tableau is thus restricted to the ideas and conceptual apparatus with which Duchamp was concerned throughout the period he worked on the Large Glass.<sup>83</sup>

Eschewing such methodology and art historical specificity, others have provided the tableau with a kind of exogenous reading, a response that merges art historical research with fiction. Thomas Zaunschirm, for example, while first "shocked and bored" when he initially encountered Etant Donnés . . ., intended to write a book on the tableau in the form of a novel, the proper medium in his opinion to demonstrate the unique connection between Duchamp's work and his daily life--an illustration of a fundamental Surrealist principle in which "unrelated realities can be associated."<sup>84</sup> Instead, he wrote a critical study on Etant Donnés . . ., the last of a trilogy of writings dealing with Duchamp. The book is a compilation of "facts," a network of data derived from Duchamp's life/work, which, according to this principle, opens onto an infinite array of possible meanings.

While the tableau has been considered from a number of vantages--from its universal mythic themes to its realization of the vast allegories of

the Large Glass as textualized in the Green Box--the work continues to generate critical and philosophical consideration. This observation is further supported by the recent art historical interest in body and gender issues and the major shifts in theoretical methodologies in the humanities in general and in Dada and Surrealist studies in particular. Rosalind Krauss, for example, has attempted to critique a certain Modernist understanding of the "retinal" and the autonomous aspects of visuality upon which much of its production is founded.<sup>85</sup> Exploring the conditions of an optical unconscious, Krauss addresses the nexus between vision and desire in Duchamp's work, determining that throughout his series of "precision optics" Duchamp was developing an erotic theater whose illusions were figured by a corporealized vision. Krauss' analysis of Duchamp's "carnality of vision" follows Lyotard's examination of Duchamp's work, and particularly the Large Glass, which, beyond its essential dispersion of the self in its nominal purview (MARIÉE/CELIBATAIRES) apportions the body as well. In short, for Lyotard, the Large Glass represents the psychophysiology of the cognitive act, "the eye and even the brain in the process of composing its objects, the images of these objects impressing the retina and the cortex according to laws of (de-) formation, which are their own and that organize the glass partition . . . the Large Glass, being the film, lets us see the conditions of impression that reign on the inside of the optical box. . . ." <sup>86</sup> Etant Donnés . . ., "being this box regulated as to its field, shows the external objects that appear to be seen from its inside (dark chamber)." <sup>87</sup> Compared with the apparitional status of the Glass, Etant

Donnés . . ., on the contrary, produces, for Lyotard, what Duchamp defined appearance to be: "the sum of the usual sensory evidence enabling one to have an ordinary perception of that object."<sup>88</sup>

Such an "ordinary perception," however, is predicated on the understanding of vision that Duchamp broached in the Large Glass, as arising from within and from outside the body. The "psychophysiological" model that informs Duchamp's broad representation of vision in the Glass suggests that vision itself doesn't stop at the retina but necessarily entails the "grey matter" that he felt was elided from art that focused too heavily on mere retinal aspects. Thus inextricably bound to the body as well as to the drives, vision as such is for Duchamp equated with his understanding of the self or of the unconscious, as ultimately invisible to itself. "The production of sensory stimulation," Krauss has written, "from within the body's own field, the optical system's porousness to the operations of its internal organs--this fact forever undermines the idea of vision's transparency to itself, substituting for that transparency a density and opacity of the viewing subject as the very precondition of his or her access to sight."<sup>89</sup>

As the work of Lyotard and Krauss suggests, recent Duchamp scholarship has replaced conventional hermeneutics (critical methodologies that attempt to decode a positive determination of meaning, reference, stylistic coherence or formal consistency) with an emphasis on the totality of the artist's psychophysiological being and on the need to expose visuality and gender as constructed and unstable. A three-day bilingual colloquium held at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, in

Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1987--on the occasion of that school's and Duchamp's hundredth anniversary--attempted to address some of these issues as well as to assess the current state of Duchamp studies.<sup>90</sup> Not surprisingly, Duchamp emerged at the colloquium as gendered, textual, and carnally visual. In addition to Krauss' efforts to further address the issue of the visual, Molly Nesbit, for example, examines the possible relationship between Duchamp's draughtsmanship and the gender-based instruction of drawing in the public education system of the Third Republic. Even André Gervais' intertextual and etymological mining of Duchamp's word-play is a reminder "that the onlooker is involved literally from head to toe . . . the entire body of Duchamp's visual and, especially, literary work is mapped onto the onlooker's body."

Such varied analysis is more a testament to Duchamp's myriad concerns than, as Paz suggests, whether or not a particular interpretation is empirically warranted by the oeuvre, with which invariably, as Lyotard has written of Duchamp, all "commentary will perforce be incongruent."<sup>91</sup> Yet for all its philosophical, literary, or allegorical content, Etant Donnés . . .'s depiction is quite literally the "exposure" of the nude--Duchamp's episodic Bride--finally descended the staircase, stripped bare, made visible.<sup>92</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

In order to understand the complexity and even uniqueness of Etant Donnés . . ., I believe that it is necessary to address the issues of human

subjectivity and the problematic formation of the self within the symbolic order--concerns that have received increasing focus since the important colloquium on Duchamp at Cerisy-la-Salle in 1977 (whose transcribed proceedings were published two years later).<sup>93</sup> As such, the central themes of this dissertation will continually return to these issues and the extent to which Duchamp himself rearticulated the various problematics of "intentionality" or of the narrative (after the readymade's disposal of the issue of personal affect) in terms of desire, continuing to investigate a notion of "lack of being" as fundamental to the nature and formation of selfhood. Therein lies what might appear to be a central paradox in Duchamp: for subjectivity understood within the context of contingency, or the variable nature of the signifier, is symptomatic of Duchamp's abiding concern for individuality beyond that cast by the "malic mould," and for the need, ultimately, to deconstruct such artificial formation in order to find one's own logic and "difference." Thus we are left with Duchamp's dramatic refusal to be stereotyped, "to conform to his own taste," or even to be identified as a Surrealist.

Duchamp's demand that the spectator meet the artistic ritual or "creative act" halfway, exemplifies his unwavering belief--despite his contrary efforts to deconstruct the notion of identity--in the individual. As such, the tableau itself forms a vital formal and structural space for examining the idea of the self, and its limits, in a specific visual as well as conceptual context.<sup>94</sup> The manner in which Duchamp represents, literally figures, such a space in the tableau, concerns the mysteries of "being" in

the world--compounded by paradox, irony, and chance--and can no longer be associated merely with a defeat of such notions as closure or causality. As this dissertation contends, Duchamp's opposition of appearance and apparition in Etant Donnés . . . is not involved with issues of transcendence, but rather with a sense of reality that opens onto the phenomenological. Thus representation is understood as decentering, and the self, the subject, as apparitional--always determined through a kind of exteriorized experience.

While the tableau, as a recapitulation of his "readymade" oeuvre, repeats a relentless defeat of semantics in terms of a discrete and idealized referential notion of identity or iconographic meaning,<sup>95</sup> its ironic emphasis on visibility, however, provides a quasi-phenomenological means by which the failure of meaning, and thus of an a priori determined sense of self, can be experienced through the active engagement of one's disconnected but contiguous relationship to reality.<sup>96</sup> (Thus the relevance, if only indirectly, of the "auratic," in terms of a primary spatio-temporal experience of art. Duchamp's own ambivalence concerning the auratic, or what Walter Benjamin referred to as the "unique phenomenon of distance," relates to his approach to the above mentioned notion of an elusive signified, the primacy and address of which--in its "unapproachability"--is to a constant state of becoming rather than a formed, having become; the notion of "being" defeating in this sense a univocal definition.)<sup>97</sup> In elaborating Duchamp's ultimate rejection of a unified, Cartesian subject and the notion of "being" through his understanding of how subjectivity is

structured in visuality, I have relied on Lacan's analysis of the interrelation between the subject and the object in vision, following the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty.<sup>98</sup>

By providing this parallel or multidimensional experience--of the structuration of the self--in and through the phenomenon of the image, Etant Donnés . . . permits such a methodological approach. For the phenomenology of the gaze, or an understanding of the special relationship an observer has to his or her own image, allows one not only to read and understand the formation of the symbolic but, in relation to the dialectic of subjectivity, produces a situation in which the spectator is subjugated by the image, becoming an object but also a subject within the world of the symbol. The viewer experiences Lacan's understanding of this embodiment of the symbolic within the Imaginary or specific terms of the visual.<sup>99</sup> Etant Donnés . . .'s integration of the alienating functions of language and the visual in the perceptual experience renders the unified gendered condition of subjectivity as illusory. This pivotal construction of an equivocal and represented self is clearly evident in his adoption of the female alter ego Rrose Sélavy, who shatters, by doubling, the "natural" order of sexual identity. The sense that one was defined--as well as alienated--by language could in effect be experienced or represented through numerous interdependent ways: the deconstruction of sexual identity; in visual terms, through the dialectical terms of the gaze; or through the fragmented body's corporeal representation of language's structure of desire.

Ultimately, Duchamp mythologizes the body by remapping the erotic onto the plane of representation specific to the unconscious, that is, subject to the distortions that characterize the language of the unconscious. From this synthesis of terms, both linguistic and psychosexual, Duchamp develops Etant Donnés . . . as a spectacle, one in which the "reality of the sensory appearance," as I will discuss in Chapter Four, assumes the status of apparition, as the "virtual representation of a mass analogous to its reflection in a mirror," in order that the real, not only the ideal fourth dimension, be construed as virtual--as representation.<sup>100</sup> Though I contend that the experience of Etant Donnés . . . represents a kind of phenomenology of the self, I am aware that such perceptions are a priori dependent on events, formations and symbolism. It is, however, as a result of such a stilled "moment," and at that level, that Duchamp divorces the corporeal from its figural status, and posits the structure of the self as arbitrary and unformed in order that it be imaged and bodily experienced as that which is abstract and symbolic as opposed to representational--a complex ontology (as well as the interrelation between science, philosophy, and the psychosexual in his work) that is suggestive of the phenomenological imperatives of the avant-garde of the 1960s.<sup>101</sup>

The tableau's specific visual concentration and consideration of the body relates as well to a variety of historical and psychological/sociological precedents--from Paleolithic "Venus" figurines to primal narcissistic fantasies. Its spectacle is thus one that derives from the functions and origins of art as well as the individual's own struggle of formation. What

results from the tableau's repeated moment of desire (as deferred) is that subjectivity is played out as a scene in which one experiences aphanisis, which Lacan has defined as "the movement of disappearance" or "the fading of the subject," extending this definition to include the notion of identity.<sup>102</sup>

The tableau ultimately creates a spectacle of the self, impelling a linguistic/semiological experience of the body as fragmented and displaceable. This operation involves an analogical experience of language: a momentary loss (metaphor) and reclamation of language (metonymy), as well as, in the freezing of the visual moment, a "stoppage" or "invisible repair" of appearance that I refer to above, which occurs throughout the oeuvre.<sup>103</sup> From the failure of communication in the Large Glass--where "words are not merely a means of communication" but become ciphers revealing the ambiguity or, worse, schism between reality and its representation--to the enigma of the tableau, there is a deliberate lack of closure in Duchamp's opaque shaping of meaning.<sup>104</sup> This symptom of the malaise of the linguistic signifier reaches its zenith in the tableau: If the nude does affect such a symbolic "castration" (of the Lacanian phallic signifier, underscored by Duchamp's ambiguous rendering of the nude), it does so paradoxically gesturing and bodying forth--literally and, within the terms of the rhetoric of the self, figuratively or apparitionally--both the mold and cast, the hollow echo of subjectivity, namely, speech.<sup>105</sup> Duchamp indeed abstracts sexuality, presenting a symbolic schematization of signification: through what appears to be an essentially rhetorical function, the figure's self-reflexive gesture is actually an act of doubling or

repetition and, as such, becomes a "signifier of signification."<sup>106</sup>

In Etant Donnés . . ., Duchamp also forcefully questions visuality, understanding its representational function within a complex of drives. By exposing this latency of representation within the visual, he exposes the issue of desire (as fragmented, even as a "fragmented body seeking itself out" upon which a sexed subjectivity is based).<sup>107</sup> It is in this sense that Duchamp's elaborate disassembly of the body, which characterizes both his literal expatriation and a significant portion of his oeuvre produced in the United States beginning with In the Manner of Delvaux, 1942 (Fig. 49), and culminating in the tableau, functions for the artist "as the primal metaphor for the trope."<sup>108</sup> Duchamp suggests such a corporeal identification in his Box of 1914, 1913-14: "Against compulsory military service: a 'deferment' of each limb, of the heart and the other anatomical parts; each soldier being already unable to put his uniform on again, his heart feeding telephonically, a deferred arm, etc. Then, no more feeding; each 'deferee' isolating himself."<sup>109</sup>

The question then becomes how Etant Donnés . . . integrates within the perceptual moment of this "ultra-rapid exposure" the central dialectical preoccupations of his oeuvre--the erotic, the linguistic, the self (exploring as a result the "figurative" plasticity of both language and form, and its implications for a reevaluation of the signifier/sign or the notion of a binding self). Did such a play of the sign, then, point to, as it did for Raymond Roussel, a positive perpetual unfolding (Paz' notion of the tableau), or is its unveiling a revelation of the hopelessness of an

epiphany.<sup>110</sup> This latter opinion, following Schwarz and Lebel--that the Large Glass' failure is the point of departure for interpreting Etant Donnés . . .--has been echoed by others in the early criticism.<sup>111</sup>

Implementing his comprehension of the logic of representation as a process in which what is signified is truly given as something other than itself, Duchamp's manipulation of language, readymades, paintings or sculptures are determined precisely to confuse image and thing.<sup>112</sup> Such a procedure defines as well the traditional Freudian psychoanalytic paradigm of the dream, in which symbolic substitution is the norm. Duchamp problematizes the subject within an incohesive visuality, subjectivity or the equivocal organization of sexuality in terms of gender formation--relating them to his desire not to fix meaning but rather to constitute it through perpetual deferral. What concerns him is not the referential aspect of representation but the (spatio-temporal) enactment of the paradoxical structure of desire.

Exploiting a variety of dialectics--gender (phallic presence as recognition/misrecognition) or of temporality ("always too early"/"always too late")--Duchamp's space of representation, as Georges Didi-Huberman points out at the Colloquium at Cerisy, involves a topology, "not of meetings but of oscillation . . . of 'perpetual wavering'. . . ." <sup>113</sup> This "no-man's land of the symbolic," as Didi-Huberman further describes Duchamp's topological space at that historic conference, must be further examined as central to the artist's discourse on identity. For only then will one reach the fundamental crossroads that Etant Donnés . . . represents, the nexus between

the two fundamental axes in Duchamp's oeuvre: a conditional visibility and the perpetual crisis of language.

Encompassing a range of plastic conventions, the tableau attempts to stage the "analytic" scene of sexuality and representation, realizing that the definition of the former is played out in the terms of the latter, which, since Saussure, has been understood within the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign. It is specifically the equivocation that occurs in the unconscious, at the foundation of our own subjectivity, that Duchamp addresses: the sense of self-loss that is a function of the unconscious. Duchamp, in this sense, is aligned with Lacan's major thesis that within this inability to establish reference for the subject is the concomitant failure to establish identity, a clearly bounded referential "I."<sup>114</sup> Or, as Jacqueline Rose has succinctly put it, "the problem of psychic identity is therefore immanent to the problem of the sign."<sup>115</sup>

This sense of a "divided self," for Duchamp, is so central an issue, that it must also be negotiated by the disjunctive experience of binocular vision. Such a viewer could thus exceed the idealization of the visible obtained through the conventional system of Albertian perspective. The latter's diagrammatic optics, which produces a conceptual path anyone can follow from one point to the next, is, as others have pointed out, even open to the blind who may reconstruct and imagine a sensory image because it functions in a space that is instantaneously grasped, mapped out as spatial, but lacks the true indeterminate character of space.<sup>116</sup> For, as Lacan distinguished this new "visual" space, as distinct from that of "geometrical

vision" or a perspectivist system, "something that introduces what is elided in the geometral relationship--the depth of field, with all its ambiguity and variability and impossibility of mastery."<sup>117</sup>

As opposed to the idealized, atemporal representation of vision that conventional perspective yields, we can not avoid a stereoscopic view of the enclosed panorama of Étant Donnés . . .. Invited to confront the way we visually negotiate the world--a process rooted in convention and habituation--Duchamp's tableau attempts to reveal to us the degree to which "it is precisely the psychoanalytic concepts of the unconscious and sexuality, specifically in their relationship to language, which seem to be lost."<sup>118</sup>

Although Duchamp believed that one could not exceed such "appearance," he proposed the dissolution of this disguise by attempting to find within himself a degree of otherness. If a repressive, socially ordered identity was what Duchamp sought to evade and undermine through the further alienation of the subject, in its assumption into the realm of language, then it was within the area of the erotic, of desire, that such alienation came to pass. Duchamp's fundamentally Lacanian understanding of this, of the biological (genital difference) within communicational terms (language)--the demand for recognition by the Other precipitated by the fantasied "wholeness" of both language and complementarity in sexuality--and the impossibility of such fulfillment, given the otherness of language and the difficulty of sexuality--explains his virtual legitimization of eroticism as a school of thought and the locus of sexuality and language in

Etant Donnés . . ..<sup>119</sup> Such an understanding of Duchamp's eroticism has been addressed by Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron, who discusses this aspect of the artist's work as "one of the places where death and life do not appear as antithetical."<sup>120</sup> In its seeking out, through the sexual experience with another, eroticism engages the ontological and figurative discontinuity of being.

Because Duchamp felt that the socialization process of the individual was repressive, making the attainment of an empowered selfhood nearly impossible, I believe that his work is driven by an anarchic edge.<sup>121</sup> It was with an abiding and profound sense, then, of this societal pathology that Duchamp addressed a gathering at Hofstra College in 1960, in a talk entitled "Should the Artist Go to College": "And assuming the appearance--I'm tempted to say the disguise--of a member of the human race, the individual is in fact completely alone and unique and the characteristics common to all individuals taken en masse have nothing to do with the solitary explosion of an individual left to his own devices."<sup>122</sup>

On another level, Duchamp's project is consistent with Surrealism's wish to expose the limitations of rational thought and analysis, constructing a mobile situation of position (as in chess), which in its game-like rules and choices defines the limits of representation by often claiming to have it both ways, to be both inside and outside a particular subject, system, space, hidden and exposed to the viewer.<sup>123</sup> And it is through the entrapment of the viewer in his works that a particular kind of perception arises. At first, as I have indicated, this occurs through certain conceptual or intelligible

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means (though not exclusive of the sensible), through semiotic or symbolic representation, as in the Large Glass; followed by the intermediary stage of optics, Anémic Cinéma's profound inscription of the ambiguity of representation within the visual field; and, finally, Etant Donnés . . . and its reconfiguration and repetition of these elements, as a linguistic and game-like economy (the language and chess analogy having fascinated Duchamp as it did Wittgenstein and Saussure) in which the freedom of choice assumes a certain prophetic primacy.<sup>124</sup>

It is in light of our culture's manipulation of our psychic drives and processes, the cult of desire, fame, and instant identity, as well as the illusion of an autonomous subject--that I will reconsider Duchamp's representation of subjectivity: the rejection of the self as a model of unity and the clear futility of identity that marks his work.

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1. Jean-François Lyotard, Duchamp's TRANS/formers, trans. Ian McLeod (Venice, California: The Lapis Press, 1990), p. 65; originally published as Les TRANSformateurs Duchamp (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1977), p. 61.
  
  2. See photograph of Mme Marcel Duchamp standing beside the door in its original site, in a small town near Cadaqués, Spain, in Anne d'Harnoncourt and Walter Hopps, "Etant Donnés: 1. la chute d'eau 2. le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections on a New Work by Marcel Duchamp," Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin, vol. 64 (April-September 1969), p. 59. That the work's placement in the museum is in the most obvious sense presented as a culmination of the oeuvre was noted even in initial, cursory reviews. See, for example, Abraham Davidson, "Marcel Duchamp: His Final Gambit at the Philadelphia Museum of Art," Arts Magazine, vol. 44 (Sept.-Oct. 1969), p. 45.
  
  3. While in Cadaqués, Duchamp ordered the bricks before his death. See d'Harnoncourt and Hopps, p. 13. According to the design indicated in his instruction manual, "Approximation démontable," the archway was constructed by craftsmen hired by the Philadelphia Museum of Art.
  
  4. Or as Paz has described it, "The door sets its material doorness in the visitor's way with a sort of aplomb: dead end." See Paz, Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare, trans. Rachel Phillips and Donald Gardner (New York: Seaver Books, 1981), p. 95. During one of the sessions at the "Western Round Table on Modern Art" (1949), Frank Lloyd Wright asked, "What is the museum now but a kind of morgue? Is it anything else?" See "Western Round Table on Modern Art" (1949), ed. Douglas MacAgy; rpt. in Issues in Abstract Expressionism: The Artist-Run Periodicals, ed. Ann Eden Gibson (Ann Arbor and London: UMI Research Press, 1990), p. 351.
  
  5. The two drilled orifices in the door originally housed removable iron bolts. These were deemed unsafe and impractical by the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and were subsequently removed. Anne d'Harnoncourt, in conversation with the author.
  
  6. Ibid.
  
  7. **Préface**

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Etant donnés: 1. la chute d'eau  
 2. le gaz d'éclairage,  
 on déterminera  
 nous déterminerons les conditions du Repos instantané (ou  
 ?  
 apparence allégorique) d'une succession [d'un ensemble] de faits  
divers semblant se nécessiter l'un l'autre par des lois, pour isoler le  
signe de la concordance entre, d'une part, ce Repos (capable  
 ?  
 de toutes les excentricités innombrables) et, d'autre part, un choix de  
Possibilités légitimées par ces lois et aussi les occasionnant.

### Avertissement

Etant donnés (dans l'obscurité) 1. la chute d'eau  
 Soit, donnés 2. le gaz d'éclairage  
dans l'obscurité, on déterminera (les conditions de) l'exposition

extra-rapide (= apparence allégorique) de plusieurs collisions  
 semblant se succéder rigoureusement chacune à chacune suivant des  
 lois, pour isoler le signe de la concordance entre cette exposition  
 extra-rapide (capable de toutes les excentricités) d'une part et le  
 choix des possibilités légitimées par ces lois d'autre part.

### Preface

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

For the instantaneous state of rest=bring in the term extra-rapid  
 We shall determine the conditions of [the] best exposé of the extra-  
 rapid state of Rest [of the extra-rapid exposure (= allegorical  
 appearance) of a group. . . . . etc.

nothing perhaps.

### Notice

Given: 1st the waterfall  
[in the dark]

If given 2nd the illuminating gas,  
in the dark, we shall determine (the conditions for) the extra-rapid  
allegorical Reproduction [assaults]  
exposition (= allegorical appearance) of several collisions seeming  
unnecessary  
strictly to succeed each other according to certain laws, in order to  
isolate the Sign of the accordance between this extra-rapid  
exposition (capable of all the eccentricities) on the one hand and  
the choice of the possibilities authorized by these laws on the other.

Duchamp du Signe, ed. Michel Sanouillet (Paris: Flammarion, 1975), pp. 43-44; The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even. A typographical version by Richard Hamilton, trans. George Heard Hamilton (London: Lund, Humphries, 1960), n.p.; see also Writings, pp. 27-28. For further discussion of this note and its implications, see Clair, Duchamp et la photographie (Paris: Editions du Chêne, 1977), pp. 56-58; and Herbert Damisch, "La défense Duchamp," in Marcel Duchamp: tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition?, ed. Jean Clair, Colloque du Centre Culturel Internationale de Cerisy-la-Salle 10/18 (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1979), pp. 74-77.

8. The first "box" of notes, the Box of 1914, containing seventeen items and originally produced in a photographic edition of three of which only one is known to exist, is part of the Arensberg Archive at the Philadelphia Museum; the second, the Green Box, was published in Paris in 1934, in an edition of 320; and the third, the "white box," entitled A l'Infinif by Duchamp himself because most of the notes in this collection were composed in the infinitive form, was published in 1966 in facsimile edition by the Cordier & Ekstrom Gallery, New York, in an edition of 150. The original seventy-nine notes in A l'Infinif, long a part of the Mary Sisler Collection, were recently given to the Museum of Modern Art. The posthumous notes, compiled and translated by Paul Matisse, were published as Marcel

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Duchamp, Notes (Paris: Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1980); subsequently published in America, with a preface by Anne d'Harnoncourt (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1983). For complete descriptions of the Box of 1914 and the Green Box, see CW, p. 584 and pp. 589-90; and Craig Adcock, Marcel Duchamp's Notes from the "Large Glass": an N-Dimensional Analysis, Studies in the Fine Arts, The Avant-Garde, No. 40 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983).

9. Copley had only perpetuated the myth of Duchamp's inactivity, reporting that: "It was a medium-sized room. There was a table with a chess board, one chair, and a kind of packing crate on the other side to sit on, and I guess a bed of some kind in the corner. There was a pile of tobacco ashes on the table, where he used to clean his pipe. There were two nails in the wall, with a piece hanging down from one. And that was all." See Calvin Tomkins, The Bride and the Bachelors: Five Masters of the Avant-garde (New York: Viking, 1968), p. 61.

10. Paz, Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare, p. 120. The poorly-lit cubical room is labeled only on the inside.

11. Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), p. 126. As will become clearer, the appearance of mastery or of Duchamp's desire for control--the idealization of his position concerning perception or the conception and deployment of the fourth dimension--as expressed in his famous statement to Lawrence Steefel, "I want to grasp things with the mind the way the penis is grasped by the vagina," is quite deceptive. See Steefel, The Position of Duchamp's 'Glass' in the Development of His Art (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1977), p. 312, n. 39.

12. Ferdinand de Saussure, Course of General Linguistics, trans. Wade Baskin (London: Peter Owen, 1960), p. 120.

13. Although Schwarz claims that among other problems that attended this work (a near accident involving Man Ray and the flying glass plate), Duchamp failed to achieve a three-dimensional optical effect, a replica, constructed in 1977 under the direction of Paul Matisse, created "a moving spiral that produced the effect of a concave or convex surface." See Gloria

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Moure, ed., Duchamp (Barcelona: Fundación Caja de Pensiones, 1984), p. 236. Man Ray photographed this work in stereoscopic form, which Duchamp included in Box-in-a-Valise on the back of his reproduced Handmade Stereopticon Slide Hand Stereoscopy. See Bonk, Marcel Duchamp: The Box in a Valise, trans. David Britt (New York: Rizzoli, 1989), p. 116.

14. Quoted by Hans Richter, Dada Art and Anti-Art (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965), p. 99. See also Schwarz, CW, p. 53. Duchamp's insists on the purity of his optical "experimentation," in a letter to the Parisian avant-garde patron Jacques Doucet, whose support permitted the artist to realize his Rotary Demisphere of 1925. Duchamp wrote: "Desnos asked me, on the part of Breton, to exhibit the globe which you have, telling me that you've agreed to lend it to him. To tell you the truth, I'd rather not. And I'll only do it if you insist. All expositions of painting or sculpture make me ill. And I'd rather not involve myself in them. I would also regret it if anyone saw in this globe anything other than 'optics.'" In his transcription of this letter, Michel Sanouillet elided the names Desnos (Robert Desnos) and Breton. See Francis M. Naumann, The Mary and William Sisler Collection (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1984), p. 206, n. 10. See also Writings, p. 185; and Schwarz, CW, p. 52, who claims that in a letter dated February 28, 1924, the artist reveals that Picabia was responsible for arranging the financial details of the operation. Naumann has suggested it was possibly through the intervention of André Breton, Doucet's artistic advisor, that the collector agreed to provide the funds for the design and construction of Rotary Demisphere. On Doucet, see François Chapon, Mystère et Splendeurs de Jacques Doucet 1853-1929 (Paris: J. C. Lattes, 1984).

15. Ibid.

16. For a discussion of Duchamp's nine spiralling linguistic configurations of Anémic-Cinéma, see Katrina Martina, "Marcel Duchamp's 'Anémic-Cinéma,'" Studio International, vol. 189, no. 973 (January-February 1975), pp. 53-60.

17. Quoted by Toby Mussman, "Anémic Cinéma," Art and Artists (London), vol. 1, no. 4 (July 1966), p. 50.

18. See his interview with James Johnson Sweeney, "A Conversation with

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Marcel Duchamp," in Writings, p. 136; and in Wisdom: Conversations with the Elder Wise Men of Our Day, ed. James Nelson (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1958); rpt. as "Interview with Marcel Duchamp," in Dadas on Art, ed. Lucy Lippard (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall), 1971, pp. 141-42.; adapted and translated into the French by Michel Sanouillet in Marchand du Sel: Ecrits de Marcel Duchamp (Paris: Le Terrain Vague, 1959). Sweeney's original interview constituted the sound track of a 30-minute film made in 1955 by NBC at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, first shown on the program "Elderly Wise Men," January 1956.

19. Clair notes that "four persons out of ten cannot perceive stereoscopic photography, being unable to perform the mental synthesis necessary for the illusion of relief obtained through a pair of photographic documents." See his "Opticeries," October 5 (Summer 1978), p. 104.

20. Richard Hamilton, "Duchamp," Studio International, vol. 7, no. 10 (January 1964), p. 28.

21. In commenting on his "antiretinal" attitude to Cabanne, Duchamp claimed for painting its more elevated "functions": "it could be religious, philosophical, moral." In other words, in addition to art's overly sensuous appeal, there was the absence of this higher value. Hence, he explained, the appearance of his notes, which ideally were to accompany the visual experience. "[The Large Glass] must not be 'looked at' in the aesthetic sense of the word. One must consult the book, and see the two together. The conjunction of the two things entirely removes the retinal aspect that I don't like." Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, trans. Ron Padgett (New York: Viking Press, 1971), pp. 42-43; originally published as Entretiens avec Marcel Duchamp (Paris: Editions Pierre Belfond, 1967).

22. "Fixed" in its multiple meanings and contexts---photographic, repair, castration--may relate to Duchamp's conception of "stoppage," which also translates as "invisible mending," as producing a new image of something. Duchamp was also aware of the possible corrective effects his optical devices could produce. "I saw an optician at that time who told me, 'That thing is used to restore sight to one-eyed people, or at least the impression of the third dimension.' Because, it seems, they lose it." Furthermore, one can only assume that when Duchamp rented a stand at the Concours Lepine,

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an industrial exposition, in order to demonstrate and sell his Rotoreliefs, under the title "benevolent technician," he felt his work could serve some greater purpose. See Cabanne, Dialogues, p. 73.

23. It is the difficulty of the very nature of the visual that is posited, as that which veils, separates. Rather than igniting desire, the illusion that Etant Donnés . . . presents, as Robert Lebel suggests, "serait parfaite si l'intention était ici de 'donner à voir,' comme s'y sont naïvement ingéniés autrefois les artistes, mais, au contraire, il s'agit d' 'empêcher de voir.'" "Le 'Chef d'oeuvre Inconnu' de Marcel Duchamp," L'Oeil (Paris), no. 183 (March 1970), p. 9. Lyotard discusses the "hallucinatory" image, in Discours, Figure (Paris: Editions Klincksieck, 1971), pp. 289-91.

24. Notes, 9. See also John Dee, "Ce Façonnement symétrique," in Marcel Duchamp: Tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition?, p. 355; Clair, Duchamp et la photographie: Essai d'analyse d'un primat technique sure le développement d'une oeuvre (Paris: Editions du Chêne, 1977), pp. 96-98; and Thierry de Duve, Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), *passim*.

25. Duchamp related this hollowing out process of the signifier with the problematics of vision when he published The in the October 1916 issue of Rogue (New York) as "THE, Eye Test, Not a 'Nude Descending a Staircase.'" See Marcel Duchamp, edited by Anne d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine (New York: Museum of Modern Art; Philadelphia: The Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1973), p. 278.

26. Carol James has analogized this "hollow music" to the viewer's individual and singular perspective and experience in Etant Donnés . . ., which "realizes the hollow music of 'Hollow paper / infrathin interval . . . female measuring device' where a flat item changes dimension, a piece of paper is slashed and slightly bent, 'one cuts and inserts the thing'" (Notes, 19). See James, "Duchamp's Silent Noise/Music for the Deaf," Dada/Surrealism, no. 16 (1987), p. 118. James also points out that in Duchamp's phrase, "Exercices de musique en creux pour creux pour sourds" ("Exercises of gap music for the deaf"), "en creux" may also mean "hollowed out, with gaps." *Ibid.*, p. 122; and

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see Notes, 181, 250, 253 and 255.

27. See Writings, pp. 70; 84-85. Lacan speaks of the "moi" (or me form) as the "ego," that is, the conscious, subjective construction of the self, versus the "je," one's symbolic construction in language. See Lacan, "The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis," in Ecrits, A Selection, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977).

28. Duchamp made clear his "mistrust" of language as communication, saying, "words are not merely a means of communication." Marcel Duchamp interviewed by Katharine Kuh, "Marcel Duchamp," in The Artist's Voice: Talks with Seventeen Artists (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 88; see also CW, p. 30. Schwarz quotes Duchamp, "words are absolutely a pest as far as getting anywhere. You cannot express anything through words, because language is an imperfect form of communication. If you want to make yourself understood, you have to create words which your neighbor can understand" (*ibid.*, p. 30). It was rather the theoretical aspects of language that interested Duchamp.

29. Writings, p. 140.

30. Wayward Landscape was made for one (no. XII) of his series of twenty Boîtes-en-valise (Box in a Valise), each containing 69 items plus an original. See Ecke Bonk, Marcel Duchamp: The Box in a Valise, p. 282. The lower, bachelor register of the Large Glass is what Duchamp referred to, metaphorically, as the "machine agricole," whose complex narrative involves the bachelor's sowing of his seed (Writings, p. 44); thus Duchamp recycles his Glass. Duchamp's aversion to the waste of energy (or materials) is specified in one of his notes, "Transformer designer to utilize the little wasted / energies like: . . . ejaculation" (Notes, 187).

31. Schwarz initially mentioned Alfred Jarry's Le Surmâle, a tale written in 1902, likening the bachelors' orgasmic journey, which culminates in the section of the Slopes, with Jarry's comparison of a bicycle race and sexual intercourse (CW, p. 175). This also parallels Duchamp's description of the passage of the Bride's as "the image of a motorcar climbing a slope in low gear" (Writings, p. 43). In the catalogue Duchamp designed for the "First

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Papers of Surrealism" exhibition in New York in 1942, a page of his layout is dedicated to "La Science Triomphante" and includes the following quotation from Jarry: "La Science avec un grand S, ou plutôt, car ce n'est pas encore assez imposant . . . la SCIENCE avec un grande SCIE." The passage comes from Le Surmâle, which concerns a contest in which bets are made regarding a man's sexual prowess. Furthermore, as Charles Stuckey has pointed out, the observers' acute visual awareness of the sexual act is contrasted with the participants' limited perceptions. "Duchamp's Acephalic Symbolism," Art in America, vol. 65, no. 1 (January/February 1977), p. 98.

32. Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts, p. 130. As Lacan wrote, in contradistinction to a restrictive understanding of the function of the unconscious as purely symbolic, "the unconscious is the discourse of the Other." Ibid., p. 131. Duchamp, according to his wife, Mme Alexina Duchamp, met Lacan through Lebel, but, typically, did not wish to be identified with the psychoanalyst. Mme Duchamp, in correspondence with this author.

33. Lacan, Ecrits: A Selection, p. 171.

34. Matisse, "Some More Nonsense About Duchamp," Art in America, vol. 68, no. 4 (April 1980), p. 78.

35. Lebel, Marcel Duchamp (Paris: Belfond, 1985), p. 18; rpt. of original Sur Marcel Duchamp (Paris: Trianon, 1959), with revisions and additions, but without texts by André Breton and Henri-Pierre Roché; original English trans. George Heard Hamilton, Marcel Duchamp (New York: Grove Press, 1959). Quoted here in Rudolf E. Keunzli, "Introduction," Dada/Surrealism, no. 16 (1987), p. 5.

36. Ibid., p. 5.

37. One of the criticisms of structuralism has been that, by not seeking an essential meaning to a work, such an approach grants equal validation to any interpretation. Duchamp's openness to sundry critical approach suggests a common sensibility.

38. Paz, Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare, p. 173. Rosalind

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Krauss, however, notes that Paz prioritizes Duchamp's "textual side," as opposed to the "visual" aspect of his work. Despite Paz' occasional indication of Duchamp's "postmodern vocation," this remains a "terrain vague." See Krauss, "The Naked Bride," Partisan Review, vol. 46 (1979), pp. 615-19.

39. See Jean Clair, Marcel Duchamp ou le grand fictif: Essai de mythanalyse du "Grand Verre" (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1975); Jean Suquet, Miroir de la mariée: Essai (Paris: Flammarion, 1974); and the more recent exegeses on various possible meanings associated with Duchamp's early mathematically oriented development, beginning with Linda Henderson, The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); and Adcock, Marcel Duchamp's Notes.

40. See Krauss, "The Notes on the Index: Part 1," October, no. 3 (Spring 1977), pp. 68-81; rpt. in The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, 1985), pp. 196-209.

41. See Clair, Duchamp et la photographie, p. 69.

42. See, for example, Clair, "Sexe et topologie," in Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques (Paris: Musée national d'art moderne, Centre national d'art et du culture Georges Pompidou, 1977), pp. 52-59.

43. Lebel, Marcel Duchamp, pp. 13, 15, and 30. What underlies the separate mechanical processes of the Large Glass, the author writes in his early monograph on Duchamp, such a "basic pessimism": "[Duchamp] would seem to see in love only a simultaneous mechanism which in no way implies a spiritual or even physical union, man and woman acting upon each other from a distance and on separate planes, she, the victim of her illusions, always keeping herself above the point of contact while he, the prisoner of his instincts, is resigned never to reach it" (p. 67). Thus, the "incomplete" Large Glass, Lebel concludes, results in a mutual onanism, a situation involving at best "the well-tested technique of coitus interruptus, leaving the Bride (the pendu femelle) "literally hanging in the air" (ibid). Lebel also notes that "the splashing reaches [the Bride] only if reflected in a mirror."

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44. Ibid., p. 27; and William Rubin, "Reflections on Marcel Duchamp," Art International 4 (November 1960), p. 52. For a detailed discussion of this theme within the oeuvre as well as Duchamp's own comments regarding the role of mathematics in his work, see Adcock, Marcel Duchamp's Notes.

45. Jean Reboul, "Machines Célibataires, Schizophrénie et Lune Noire," Journal Intérieur du Cercle d'Etudes Métaphysiques, no. 1 (May 1954); and René Alleau, "Des Fictions et des Jeux," Medium, no. 4 (January 1955).

46. Breton, "Phare de la Mariée," Minotaure, vol. 2, no. 6 (December 1934), pp. 45-49. It was actually Ulf Linde's discovery of an illustration of two personages disrobing a virgin, in a treatise on alchemy by Solidonius--strongly resembling the first version of The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors (Munich, 1912)--which fortified the belief that the iconographical solution to the Large Glass lay in this esoteric realm, first suggested by André Breton. This illustration of the undressing of a maiden was reproduced and some of Linde's ideas were cited before he published them, in K. G. Pontus Hultén, The Machine (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1968), p. 79. See also Linde, "L'Esotérique," in Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques, pp. 60-85; and Richard Hamilton, "The Large Glass," in d'Harnoncourt and McShine, p. 58. For a critique of alchemical and cabalistic interpretations of Duchamp, see Jean Clair, "La Fortune critique de Marcel Duchamp," Revue de l'art, no. 34 (1976), pp. 92-100, 102.

47. In an interview with Michel Sanouillet, Duchamp was asked to define his occupation. He answered, "How do I know? A human being, quite simply-- a breather [respirateur] . . . Anyway, you know, my whole life's work fits into one suitcase, literally and figuratively. . . ." "Dans l'atelier de Marcel Duchamp," Les Nouvelles Littéraires, no. 1424 (Paris, December 1954), p. 5. And to Pierre Cabanne, Duchamp remarked: "I like living, breathing, better than working . . . Therefore, if you wish, my art would be that of living: each second, each breath is a work which is inscribed nowhere, which is neither visual or cerebral. It's a sort of constant euphoria" (Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, p. 72).

48. Peggy Guggenheim recalls "in order to view the entire works of Marcel

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Duchamp in reproduction, you looked through a hole in the wall and turned by hand a very spidery-looking wheel." See Peggy Guggenheim, Out of This Century--Confessions of an Art Addict (New York, 1946), p. 101; see also Bonk, Marcel Duchamp: The Box in a Valise, pp. 166-67. The first multiple of the Box-in-a-Valise, begun in 1936, appeared in Paris on January 1, 1941, as "de ou par MARCEL DUCHAMP ou RROSE SELAVY." This "portable museum" included sixty-nine miniature replicas of his works.

49. Jean Clair has referred to the problem of scale as an implicit obstacle of the look in Duchamp; see Marcel Duchamp: Tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition?, pp. 223-24.

50. The drawing, dated by Robert Lebel to 1944, is inscribed "Dec. 1947." See Lebel, Marcel Duchamp, p. 175 (cat. no. 186).

51. Naumann, "The Bachelor's Quest," Art in America, vol. 89, no. 9 (September 1993), pp. 77-80.

52. Ibid. See William Camfield, Marcel Duchamp: Fountain (Houston: The Menil Collection and Houston Fine Art Press, 1989), cat. no. 12, p. 170; and Bonk, Marcel Duchamp: The Box in a Valise, pp. 282-83.

53. See, for example, Jean Clair's remarks: "Dans Etant donnés, sa posture semble ne laisser guère de doute: elle est figurée post-coitum, animal déchu, mais aussi corps redescendu du ciel quadridimensionnel dans la réalité, visible à nos yeux, de l'univers tridimensionnel: elle a pris corps et consistance, en même temps que sont surgis au regard le gaz d'éclairage et la chute d'eau qui, dans le Grand Verre, demeuraient cachés" (Duchamp et la photographie, pp. 104ff). Jean-François Lyotard appears to agree with this view, that the Bride "has fallen into the 3-dim Bachelor space, and that's what her nudity is. Or, if she is visible in this space, it can only be as naked, and then we must believe she takes pleasure" (Duchamp's TRANS/formers, p. 183).

After noting the absence of the most inauspicious element of the Large Glass, the ill-fated Bachelors enduring the drone of the Litany of the Chariot ("Slow life. Vicious circle. Onanism . . ."), d'Harnoncourt and Hopps suggest that "there may be some justification for detecting a faint air of affirmation

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in the new tableau. The sensuality in the figure of the new Bride is neither ironic or 'timid' (as she is characterized in one note), but perhaps calls for the adjective 'blossoming.' The very fact of Etant Donnés . . . having been finished, in contrast to the intrinsic incompleteness of the Glass, suggests a kind of satisfaction" (d'Harnoncourt and Hopps, pp. 24-25). A satisfaction that I believe the viewer cannot impute to the tableau since it exists only in the narrative as opposed to a perceptual level. See also Paz who, in comparing the Large Glass with Mallarmé's Un Coup de dés, sees both works as realizing their affirmation through a process of negation, "The poem and the painting affirm simultaneously the absence of meaning and the necessity of meaning, and it is here that the meaning of both works resides. If the universe is a language, Mallarmé and Duchamp show us the reverse of language--the other side, the empty face of the universe. They are works in search of a meaning" (Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare, p. 79-80). Some have seen the tableau as simply confirming the "failure" of the Large Glass. See, for example, Lebel, "Le 'Chef d'oeuvre Inconnu' de Marcel Duchamp"; or Yve-Alain Bois, "La Mariée Nue: du Nouveau sur Marcel Duchamp," VH 101 (Paris), no. 3, (Autumn 1970), p. 67.

54. See Preface, above, note 2.

55. Alain Jouffroy believes that the Large Glass and Etant Donnés . . . are as opposed conceptually as they are in their physical structure; see "Etant donné Marcel Duchamp: 1) individualiste révolutionnaire 2) respirateur," Opus International, no. 49 (March 1974), p. 22. Adcock argues that "Etant Donnés . . . is essentially an  $n + 1$  dimensional recasting of the  $n$ -dimensional Large Glass," while also "mirroring" it, in effect, returning the earlier work transformed; see, Marcel Duchamp's Notes, p. 169, 193. See also René Micha, who writes, "Etant Donnés . . . tente de précipiter un temps pur--de fixer une apparition sous la décalcomanie de l'apparence"; "Etant donné 'Etant Donnés,'" in Marcel Duchamp: Tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition?, p. 172.

56. There is no disagreement in the literature that the essential relationship between the two works is perspectival. This may involve a literal progression or dimensional growth (two-dimensional Large Glass, three-dimensional tableau-assemblage, and a hypothetical four-

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dimensional Bride) or the two works may simply assume an antithetical relationship (nonfigurative vs. figurative, transparency vs. opacity, invisibility vs. visibility). For further discussions of the relationship between Duchamp's two major works, see Arturo Schwarz, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp (New York: Harry Abrams, 1969), pp. 557-62; Octavio Paz, "Water Writes Always in \* Plural," in Anne d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine, eds., Marcel Duchamp (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1973), pp. 143-58 and rpt. and appended in Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare, pp. 91-178; Alain Jouffroy, "Etant donné Marcel Duchamp 1) individualiste révolutionnaire 2) respirateur," Opus International 49 (Paris, 1974); Jean Clair, "Sexe et Topology," in Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques, pp. 52-59; Duchamp et la photographie: Essai d'analyse d'un primat technique sur le développement d'une oeuvre (Paris: Editions du Chêne, 1977), especially pp. 94-112; Jean-François Lyotard, "Charnières," in Les transformateurs Duchamp (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1977), pp. 97-155; rpt. in English, trans. Ian McLeod, as "Hinges," in Duchamp's TRANS/formers; partial rpt. in "Etant Donnés: Inventaire du dernier nu," in Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques, pp. 86-110; Réne Micha, "La Licorne de Philadelphia," L'Arc, no. 59 (1974), pp. 61-66; and "Etant Donné 'Etant Donnés,'" in Marcel Duchamp: Tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition?, pp. 157-75; and Hellmut Wohl, "Beyond the Large Glass: Reflections on a Landscape Drawing by Marcel Duchamp," Burlington Magazine, vol. 119, no. 869 (November 1977), pp. 763-72; and The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, ed. Thierry de Duve (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1991), passim.

57. This query was posed by Richard Hamilton following the idea that if the Large Glass is a two-dimensional representation of a three-dimensional world, then could a three-dimensional representation (i.e., Etant Donnés . . .) possibly be a projection of a four-dimensional world. Richard Hamilton, Collected Words 1953-82 (London: Thames & Hudson, 1982?), p. 230. Craig Adcock also suggests such a possibility, based also on the significance of the readymade Eau & gaz à tous les étages, both elements of which power Duchamp's two major works. "Duchamp may have meant to imply by this readymade," Adcock writes, "that the two-dimensional Large Glass and the three-dimensional Etant Donnés . . . are both 'sections' of a hypothetical

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four-dimensional figure." Adcock, Marcel Duchamp's Notes, p. 64.

58. "Etant Donnés: 1. la chute d'eau 2. le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections on a New Work by Marcel Duchamp," Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin, vol. 64, nos. 299-300 (April-September 1969).

59. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

61. Duchamp quoted by the authors, p. 25.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

63. Quoted in d'Harnoncourt and Hopps, pp. 16-17; see Writings, p. 45.

64. Given that the "perceived and unperceived reality" of the work of art is contained in Duchamp's concept of "apparition and appearance"--that an object's appearance only fortuitously resembles its "apparition," an idea that they remind us Duchamp made explicit in his notes through the illustration of the relationship between a cast chocolate object and its mold--they suggest that the fertile relationship of the Large Glass to Etant Donnés . . . exists on many levels. d'Harnoncourt and Hopps, p. 17. For further discussion of Duchamp's notion of casting in relation to photography, see Craig Adcock, "Marcel Duchamp's 'Instantanés': Photography and the Event Structure of the Readymades," in "Event Arts and Art Events," ed. Stephen Foster (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1988), pp. 239-66. Duchamp in fact defined the equivalence of these terms, unfortunately only in formalist terms, in A l'Infinif: "Given The object, considered in its physical appearance (color, mass, form.) Define (graphically i.e. by means of pictorial conventions) the mold of the object. By mold is meant: from the point of view of form and color, the negative (photographic). . . ." (Writings, p. 85).

65. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

66. As Duchamp revealed to Schwarz, "You see, I don't want to be pinned down to any position. My position is the lack of a position, but, of course,

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you can't even talk about it, the minute you talk you spoil the whole game. I also mean that words are absolutely a pest as far as getting anywhere. You cannot express anything through words" (CW, pp. 194-95).

67. d'Harnoncourt and Hopps, p. 23. Initially quoted in Jean Schuster, "Marcel Duchamp, vite," Le Surrealisme, même (Paris), no. 2 (Spring 1957), p. 144. See also Duchamp du Signe, p. 247.

68. The authors paraphrase Duchamp's statement, which they also quote: "'Art' etymologically means 'to make,' according to some dictionaries at least. And to make, not necessarily to make by hand, but to make. So everybody is making, not only artists." d'Harnoncourt and Hopps, pp. 38, 40.

69. For the "grand-luxe" edition (21) of Lebel's Sur Marcel Duchamp, Duchamp affixed an enamelled metal plaque bearing the words EAU & GAZ A TOUS LES ETAGES, which he stated to Robert Lebel, played a role "in his conception of 'illuminating gas' . . . [the plaque] which all the new buildings in Paris once bore"; the other 110 "demi-luxe" copies received a pochoir-colored collotype reproduction of the sign. See Lebel, Marcel Duchamp, p. 176; and Bonk, p. 181.

70. Schwarz felt, however, since Duchamp "had not shared his secret with his old friend Robert Lebel when the latter was working on his own Duchamp monograph published in 1959 . . . there was no reason why he should share it with me now" (CW, pp. 524, 557-58).

71. Ibid., p. 560.

72. Ibid., p. 558-59. In noting that Duchamp repeats both lines of the tableau's title, adding the words "in the dark" to the Notice, Schwarz suggests that the environment's one moment, Duchamp's "extra rapid exposition" or "allegorical appearance" of the Bride and the Bachelor, "sees the Bride and Bachelor . . . engaged in several amorous bouts." Or, as Duchamp indicates further along in the note, "several collisions/assaults seeming strictly to succeed each other according to certain laws," which Schwarz relates to his reading of the incest taboo (ibid).

Thierry de Duve has retranslated both notes, "Preface" and "Warning,"

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grounding the meaning of the artist's writings and work in the specific worldly acts and decisions of his life. Through an imaginative extrapolation of Duchamp's mathematical ingenuity, and in a manner that directly mirrors the artist's "algebraic comparisons," de Duve reconfigures a number of analogies involving certain of the artist's works and exhibitions that challenged conventional institutional and aesthetic hierarchies. While his reading does not directly relate to the tableau, de Duve's assessment of this period redefines not only Duchamp's Dadaist activities but the possibly strategic role he played in shaping his own critical success. See "Given the Richard Mutt Case," in The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, pp. 187-225.

73. If language and its structural formation in the subject can be seen as an issue for reevaluating Duchamp's complex oeuvre, another approach to understanding the various narratives of the symbolic in the Large Glass--as well as the transposition of the formal qualities of language to the perceptual (optical) and subjective issues of desire--might open onto a discussion of metaphor. In order to better understand Duchamp's linguistic imperative--the tropes of desire, repetition, death, resemblance and difference within this work--one could turn, for example, to Peter Brooks' Lacanian reconsideration of Freud's Beyond the Pleasure Principle. Brooks' understanding of the process of metaphoric translation relates to the implicit claim of the narrative to be in a state of repetition, "as a going over again of a ground already covered . . . as the detective retraces the tracks of the criminal," and, in so doing, this action unfolds onto the terrain of metonymy. See Brooks, "Freud's Masterplot: Questions of Narrative," in Literature and Psychoanalysis: The Question of Reading: Otherwise, ed. Shoshana Felman (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), pp. 280-300. Tzveton Todorov employs the example of the detective story to elucidate the dual temporality of the narrative. "Typologie du roman policier," Poétique de la prose (Paris: Seuil, 1971), pp. 58-59; published in translation as "Detective Fiction," in Poetics of Prose (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977); cited in Brooks. It is both this consideration of narrative, as involving the functions of metaphor and metonymy, and Lacan's privileging of the latter in his equation of metonymy and desire, that defines desire as that which propels the narrative. Duchamp, likewise, defined desire as the motor of the Large Glass, and especially of the Bride, whose "stripping" or "cinematic blossoming" is a function of her desire-

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gears. Both in its element of intrigue and careful planning and as a measured environment associated with death, Etant Donnés . . . defines the very word plot.

74. Schwarz' psychoanalytic reading of desire's function in the work obscures Duchamp's formalization of its dynamic. Since it is desire's representationally anamorphic, or marginal, relationship to its object that interests the artist. As Lacan has written (Ecrits, p. 311): "Desire begins to take shape in the margin in which demand becomes separated from need: this margin being that which is opened up by demand, the appeal of which can be unconditional only in regard to the Other, under the form of the possible defect, which need may introduce into it, of having no universal satisfaction (what is called 'anxiety')."

75. See, for example, Clair, "Sexe et Topology," pp. 52-59.

76. Paz, Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare, p. 110.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 108. Also see Chapter Four of this dissertation.

78. It was more within the philosophical tradition--determining one's relationship to the world--than within the history of Western pictorial art that Duchamp sought to disclose those marginal aspects of the art object with which traditional art was necessarily unconcerned. Rather than merely provide the viewer with one more or less accessible orientation to a work, Duchamp determined variable axes of orientation: to challenge through either contradiction or multiplicity traditional art's belief in logocentricity and its qualification of subjectivity. Furthermore, Duchamp rejected any certainty of meaning, "I go farther by saying that words such as truth, art, veracity, or anything are stupid in themselves," replacing such conviction with "doubt in myself, doubt in everything. In the first place, never believing in truth." Interview with William Seitz, "What's Happened to Art? An Interview with Marcel Duchamp on Present Consequences of New York's 1913 Armory Show" Vogue, 15 February 1963, p. 113. Also quoted in part in John Tancock, "The Influence of Marcel Duchamp," Marcel Duchamp, Museum of Modern Art, New York, and Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1973, p. 165.

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79. Lyotard, Duchamp's TRANS/formers, p. 35

80. Ibid. p. 36.

81. Ibid., p. 128.

82. Ibid., p. 125.

83. Lyotard queries whether the Notes' reference to a "work in progress" might be the "unfinished, perhaps unfinishable" tableau? Ibid., p. 157.

84. Thomas Zaunschirm, Marcel Duchamp's Unbekanntes Meisterwerk (Klagenfurt: Ritter, 1986), p. 11. The last of three books concerning Duchamp, the other two are: Robert Musil und Marcel Duchamp (Klagenfurt: Ritter, 1982) and Bereites Mädchen Ready-made (Klagenfurt: Ritter, 1983). Zaunschirm initially wanted to write this book in the form of a novel, because he thought this would be the proper medium to illustrate the surrealist "association between unrelated realities," his own dreams and daily life and Duchamp's oeuvre. Unable to accomplish this, Zaunschirm began to relate as many facts about Etant Donnés . . . and Duchamp's life as possible. The author apparently ascribes a certain significance to such "facts" as Man Ray, or Ray Man, and the Illuminating Gas (both Philadelphia-identified); noting other such facts, for example, between the symbol of the torch/the exhibition of the Arm of the Statue of Liberty in Philadelphia in 1876; the relationship between Philadelphia and the Cassandra Foundation (p. 17) (actually noting their common latitude of 40 degrees, p. 21). Zaunschirm reminds the reader of Cassandra's role in warning the city of Troy about Helen's beauty (noting the relationship between Helen/woman and truth and thus the artist's cultivation of the "negation of the concept of beauty." Another "ray" is cited in Jules Verne's (who is continually cited in terms of his similar "mysterious" connections and procedure, his importance to Roussel, etc.) "The Green Ray," in which a woman is only ready to be married after she has seen the green ray at sunset; the figure, whose head is turned away from the torch in Etant Donnés . . ., the author notes, will also never see such a light. Zaunschirm mentions Duchamp's Le rayon vert (The Green Ray) (conceived by Duchamp and constructed to his specifications by Frederick Kiesler, and installed at

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the exhibition "Le Surrealisme en 1947," at the Galerie Maeght, Paris) without noting, however, this work's precedent for the tableau both in terms of being viewed through a kind of peephole and for its horizon and cloudscape. The German author also speculates on Duchamp's possible esoteric sources for the tableau's door, such as John's Apocalyptic vision in the Bible, citing the prediction of the door that no one will be able to open or close (p. 30), relating this also to Roussel's suicide behind the connecting door to Charlotte Dufrène ("Never desired but Available"[p. 32]). The book also includes brief essays by various other contributors. For more on Le rayon vert, see Herbert Molderings, "Objects of Modern Skepticism," in The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, pp. 259-65.

85. See Krauss' "The Blink of an Eye," in The States of Theory: History, Art, and Critical Discourse, ed. David Carroll (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 175-99; "The Impulse to See," in Vision and Visuality, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988), pp. 51-74; and "Where's Poppa?" in The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, pp. 433-59. Regarding revisionist work on Duchamp and the issues of gender and the body, see Molly Nesbit, "The Language of Industry" in The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, pp. 351-84.

86. Lyotard, Duchamp's TRANS/formers, pp. 169-70; also cited in Krauss, "The Blink of the Eye," pp. 182-83.

87. Ibid.

88. Writings, p. 84.

89. Krauss, "The Blink of an Eye," pp. 186-87.

90. Entitled The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp and edited by Thierry de Duve, the conferences papers and the discussions that followed them were published in 1991 by The MIT Press. Organized by Nova Scotia's Dennis Young and Thierry de Duve, who, in addition to participating in the colloquium, transcribed and edited the proceedings and served as chair for seven of the sessions, the conference provided the opportunity to appraise the state of Duchamp criticism--a decade after the major Duchamp retrospective in Paris at Beaubourg and at the as of yet untranslated

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colloquium at Cerisy-la-Salle. While this volume covers the methodological spectrum of recent Duchamp studies (seven of the participants have since 1977 published books that in whole or in part deal with Duchamp), its transcription of the discussions that followed each paper affirms what is implied by the title: no model will ever be sufficient for comprehending the totality of Duchamp's oeuvre.

91. Lyotard, Duchamp's TRANS/formers, p. 11. Also see Duchamp's statement concerning "the difference between the intention and its realization, a difference which the artist is not aware of," part of his statement entitled "The Creative Act," in Writings, p. 139,

92. Not surprisingly, early critical reaction to the work often queried whether such extreme realism, contrary to the more abstract and symbolic Large Glass, restricted "our tendency to allegorize." See d'Harnoncourt and Walter Hopps, p. 24. See also Yve-Alain Bois, p. 67.

The tendency to provide literalist readings of Étant Donnés . . . informed the thinking of William N. Copley, a painter and Duchamp's longtime friend. Copley, for example, compared the tableau to the Happenings of the early 1960s, performances designed to provoke the spectators' spontaneous reactions: "This piece is in many ways a happening, but a short glimpse of it makes its effect for a lifetime. . . But I cannot intellectualize on this piece of Marcel's; I can only feel it. I have experienced it. I can close my eyes and see it in detail anytime I choose." Copley "The New Piece," Art in America, vol. 57 (July-August 1969), p. 36; rpt. in Marcel Duchamp in Perspective, ed. Joseph Masheck (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975), pp. 112-14. When Cabanne asked Duchamp what he thought of happenings, he said, "I like happenings very much because they are something diametrically opposed to easel painting. Cabanne then said, "they adhere completely to your theory of the "onlooker." "Exactly," Duchamp responded, "Happenings have introduced into art an element no one had put there: boredom. To do a thing in order to bore people is something I never imagined!" (Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, p. 99). Likewise, for Arturo Schwarz, it was difficult to account, through words or visual reproduction, for the experience of seeing the tableau. "No photograph can ever render justice to the beauty and complexity of this work," Schwarz wrote. "There is no short cut to its enjoyment. The shock of discovering the piece cannot be captured by a

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photo or a description. Viewing the item is indeed a unique and untranslatable experience" (CW, p. 557).

93. The transcription of the colloquium was published in 1979, as Marcel Duchamp: tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition?, op. cit. While a belief in Duchamp's "reconciliation of opposites" has been embraced in the literature, such a view fails, however, to explain Duchamp's and Etant Donnés . . .'s intersubjective address. For a recent example of such a reading, see Francis M. Naumann's essay, "Marcel Duchamp: A Reconciliation of Opposites," in The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, pp. 41-64. The idea that Duchamp's ultimate transcends paradox is to varying degree an approach upheld in much of the literature, including Paz, Clair or Adcock; although Adcock does contest, for example, Clair's general reading of the Large Glass as "neo-platonic," its "transparency . . . the cast shadow of a superior reality," claiming this applies only in a mathematical context. See Adcock, Marcel Duchamp's Notes, p. 33; Clair, Marcel Duchamp ou le grand fictif: Essai de mythanalyse du Grand Verre (Paris: Galilée, 1975), pp. 44, 57.

94. A significant problem that a reliance on Duchamp's many texts (as occurs in the writings of Paz) presents is the tendency to subordinate the visual with words. In noting the tendency to disregard "the physical and temporal distance between [image and text], Krauss has observed, "that the text and the allegorical dimensions it promises to open behind the Glass are never permitted to inhere in the visual matrix of the work." Krauss, "The Naked Bride," Partisan Review, vol. 46 (1979), p. 618. One of the premises of this dissertation is that, in Etant Donnés . . ., this is no longer the case. The visual and the allegorical merge within the work. The act of seeing--as a durable instant of dilated perception--is to be considered as part of the subject so that perception's multiple dimensions (retinal, neuro- and psychophysiological) can unfold. Etant Donnés . . . presents this critical perceptual moment as the last of many references in Duchamp's oeuvre to the Garden of Eden, when the innocence of vision or reality assumed its ulterior, symbolic status (sexual difference). Duchamp's privileged "ultra-rapid" visual moment may be such a "revelatory" moment that, for Paz, reoccurs throughout the oeuvre: "the contemplation of a naked body in which alternately nature is revealed and the other reality is hidden. The

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Bride's veil is her nakedness" (Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare, p. 162). Or, as Paz suggests, the Bride may be herself "our horizon, our reality . . . ideal or rather hypothetical: the Bride is a point of view. More exactly, she is the vanishing point," which at one point is Duchamp's intimation of her (ibid., p. 176). For Duchamp's note regarding the Bride and the vanishing point, see Writings, p. 45. In either case the Bride acts as a sign or metaphor for representation, a hinge, that, as I have indicated, functions for others such as Lyotard, as a vanishing point, a point of equilibrium between the sexes and thus is indicative of their reconciliation (Duchamp's/TRANSformers, p. 115). But it is precisely a contrary experience of the representation of sexuality, as fragile and unstable, that I believe Etant Donnés . . . conveys. This complexity of sexual identity is rarely addressed in the literature, as opposed to the act of sexuality, to which Duchamp, I believe, was referring--in his famous statement to Schwarz, "I would not say that sex is the fourth dimension"--and that others have interpreted to mean sexuality in general. See CW, p. 36, n. 4.

95. But literal reference is hardly what concerned Duchamp; nor with the reincarnation of a narrative modality, which he had abandoned many years before with his adoption of the readymade and the mechanization advanced by the Rousselian model. Furthermore, because of his conceptual topology (involving non-Euclidian and n-dimensional geometry), in which there is a fundamental equivalency to all form--a strategy which is consonant with his nominalist refusal to privilege one meaning over another--a questioning of a general and conventional hermeneutics is further posited.

96. d'Harnoncourt and Hopps note that Etant Donnés . . ., no less than the Large Glass, "depends for its total visual effect on a specific perspectival system," which determines its "contiguous arrangement of forms within a three-dimensional space" (d'Harnoncourt and Hopps, p. 17). While the authors relate Duchamp's analogical constructions, such as his concept of "apparition and appearance," to notions of perspective, they do not extrapolate on this aspect of spatial recognition or examine its phenomenological structure, as it might relate, for example, to stereoscopy. For further discussion of perspective and the ways in which it informs the tableau, see Chapter Four.

97. As Benjamin writes, "the definition of the aura as a 'unique

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phenomenon of a distance however close it may be' represents nothing but the formulation of the cult value of the work of art in categories of space and time perception. Distance is the opposite of closeness. The essentially distant object is the unapproachable one. Unapproachability is . . . a major quality of the cult image. True to its nature, it remains 'distant, however close it may be.'" Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in Illuminations: Essays and Reflections, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), pp. 222, 243. Duchamp, as his note in A l'Infinif demonstrates, remained concerned spatio-temporal relations: "Try to argue on the plastic duration," to which the editor notes that Duchamp in 1965 added the notation, "I mean space into time." Writings, p. 77.

98. Duchamp was familiar with the work of Merleau-Ponty, although he did not know the philosopher personally. Mme Alexina Duchamp, in correspondence with this author. Lacan pays homage to Merleau-Ponty, in the first of four sessions that he devotes to the topic "Of the Gaze as objet petit a," in The Four Fundamental Concepts, p. 75. Referring to Merleau-Ponty's The Visible and the Invisible, Lacan cites his important reciprocity of subject and object. See The Visible and the Invisible, ed. Claude Lefort and trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968); and Phenomenology of Perception, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul and New York: The Humanities Press, 1962).

99. These categories--the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real--represent, respectively, the registration of images, both perceived or imagined; the Saussurian notion of the signifier; and the "raw" of existence (such as one's biological needs) which, because of its ungraspability, is precluded from the analytic experience.

100. Rather, as Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron has put it, for Duchamp the "play on words must become its own object," whereas "[for Breton] dreamed forms must be materialized in a tangible object." Surrealism, trans. Vivian Folkenflik (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 5. For further discussion of Surrealism's in terms of a dynamic temporal "event," see pp. 81-3; and also her Le surréalisme et le roman, 1922-50 (Lausanne: L'Age d'homme, 1983).

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101. The multiplicity of sense perception in late Duchamp becomes increasingly concentrated in another kind of "precision optics," a spatial interaction (infra-thin) that is both ambiguous and precise (see Chapter Four). Particularly with his return to figuration, Duchamp would concentrate on conveying this tension in terms of a newfound linearity. Through this "infra-thin" dimension of the line, he would envelop the "subject," in order to project a communal sensation between body and world that occurs at the level at which one produces meaning within one's body. For, as Merleau-Ponty observed, only by exploring one's own immediate contact with the world, at the threshold of immersion before and beyond any objective recording of perception, may one reflect "naturally," and "bodily" without the intercepting and controlling "ego." See Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, pp. 204-6. For further discussion of Merleau-Ponty's body-subject, see Remy C. Kwant, The Phenomenological Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1963), pp. 11-30, and *passim*.

Although the preeminently visual moment of Etant Donnés . . . is rooted in the narrative pretext of the Large Glass, the tableau's "extra-rapid" spectacle involves the freezing of the narrative and also suggests various kinds of spatio-temporal images, from the abstracted and idealized visual moment of modernism in which visibility is conceived of as autonomous, to the photograph's spatio-temporal manipulation as both time exposure and snapshot to the repetitive function of the fetish. See Thierry de Duve's discussion of the "trauma effect," in his analysis of the spatio-temporal effects of "the photograph as paradox"; "Time Exposure and Snapshot," October, no. 5 (Summer 1978), pp. 113-25.

102. A term initially coined by Ernest Jones, to mean the "disappearance of all sexual desire, the term was appropriated and redefined by Lacan. See Jones, "Early Developments in Female Sexuality," in Papers on Psychoanalysis (Boston: Beacon Hill Press, 1927); and Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts, p. 208.

103. See note 21, above. Such loss can be related to certain kinds of aphasia; see, for example, Chapter Two.

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104. See Duchamp's interview with Kuh, "Marcel Duchamp," in The Artist's Voice: Talks with Seventeen Artists, p. 88.

105. Duchamp's continual relinquishing of position, encompassing gender ambiguity or the absence of a position of artistic mastery, all can be read in terms of Lacan's theory of sexual identification, which, as Jane Gallop writes, "is precisely a theory of inadequacy, a theory of castration" that is no longer just sexual but involves everyone's assumption of inadequacy in language. "Only this realization," Gallop continues, "can release us from 'phallogentrism,' one of the effects of which is that one must constantly cover one's inevitable inadequacy . . . to speak." See Gallop, Reading Lacan (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 20. The issue of phallogentrism and Duchamp is discussed in Chapter Two.

106. For more on the issue of doubling or repetition in terms of the formation of language, see Claude Lévi-Strauss, The Raw and the Cooked, trans. J. and D. Weightman (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 339-40. Lévi-Strauss' analysis of the infant's acquisition of language has been cited by others, initial among them, Craig Owens, "Photography en abyme," October, no. 5 (Summer 1978), p. 82; and Rosalind Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," October, no. 19 (Winter 1981), pp. 3-34; rpt. in The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths, p. 110.

107. Lacan, The Seminar--Book I: Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-1954 (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1991), p. 148.

108. For a discussion of Duchamp's preoccupation with the body, as a malaise, see Carol P. James, "Duchamp's Pharmacy," Enclitic, vol. 2, no. 1 (Spring 1978), p. 68.

109. Writings, p. 23.

110. Crediting Roussel and particularly his Impressions d'Afrique (from which the artist "got the general approach" to the Large Glass), Duchamp maintained that he was liberated by the notion that as a painter he was influenced instead by a writer. "It was fundamentally Roussel who was responsible for my large glass La Mariée. . . From his Impressions

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d'Afrique, I got the general approach. . . ." Duchamp as quoted in Francis Steegmuller, "Duchamp Fifty years Later," Show (New York), vol. 3, no. 2 (February 1963), pp. 28-29. For Duchamp's remarks concerning literary influence, see his interview with James Johnson Sweeney, The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art, vol. XIII, no. 4-5, (1946), pp. 19-21. Roussel's grammatical ideas are adapted in Duchamp's writing and notes that appeared in the following publications, 391, Littérature 5, Anthologie de l'humour noir, The Wonderful Book, The Box in a Valise, and in various examples, some modified, in the spiraling and alliterative titles of his film Anémic Cinéma. Duchamp's earliest published pun (in Picabia's 391, July 1921) illustrates Roussel's influence, "If what you want is a grammatical rule: the verb agrees with the subject in consonance; for instance, le nègre aigrit, les n égresses s'aigrissent ou maigrissent, etc." Roussel later explained the creative work as "based on the coupling of two words which are taken in two different senses. . . . This procedure, in fact, is related to the use of rhyme. In both cases, the creative act is an unexpected one resulting from coincidences in the sounds of the words. Such an approach is essentially poetic." Comment j'ai écrit certains de mes livres (Paris: Librairie Alphonse Lemerre, 1935), pp. 17, 22; How I Wrote Certain of My Books, trans. with notes, by Trevor Winkfield (New York: SUN, 1975, 1977); quoted here in Schwarz, CW, p. 31. For a disseminative, intertextual and Rousselian reading of Duchamp's oeuvre, see André Gervais, La Raie alitée d'effets (Montreal: HMH, Collection Brèches, 1984).

111. Yve-Alain Bois, in agreement with Lebel that the Large Glass is "the admission of a failure," believes that even the choice of interpretation that that work offers is denied the viewer in Etant Donnés . . .. "Alors que dans le Grand Verre nous faisons partie du tableau qui nous englobait dans sa transparence, nous sommes ici confiné dans notre solitude, dans un monde clos, imperméable." Indeed, for Bois, the limitations imposed by Etant Donnés . . . have dire implications. The tableau goes beyond its pendant, creating through its finite view an impenetrable sense of isolation in the viewer. Bois, "La Mariée Nue: du Nouveau sur Marcel Duchamp," p. 67.

112. Carol P. James relates this "pathology" of confusion between the real and the symbolic to Duchamp's implementation of the "paranoid object," the readymade, which quintessentially defines the displacement of the natural.

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See "Duchamp's Pharmacy," p. 72.

113. Georges Didi-Huberman quoted in discussion, in Marcel Duchamp: Tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition?, p. 229; see also Jacqueline Chénieux, "L'Erotisme chez Marcel Duchamp et Georges Bataille," in *ibid.*, pp. 193-221.

114. This celebrated barring of the subject, within the self-representational terms of language, is central to Lacan's work. Following Saussure's fundamental structure of language as signifier and signified, Lacan introduced the "algorithm" S/s, "which is read as: the signifier over the signified, 'over' corresponding to the bar separating the two stages" (Ecrits, p. 126). With the horizontal bar of the door in Etant Donnés . . ., Duchamp not only alludes to the precedent of a bar-like division in the Large Glass but develops the structural idea of sexuality. Similarly, it is the Bride who again occupies the upper register of the "signifier" in Duchamp's equation, if indeed the spectator functions as one of the bachelors or "oculist witnesses."

115. Sexuality in the Field of Vision (London: Verso, New Left Books, 1986), p. 229.

116. See Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts, pp. 79-104. See also Clair, "Opticerics," p. 107; and "Marcel Duchamp et la tradition des perspecteurs," in Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques, pp. 124-59; rpt. in English, as "Duchamp and the Classical Perspectivists," Artforum, vol. 16 (March 1978), pp. 40-49.

117. *Ibid.*, p. 96 (modified translation).

118. Rose, Sexuality in the Field of Vision, p. 230.

119. See Fredric Jameson, "Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan," in Literature and Psychoanalysis: The Question of Reading--Otherwise, ed. Shoshana Felman (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), p. 367.

120. See "L'Erotisme chez Marcel Duchamp et Georges Bataille," in Marcel

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Duchamp: Tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition?, p. 195.

121. Duchamp on more than one occasion referred to the influential writings of Max Stirner, an early nineteenth-century German philosopher whose brand of anarchistic doctrine, or "egoism," appealed to Duchamp because of its refusal of teleological categories, such as purposes, goals, etc. In response to the questionnaire solicited by The Museum of Modern Art in 1953 as to the literary source for Three Standard Stoppages, Duchamp mentioned Stirner's L'Unique et la Propriété (actually Duchamp recalled the title as Le Moi et la Propriété); and, again, in one of the one hundred questions asked of Duchamp by Serge Stauffer in 1960. See Artist's Files, The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Stauffer, "Hundert Fragen au M. Duchamp," in Marcel Duchamp: Die Schriften (Zürich: Regenbogen-Verlag, 1981), p. 290.

122. Quoted in James, "Duchamp's Pharmacy," p. 72. This despite Duchamp's disclaimer that he was never interested in any social issues in his art. See Ivor Davies, "New Reflections on the Large Glass," Art History, Vol. 2, no. 1 (March 1979), p. 88.

123. Writing itself could thus be thought of as outside and supplemental to speech. Likewise, in reference to the onanism of the bachelor machine, as Derrida recalls Rousseau's initial observation, masturbation is a "dangerous supplement," not only functioning as an additional practice to sexuality but as a substitute for "normal" sexuality. Of Grammatology (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 56ff.

124. See Ferdinand de Saussure, Course of General Linguistics, trans. W. Baskin (London: New York Library and Peter Owen, 1960), pp. 125-27. Although beyond view, the floor of Etant Donnés . . . is a chess-like black-and-white checkered linoleum. See Duchamp's manual of instructions, "Approximation demontable."

## Chapter Two

### The Divided Self: Language and Sexuality

"If the 'Surrealists' . . . didn't deconstruct language, or only very little, it was because at bottom they had a normative idea of the body--of sexuality, to be blunt. The 'corset' imposed on syntax (an enormously complicated garment, in Breton's case) and sexual constraint come down to the same thing. The 'dream' they conceived of offered no access to bodily madness . . . but rather entrance to a kind of cultural vulgate, to 'oneirism,' a rhetorical release of images. It seems to me that the Surrealists missed the body. For this reason they left behind too much literature."<sup>1</sup>

Roland Barthes, The Grain of the Voice

In the fall of 1962, Duchamp visited the Church Street studio of the artist Robert Morris. After showing the Dadaist/Surrealist some of his own Duchamp-inspired work, Morris asked him how serious he was about playing chess.<sup>2</sup> Without hesitation, Duchamp responded that he really was quite serious. He wanted, he said, to become a chess master. But he realized, alas, that some of the other players of his day were simply much better than he. This concept was very difficult for Duchamp to accept. Struggling with his feelings of inadequacy, he muttered to Morris: "You begin to think like the girls. You wonder what they've got that you don't have."<sup>3</sup>

While Duchamp would on one level neutralize the inequities between the sexes, the construction of the subject for Duchamp would hinge on the

notion of inadequacy or lack. The possession of knowledge and power and the ways they are a part of masculinity were critical areas to expose and undermine in the artist's oeuvre. The "reality" of such myths, based on the constitution of normative identities, became increasingly and intricately tied to the formation of subjectivity and its symbolic construction. This Chapter concerns the artist's underlying program of unmasking the "phallic" signifier. With the readymade and later works--through discourses that function both symbolically and literally, consciously and unconsciously--Duchamp reveals a fundamental incommensurability in our understanding of the language of sexuality: that the penis and the phallus are not identical.

Before I address how Duchamp's complex dialectic of sexuality developed, it is important to reexamine some of the issues around Surrealism's politics of sexuality that I mentioned in the Introduction. Vested in the traditional symbolist-derived division of the female as muse/femme fatale, many of Surrealism's artists and writers traversed a host of literary mythological figures (among them the androgyne, Oedipus, Pygmalion). This work generated a symbolism that marginalized the woman and merely suspended deeply seated masculine conflicts and drives toward her.<sup>4</sup> This relationship is particularly evident in the early stages of Surrealism, such as one finds illustrated in La Révolution surréaliste (1929), previously discussed in the Introduction (see Figs. 14 and 15). As such, these masculine conflicts became absorbed within the traditional Freudian model of psychosexual development--a paradigm which allowed repressed material

to be transformed into art. Such libidinal maturation was based on an intuitive preoccupation with generative forces which could somehow transcend Oedipal fears and uncertainties about a threatening female (pro)creative force. The innately human drive to feel whole and transcend a sense of self as a "fractured sexual subject"--to unify both male and female elements--precluded most of the Surrealists from deconstructing the subject in psychoanalytic or Lacanian terms.

The myth of a unified "self" (along with its implied acquisition of a sexual identity based on ego development and/or the maturation of the drives) was hardly endorsed by Marcel Duchamp, whose uncertainties about female creativity were integrated into his alter ego, Rose Sélavy, if not completely resolved with his readymades.<sup>5</sup> Unlike his Surrealist colleagues, Duchamp's interrogation of the unity of the subject--its fictive coherence--ultimately addresses the discourse of sexuality itself as it parallels the internal and arbitrary division of language.

This Chapter, then, will contend that such an address, dramatically constituted in Etant Donnés . . ., hinges on the issue of desire, and a concomitant divided self (sexual division as symbolic division), and centers, in a Lacanian sense, on the castration complex. This connection is of seminal importance in understanding Duchamp's oeuvre, having been broached with the Large Glass and later foregrounded in Etant Donnés . . .. It is precisely Duchamp's "pre-figurement" of these issues that lends itself ultimately to a Lacanian reading.

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A margin sketch from the Green Box (Fig. 16), showing the upper and lower registers of the Large Glass--the realms of la mariée on top and le célibataire below--suggests that the artist conceived of the work, in part, as a self-portrait. This concern with gender division presaged, of course, the other type of self-portrait that emerged around 1920, when the artist was in the middle of executing the Large Glass: the personage of Rose Sélavy.

The readymade, as well, often involved gender ambiguity; although resembling a womb-like form, the urinal of Duchamp's Fountain, 1917 (Fig. 36), for example, has a function that is applicable to men only. Indeed, one might recall that "each of the malic forms [of the Large Glass] is built above and below a common horizontal plane, the plane of sex cutting them at the point of sex."<sup>6</sup> This one horizon, suggestive of a common vanishing point, also relates to the height of the projections of the Réseaux des stoppages (Network of Stoppages), 1914 (Fig. 50) (that Duchamp achieved by reproducing his own revision of standard measurement, 3 Standard Stoppages, 1913-14 [Fig. 51] , drawing each "stoppage" three times with rulers he devised especially for the task), that hovers over their heads, further implying that, for Duchamp, identity was as unstable as the artist's "standard" measurements themselves.<sup>7</sup>

The clear structure of sexual division illustrated symbolically in the Large Glass is again the locus of Etant Donnés . . .. But before I address the subtle ways in which the question of sexual identity, or its instability, is played out in the symbolic terms of language, I would like to suggest that

the difficulty of the issue--the fantasy of absolute sexual difference--is presented quite directly in the sexual ambiguity of the nude figure.

In addition to the issue of sexual identity's problematization in the oeuvre is the manner in which it is treated in the tableau, that raises a number of questions. This treatment appears to specifically engender confusion, rather than to suppress it through the mythical containment of androgyny. As psychoanalytic theory since Freud has attempted to make clear, the psychic condition of bisexuality exists universally.<sup>8</sup> "Anatomy," Freud wrote, "can point out the characteristics of maleness and femaleness, psychology cannot."<sup>9</sup> In *Etant Donnés . . .*, Duchamp begins to disrupt even a simple biological distinction. While the left side of the figure, for example, speaks of the conventional standard of woman--the ample breast, the gracefully-curved thigh, the elegantly bent knee, the attenuated, uplifted arm--the figure's right side appears as male, with its massive structure and earthy weightiness, and less visible breast. And if one bisects the body lengthwise, this con-fusion of gender is further heightened. For the left, female side, is clearly diminutive and, in its installment in the quasi-middle ground, is perceived as situated in a space somewhat below its other "male" half.<sup>10</sup>

As discussed in the Introduction, this spatial and sexual equivocation recalls Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* and Duchamp's rectified readymade of it, *L.H.O.O.Q.*, 1919 (Fig. 18);<sup>11</sup> the latter dramatizing the androgynous character of the former.<sup>12</sup> Not content with the figure's mere androgyny, however, Duchamp's *Giocanda* becomes literally marked by a sign of

masculinity: inscribed by a patch of facial hair. Rather than simply see the *Giocanda* as a woman transformed into a man, as others have, I prefer to see the work as ambiguous, such as Schwarz has suggested. "Duchamp . . . transforms the subject into a personage of indeterminate sex," writes Schwarz, noting that soon thereafter, Duchamp adopted his feminine pseudonym, Rose Sélavy.<sup>13</sup> The nude figure, furthermore, in the relief *Etant donnés le gaz d'éclairage et la chute d'eau*, 1948-49 (Fig. 47), appears even more masculine, both in its musculature and lack of fleshiness, than the final figure in the tableau. Not every incarnation of the nude, however, would convey this ambiguity. The artist's first known study of the figure in the landscape, a photo-collage entitled *Study for Etant Donnés . . .*, c. 1947 (Fig. 52), in which the "arbor-type" Bride appears as if growing from a tree, presents a more feminine version.<sup>14</sup>

Duchamp's continued allusions to Adam and Eve, however, foreground the issue of gender division in the oeuvre. The *Green Box* tells us that the titular elements of water and gas, while gender-defined by Duchamp as female and male respectively, both belong to the bachelor domain of the earlier *Large Glass*. Reunited in *Etant Donnés . . .*, virtually next to one another on the tableau's horizon, and relegated in their neutrality to a position of equality, we must again decipher the image in relation to gender division. Moreover, Duchamp's ambiguous allusions to gender--his belief in the uncertainty of sexual division--can be understood as underlying both his particular morphology as well as his assault on the concept of the unity of language.

The confluence in Etant Donnés . . . of certain issues of ambiguity such as gender, landscape, genre, and vision have their antecedence in the work of Leonardo da Vinci. While Duchamp's adorned Mona Lisa, L.H.O.O.Q., was his initial mock homage to this figure, it was her beardless return in January 1965, as an unrectified readymade pasted on to a dinner invitation, now inscribed rasée/L.H.O.O.Q. (L.H.O.O.Q. Shaved) (Fig. 53), that indirectly announced another shaven figure, who had yet to arrive, the Bride of Etant Donnés . . ..<sup>15</sup> Typically with Duchamp, there would be other links, other announcements or clues of things to come, that were already named, that seemed themselves to be "already-mades," most notably, as I have suggested, his series of etchings on the theme of "The Lovers" completed during the last year of his life. The lovers' union, which appears in this series, further suggests that Duchamp was more directly reworking his ideas on gender division.

Among the many works that Duchamp made during the decade in which he completed the tableau, none more explicitly alludes to the tableau than the second series of nine etchings he executed in New York, between December 1967 and March 1968, to accompany the second volume of Schwarz's The Large Glass and Related Works.<sup>16</sup> While the first of the two series depicts the principal elements of the Glass, the second series evidences, in addition to further visual/linguistic punning, Duchamp's subtle late formulation of eroticism that would inform his posthumous tableau.<sup>17</sup> Literally revealing the then-unknown Bride from Etant Donnés . . ., the fourth etching, entitled The Bec Auer (Fig. 10) (after the

name of the manufacturer of the turn-of-the-century lamp that the figure holds in her left hand), replicates the tableau's figure. Here, however, she is accompanied by a lover whose arms, clasped behind his head, mirror the Bride's outspread legs and conveniently cover her face. The ease with which they recline together, their limbs symmetrically balanced, suggests an almost symbiotic relationship between them. The Bec Auer, which illuminates the face of the lover, alludes to the imminent revelation of the tableau and the focus that would also fall on the viewer. Indeed, in the ninth etching of the "The Lovers" series, entitled Morceaux choisis d'après Courbet (Selected Details after Courbet) (Fig. 13), Duchamp provides a preview of the tableau and its explicit scene. Based on Courbet's Woman with White Stockings, Duchamp's graphic revision of this work consists of his turning the figure's face away and placing a falcon in the foreground, a personification of the viewer-to-be of Etant Donnés . . .. "He's curious," the artist said of his feathered observer, "and furthermore he's a falcon, which in French yields an easy play on words" (a faucon is also a faux con). "You can see," Duchamp concluded, "a faux con and a real one."<sup>18</sup>

In the fifth and seventh etchings of the series, Morceau choisis d'après Ingres (I and II) (Selected Details After Ingres (I and II) (Figs. 11 and 12), Duchamp appropriates the female figures from the Bain Turc, 1862. The male figure in the fifth etching (I) derives from Ingres' Virgil Reading the Aeneid to Livia, Octavia, and Augustus, while the male figure in the seventh etching (II) is after Ingres' depiction of Oedipus, in his Oedipus and the Sphinx, 1808 (Fig. 54). Apart from whatever other reasons inspired

Duchamp to quote Ingres, one explanation might lie in the latter's classicism and stylistic elevation of the erotic subject to another level of signification. John Connolly indeed suggests that such symbolization of eroticism occurs in Ingres, whose classicizing tendency appealed to Duchamp, who presumably wished to sustain--particularly as a foil for his return to realism--a classical sense of detachment:

What constituted Ingres' concept of eroticism centered on his expectation that an educated spectator would embrace the erotic image with his intellect no less than with his senses. For this reason, the erotic images that Ingres created are fully erotic only to those who recognize that the cliché accompanying the primary image covertly contradicts its overt message. To Ingres, the erotic was that which is recognizable and desirable, but known to be unattainable, and therefore all the more desirable. The monumental Bain Turc is just such a painting. To the uninitiated it is a hedonistic wallow; but to those who suspend disbelief to discover the artist's intent it is the masterpiece of a lifetime search to create an allegory of the senses wherein the spectator is the living personification of sight.<sup>19</sup>

Similarly, Duchamp was exploring a sublimation of the erotic in favor of a symbolic construction whose meaning fades and, like the mechanism of the pun, turns away from the signifier, and liberates form from a delimited or restricted sense of meaning.<sup>20</sup>

For Duchamp, eroticism involves--no less than with his linguistic play--an element of "delay," withdrawal or detachment that is consistent with his thematic refusal of consummation or jouissance. Indeed, beginning with the Glass and progressing to the erotic play of Anemic

Cinema, it is the artist's underlying objective to reveal the self and the nature of the "drive" as that which is subsumed by the symbolic function. This psychoanalytic terms "Hence the concept of drive," Lacan continues, "in which [the subject] is designated by an organic, oral, anal, etc., mapping that satisfies the requirements of being all the farther away from speaking the more he speaks."<sup>21</sup> Thus Etant Donnés . . . may be further contextualized through the Lacanian registers, as the tableau's formalization of "desire" exceeds a discourse that establishes the mise-en-scène for the phenomenology of "aesthetic perception" (understood as the space of representation) to occur.<sup>22</sup> The pictorial or linguistic sign constitutes desire--the dynamic of Surrealism--but, as I have pointed out, for Duchamp, it is the abstraction and configuration of desire as unattainable that the tableau enacts, "fleshing out" in this treatment the issue of the failure of jouissance represented in the Large Glass.

Ultimately, the meaning of the voyeuristically revealed image in Etant Donnés . . . revolves around a psychosexual and linguistic axis. The single gesture of the nude--as she holds a phallic-shaped gas lamp to illuminate her sex--produces a visual analog between sex and lamp. Yet, despite the absolute precision with which the landscape is depicted, the work denies a narrative that could yield a graspable, logical meaning for the viewer. On the contrary, Duchamp's representation functions at the level of the wound, of painful denial, of castration.<sup>23</sup> It is the rendering of the female genitalia that further produces this inability to read the scene in terms other than desire and lack, an impression predicated, in part, as I

suggest in the Introduction, on the severe, unnatural manner in which Duchamp has depicted the female genitalia--almost as an intimation of castration. Above all, when one compares the anatomical detail visible in the tableau's figure with that conjured by the negative cast derived from it, Female Fig Leaf (Fig. 23), it becomes evident that Duchamp is projecting something other than a physical absence.<sup>24</sup>

Indeed it is not the phallus but the phallic signifier that Duchamp reveals--the idea that in language everyone is castrated, symbolically signified by a system to which everyone must yield. And it is through the phallic signifier that one attempts to cover up this inadequacy, to signify oneself through language, in other words, to speak. Thus Duchamp's acceptance of this universal condition, his refusal of "phallocentrism," his unwillingness to veil his castration underlies the enigma of Etant Donnés . . .. Therefore, as I wish to show, the perceived ambiguity of sexuality in the tableau is not only to effect an erasure of sexual difference, as most of the literature assumes, but rather to disclose the symbolic construction of gender. Such a strategy allows one to see the relationship in the oeuvre between such diverse works and entities as the readymade, Rose Sélavy or the artist's Self-Portrait in Profile, 1958 (Fig. 22), all of which, as I suggested earlier, reflect Duchamp's will to question his position of mastery, to deny his phallocentrism as well as to define himself through his feminine side.<sup>25</sup>

The question of language--and to what extent the role it plays in achieving a sense of dislocation precludes a forging of identity--is central

to Duchamp's willful unraveling of the self. The degree to which his engenderment of the subject wavers and, in that process, produces a perceptual instability, hinges not only on an understanding of the arbitrariness of both the signifier (language) and of sexual division but on its registration in the visual and symbolic realm. But it is his sustained interrogation and, more important, his embodiment of gender ambiguity, understood foremost within a linguistic context, that permits the distinction that I have already drawn of Duchamp within Surrealist practice.

To further clarify this contention, I must again digress to Duchamp's relationship to Breton and also to the period of his collaboration in New York with other surrealists such as Max Ernst. Duchamp's collaboration with Breton was substantiated throughout the 1940s, having begun the decade before with his Door for Gradiva (Fig. 7), a silhouetted coupling of man and woman for the glass doorway of Breton's Galerie Gradiva in 1937.<sup>26</sup> Duchamp's fidelity to his early champion Breton can well be understood. Breton first supported Duchamp two decades earlier, writing the first significant essay on the Large Glass, "Phare de la Mariée," which appeared in Minotaure in 1935. In addition, as the honorary New Yorker among the Surrealists in exile, Duchamp's friendship must have been invaluable to Breton, whose sense of cultural displacement was intensified by the his refusal to learn English.

Duchamp's design initially for the window of Brentano's, Fifth Avenue bookstore, and then for the Gotham Book Mart (Fig. 25), in the spring of 1945, in honor of the publication of Breton's essay Arcane 17,

announced his well-known "mirrorial return," a renewal of the specular theme begun with the Large Glass, of engaging the viewer through the capture of his or her reflection.<sup>27</sup> The resultant self-consciousness, "seeing oneself see," as well as the conjunction of viewer and object, has suggested to some, a visual counterpart to Breton's unification of the male/female gender polarity. Indeed, it would appear that Duchamp equated the act of vision with [Breton's] act of love as a unifying force.<sup>28</sup>

The Gotham Book Mart window display resumes certain themes Duchamp began developing when he first conceived of his Chocolate Grinder paintings of 1913 and 1914 (Figs. 55 and 56). These ideas were subsequently published more than a half century later in his third and final collection of notes, A l'Infinifit:

The question of shop windows.

To undergo the interrogation of shop windows.

The exigency of the shop window.

The shop window proof of the existence of the outside world.

When one undergoes the examination of the shop window, one also pronounces one's own sentence.

In fact one's choice is round-trip.

From the demands of the shop window, from the inevitable response to shop windows, my choice is determined.

No obstinacy, ad absurdum, of hiding the coition through a glass pane with one or many objects of the shop window.

The penalty consists in cutting the pane and in feeling regret as soon as possession is consummated.

Q.E.D.<sup>29</sup>

Duchamp's window installation consisted of a headless, female store mannequin, behind whose right foot, he placed a small card on which was

written "LAZY HARDWARE." Standing upright and embracing a copy of Breton's book, and dressed in a revealingly short, bright white apron, the mannequin also had a faucet attached to her right thigh.<sup>30</sup>

The motif of the headless woman derives from Max Ernst's collage novel of 1929, La femme 100 têtes, which itself contains reference to Emile Zola's novel Germinal.<sup>31</sup> It was Ernst who, upon reading the latter, produced the pun (sans/cent [100]). As opposed to the spectator's ambient reflections in the Large Glass, the observer of Lazy Hardware, in its first installation at Brentano's, experienced quite literally a visualization of Ernst's pun.<sup>32</sup> As Charles Stuckey has speculated, from photograph's and store records, Duchamp's desired effect was for the viewer's head, reflected in the window glass, to become the mannequin's missing head.<sup>33</sup> The reincarnation of the work at the Gotham Book Mart, encountered slightly different physical dimensions--now the mannequin stood at least 24 to 30 inches above the level of the sidewalk, no longer permitting the visual effect achieved at Brentano's. Thus Duchamp had to reconceive and orient the viewer's altered reflection. As the well-known photograph of Duchamp and Breton flanking the mannequin reveals, the viewer's head and its reflection, now parallel with the mannequin's white apron, were washed out by the latter's deliberately well-illuminated opacity. In other words, one would "lose one's head" in the genital area.<sup>34</sup>

In terms of Duchamp's art historical development, the acephalous theme, as well as that of castration, is clearly present in the Large Glass, where the nine malic moulds are doubly threatened. The coffin-like forms

of the "bachelor" malic moulds--"external containers of the mouldings of nine different uniforms or liveries" such as a policeman, priest, hunter, bellboy, undertaker, etc., each crowned by a different form of hat--occupy the area of the Glass called the Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries.

According to a note from the Green Box: "Each of the [eight] malic forms is cut by an imaginary horizontal plane at a point called the point of sex."<sup>35</sup> In addition, as the drawing Cimetière des uniformes et livrées (Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries) [No. 2] 1914 (Fig. 57), shows, the nine lines of the "Capillary Tubes" ominously lead to the top of each mold. The theme figures in the derivation of the Large Glass: as Duchamp recalled in an interview in 1957, the idea of the Bride (as well as the association of love/death) had been inspired "by those booths at the fairs, which were so numerous then, where dummies, often representing the characters of a wedding, offered themselves for decapitation thanks to the skill of the ball-throwers."<sup>36</sup> The femme fatale theme also functions in relation to castration in Duchamp's photo-collage Obligations pour la Roulette de Monte Carlo (Monte Carlo Bond), 1924 (Fig. 26).<sup>37</sup> This edition of 30 bonds, inscribed by Rose Sélavy, carries the image of Duchamp's head, "cut out" from Man Ray's original photo and reset on a roulette board. Inscribed by Rose Sélavy, this edition of 30 bonds carries the image of Duchamp's head, "cut out" or "decapitated" from the original photo by Man Ray and reset on a roulette board, resembling the presentation of the head of John the Baptist on a plate. Although his hair is propped up with shaving cream providing him with satyric horns, Duchamp resembles the presentation of the head of John the

Baptist on a plate, again depicting himself as de-phallicized.

Duchamp's challenge to the phallic order is more subtly conveyed, however, in Lazy Hardware. Typically, the artist's work functions in a complex of ways. While a female viewer of Lazy Hardware enacts Ernst's pun, a male spectator, achieves its gender reversal, as well as a realization of Duchamp's early musing on the nature of the shop window, "the coition through a glass pane." And inasmuch as the spectator, in order to regain his head, would have to bend down below the level of the skirt, the work recasts the viewer in the role of one of the oculist witnesses of the Large Glass, playing on the pun "au-cul-iste" ("ass specialist"), once again seeing the bride stripped bare.<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, the faucet attached to the mannequin's right thigh also refers to another of Duchamp's statements, indicated by the inclusion of a card that reads "LAZY HARDWARE," "Parmi nos articles de quincaillerie paresseuse, nous recommandons un robinet qui s'arrête de couler quand on ne l'écoute pas" (Among our articles of lazy hardware we recommend a faucet which stops dripping when nobody is listening to it.)<sup>39</sup> Additionally, through his reference to the sense of hearing, Duchamp indirectly alludes to the reflexivity of sight, a quality that grants this perceptual faculty a degree of primacy among the various senses. Duchamp had made a judgment some years before in his well-quoted statement from the Box of 1914: "One can look at seeing: one can't hear hearing"; the spectator standing before the Gotham Book Mart is, in fact, witnessing himself in the act of voyeurism.<sup>40</sup> But more important, in the sense of his

psychosexual development, it is the loss of one's reflection, indeed one's sense of self, that results in the visual perception, or lack of perception, of the genitalia. On one level, as Stuckey argues, Duchamp's substitution of "the polarity between spectator and object for Breton's polarity between masculine and feminine in an attempt to find the visual embodiment of the union of physically inert opposites" does achieve a certain degree of unity for the spectator: "If only he can ally himself with what he sees, he achieves in his mind a unity, a 360-degree field of vision. This is, of course, a variety of self-consciousness, but it should not provoke any anxiety. The spectator's self-consciousness instead allows him to imagine a new totality, a primal unity."<sup>41</sup> Yet, such an idealized conception of self-consciousness rests on the imaginary pretensions of bourgeois subjectivity. If ever Duchamp alluded to the complex and perhaps ideal perceptual state of the fourth dimension, it was always something not entirely grasped by the viewer, whose world is defined in three-dimensions. And it is this loss of bearing, as the field of vision is blurred in the complex crossing of sexual identification, that informs the enciphered role of the Bride in the tableau.

Such a realistic, three-dimensional field, in which sexuality, subjectivity and vision merge and perception falters, occurs in Etant Donnés . . .. But it was the particular coincidence and problematization of vision and sexuality, initially indirectly addressed throughout the 1920s with the artist's abstract and linguistic optical experimentation, that assumes renewed and primary concern in the window display. Lazy Hardware's conflation of Duchamp's thematics, while generally associated

with the continuing expatriated, and increasingly literary, movement of Surrealism, signals Duchamp's efforts to further analyze the interdependency of his themes directly prior to beginning his first studies for the tableau.

Duchamp's more radical, gender-obscuring thematics were executed ostensibly in the service of the idealism of the Surrealist movement, as defined principally by Breton. Shortly after Arcane 17 was published, Duchamp designed the cover and dustjacket for Breton's book, Young Cherry Trees Secured Against Hares (Fig. 24). In effect Duchamp attached a photograph of Breton's face to the book's binding, which became the face cut-out of a jacket cover rendering of the Statue of Liberty. Duchamp, therefore, unites binding with cover, Breton with his female opposite, achieved through the poet's power of love.<sup>42</sup> This explicit reaffirmation of Breton's message of hope founded upon liberating love in Arcane 17, of a "liberty not subject to any contingency," again signaled Duchamp's deep alliance and gratitude to his dear friend. The longevity of their friendship and collaboration, however, has contributed to a blurring of distinctions between certain shared concerns in their work, such as androgyny, language, and the self-portrait.

Indeed, Duchamp may have even borrowed from Breton's visual iconography. While the conception of Etant Donnés . . . probably significantly predates the actual execution of the piece, it is the sole nude figure that initially appears in two studies--the first, a small pencil drawing dating from circa 1947, entitled Etant Donnés: Maria, la chute d'eau et la gaz

d'éclairage (Fig. 46), remains the earliest known graphic intimation of the eventual figure in the tableau; the second, the relief Etant donnés le gaz d'éclairage et la chute d'eau, 1948-49 (Fig. 47), presents the motif and treatment that Duchamp would again use to make his final figure, pigment and graphite on vellum over gesso, here mounting the figure on, and cropping it with, contoured planes of velvet.<sup>43</sup> It is significant that in the latter work, in addition to approximating the actual pose and treatment of the finished work, the figure's pubis is hairless, and the axis of the body suggests a figure in flight.<sup>44</sup> Such a figure, indeed, appears in a number of Breton's novels, beginning with Nadja in 1928 and, prominently, in his last major work, Arcane 17. In the latter, a siren named Melusine is called the "woman child," a personification of the new Eve who represents "the analogical alliances of opposites in the occult forces in nature."<sup>45</sup>

It would seem that Duchamp's sensibility, given his last masterpiece, opposes the transcendent, complementary opposition of the male/female polarity finally endorsed by Breton. Represented by the supine nude, whose undeveloped, hairless pudendum defines this woman/child, is another set of meanings entirely--utterly divorced from the resplendent dreams of triumphant revolution embodied in Arcane 17.<sup>46</sup> The Bride who appears in the guise of Breton's siren, Melusine, who in Arcane 17 had represented the new Eve, bearer of hope, of a future resolved of conflict, is abandoned, in Etant Donnés . . ., in favor of a present reality of division and uncertain identity. And this shift, articulated in private over the course of 20 years--hinges on Duchamp's rejection of popular Surrealism's utopian

conviction in the inexhaustible potential of language to explore the unknown, forever "translating" the mysteries of the unconscious in search of identity or a resolution to the contradictions of dualism.

The exploratory function of language was never chief among Duchamp's linguistic aims. Instead, he developed a proto-structuralist, rather than a lexical, understanding of language. This conceptual approach would lead ultimately to a parallel experience of language and sexuality in vision (wherein the body would "figure" language, or "write" itself)--an advancement of the artist's earlier synthesis of these terms in his symbolic assumption of the "otherness" in language, through the "literary" and sexual presence of Rose Sélavy.

While Duchamp's rendering of vision as symbolic will be explored in Chapter Four, in Etant Donnés . . . the artist conflates the act of "writing" gender with that of visualizing it, a relationship metaphorically suggested by the stylus that appears in a study for the right-hand section of the Bachelor domain of the Large Glass, entitled To Be Looked at (from the Other side of the Glass) with One Eye, Close to, for Almost an Hour, 1918 (Fig. 5). The profound ways in which To be Looked at . . . informs Etant Donnés . . ., as I suggested in the Introduction, may be located at the very "point" at which the stylus--whose historical function was to write and, like that of the camera obscura, to organize vision--represents a confluence in the oeuvre between vision, language, sexuality, and the equivocal construction of subjectivity.

This conjunction becomes more obvious in light of the artist's

implicit reference in Etant Donnés . . . to Albrecht Dürer's woodcut Draftsman Doing Perspective Drawings of a Woman (Fig. 27), from De Symmetria Humanorum Corpum, 1532, a print that further evidences Duchamp's return to this early critical juncture in the oeuvre--when the erotic narrative of desire was being transposed to the terms of optics (through such studies as To be Looked at . . .), synthesizing his earlier narrative of desire in vision around the symbolic axis of language.<sup>47</sup> As its title informs us, Dürer's woodcut depicts the artist graphically transcribing the three-dimensional form of his female model into the organized coordinates of linear perspective. The instrument mediating this "dimensional" transference to the plane of single point perspective is the stylus, which is located between the artist and the woman, and at whose edge or point the artist adjusts his eye. Bisecting the space between the two figures is a window on whose gridded surface the infinite points of space are mapped. But it is through this point of view, the literal and figurative reference point of the stylus--an instrument historically used for writing--that perspective, language, and gender converge. One can thus see inscribed in both To be Looked at . . . and Dürer's woodcut more than just the artist's ultimate deconstruction of perspective: by further analogy to the vertical instrument of the stylus (the patriarchy of perspective), Duchamp signals the tableau's construction of the female body as visualized and "written" as a certain, rhetorical, point of view.<sup>48</sup> (Moreover, in Duchamp's reference to the Dürer print, one might also note an allusion to the Large Glass. In the uncanny presence of a pair of windows in the background--

each framing its respective figure and gender--separated at the critical median point by the perspectival grid, the woodcut could be said to illustrate a much earlier incarnation of the Glass [replete with the landscape that Duchamp would later provide, in Cols alités (Bedridden Mountains), 1959 (Fig. 58), which, along with its punning title, suggests the Glass' linkage to the then-unknown Etant Donnés . . ..]<sup>49</sup>

Like many of his Surrealist colleagues, Duchamp's understanding of language revolves around the arbitrariness of the sign. Yet, despite his constant word games and apparent investment in the sign's multiplicity of meaning, Duchamp's paradoxical aim is to exhaust the sign while also exposing its variability. While he distinguishes this process of alternating the filling and depletion of the sign as implicitly sexual, this perception of sexuality as constituted in language is more importantly related to a contingent sense of self.

In contrast, Breton's understanding of Roussel, for example, ascribes to the writer the role of the alchemist, producing work with coded, decipherable messages concealing the real source of his work--the philosopher's stone.<sup>50</sup> He fails to see beyond the symbolic metamorphoses within Roussel's universe, or in Michel Foucault's words, "beyond the quasi-liberties of expression, an absolute emptiness of being that he [Roussel] must surround, dominate, and overwhelm with pure invention."<sup>51</sup> Contrary to the Surrealists' search for a hidden significance in Roussel's dazzling prose, Duchamp understood his essential opacity, which, in Foucault's words, "systematically imposes a formless anxiety, diverging and yet centrifugal,

directed not toward the most withheld secrets but toward the imitation and the transmutation of the most visible forms; each word at the same time energized and drained, filled and emptied by the possibility of there being yet another meaning, this one or that one, or neither one nor the other, but a third, or none."<sup>52</sup> Roussel's process--predicated on his suffering and founded in the emptiness or hollowness that opens within the word--is the reverse of Breton's method.<sup>53</sup>

Breton attempted to grasp from the threshold of these fissures in language, a history, an identity formulated in the countless tropes, twists and turns of language's movement, its constant rebirth of meaning. As I have suggested in the Introduction, when compared with Duchamp's bi-gendered self-representation in the Large Glass, for example, or with one of his multiple selves such as Rose Sélavy, Breton's "self-portrait" Portrait of the Actor A.B. in his Memorable Role in 1713 (Fig. 21) appears as an arcane text from which the Surrealist founder seeks to construct an historically bound, egotistic sense of himself in order to fortify his *raison d'être*.<sup>54</sup> The objective of Breton's self-portrait is clearly incommensurate with Duchamp's refusal to establish a fixed self. While the former chooses to enhance his persona with a male-identified footnote from history, the latter again declines even to identify himself as male. Duchamp's conviction in the subject's multivalence ultimately renders it ungraspable for him; the narrative of history, therefore, could never serve as a source or a means for self-identification.

Within the arbitrariness and ambiguity of language, Duchamp does

not yield the self to the fiction of the word--to the illusion of language's metaphoric process of transcendence. He neither seeks to identify nor to realize the self through the theater of the sign. His perpetual deconstruction of the social function of language, as Annette Michelson has observed, reminds us "of autism considered as a language system" that ultimately becomes inscribed within the body.<sup>55</sup> The self, a fiction for Duchamp, disappears before the spectacles that constitute it--language and gender.

It is important, however, to first situate Duchamp's idea of a contingent sense of self within his early work in optics and the vital and complex role this equation plays throughout his oeuvre. Annette Michelson's article "Anemic Cinema: Reflections on an Emblematic Work" represents an early and significant attempt to explore and relate Duchamp's optics to the pathology of autism.<sup>56</sup> Building upon Lawrence Steefel's initial emphasis and reading of Duchamp's "autoreroticism," Michelson systematically explored Duchamp's formal strategies and themes in relation to autism. Her effort to understand his lifework as "a total semiotic system" ironically centers on the failure rather than triumph of language.<sup>57</sup>

While the idea of autism was originally mentioned by Lebel, in reference to certain "schizoid tendencies" seen in Duchamp's work by Jean Reboul as well as Michel Carrouges, it was addressed in relation to the idea of separatism in the Large Glass and its unfulfilled consequences and not to Michelson's understanding of a contingent or fissured self.<sup>58</sup> Michelson's locating of the autistic syndrome within a linguistic context centers

Duchamp's oeuvre around the kind of "coherence of [a] given syndrome."<sup>59</sup> Michelson cites Bruno Bettelheim's study of Joey, an autistic child whose features of speech--self-reflexive, detached, abstract, depersonalized--characterized a fractured sense of self and identity. In effect, Michelson relates Joey's fixations--a fascination with revolving disks (such as an oscillating fan), an incorrect use of personal pronouns, an identification with and transformation into a machine, and an immersion in a fantasy world of pseudo-logic--to Duchamp's own solipsistic production: "Duchamp's persistent interest in Rotary Spheres, in the forms of rotation and motion, the insistence upon the usefulness of objects (exemplified in his joy at the possibility of Anemic Cinema being considered as a therapeutic device in the restoration of Vision), the elaborate linguistic play, the recasting of natural laws into highly artificial and controlled codes, the subversion of measure, the constant movement between alternatives which support his esprit de contradiction, the disdain of community, the extreme interest in scientific discovery, the enchantment with the pseudo-science of parapsychics, represent only a few strategies of the autistic economy so remarkably converted by him to the uses of art and speculative thought."<sup>60</sup>

The situating of the dialectic of gender within the domain of language and its hopeless divide--in the irreducible signifying order "figured" in the body of the nude--provides the perimeters within which a psychosexual construction can be constituted. By establishing the female sex as the visual focal point (a play on sight/site), Duchamp returns us, in Etant Donnés . . ., to the source of visual experience before the acquisition of

language. Again the female sex becomes the sign behind which logocentrism and phallogentrism seem to waiver as we come face to face with the disarticulation of language, with the site of writing constituted in and of the body--the artist's address of "the Preconditions of a Language."<sup>61</sup>

This matrix of origin, desire, and language--particularly given the tableau's unique "retinal" aspect--reminds us of Gustave Courbet's recently re-discovered L'Origine du monde (Origin of the World), 1866 (Fig. 59). The latter is the subject of an article by Linda Nochlin, written before the painting's recent reemergence, when the work was virtually known only through its historical reference and through photographs.<sup>62</sup> Nochlin situates her own failure to locate the original painting, "each new find simply repeats, as though original, a new set of false clues," against traditional art history's belief that through "the repetitive act of searching over and over again--one can finally penetrate to the ultimate meaning of a work of art." The author reveals that the idea of origin, and the subject of Courbet's painting, ultimately involves the infinitely repeatable symbolic process of desire. Exploring "the myth of an originating force" within the "presumed origin of The Origin in masculine desire," Nochlin cites Desmond Collins and John Onians' efforts to situate the origin of art in the engravings of vulvas on the walls of caves in Southern France during the Aurignacian Period (c. 33,000 to 28,000 B.C.).<sup>63</sup> Courbet very much believed in this myth of originating force. In works such as The Studio of the Artist, Courbet "focuses our attention on the manipulation of matter, the application of paint to canvas," clearly signaling this paramount aspect of

himself--the patriarch/ artist, the great progenitor. Absent because the numerous photo-reproductions of the work are poor at best, art historians have sought to read that "unique touch," the identity of Courbet, back into the image. Yet, for Nochlin it is ultimately the absence of an original Origin, and its infinite reproducibility, that illuminates the very subject of the painting--the Lacanian metonymic construct of lack and desire. And it is this emergence of the concept of desire as something unfulfillable, or in Lacan's terms as "eternally stretching forth towards desire for something else," that allows Nochlin to satisfactorily conclude her impossible search for a lost origin.<sup>64</sup>

Even more dramatically, the center of visual conflict in Etant Donnés . . . is the hairless sex that reveals a gash, the wound that is the absence upon which language is based.<sup>65</sup> In his typical mode of conversion, Duchamp's "writing," which in the Large Glass is constituted in part by the graphic textuality of the bride, is further attenuated in Etant Donnés . . .. Duchamp's assault on the principle of illusion underpinning language, as embodied by the bride in the Large Glass, has been described by Michel de Certeau: "In . . . scriptural celibacy, organized by its imaginary other. The breakdown . . . of characters falling to pieces--gears and springs. Of characters painted on the pane, where they meld with the objects behind the glass/window, or with the reflection of the spectator before the glass/mirror. It traces, still scripturally, the limit of writing and the cleavage that disseminates the subject despite the minimal promise of fusion this transparency provides."<sup>66</sup>

Underlying Duchamp's logic, then, in the graphic layout of his notes, the "scriptural" representation of the "Bride" in the Large Glass as a form of writing, and his final con-figuration of the nude within the tableau, is this correspondence in articulation between language and gender/sexuality as embodied within the figure. Ultimately, the artist, in uncovering the preconditions and limits of symbolic articulation, questions the very possibility of meaning to mark itself and prevail.

Despite the extraordinary narrative and textuality which the Large Glass opens on to and by which it is illuminated, it is specifically within the Bride's domain that language falls apart and communication ceases to function. In addition, one may recall that the disintegration of language, the literal jumbling of its fundamental elements of the alphabet, is suggested in the Green Box. Moreover, Duchamp specifies that communication--the Bride's messages, constituted through the flow of letters, or "alphabetic units"--are conveyed or negated through the means of the "top inscription." In one of the early notes, he indicates that the three "draft pistons" (also called "nets") function to stop the Bride's messages on their way to the Bachelor, releasing them only after they have gone through a "sort of triple 'cipher' . . . governed by the orientation of the 3 nets" (Piston de courant d'air [Draft Piston] was photographed in 1914, [Fig. 60]). While Schwarz has inferred from this process of filtration the role of the censor, which in the dream process functions to mask and repress wish-fulfillment, such a process might better be explained in a structuralist or allegorical context. For it is this passage through the three

nets, or Draft pistons, that removes the commands or language "so that nothing remains but their firm imprint i.e. the form permitting all combinations of letters sent across this said triple form, commands, orders, authorizations, etc. which must join the shots and the splash."<sup>67</sup>

Duchamp's particular dialectical engagement of language--his punning, homophonic and alliterative strategies--paradoxically slows down the semantic order, seeming to appear and withdraw, while allowing the disoriented space of language's arbitrariness to prevail. For Breton, language functions to secure a subjectivity which is, as Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron writes, "a centripetal . . . entity, one which its acts serve to define," and the experience of language remains a constant renewal, a becoming, through the metaphor's creative power. "For the Surrealist consciousness," Chénieux-Gendron continues, "the individual presents itself as pure subjectivity and also (without paradox) as pure dynamism defining itself through its acts."<sup>68</sup> Contrastingly, for Duchamp, the dissolution of the subject within the terms of language's ambiguity is often sustained, unrelieved by revelation or metaphor. Rather than deploy Breton's poetics of the metaphor, Duchamp often leaves one feeling the need to "connect," to enact the erotic mechanisms more characteristic of metonymy.

Unconcerned with capturing the word's transient identity, Duchamp focuses instead on the sign's divagations, its furtiveness. Playing on the notion of a self-annulling sign, Duchamp's "semiotic" is a system designed to oppose the symbolic or semantic aspect of language and syntax; it consistently turns perceptual experience, visual or linguistic as in Rotative

Demisphere (Rotary Demisphere), 1925 (Fig. 61), or Anémic Cinéma (Fig. 62), for example, on this entropic experience of language . Breton and even Roussel (although differing in process) fill the void with their liberated imagination. For Duchamp, it is preeminently the locating of desire as the space of difference, of displacement, of division, that supersedes the recognition of that emptiness as a space in need of infinite fulfillment.<sup>69</sup> In Étant Donnés . . ., he isolates this act of "displacement," resulting in language, that is represented paradoxically, literally through its figurative form. The tableau represents more than the drama that the linguistic sign perpetually enacts--of origin and loss: In constituting a form--for desire--a discipline, as he referred to his "ism," Duchamp chooses eroticism, and through this rhetoric examines its figurative structure.<sup>70</sup>

In both his linguistic and visual work, the quotient produced by Duchamp's stilled signifiers, the "isolated act of displacement," is strangely of a spatial nature. As the equivocal meanings one can elicit from his visual and linguistic work reverberate, as in Rotative Demisphere, and in the spiraling puns of Anémic Cinéma the following year, for example, the dynamic is primarily kinematic and spatial. As has been often noted, this repetitive and cyclical dynamic, navigating within itself, amplifying the echo and oscillation of its phonic, recessive, and significative space, clearly alludes in its undulation and manipulation of space and meaning to the erogenous zones of both genders as well as to the sexual act.<sup>71</sup> Duchamp's concern with effecting a sense of depth, of penetration, erotically conveyed through the spiraling movement of the disk, is made explicit on one of the

disks from Anémic Cinéma: "Avez vous déjà mis la moëlle de l'épée dans le poêle de l'aimée?" (Have you ever put the marrow of the sword into the stove of the loved one?) (Fig. 62).<sup>72</sup> Duchamp also notes, "the spiral at rest doesn't give any impression of relief (or at least only imagined psychologically)."<sup>73</sup>

Furthermore, the optical incorporation of the verbal puns of Anémic Cinéma, accompanied by the imprimatur of Rose Sélavy, affirmed Duchamp's interest in the erotic, vertiginous spatial effects created by language's binding yet corrosive force. Such a correlation between the onanistic and the illusory dimension of language is enacted in the fateful choreography of the Glider Containing a Water Mill in Neighboring Metals, 1913-14 (Fig. 63) of the Large Glass, the "carriage" or "chariot" that repeats its forward and backward movement, and its repetition of the litanies which are the refrain of the Bachelor Machine. (Referring to the Glider in his notes, Duchamp wrote: "The chariot should, while reciting its litanies, go from A to B. and return from B to A. at a jerky pace; it appears in the costume of Emancipation, hiding in its bosom the landscape of the water mill.")<sup>74</sup>

The bachelors must accept their hopelessly illusive goal. The illusion of their identities, dependent as they are on the revelation and possession of the Bride, is similarly unmasked in Anémic Cinéma. When that film's whirling phrases and forms ultimately cease functioning descriptively and appear abstract, they undermine the idealist desire that language or form connect to, or become one with, something else in the world. Indeed the

film's conceptual and formal convergence of sexuality and language as equivocating categories underlies Duchamp's parody of the concept of both subject and identity.<sup>75</sup> This is underscored in the film's last frame, which reads "Copyrighted by Rrose Sélavy" (Fig. 6A), Duchamp's literary pseudonym.<sup>76</sup> In addition to his intimation of the representational nature of identity, appearing underneath the handwritten signature, Duchamp includes another index of individuality, his thumbprint, further bracketing his subject as that of self-inquiry. Although the artist claimed a pure interest in "optics," there is in the relationship between language and sexuality an apprehension of the body as functioning within the symbolic, as sign--an understanding that just as language may be said to possess a "body" and to share in the material world, conversely, the bodily self (involving sexual difference, subjectivity, integration in the world) can function within the differentiating and ordering process characteristic of language.

Through the film's often subliminally erotic verbal content (expressed as puns), sexually charged forms (erotic anatomical illusions) and destabilizing movement (spiraling motion), Duchamp establishes a new and complex perspectival space. The rotating optical effect of the spiral creates an illusion of three-dimensional projection toward the viewer, relocating the coordinate vanishing point for a possible n-dimensional, or identificatory, perspective outside the work of art. This projection is suggested at the outset, through the orthogonals of the title frame formed by the anagrammatic words Anémic and Cinéma. Appearing to produce a

conventional spatial recession, their presentation "as diagonal mirrors" suggests an infinite specular perspective whose vanishing point--greatly enhanced by the illusion of relief created by the spiral movement of the circles--is projected towards the viewer.<sup>77</sup>

The film's precedent lies in this recontextualization and relocation of  $n + 1$  dimensional space, from within its previous pictorial context (i.e., the Large Glass's three-dimensional area of the Bachelor Machine and its conceptual four-dimensional domain of the Bride), to the optical space of specularity, which becomes representative of the subjective position of the viewer: the spiraling circles being a simulacrum of both the eye and the unconscious, the sight/site of meaning, or, more precisely, of an "optical unconscious."<sup>78</sup> Thus an already indeterminate space--neither wholly abstract (optical) nor referential (discursive)--assumes the locus and embodiment of subjectivity. There is a residual optical effect in the tableau, although on a subliminal level, of the material yet hopelessly elusive experience of phenomena, as veering away from a signified towards an indeterminate abstraction--inversely reminiscent of Duchamp's earlier rotative reliefs. One may see Anémic Cinéma's hypnotic, destabilizing experience reinvoked in Étant Donnés . . .--and the tableau's corporeality "abstracted"--as the eye moves along that same encircling path, beginning with the Bec Auer lamp and proceeding outward toward the body's limbs, tracing its extremities in a clockwise spiral movement that paradoxically inverts inward, toward the sexual vanishing point, and then reverses again.

Anémic Cinéma thus stands as the high transitional link between

many of Duchamp's radical ideas first conceptualized in the Large Glass and their phenomenological realization in Etant Donnés . . .. With the tableau's distillation of the earlier optics' repeated play of desire's unfulfillment, its subtle reworking, for example, of the film's constantly altering experience of perspective, form and meaning, Duchamp further locates a new kind of "vanishing point" within the analytic experience. His transposition of an idealized conceptual vanishing point to the level of signification, furthermore, allowed him epistemologically to define and refigure the nature of the subject in the tableau, and to formalize his philosophical inquisition of appearance and subjectivity.

"His [Roussel's] word play had a hidden meaning, but not in the Mallarméan or Rimbaudian sense," Duchamp was later to recall to Cabanne. "It was an obscurity of another order."<sup>79</sup> Such an order allowed for language to represent what Lacan has referred to as "the margin beyond life," where "being" can only be represented. The continuous disintegration and reconstitution that characterizes subjectivity reoccurs throughout the oeuvre. It is played out, for example, even in the reproduced facsimile fragments of notes that were re-joined and, like an archaeologist's group of assembled shards of glass, photographed reiterating their own echo in the cracks of the fragmented Large Glass; and it is no less apparent in his constant effort to remythologize himself or to gather together his multifarious oeuvre in one panoramic setting.

Duchamp's various concepts, such as his category of "infra-thin" or the theme of the "mold," or his implementation of the pun, may, as I have

suggested, be understood in terms of his psychosexual project inasmuch as language's structure as a sign is further extrapolated, or formalized, in a Lacanian sense, to produce an understanding of sexuality in terms of an unclear division.<sup>80</sup> The language of gender thus becomes formalized as yet another definition of "infra-thin," and further subsumed within the latter concept's relation to the idea of the mold: "2 forms cast in the same mold (?) differ from each other by an infrathin separative amount."<sup>81</sup> But it is the idea of And as Jacqueline Rose has written, "Lacan located the fantasy of 'sameness' within language and the sexual relation at one and the same time" or, as Lacan himself stated, "instead of one signifier we need to interrogate, we should interrogate the signifier One."<sup>82</sup> Within the interrogation of this paradox, then, certain of Duchamp's formal preoccupations, such as his concern with the photographic trace or the deictical function of the concept of "infrathin" and its correlation with his notion of the mold, are integrated in his ongoing psychosexual discourse.<sup>83</sup>

By focusing on Étant Donnés . . .'s construction of sexual identity, one realizes that the work's mark of castration signals not only gender division based on phallic division, but, more important, the role of signification, embodied in Jacques Lacan's concept of the phallic signifier. While the presence of the phallus "figures" sexual difference, it is the role of the phallic signifier, according to Lacan, that structures the unconscious as a language, that raises sexuality to the order of the symbolic, based on the notion of a "defect in being." It is, of course, such defects as lack or absence, and the lacking object that provide the basis upon which

representation exists at all. Thus the unconscious speaks desire but only in so far as language, marked by the phallic signifier, prohibits that desire from being fulfilled.

The female nude in Etant Donnés . . ., as the figure upon whom this lack, this engendered mark of castration, is projected, is depicted embodying, marking, the very terms of language's phallic order: its castrative function. The woman's status as Other, as the place of symbolic phallic support, is thus made visible, constituting her as both object and fantasy. It is this representation of woman as sign, as both material and concept--the simultaneous embodiment of woman's requisite, supportive role in the privileged function of the phallus and her resistance to such a substructure--that further articulates Duchamp's correlation of the body with language. This correlation serves to illustrate the dependency of the phallic signifier on the maternal body in order to secure self-knowledge and a sense of identity. It is at the instance of the letter, at the place of speech, that that armature and the authority of the phallus collapses.

The loss of language's representational capacity is subliminally registered and mirrored in the "incapacitation" of the spectator, a manipulation Duchamp explicitly intended. While emphasizing on numerous occasions the importance of the viewer's contribution to the work of art and, as well, the "personal 'art coefficient,'" representing "the arithmetical relation between the unexpressed but intended and the unintentionally expressed," one should also note that Duchamp was fascinated by the range of responses that could be controlled and varied by

the artist.

As one begins to think of the female body in Etant Donnés . . . as the site where language disintegrates--only to be reconfigured within the formal and signifying terms of language and optics--one might also think of the body as functioning according to the terms of language's constituent axes: metonymy and metaphor. Metonymy is constructed as a linear, horizontal progression from word to word, while metaphor is built on a vertical stacking and the substitution of one word for another. The former is dictated by placement, the latter by similarity. The space of metonymy--a space of origin, a space in which lack is acknowledged and which only the woman can represent--is "embodied" within the figure.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, Duchamp's establishment of the "pre-conditions" of language would suggest a return to a sort of spatial linguistic origin, an inception which is suggestive of metonymy in that the metonym is a spatial coordinate and temporally precedes metaphor.

As a voyeur, the viewer is forced into a passive role, a position of inadequacy. This conditional witnessing of the work effects a sense of absence that can only be compensated, supplemented by language, a need which the viewer cannot easily fulfill. Unable to see the face of the nude, and particularly her mouth, the sense of communal existence or relations with others is suddenly impeded, replaced by mute solitude. For a moment brute vision exists, its autonomy unalleviated by language or its "freeing" temporal condition. By virtue of a distanced, paralytic relation to the tableau, the viewer is doubly castrated.<sup>85</sup> Momentarily robbed of the

ability to speak or to allude to metaphor or narrative, the viewer experiences a type of language disturbance. This inability to translate the objects seen into symbols enforces a condition of perception in which the objects are defined through contiguity or context, that is, through a metonymic relationship. Such an aphasic disorder has been discussed by Roman Jakobson as an inability to identify by name an object pointed to. Rather, an aphasic with a defect in substitution will refer to the object's function, its spatial utilization. Jakobson writes: "The aphasic with a defect in substitution will not supplement the pointing or handling gesture of the examiner with the name of the object pointed to. Instead of saying 'this is [called] a pencil,' he will merely add an elliptical note about its use: 'to write.'"<sup>86</sup>

This privileging of function over static identity relates to Duchamp's understanding of gender as vacillating, and of the representation of this idea in the sexual act. Rather than fix the identity of the symbolic object (i.e., gender) in terms of a phallic signifier, it is this oscillating movement within gender or the sexual act that is isolated: the function of sexuality as separation. And the indefiniteness of identity, of the personal pronoun "I," and of gender, would be consistent with Jakobson's understanding of the "shifter" as involving "that category of linguistic sign," Krauss has written, "which is 'filled with signification' only because it is empty," and relate as well to Lacan's understanding of the phallus not as a biological organ but "as the signifier which has no signified."<sup>87</sup>

The conflation of the Otherness of woman with the initial cause and

object of desire--equating woman with phallus--is part of the mystification of woman that occurs within Surrealism's mainstream. In Brassai's untitled photograph of 1933 (Fig. 64),<sup>88</sup> for example, the female body is visually contorted into a phallus. The same effect is achieved in another photograph by Brassai, which appeared in *Minotaure* (no. 6, 1934). In the latter work (Fig. 65), the partial figure of the back of a nude woman lying on her side, viewed from below the shoulders to the buttocks, is doubly mirrored by a mountainscape whose roughly hewn contour is defined and softened by a sky whose clouds and atmosphere are formed by the highlighted tonality of the nude now viewed in reverse. Describing the photograph's "blend of figure and nature held in exchange," Mary Ann Caws relates this interplay to Surrealism's principle of convulsive beauty: "Surrealism's flexible and often sentimental vision serves to encourage such harmony between natural landscape and the culture of art, holding in poetic embrace contrary elements past their binary opposition, as in Breton's memorable and significant expressions 'the air of water' and 'the flame of sea.'"<sup>89</sup>

As opposed to Surrealism's fetishized abolition of sexual difference, Duchamp's understanding of woman as Other serves not to reinforce the phallic order but ultimately to undermine it. Duchamp consequently represents himself through the female signifier--in the personage of Rose Sélavy--rather than through the phallus as in the Brassai photograph. Likewise, the 1938 incarnation of Rose Sélavy (Fig. 66), in the Paris "Exposition internationale du Surréalisme," is a female mannequin dressed, in fact, in most of Duchamp's clothes. And it is through the personage of

the Statue of Liberty that Breton is represented; finally, in Female Fig Leaf (Fig. 23), Duchamp employs that historical symbol, which hides the all-too-visible male sex, to veil the female genitalia, and, as I have noted above, this work relates to his torn-paper Self-Portrait in Profile (Fig. 22).

In Lacan's view, the woman as "not whole" generates the desire to be One again--to achieve unity in the subject. But for Lacan, as for Duchamp, the notion of "complementarity"--of achieving unity in love, or an ideal "oneness" through sexual intercourse--was false.<sup>90</sup> For such complementarity served to bolster the phallic order, to support an unequivocal sense of male identity and authority. As Whitney Chadwick has indicated, Breton acknowledges this need when he expresses in Arcane 17 that "it is the artist who must rely exclusively on the woman's powers to exalt, or better still, to jealously appropriate to himself everything that distinguishes woman from man with respect to their styles of appreciation and volition."<sup>91</sup> This need to reconcile sexual difference in order to establish a firmer sense of identity, based on the phallic order, was for Duchamp unacceptable; gender was simply a symbolic construction, which the ideal of love or the oneness of the sexual act, like the myth of the androgyne, masked.

With sexual intercourse or its fulfillment, jouissance, denied in the Large Glass under penalty of castration,<sup>92</sup> for example, it was clear even then that sex (not to mention jouissance), and its implicit wish to attain an ideal state of completion, was for Duchamp a fantasy. For Duchamp, the "almost whole" male's desire to be complete and undivided, to sustain the

imaginary unity of the "ego," was founded in a symbolic and idealized phallic economy. For him such an economy was based more on the logic of a "symbolic" supplementarity, a condition present in Lacan's symbolic construction of the feminine position, involving a correlation between woman and language, "there is woman only as excluded by the nature of things which is the nature of words." It is in the woman's relationship to *jouissance*, according to Lacan, that "lack" assumes a supplementary function. "It is precisely that in being not all, she has, in relation to what the phallic function has of *jouissance*, a supplementary *jouissance* . . . a *jouissance* beyond the phallus."<sup>93</sup> One feels this vascillation between a "not all" and "something beyond" (*en plus*, something more) virtually throughout the entire oeuvre (from the artist's enigmatic use of language and puns to the bachelors' masturbatory activity, which can be interpreted as involving a supplementary function).<sup>94</sup> The tableau's correlate to the gender/linguistic status as both lack and supplement is the gaze's relationship to the look of the observer (see Chapter Four).

Throughout the period of construction of *Etant Donnés . . .*, Duchamp's formalization of his "theology" of eroticism was marked by the production of a series of "erotic" anatomical sculptures. In addition to the more explicitly erotic *Female Fig Leaf*, *Objet-Dard*, 1951 (Fig. 67), or *Coin de chasteté* (*Wedge of Chastity*) 1954 (Fig. 68), other works that involve the body fragment, as in *Torture-morte* and *With my Tongue in my Cheek* (Figs. 41 and 42), both of 1959, or an article of clothing, such as *Waistcoat*, 1958 (Fig. 69), also relate to the futility of a cohesive and whole self.<sup>95</sup> It is

precisely in their consummate amalgam of desire that words fail to materialize and the artist's linguistic enterprise of self-inquiry emerges--to expose the basis of gender in language. It is not just sexuality's consubstantiality with the unconscious--as thematized by the mold--but its simultaneous origin and function within language that is the salient feature of Duchamp's self-investigatory linguistic/erotic project.

If the experience of the self in Etant Donnés . . . involves a parallel experience of language and the visual, it thus occurs--in the sense of the Lacanian phallus--through the experience of their insistent exteriority. The difficulty of the visual, as it is deconstructed by Duchamp, functions on many complex levels. Following the specular directives of the Large Glass, in the preponderance of Duchamp's oeuvre and, most significantly, in the case of the assemblage, there is an ulterior or dislocated positing of meaning. The tableau's explicit dynamic of voyeurism elaborates a notion of exteriority that, as I will address in Chapter Three, undermines the facilitation of perspective, or subjectivity as the imposition of a view. If Duchamp's subject often appears to pivot on desire, on what he popularly referred to as eroticism, it is foremost the relation of fantasy to the ego that he wishes to expose. The central structure of separateness that prevails in the failure of consummation in the Large Glass can be seen to exist at the fundamental level of lack of identity with which the Glass is concerned. In the mirrorical relation that allows the Bride to see her own image reflected through the other, one can understand Lacan's claim that it is "one's own ego that one loves in love, one's own ego made real on the imaginary

level."<sup>96</sup> In this Chapter, while I have addressed the imaginary construction of identity as involving a mirrorical relation to the world that occurs at the level of the unconscious through "the effects of the signifier," it is above all through the bodily image of the mirror stage that the subject's ego truly comes into play.

Indeed, Jean Clair has suggested that the formulation of Duchamp's late series of erotic objects, involving mold and cast, relates to the artist's conceptual reciprocity between apparition and appearance. This reciprocity, in turn, leads to an idealized notion of gender in which difference is abolished.<sup>97</sup> Such a reading accords with Duchamp's Platonism, his philosophy of universal solubility: "there is no solution because there is no problem," a concept that underlies his non-Euclidian, n-dimensional thematic.<sup>98</sup> Yet, the notion of "reversibility," fails to address, within this broad question of gender, the inadequacy of language. For it is at the level of enunciation of the self that Duchamp accepts the futility of identity and wholeness. Rather, presenting a disoriented space of division and difference subject to thwarted desire, Duchamp binds the viewer to the operations of language and its function to constantly repeat the experience of initial, fundamental division, and loss.

A major article entitled "L'androgynie" by Albert Beguin appeared in the widely-read periodical Minotaure in 1938.<sup>99</sup> In the course of analyzing the myth of the androgynie, Beguin reproduced a depiction of Adam taken from a Rosacrucian text. While I am not claiming this image as a specific source for Duchamp, the figure does conform to the particular reading I

have been suggesting. The image, entitled Adam Before the Fall (Fig. 70), depicts a feminized male figure holding up an illuminating staff before a landscape punctuated with fountains. However, in contrast to Adam's outright lack of genitalia, Etant Donnés . . .'s conflation of gender is represented anatomically in the nude--as genitalia in formation between possession and dispossession of the phallus.<sup>100</sup> A statement of Gnostic mysticism, quoted in the same article from Minotaure suggests this indeterminacy: "For the Lord himself being asked by someone when his kingdom should come said: 'When the two should be one, and the outside as the inside and the male with the female neither male or female.'" One can apply the theory of "reversibility" to the nude in the manner in which it is understood operating in Objet-Dard, 1951 (Fig. 67) (the section of the mold for the tableau's nude figure that the artist preserved, which was originally a support for the figure's breast), for example, as representing simultaneously the positive volume of the penis and the negative void of the vagina.<sup>101</sup> And indeed "the interior and the exterior can receive," Duchamp did say, referring to the fourth dimension, "a similar identification," or as Jean Clair would put much later, "vagina and phallus receive a similar identification."<sup>102</sup>

Yet Duchamp actually exceeds this earlier bivalence, inducing a self-consciousness in which the voyeur experiences the dispossession of the phallus within the "otherness" of language. In the end, Duchamp has returned us to a garden of Eden, to a space uncannily like Courbet's L'Origine du monde. But unlike the material world of Courbet's depiction, in

which the female genitalia exists graphically as an object of desire, Etant Donnés . . ., conceived as the site of gender formation, frustrates the spectator with the impossibility of desire's search for the subject--the mythic object of desire.<sup>103</sup>

Even if one accepts the reading of the nude in the tableau as completing the putative narrative of seduction of the Large Glass, that the figure now is in post-coital repose, or represents an optical three-dimensional configuration of its earlier invisible fourth-dimensional rendering in glass, neither would in any way comment on the nature of the work as perceived.<sup>104</sup> Nor would one honor Duchamp's critical and philosophical position which sought to undo the hierarchical oppositions on which traditional hermeneutics are founded. The "irreducible difference" that remains in Duchamp's "infrathin" theoretical position--whether it is illustrated by the pun or some other representational rubric--is not to be idealized mathematically but rather is to be understood to exist in a space of uncertainty, as subject to accident, chance, external affect.

Furthermore, however correct or speculative an iconographic reading based purely on an a priori understanding of Duchamp's oeuvre may be, such an approach does not investigate the primary role that Duchamp ultimately gives to the spectator. As he demonstrated in the Gotham Book Mart window display, and confronted problematically throughout his subsequent phase of production, the failure of the object as an autonomous work of art--its being "not all"--is fundamentally dependent on the spectator's input.<sup>105</sup>

It was also in that window display that the indeterminacy and duplicity of sexuality as well as the symbolic registration of the body was further equated with the problematic positioning of subjectivity through the faculty of vision, the dynamics of which would again be examined in a similar window-like display space, in Etant Donnés . . .. But now, as a "window-undresser," in his preferred role as a "fenêtrier," Duchamp could further stress his objective: the derailing of the spectator's sense of unique subjectivity, or more precisely, bourgeois subjectivity, namely, identity.

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1. Roland Barthes, The Grain of the Voice (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985), pp. 243-44.
  2. The publication of Robert Lebel's monograph on Duchamp, entitled Marcel Duchamp, trans. Georges Heard Hamilton (New York: Grove Press, 1959), emphasized the "proto-Dada character" of the readymades, and distinguished Duchamp as a "Dada . . . [who] has also been one of the few who have remained so all their lives" (p. 40). He was also one of the first critics who addressed the complex psychosexual and linguistic conditions underlying Duchamp's oeuvre, influencing artists as diverse as Morris, Eva Hesse and Andy Warhol.
  3. Maurice Berger, unpublished interview with Robert Morris, New York, October 15, 1992, n.p.
  4. For general bibliographic reference on Surrealism and women, see Dada/Surrealism, no. 19 (1990).
  5. In discussing Lacan's concept of the drive, Jacqueline Rose stresses that, as Freud defined it, the drive was understood as "an internal stimulus" in order to distinguish it from a satisfiable need, such as hunger or thirst. "The drive is divisible into pressure, source, object and aim," that it "can be sublimated," and that "Freud described its object as 'indifferent.'" "What matters, therefore, is not what the drive achieves, but its process," Rose continues. "For Lacan, that process reveals all the difficulty which characterizes the subject's relationship to the Other . . . the drive is something in the nature of an appeal, or searching out, which always goes beyond the actual relationships on which it turns." Rose, Sexuality in the Field of Vision (London: Verso, New Left Books, 1986), p. 57.
  6. Writings, p. 51. "For the position of the axes of the malic moulds, I had to yield to the demands of the perspective." Marcel Duchamp: Die Schriften, translated and edited by Serge Stauffer (Zurich: Regenbogen-Verlag, 1981), p. 254; quoted here in Duchamp (Barcelona: Fundación Caja de Pensiones, 1984), p. 228. See also Clair, Duchamp and the Classical Perspectivists," Artforum, vol. 16 (March 1978), pp. 40-49.
  7. Duchamp may have juxtaposing the bachelors' form of entrapment (and punning on its repressive nature, the "forced" perspective, as Duchamp put it, that determines the Bachelor machine and its environment of masked "malic moulds") with the freedom of the Network of Stoppages.

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8. For a psychoanalytic account of the concept of bisexuality, see Jean Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, The Language of Psychoanalysis, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1973).
  9. Sigmund Freud, "Civilization and its Discontents," (1930), in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-74), vol. XXI, p. 106.
  10. Jean-François Lyotard has suggested a similar bifurcated sexual representation in the figure; see his Duchamp's TRANS/formers, trans. Ian McLeod (Venice, California: The Lapis Press, 1990), pp. 9-10.
  11. Duchamp commented that his "landscapes begin where da Vinci's end." See his interview with Francis Roberts, "I Propose to Strain the Laws of Physics," Art News, vol. 67 (December 1968), p. 63. For further discussion of the relationships between Duchamp and Leonardo, see Theodore Reff, "Duchamp & Leonardo: L.H.O.O.Q.-Alikes," Art in America, vol. 65 (January-February 1977), pp. 82-93; and Jean Clair, "Duchamp, Léonard, La Tradition maniériste," in Marcel Duchamp: Tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition?, ed. Jean Clair (Paris: Union Générale d'Editions, 1979), pp. 117-44.
  12. For further discussion on the relation of Leonardo and Duchamp, see Theodore Reff, "Duchamp & Leonardo: Alikes," Art in America, vol. 65 (January-February 1977), pp. 82-93; Clair, "Duchamp, Léonard, la tradition maniériste," pp. 117-56.
  13. CW, p. 477. See also Duchamp's comments in his interview with Herbert Crehan, "Dada," Evidence, no. 3 (Fall 1961), pp. 36-38.
  14. d'Harnoncourt and Hopps date the work with uncertainty to 1947, suspecting that it was executed between the two other studies for the tableau, the drawing and the 1948-49 relief. Now on extended loan to the Philadelphia Museum, the collage of textured wax and black ink on yellow-toned paper and cut silver gelatin photographs, mounted on board, is illustrated in d'Harnoncourt and Hopps, "Etant Donnés: 1. la chute d'eau 2. le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections on a New Work by Marcel Duchamp," Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin, vol. 64, nos. 299-300 (April-September 1969), p. 11.
  15. The occasion for the dinner was the preview of the Mary Sisler Collection at the Cordier & Ekstrom Gallery on January 13, 1965. CW, cat. no. 375. Hellmut Wohl also suggests that the rectified reproduction of the Mona

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Lisa, through the five letters that entitle her--L.H.O.O.Q (elle a chaud au cul)--alluded to the Bride's eroticism in the Large Glass. Her rasé return and gender reversion announces for him the Bride, desirous and ready, in the landscape of Etant Donnés. . .. See "Duchamp's Etchings of the Large Glass and The Lovers," Dada/Surrealism, no. 16 (1987), p. 171. Duchamp's likening of the clouds of the Milky Way to shaving soap has suggested to Schwarz that "the feminine Milky Way grows a beard that needs to be shaved." Schwarz, p. 155; and see Note 75 in Schwarz' compendium volume, Notes and Projects for the Large Glass, ed. Arturo Schwarz (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1969).

16. In addition to the nine etchings, the first volume of the The Large Glass and Related Works, published in Milan in 1967, includes 144 facsimile reproductions of Duchamp's notes, organized thematically and chronologically for the first time; the second volume, published in 1968, containing the nine etchings on the theme "The Lovers," presents Schwarz' thematic interpretation of both the notes and the Glass.

17. For an iconographic analysis of the etchings, see Hellmut Wohl, "Duchamp's Etchings of the Large Glass and The Lovers," Dada/Surrealism, no. 16 (1987), pp. 168-83; and for a reading of Duchamp's late visual/linguistic puns, see George H. Bauer, "Duchamp's Ubiquitous Puns," *ibid.*, pp. 127-48. See also Chapter Four of this dissertation.

18. CW, p. 576. In addition to Woman with White Stockings, which Duchamp could well have seen when it was exhibited in Paris in 1919 and 1922, and Woman with a Parrot, which he could have seen at the Metropolitan Museum of Art as early as 1929, the artist also could have been inspired by Courbet's L'Origine du monde (Origin of the World). Jean Clair, Marcel Duchamp: Catalogue raisonné (Paris: Musée National d'art Moderne, Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, 1977), p. 143; and Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques (Paris: Musée National d'art Moderne, Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, 1977), pp. 53-54.

19. John L. Connolly, "Ingres Studies: Antiochus and Stratonice: The Bather and Odalisque Themes," Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1974, 52-53. Here quoted in Wohl, p. 177.

20. See Jacqueline Chénieux, "L'Erotisme chez Marcel Duchamp et Georges Bataille," in Marcel Duchamp: Tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition?, p. 198.

21. Ecrits: A Selection, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977),

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p. 314.

22. Dalia Judovitz has claimed the "referent" of Anémic Cinéma to be "the visual character of esthetic perception," in "Anemic Vision in Duchamp: Cinema as Readymade," Dada/Surrealism, no. 15 (1986), pp. 46-57. My reading of Duchamp's visual translation of the essential character of aesthetic representation is basically aligned with hers. What most often defines the "signified" in his work is not a concept (that correlates with a signifier), but the diachronic structure that exists between signifier and signified in language. Thus Duchamp's work, and his concept of eroticism, increasingly becomes isomorphic to the operations of language, transcending the need to define the signified as that which the signifier denotes. Eventually with Duchamp everything becomes subsumed within this account of language. And following this the artist's very formal practice--emblematic in Étant Donnés . . .-- becomes increasingly, like language, self-referential--always referring back to the endless process of signification.

23. René Micha also has referred to Duchamp's representation of the female genitalia as a "blessure," relating it as well to the Lacanian phrase "'entame' la matiere." See "Étant Donnée 'Étant Donnés,'" in Marcel Duchamp: Tradition de la rupture ou rupture de la tradition?, p. 163. Furthermore, given the degree to which Duchamp relies in the tableau on an eidetic memory (although the work has been widely reproduced, the particular effects of its actual viewing cannot be appreciated in reproduction), one founded in the experience of vision, also suggests an initial trauma rooted in vision as well, the locus of which is castration anxiety and the concomitant formation of the fetish (specifically the fetishist's equivocation between perception and denial of castration). As Freud stated, in his essay on Leonardo, once the young boy sees sexual difference in the woman, he will "tremble for his masculinity henceforth." Sigmund Freud, "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood," (1910), The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works, trans. James Strachey, vol. XI (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), p. 95; quoted here in Rose, "Sexuality in the Field of Vision," p. 33. While the castration complex might suggest a gender-specific viewer, this dissertation maintains it is the universal castration of the phallic signifier that the figure ultimately represents.

24. Francis Naumann has noted that the Female Fig Leaf is more revealing than the positive form from which it was cast, Étant Donnés . . .. See The Mary and William Sisler Collection (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1984), p. 214. d'Harnoncourt and Hopps, I believe, refer to this paradox of a projected absence when they write: "What fascinated Duchamp was what our five senses could not tell us about any perceived object. The recurring

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themes are the intangibles: perspective and the projection of an invisible fourth or n dimension, 'the apparition of an appearance,' the light from within, and the mysterious generative forces playing beneath the surface--water, gas, electricity, and as their human corollary, desire" (d'Harnoncourt and Hopps, p. 16).

25. See my comparison of Self-Portrait in Profile and Female Fig Leaf, in the Introduction.

26. Reworking his original notion of the door (Door, 11 rue Larrey, 1927, a materialization of the concept of paradox, opening simultaneously in two directions) as yet another "hinge," Door for Gradiva adds the problematics of vision (i.e., figure/ground, depth/surface) and perception to the paradox of sexuality as a sliding signifier. Dalia Judovitz has related this aspect of Door for Gradiva to the transitive nature of the nude and of eroticism in Etant Donnés . . ., involving the artist's notions of infrathin and the mold. "Sexuality is thus presented as an interplay whose ambiguous indexical character resituates the notion of sexual difference and its equation with visibility." See Dalia Judovitz, "Rendezvous with Marcel Duchamp: Given," in Dada/Surrealism, no. 16 (1987), pp. 192-93.

27. See Linde, "MARiée CELibataire," in Hopps, Walter, Ulf Linde, and Arturo Schwarz, Marcel Duchamp Readymades, etc. (1913-64) (Paris: Le Terrain Vague, 1964), p. 66; and Charles Stuckey, "Duchamp's Acephalic Symbolism," Art in America, vol. 65, no. 1 (January/February 1977), pp. 94-99.

28. Ibid., p. 98. See also, Jean Suquet, Miroir de la Mariée, (Paris: Flammarion, 1974), pp. 145-50, 170.

29. Marcel Duchamp, A l'Infinitif, with translation by Cleve Gray in collaboration with the artist (New York: Cordier & Ekstrom, 1966). Partially published in Art in America, vol. 54, no. 2 (March-April 1966), pp. 72-75, as "Speculations." The text was first related to Lazy Hardware by d'Harnoncourt and Hopps, pp. 31-2.

30. This short-lived window display, in which Duchamp collaborated with Matta, Breton, and Isabelle Waldberg, was deemed obscene by the League of Women, and was quickly dismantled and reassembled at the Gotham Book Mart. Robert Lebel, Marcel Duchamp, trans. Georges Heard Hamilton (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 175 (cat. no. 189). Cf. Charles Stuckey, "Duchamp's Acephalic Symbolism," p. 96. For additional accounts of the episode, see W.G. Rogers, Wise Men Fish Here: The Story of Frances Steloff and the Gotham Book Mart, (New York, 1965), p. 155; CW, p. 521, (cat. no.

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324); Frances Steloff, "In Touch with Genius," Journal of Modern Literature (April 1975), p. 770.

31. See Stuckey, "Duchamp's Acephalic Symbolism," p. 94. Duchamp recounted to Jean Schuster that the theme of the Bride was initially inspired while regarding mannikins in wedding dress at a fair; they were targets in a game whose object was to knock off their heads with thrown balls. "Marcel Duchamp, vite," Le Surréalisme, même, no. 2 (Spring 1957), p. 143-45; rpt. in his Archives 57/58: Batailles pour le surréalisme (Paris: Losfeld, 1969), pp. 7-10; see also Stuckey, p. 99, n. 12. One also should note Lebel's prior speculation on the relevance of the carnival or fair not only to the Bride but to the malic molds as well. Referring to the "jeu de massacre," a game played at fairs in which one threw balls at a target of a man's head. See Lebel, Marcel Duchamp, p. 31.

32. While Ernst and Duchamp had known each other since 1921, having met through Breton in Paris, it wasn't until they were reunited in New York in the early 1940s, however, as editors of VVV magazine, that Duchamp refamiliarized himself with Ernst's work.

33. Based on records kept by the advertising department that indicate the shallow (12-inch-deep) window case was approximately 12 to 18 inches above the sidewalk, and by contemporary photographs. Cf. Stuckey, pp. 96 and 99, n. 18.

34. Stuckey also mentions an important image from Ernst's La femme 100 têtes, in which a portrait bust of a man is projected from the genital region of a woman, with the accompanying caption, "Sans souffler mot et par n'importe quel temps, lumière magique" ("Without uttering a word and in all kinds of weather, magic light"). Ibid., n. 19. Cf. Max Ernst, The Hundred Headless Woman (La femme 100 têtes) (New York: George Braziller, 1981), p. 89.

35. Writings, p. 51. As his drawing Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries, No. 1 (1913) shows, the initial study for this element included only eight malic molds; a ninth, the Station Master, was added later. An additional reference, from The Box of 1914, suggests further consideration of this theme, "a 'removal' of each limb . . . and the other anatomical units. . . . Finally, a Regulation of regrets from one removed part to another" (ibid., p. 23).

36. Schuster, "Marcel Duchamp, vite," pp. 7-10. It can be argued, however, that the malic molds are not headless, in fact wear hats, according to their occupational identities. Duchamp emphasizes their anonymity, however, fashioning them as chessmen, in the shape of "coffins." See also CW, pp.

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128, 440.

37. Referring to Monte Carlo Bond, no. 17, Peter Read writes, "the male falls victim to both Salome and Delilah--a powerful recurrence of serrated symbolism." See "The Tzanck Check and Related Works by Marcel Duchamp," Dada/Surrealism, no. 16 (1987), p. 102.

38. Ibid. See also Linde, "MARiée CELibataire," p. 58.

39. Writings, p. 106.

40. See Stuckey, p. 96; and Writings, p. 23.

41. Stuckey, p. 98.

42. Stuckey provides an excellent analysis of the conceptual similarities between the window display, Lazy Hardware, and the cover design for Breton's Young Cherry Trees Secured Against Hares, trans. Edouard Roditi (New York, London and Paris, 1948), p. 98.

43. While I suggest, in Chapter Four, that the relief's contoured velvet forms relate to the artist's concept of infrathin, here they also might allude to the brush or bushes through which the "arbor-type" Bride is viewed. The way in which the forms crop the figure also suggests a kind of optical device, perhaps a kaleidoscope, with its alterably viewed singular perspective. A further connection between the figure and optics is in fact supported by the artist's use of velvet; Duchamp had mounted the hemisphere, in Rotary Demisphere (Precision Optics), 1925, on a flat disk covered in velvet. See CW, p. 52.

44. Duchamp confidentially did relate to the Arensbergs an incident that occurred at one of his and Man Ray's tumultuous filming sessions, when the latter attempted to shave the pubic hair of a woman friend of theirs. Whatever footage was taken remains lost. See Duchamp (Barcelona: Fundaci3n Caja de Pensiones and the Fundaci3n Joan Mir3, 1984), p. 234.

45. Nicolas Calas, "Freedom Love and Poetry," Artforum, vol. 16, no. 9 (May 1978), p. 26.

46. While the absence of bodily hair, as John Berger has noted, further denies woman her own sexuality as well as underscores her objectified body, Duchamp's programmatic undermining of the male spectator's visual gratification is such that Etant Donn3s . . . can not be relegated so easily to this historical category. See Berger, Ways of Seeing (London: Pelican Press,

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1972), p. 55; cited also in Mary Ann Caws, "Ladies Shot and Painted: Female Embodiment in Surrealist Art," The Female Body in Western Culture (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 286.

47. For additional discussion of Dürer's woodcut in relation to Etant Donnés . . ., see Clair, "Marcel Duchamp et la tradition des perspectiveurs," in Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques, pp. 158-59; "Duchamp and the Classical Perspectivists," Artforum, vol. 16 (March 1978), p. 48; and Adcock, Marcel Duchamp's Notes from the "Large Glass": an N-Dimensional Analysis, Studies in the Fine Arts, The Avant-Garde, No. 40 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983), p. 135; and Judovitz, "Rendezvous with Marcel Duchamp: Given," p. 191. For more on the subject of this juncture, in which the Glass' narrative assume both optical and metaphorical dimensions, see Chapter Four.

48. In her elucidation of the nature of eroticism in Etant Donnés . . ., Judovitz has also made this point; see her "Rendezvous with Marcel Duchamp: Given," p. 191

49. Appearing to connect with the Bachelor Apparatus, in the area of the Oculist Witnesses, the introduction of the electrical pole might also refer to the indispensable electrifying connection provided by the spectator. Schwarz identifies the pole as "telephone or telegraph wires," and as an allusion to Duchamp's reference in the Green Box to the telegraphic communication between Bride and Bachelors ( CW, p. 535).

50. See Breton's preface in Jean Ferry, Une Etude sur Raymond Roussel (Paris: Arcanes, 1953); and Michel Foucault, Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel, Intro. John Ashbery (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. xxvi.

51. Ibid., p. 16.

52. Ibid., p. 11.

53. In the world of Roussel, words inevitably return as virtually identical repetitions. As in Roussel's work, the relationship between Marcel Duchamp's the Large Glass and Etant Donnés . . ., the artist's beginning and concluding statements, reflect the principle of reunion of initial sentence and ending that constitutes a ritual of Rousselean repetition. Roussel's Impressions d'Afrique, for example, begins with "les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux billard" (the white letters on the cushions of the old billiard table) and ends with "les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux pillard"

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(the white man's letters on the hordes of the old plunderer); while only slightly altered, almost every word has changed its meaning. See Impressions of Africa, translated by Lindy Foord and Rayner Heppenstall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

54. See Introduction.

55. Annette Michelson, "Anémic Cinéma: Reflections on an Emblematic Work," Artforum, vol. 12, no. 2 (October 1973), p. 69; reprinted in Amy Baker Sandback, ed., Looking Critically: 21 Years of Artforum Magazine (Ann Arbor: U.M.I. Research Press, 1984).

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid., p. 67. Also see Lawrence D. Steefel Jr., Duchamp's 'Glass' in the Development of his Art (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977); especially pp. 333-36, where, remarkably, the author cites Bruno Bettelheim's recent study of his patient "Joey," adding that such a "context . . . shows us many of the factors of human concern which Duchamp's art also involves and also helps us to see the social application of Duchamp's personal concerns." Cf. Bruno Bettelheim, "Joey: A Mechanical Boy," Scientific American, vol. 200, no. 3 (March 1959), pp. 117-27.

58. See Lebel, Marcel Duchamp, pp. 30, 71; and Reboul, "Machines Célibataires, Schizophrénie et Lune Noire," Journal Intérieur du Cercle d'Etudes Métaphysiques, no. 1 (Paris), May 1954.

59. Ibid. Rosalind Krauss has extended Michelson's systemic and specific reading of Duchamp's autism, relating it to the semiotic investigations of Charles Sanders Peirce. See "Notes on the Index: Part I," October, no. 3 (Spring 1977), pp. 68-81; rpt. in The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, 1985), pp. 196-209. Krauss has expanded the discourse of a contingent self by exploring Duchamp's oeuvre through the idea of the "shifter" and the semiotic category of the "index." Relating Duchamp's diverse means of representation, Krauss demonstrates how the function of the index, embodying the very emptiness characteristic of the shifter, underlies Duchamp's analysis of representation. This analysis--central to Duchamp's project of self-portraiture and critique of identity--involves that representational category most connected to, yet equally wrenched from, reality: the photographic. Locating the photographic condition as integral to the oeuvre, indeed defining the very process of the readymade (a "snapshot" effect . . . at such and such an hour"), Krauss relates it to Duchamp's assault on language or the notion of the self; ascribing to the

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photographic, in terms of its indexical or direct relationship to the object, a "sub- or pre-symbolic" state, she situates the photograph within Lacan's category of the Imaginary. Thus, Krauss writes, "the photograph heralds a disruption in the autonomy of the sign " (ibid., p. 205). Yet the photograph often remains dependent on language, as in the case of picture magazines, which the "captioned" and allegorical Large Glass illustrates, and must always translate its formal and abstract language into the terms of the Symbolic.

60. Michelson, "Anémic Cinéma: Reflections on an Emblematic Work," p. 69.

61. The presence of eroticism represented by Rose Sélavy throughout Duchamp's oeuvre, as the manipulator of language, configuring the elusive, sensual materiality of the signifier, is again confirmed. Lyotard has queried the significance of the entrance of the nude into visibility from the left, relating her to the Bride of the Large Glass, who "inscribes its mute commands in space according to the same direction as writing (?)." Lyotard, Duchamp's TRANS/formers, p. 196. See also Duchamp's notes on the "Conditions of a Language," in Writings, p. 31.

62. Nochlin, "Courbet's L'Origine du Monde: The Origin without an Original," October, no. 37 (Summer 1986), pp. 75-86. See also Clair, "Erotism: Sexe et Topologie," in Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques, pp. 52-59.

63. Nochlin, p. 81. See Desmond Collins and John Onians "The Origins of Art," Art History, Vol. I., no. 1 (March 1978), pp. 1-25.

64. Ibid.

65. Such a gash appears, in Duchamp's last painting on canvas, entitled Tu m'. While playing on the notion of trompe l'oeil, Duchamp depicts a tear in the center of the canvas. This simulation, which is held together by three real safety pins, suggests to Schwarz that the Bride must remain a virgin (CW, p. 471). Such a measure disrupts the left to right movement of reading, just as the title, Tu m', disrupts a univocality. Concentrating instead on the anamorphic spatial aspect of the indexical signifier, that relates to the "hypophysicality" of his conceived Picture of Cast Shadows, Duchamp traced the shadows of his readymades (bicycle wheel, hatrack, and corkscrew) cast by a lantern. The idea of displacement in representation is presented through anamorphosis, literalized by the bottle brush's perpendicular relationship to the canvas, which requires that one to stand to the side to see it.

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66. Michel de Certeau, Heterologies: Discourse on the Other, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 157.

67. Writings, p. 36. As the Notes indicate, Duchamp had originally conceived of the mechanism for transmitting the Bride's messages as more complex. For example, under the heading, "[Blossoming] ABC . . .," referring to the combination of letters, "moving inscription" or title of the work, Duchamp wrote, "the group of alphabetic units should no longer have a strict order from left to right--each alphabetic unit will be present once only in the group A B C, and will be displaced from A to C and back again.-- Since, from A towards C, the inscription should, according to the need for equilibrium of the plate D, displace a [stabilizer] (a ball or anything). On this plate D. At A. there will be [a sort of letter box (alphabet) which will go towards B and C" (ibid., p. 38.) See also CW, pp. 156-57.

68. Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron, Surrealism, trans. Vivian Folkenflik (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 112, 114. Perhaps the greatest exaltation of pure subjectivity is offered by Louis Aragon, when he declared, "I do not believe in the experience of others." Ibid.

69. "Desire is that which is manifested in the interval that demand hollows within itself, inasmuch as the subject, in articulating the signifying chain, brings to light the want-to-be, together with the appeal to receive the complement from the Other, if the Other, the locus of speech, is also the locus of this want, or lack." Ecrits, p. 263

70. For further analysis of the construction of sexuality in Étant Donnés . . ., see Judovitz, "Rendezvous with Marcel Duchamp: Given."

71. See, for example, Toby Mussman, "Anémic Cinéma," Art and Artists, vol. 1, no. 4 (July 1966), pp. 48-51. For a specific discussion of the punning and sexual references contained in the film's linguistic configurations, see Katrina Martin, "Marcel Duchamp's Anémic Cinéma," Studio International, Vol. 189, no. 973, (January-February 1975), pp. 53-60.

72. Duchamp later remarked, "I made a little thing that turned, that visually gave a corkscrew effect. . . . At first I made it with spirals . . . not even spirals--they were off-center circles which, inscribed one inside the other, formed a spiral, but not in the geometric sense; rather in the visual effect." Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, trans. Ron Padgett (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. 72.

73. Notes, 170. See also Judovitz, "Rendezvous with Marcel Duchamp: Given,"

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p. 194; and on the subject of sexual difference and indifference in Anemic Cinema, see Judovitz, "Anemic Vision," pp. 48-56.

74. Writings, p. 61.

75. Central to this dissertation is the belief that Duchamp intuitively understood the concept of the drive, as involving first sexuality and language and then opening onto other fields within which there was reference to the Other. Jacqueline Rose has defined the drive, following Lacan, "as divisible into pressure, source, object and aim; and . . . challenges any straightforward concept of satisfaction--the drive can be sublimated and Freud described its object as 'indifferent.' What matters, therefore, is not what the drive achieves, but its process. . . . In Lacan's description of the transformation of the drive (its stages), the emphasis is always on the loss of the object around which it revolves, and hence on the drive itself as representation . . . the structure of representation is present in the very process of the drive." Sexuality in the Field of Vision, p. 57. Similarly opposed to the order of the subject, one also thinks of Jacques Derrida's category of différance, language's arbitrary determination of meaning, which Derrida opposes to the binarism of sexual difference. For Derrida's work related to psychoanalysis, see "Freud et la scène de l'écriture, in L'écriture et la différence (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1967); trans. Alan Bass, "Freud and the Scene of Writing," in Writing and Difference (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); and "La double séance," in La dissémination (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1972); trans. Barbara Johnson, "The Double Session," in Dissemination (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

76. In 1923, in the rectified readymade Wanted/\$2000 Reward, Duchamp affixed two typical mug-shot photographs of himself to a "Wanted" poster. Representing himself as a fugitive and through a litany of aliases, in addition to not signing the work, Duchamp relates the issue of the name to the idea of identity: "For information leading to the arrest of George W. Welch, alias Bull, alias Pickens etcetry, etcetry. Operated Bucket Shop in New York under name Hooke, Lyon, and Cinquer. Height about 5 feet 9 inches. Weight about 180 pounds. Complexion medium, eyes same. Known also under name RROSE SELAVY" (CW, p. 489).

77. Dalia Judovitz, "Anemic Vision in Duchamp: Cinema as Readymade," p. 51.

78. Walter Benjamin first likened the camera's powers of revelation, its "unconscious optics," to that of psychoanalysis' uncovering of "unconscious impulses." See his "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical

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Reproduction," in Illuminations: Essays and Reflections, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 237. Other critics of recent vintage, such as Krauss, have reinvented and expanded this concept.

79. Duchamp in fact states how enlightening he found Jean Ferry's book on the author; see Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, p. 41.

80. See Lacan, Encore (1972-73), Le Séminaire XX (text established by Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Les Éditions du Seuil, 1975); partially trans. Jacqueline Rose, in Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, eds. Feminine Sexuality: Jacqueline Lacan and the école freudienne (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1985); and in Écrits: A Selection, p. 149.

81. *Ibid.*, 35.

82. Lacan, Le Séminaire XX, p. 23. As quoted here in Mitchell and Rose, Feminine Sexuality, p. 46.

83. Judovitz relates the transitive discourse of eroticism in Étant Donnés . . . to the deictical aspect of Duchamp's principle of *infrathin*, and the implementation of this principle to his use of the mold. See, "Rendezvous with Marcel Duchamp: Given," pp. 190-93.

84. For a discussion of metaphor and metonymy as they relate to gender, see Jane Gallop, Reading Lacan (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 114-32.

85. The arch under which the viewer stands is also the form created by the sieves, and the critical visual link where the "bayonet" of the chocolate grinder and the crossing of the "scissors" occurs. Steefel notes that this area is both situated below the vanishing optical point of the Bachelor panel and "cut off" by the scissors overlapping the cones. Duchamp might be suggesting a link between the vanishing point and sexual difference (and implicitly the castration complex). The Position of Duchamp's "Glass" in the Development of His Art, p. 398, n. 104.

86. Roman Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances," Fundamentals of Language (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), p. 66.

87. Krauss, "Notes on the Index: Part I," p. 197; and Lacan, Le Séminaire XX, p. 75, quoted here in Gallop, Reading Lacan, pp. 139-40; also see Mitchell and Rose, p. 152.

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88. Reproduced in Rosalind Krauss and Jane Livingston, L'Amour fou (New York: Abbeville, 1985), p. 94.

89. Mary Ann Caws, "Ladies Shot and Painted: Female Embodiment in Surrealist Art," The Female Body in Western Culture (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 273. Elsewhere, Caws has questioned what it means to "represent" the body, and the position one assumes in doing so. See her "Representing Bodies: Cloaking, Veiling, and Ellipsis from Mannerism to Modernism," in Monique Chefdor, Ricardo Quinones, and Albert Wachtel, eds. Modernism: Challenges and Perspectives (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985); and "Partiality and the Ready Maid, Representation by Reduction," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, vol. 42, no. 3 (Spring 1984), pp. 255-60. The status of woman as mystification, as object of complete fantasy that occurs throughout Surrealism, a status that results from the situating of woman (as negative to man) in the place of the Other, as signifier of truth (nature) or fantasy has been dealt with only peripherally in Duchamp literature and is basically limited to traditional iconography. In discussing the sexual symbolism of the Large Glass, for example, Paz quotes Erich Neumann, who writes, "Flowing and moving waters are bisexual and male and are worshipped as fructifers and movers." He also notes, however, that it is a "masculinity dependent on the feminine sign: waterfalls and streams although 'looked upon as masculine . . . have the significance of a son." Paz, Marcel Duchamp, p. 113; Neumann, The Great Mother, Bollingen Series XLVII (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 48.

90. Jacqueline Rose's reminder that Lacan's statement, "'There is no sexual relation,' relates to the division of the subjects in the unconscious, and because it is the myth of that relation that creates a false unity which acts as a barrier to that division . . ." And Lacan's positive counterpart to this, "There is something of One," relates to a fantasied unity of relation: "We are as one. Of course everyone knows that it has never happened for two to make one, but still we are as one. That's what the idea of love starts out from . . . the problem then being how on earth there could be love for another." Language, far from mediating relations, is further divisive. See Mitchell and Rose, pp. 46ff.

91. André Breton, Arcane 17 (Paris, 1957). Quoted here in Whitney Chadwick "Eros or Thanatos--The Surrealist Cult of Love Reexamined," Artforum 14, no. 3 (November 1975), p. 56.

92. In the Bachelor's domain of the Large Glass, the Waterfall activates the Water Mill, which in turn controls the action of the Scissors. The latter

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function, according to Schwarz, is "paralleled by the Bride's vagina dentata in the upper half of the Large Glass" (CW, p. 559).

93. Lacan, "God and the 'Jouissance' of The Woman," in Encore: Le Séminaire XX, 1972-73 (Paris: Seuil, 1975); rpt. in Mitchell and Rose, pp. 144-45. Also cited by John Fletcher, "Poetry, Gender and Primal Fantasy," in Formations of Fantasy, Victor Burgin, James Donald, and Cora Kaplan, eds. (London and New York: Methuen & Co., 1986), p. 133.

94. Regarding the onanism of the célibataire, or bachelor, machine: Derrida reminds us, as Rousseau initially pointed out, masturbation is a "dangerous supplement," not only functioning as an additional practice to sexuality but as a substitute for "normal" sexuality. For further discussion of Rousseau and the question of supplementation, see Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); see also, Jonathan Culler, On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 104ff.

95. Duchamp, one might say, attempts to reassemble the body, which had been "anatomized," dissected bodily and in language, with works such Please Touch, Female Fig Leaf or Homage, in order to achieve a fictive unity of meaning. However, just as Balzac's sculptor, Sarrasine, appraises La Zambinella's nature and beauty, in its perfect parts and diversity, in an effort to define the enigmatic person, the spectator of Etant Donnés. . . to a certain degree attempts a similar but futile effort to redeem a sense of bodily unity and identity for the figure in the tableau-assemblage. See Barthes, S/Z, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974).

96. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book I, p. 142.

97. Jean Clair, "Erotism: Sexe et Topologie," in Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques, pp. 52-59; and Clair, "Marcel Duchamp et la tradition des Perspectiveurs," in Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques.

98. Duchamp's interest in four-dimensional geometry was first connected to the theme of eroticism by Lebel. Lebel (p. 28) claimed that Duchamp's ". . . transcendental conception was reinforced by his very tactile idea of the fourth dimension, since he considers the sexual act the pre-eminent fourth-dimensional situation." Duchamp, as Craig Adcock states, failed to deny or affirm this interpretation. Marcel Duchamp's Notes, p. 386, n. 65. Serge Stauffer, in a letter dated May 10, 1961, asked Duchamp about Lebel's association of eroticism and the fourth dimension. Responding, in a letter dated May 28, 1961, Duchamp writes:

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"Sans employer ces mots, cette idée est une vieille idée à moi, marotte expliquée par le fait qu'une sensation tactile qui enveloppe tous les côtés d'un objet s'approche d'une sensation tactile à quatre dimensions. Car bien entendu aucun de nos sens ne trouve d'application quadridimensionnelle sauf peut-être le toucher et par conséquent l'acte d'amour comme sublimation tactile pourrait faire entrevoir ou plutôt entretoucher une interprétation physique de la 4<sup>me</sup> dimension."

Schwarz provides the following quote by Duchamp:

"I would not say that sex is the fourth dimension; far from it, I would never say that. Sex is three-dimensional as well as four-dimensional. There is, however, an expression beyond sex which can be transferred into a fourth dimension. But the fourth dimension is not sex as such. Sex is only an attribute, which can be transferred into a fourth dimension, but it is not the definition or the status of the fourth dimension. Sex is sex" (CW, p. 36, n. 4).

For further discussion of this problem, see CW, p. 36; Steefel, Duchamp's 'Glass' in the Development of his Art, pp. 311-12; Henderson, The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 134, n. 49.

99. Albert Beguin, "L'Androgyne," Minotaure no. 11, May 1938, pp. 10ff; quoted here in Robert Knott, "The Myth of the Androgyne," Artforum, vol.14, no. 3 (November 1975), p. 38. Knott does not include Étant Donnés . . . in his discussion of this theme.

100. There appears to be an ambiguous convexity on the male side of the nude's genitalia, which, as others such as Lyotard have suggested, may be an emergent scrotum. See Duchamp's TRANS/formers, pp. 9-10. I think Duchamp's "androgyny" functions, however, on another level from that which is generally characterized in Surrealism. The latter is to a great extent tied to an idea of completeness rooted in the idealization of love between a heterosexual couple, an emphasis clearly absent in Duchamp's oeuvre. In his rejection of this underlying principle of mainstream Surrealism, and its fundamental ideal of completeness, understood within the terms of reciprocity, that inspired other Surrealists such as Breton or Robert Desnos, Duchamp's notion of androgyny is tied to a less stable sense of self and sexuality, one rooted in the problematics of division and separation. Beguin's reference to the 17th-century philosopher Jacob Boehme is thus instructive here. For the latter, turning to Cabalistic

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teachings, pointed out that the fall of man was symbolized by the division of the sexes.

101. Duchamp entitled it "objet-dard," a homophonic play on "art object" and "dart object," as well as on the double entendre of the French dard, which means both "dart" and "phallus."

102. Writings, p. 29. Clair, "Erotism: Sexe et Topologie," pp. 58-59.

103. Conversely, if indeed the hypothesis can be made that Duchamp has returned us in his posthumously revealed work to a garden of Eden, Étant Donnés . . . also confronts us with the first work of art, the vagina that is the object of desire. As such, we are also given insight into another, perhaps more elusive first: the first word. See also Linda Nochlin, "Courbet's L'origine du monde: The Origin without an Original," pp. 77-86.

104. See above, Chapter One. Although some support such a narrative reading, such as Jean Clair who, perhaps because of Duchamp's note from the Green Box, believes that there is no doubt as to the Large Glass' narrative conclusion: the Bride's blissful post-coital state. Duchamp et la photographie, pp. 104ff. Duchamp's note reads: "Le dernier état de cette mariée à nu avant la jouissance qui la ferait déchoir [fera déchoir]. Graphiquement, nécessité d'exprimer d'une façon complètement différente du reste du tableau, cet épanouissement. (The last state of this nude bride before the orgasm which would make her fall [makes her fall, scratched out] [will make her fall]. Graphically, the need to express in a completely different way from the rest of the painting, this blossoming.") See Duchamp du Signe: Ecrits, ed. Michel Duchamp du Signe: Ecrits, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (Paris: Flammarion, 1975), p. 64; and Writings, p. 43. The editors, however, have translated the tenses in the subjunctive, as "The last state of this bride which may (might) bring about her fall. . . ."

105. "All in all, Duchamp wrote, the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act" (Writings, p. 140). Much earlier Duchamp had indicated such an emphasis, citing the various epochal influences governing the interpretation of Rembrandt, "which may prove that people give more to pictures than they take from them." "A Complete Reversal of Art Opinions by Marcel Duchamp, Iconoclast," Arts and Decoration, September 1915, pp. 427-28; rpt. in Studio International, vol. 189 (January-February 1975), p. 29.

## Chapter Three

### Etant Donnés . . . and the Early Work

How does one explain the transformation that occurs even in Duchamp's work of 1910-11--the sudden absorption of libidinal energy that is no longer a phenomenal aspect of the object which has assumed an alterability, veiling itself in a complex construction of the subject?<sup>1</sup> What is the correlation, for example, between the sculptural nudes of Le Buisson (The Bush), December 1910-January 1911 (Fig. 71), that strangely defy gravity, and the dematerialized nudes of Young Man and Girl in Spring, Spring 1911 (Fig. 72)? Despite the sensual, corpulent figures of the former, there is a withdrawal from the physical plane (a detachment that would become complete by the end of the year with the appropriation of mechanical drawing), a greater spatial indeterminacy, but, more important, in terms of his subsequent mechanomorphic period, a marked internalization of desire, of the subject--all of which is certainly due to more than Duchamp's rejection of the "physicality" of painting in the tradition of Courbet. How may we, furthermore, read this transitional phase of his oeuvre, which was precipitative of Duchamp's lifelong solipsism, in relation to the latter's epiphany behind the permanently closed door from Cadaqués?

In 1964, in a lecture entitled "Apropos of Myself," Duchamp commented on this period during which he engaged the then-dominant avant-garde styles of painting. Referring to Le Buisson, he remarked, "This painting shows a turn toward another form of Fauvism not based on distortion alone. The figures are stylized in their design, and the colors are contrasted and blended at the same time. The presence of a nondescriptive title is shown here for the first time . . . from then on, I always gave an important role to the title which I added and treated like an invisible color."<sup>2</sup> The specific importance Duchamp accords the "nondescriptive" titling of Le Buisson acquires additional significance in light of the renewed relevance this painting and its virtual pendant work, Baptême (Baptism), 1911 (Fig. 73), have to Etant Donnés . . ..

In both paintings--depicting a kind of ritual of initiation--an aureole or cloud-like form surrounds the two nudes. Such a form and significance would reappear bound to the same innocence and incipient state of passage, in the etching La mariée mise a nu . . ., 1968 (Fig. 74) the sixth of a series of nine etchings Duchamp conceived on the theme of "The Lovers." The Bride is witnessed as if seen through the transparency of her veil, kneeling in the manner of a young girl receiving her first Communion.<sup>3</sup> The veil-like opening alludes not only to the brèche, the opening in the brick wall through which the voyeur witnesses the Bride in Etant Donnés . . ., but recalls this specific form in both Le Buisson and Baptême as well as in Duchamp's etching of the upper part of the Bride's register of the Large Glass, entitled Top Inscription, 1965. For La mariée mise a nu . . . depicts a

short-haired, child-like, gender ambiguous figure kneeling in a fetal position, whose body is turned away from the viewer, absorbed in private reverie.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, with his inscription on the color pencil study for the etching "Le nu est à l'intérieur du voile de la Mariée," Duchamp alludes to that "moment of stripping," the "épanouissement cinématique" or "cinematic blossoming" of the Bride, that would occur only posthumously (Fig. 75).<sup>5</sup> Yet the Bride in the etching still remains a virgin; within her veiled and enclosed space, one can only anticipate her soon-to-be "blossoming," in Etant Donnés . . .

Indeed the artist's late return to his formative period is significant. Rarely venturing beyond the anecdotal in his infrequent explication of his work, Duchamp does suggest that a psychological matrix was being worked out during this crucial period. Some fifty years later, Duchamp would recall: ". . . without a definite 'plot,' I was looking for some 'raison d'être in a painting otherwise than the visual experience--The Bush and the 2 nudes in relation to one another seemed at that time to satisfy the desire I had to introduce some anecdote without being 'anecdotal'.--In other words I did not, in that painting, illustrate a definite theme, but the disposition of the three elements evoked for me the possibility to invent a theme for it, afterwards."<sup>6</sup> Duchamp's new iconography required another kind of structure for the visual--toward a detachment from the material world, in favor of a symbolic dimension that could fix the subjectivity of the viewer by suggesting an alterity, an unseen dimension of meaning, an unformed yet incipient image that would emerge in time. Such an idea would accord

with Duchamp's notion of delay as a new way of "sub-titling" or projecting an image, rather "than thinking the thing in question is a picture. . . ."7 While Duchamp's acknowledged preference for the figure three has been well noted, with its implication of series as well as the Hegelian synthesis of a dialectic combination, it has not been considered independent of an idealist position--that is, for example, in relation to the issue of intersubjectivity. Since, as Lacan emphasizes, intersubjectivity, in order to avoid the imaginary relation between the subject and his or her mirror image, requires a third position.<sup>8</sup>

This important aspect of Duchamp's oeuvre, and especially of his early work, has been oddly overlooked, particularly given the early (1959) commentary of Lebel on the intersubjective in Duchamp. Anticipating this conceptual priority, yet still tied to a Symbolist aesthetic (the late Fauvist use of color, for example, deployed in order to transcend objectivity) and struggling to emerge from Cubism's dominance of the material world, Duchamp's friend and colleague Picabia summed up their mutual feelings when he observed that the properties of objects could "no longer be expressed in a purely visual or optical manner," that what needed to be developed was "the objectivity of a subjectivity."<sup>9</sup> Although the ostensible subject of Duchamp's work remained reasonably conventional throughout 1912 (he was, to quote Apollinaire, "the only painter of the modern school who today (autumn 1912) concerns himself with the nude"), Lebel is correct in interpreting the "nude" to mean more than an anatomical study, emphasizing the "psychological intimacy of being nude . . . an object for

interior investigation"--an application that can be most fully understood when one looks ahead to Etant Donnés . . ..<sup>10</sup> And following Apollinaire's acute sensibility in seeing in Duchamp's work "traces of being," Lebel's own perspicacity led him to state that Duchamp's paintings of 1912 "constitute the first incursion of modern art into the domain of intersubjective relations."<sup>11</sup>

It is, of course, at this stage, in July 1912 in Munich, that Duchamp achieves his dematerialization of the object in order to further establish a discourse on the subject and its relational structuring of the symbolic--to include the discourse of the Other. Clearly Duchamp's pre-structuralist, pre-psychoanalytic understanding of the unconscious subject was intuitive: masking an increasingly internalized subject--and signifier--within a "mechanical blossoming" of the forms, i.e, chain of signifiers. In this sense it is a "passage" of the signifier that is enacted in the homonymous painting, representing not just the loss of virginity but "a succession from one form to another" (Fig. 76).<sup>12</sup> Lebel, in fact, clarifies this idea in a footnote by defining it as "the dialectic notion of "passage," associated with that of transmutation."<sup>13</sup> One can only speculate as to Duchamp's awareness and understanding of the embryonic advances in the field of psychoanalysis at this time. His unbridled exploration of the anatomy in his paintings of 1912, Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2 (January), The King and Queen Surrounded by Swift Nudes (May 1912) (Fig. 77), The Passage from Virgin to Bride (July-August) (Fig. 76), and the Bride (August) (Fig. 78), concludes his own psychological and formal excoriation of the body.<sup>14</sup>

The formal culmination of the Bride, as she essentially appears in the Large Glass, evolved from its morphological inception in Young Man and Girl in Spring (Fig. 72) one-and-a-half years earlier. While Schwarz sees a particular resolution achieved in the androgynous nature of the Bride, a resolution that "embodies the realization of the wishes of the protagonists" of the latter painting, it is a resolution that hinges on his particular reading of that painting, which he sees as an affirmation of Duchamp's "unconscious incestuous love" for his sister Suzanne. Basing his interpretation of the symbolism of the Large Glass--the passage from virgin to bride--on this underlying psycho-drama, the "passage of sexual identity that implies the attainment of a state in which one is no longer subject to the male-female contradiction," Schwarz rightly sees in androgyny an erasure of difference.<sup>15</sup> However, in citing as an affirmation of this theme a detail that resides in the final synthesis of the Bride's structure ". . . right of center . . . an alembic--the classical androgynous symbol in alchemy," and in citing Duchamp's notes, which refer to the spinal column of the Bride as arbor-type, Schwarz reminds us that the tree is a typical symbol of bisexuality.<sup>16</sup>

While androgyny functions as myth, suppressing difference, bisexuality rather than suggesting a fantasized abolition of sexual difference implies a sliding reference with its inherent assumption of the two sexes.<sup>17</sup> Schwarz, however, does not root his definition of bisexuality within a psychosexual framework, but rather within the traditional mythology of alchemy and its symbolism. "Let us remember," he writes, "that bisexuality

is the archetypal quality of the creator, while the alchemical incest is the ideal mythical model for the state in which, after all contradictions have been resolved, individuation is achieved and creation becomes possible."<sup>18</sup>

Yet such individuation, or what Lacan calls the "moi," was for Duchamp an unattainable ideal, an imaginary identity, a representational process involving an insoluble conflict that is reflected in Duchamp's early paintings through an erotic spatio-temporal dynamic, which also can be analogized to language. This dynamism can be seen to underlie Duchamp's formalization of the linguistic throughout the mechanomorphic period. The schematic and overlapping imagery of The Passage from Virgin to Bride, for example, or of the previous year, in Sad Young Man in a Train, 1911, is both static and mobile, and might be said to articulate language's inner workings, the structure of both metonym and metaphor, respectively, the word-to-word connection and language's substitutive process. "The Bride basically is a motor," Duchamp writes, and in his painting Bride, one can clearly see her various gears and mechanical parts.<sup>19</sup> His focus on mechanics, the inner working of an engine, describe primarily the "blossoming," the eroticism of both the Bride and Bachelors' desire. However, the formal elements of the paintings that Duchamp made in 1912, describe another evolution or process of "stripping" down to the rudiments-the allegorization of language or the linguistic subject. The sublimation of diverse forms to a mechanically outlined, schematic ordering and mechanical process, indeed, suggests a semiology of the structuring of language. In the spatial configuration of these forms, one can see the

process of language's conjuring of likeness in metaphor, or of movement in metonymy. But, principally, it is the active process of the structuring of form that one sees in these paintings, and that relates to the complex symbolic and imaginary formation of the subject.

The psychosexual content that is progressively hidden, transmuted or subsumed in various forms throughout Duchamp's formative stage, as he rejected painting in favor of alternative semiotic and symbolic means and strategies of representation--the mechanical drawing, the readymade, the photograph, the pun--(that regardless of its literary context is never nonretinal) all become at the level of the subject increasingly similar to the manner in which the unconscious functions.<sup>20</sup> In other words, if "the unconscious of the subject is the discourse of the Other," then, as Lacan argues, "the unconscious is structured in the most radical way like a language."<sup>21</sup>

As Duchamp would later admit: "My intention was always to get away from myself, though I knew perfectly well that I was using myself. Call it a little game between 'I and me.'"<sup>22</sup> Thus the conjunction of issues such as entitlement--the symbolic nomination through language--understood as nondescriptive, and subjectivity, marks Duchamp's foray into abstraction, distinguishing his work, for example, from the more plastic or formalist intentions of Fauvism or Cubism. It is not just coincidental, then, that his recollection of his appropriation of expressionist color, his "turn toward another form of Fauvism not based on distortion alone," would involve the red/ color polarity that would figure so significantly in his work later that

decade involving the subjective perceptual issues of stereoscopy.

Duchamp in fact indicated that even at this point his involvement with color--shortly of little to no representational importance in his work--assumed a wholly different context. Regarding the Portrait of Dr. Dumouchel, 1910 (Fig. 79), he later recalled: "The portrait is very colorful (red and green) and has a note of humor which indicated my future direction to abandon mere retinal painting."<sup>23</sup> As deceptively benign as his statement first appears, I believe that Duchamp's association of humor, and his mention of color, specifically the complimentary colors red and green, with his abandonment of a certain kind of descriptive painting is extremely revealing.<sup>24</sup>

In addition, aside from the commonplace psychoanalytic implications associated with humor, Duchamp's emphasis on the color combination of red and green would soon manifest in a manner entirely consistent with his eschewal of the retinal. Quite familiar with scientific color theory, and the perceptual aspects rendered by the simultaneous contrast of colors, Duchamp would, in his rectified readymade entitled Pharmacy, 1914 (Fig. 80), an ordinary commercial print of a winter landscape, add the colors red and green;<sup>25</sup> such would be the case a half-century later with another landscape, now partially illuminated behind a barn-like door by red and green lights.<sup>26</sup> However, unlike the optical effect achieved through the simultaneous registration of complimentary colors, as in the Portrait of Dr. Dumouchel, the two dots of red and green that Duchamp applied in Pharmacy, are no longer contiguous. By wrenching the intentional

perception of depth inherent in the simultaneous contrast of colors from its retinal status to an intellectual, or mental function, Duchamp assigns to it instead a semiotic status--of its alterability as sign--a phenomenology, one could say, of another order of perception.<sup>27</sup> Duchamp signalled the significance of this evolving sign, in a note in A l'Infinifit: "Do not forget the painting of Dumouchel: Pharmacy--snow effect, dark sky, dusk, and 2 lights on the horizon (pink and green)."<sup>28</sup> In the disposition of this print--a wintry landscape by an anonymous artist "of the worst kind"<sup>29</sup>--Duchamp's touch of color established a polarity which has "colored" his entire oeuvre, from the Large Glass ("verre" being a homonym of "vert," French for green) to the "pink" (rose) of *Rose Sélavy* back to the expressed lighting of the tableau.<sup>30</sup>

Duchamp's early reference to humor at this particular stage indeed relates to the increasing complexity of the subject in his work. Thus the relevance of Henri Bergson's observation that "a situation is invariably comic when it belongs simultaneously to two altogether independent series of events and is capable of being interpreted in two entirely different meanings at the same time."<sup>31</sup> For soon, the arbitrary and multiple meanings in Duchamp's work would be reflected in a hermeticism, already manifest in the readymades, as well as conveyed through increasingly complex optical constructs begun by the end of the decade, involving stereometry and anaglyphs. It was only with such optical experimentation that he could determine a kind of dialectical perceptual experience that, while remaining within the objective bounds of geometry, would also yield

the kind of objective recording of the subjective to which Picabia refers above.<sup>32</sup>

But before the nature of visual discordance could be elevated to the status of the gaze or express the symbolic condition of lack, Duchamp would focus on a certain arbitrariness of the "signifier" that might be said to be proto-structuralist. This becomes increasingly apparent throughout the mechanomorphic period, insofar as paintings like The Passage from Virgin to Bride or Bride suggest a formal condition of division or difference that not only parallels the artist's own gender analysis but relates to a split in the subject in its relation to the signifier. Such an experience of division occurs of course with the readymade or the pun, whose multiple meanings often are realized "en retard," the delayed comprehension appearing to come or be transmitted from without. What Duchamp suggests, then, in his earlier remark concerning the relation between his simultaneous introduction of humor and abandonment of the retinal, is a renegotiation and understanding of the self in terms that begin to address the Lacanian "symbolic," a process that would soon accommodate the retinal deceptions of the optic "imaginary."

This withdrawal from the purely visual toward the more psychological and abstract--begun by the Portrait of Dr. Dumouchel, the last of three psychological portraits he was to paint that year (the other two being the Portrait of the Artist's Father, 1910 [Fig. 81] and The Chess Game, 1910 [Fig. 82])--though propelled on one hand by the contemporary interest in the fourth dimension and its potential for multidimensional

transformation, was also rooted in Duchamp's wish to deny the subject its tyranny of order, its nominal claim to partition a "point of view."<sup>33</sup> As Duchamp recalled to Cabanne in 1966:

"I was . . . giving less importance to visuality, to the visual element, than one generally gives in painting. Already I didn't want to be preoccupied with visual language. . . . What we were interested in at the time was the fourth dimension . . . Simply, I thought of the idea of a projection, of an invisible fourth dimension, something you couldn't see with your eyes."<sup>34</sup>

In most of Duchamp's more conventional Impressionist and Fauvist influenced portraits and nudes during the period 1910-11, there is a sublimation of the physical, an absorption of the figures into an increasingly private space. The visible "self-containment," for example, within the portrait of his life-long friend, Dr. Dumouchel, of a multivalent symbolism that informs the depersonalized non-pictorial constructs he would soon produce has been described by Steefel, "the image is clearly introverted at the same time that it is depersonalized."<sup>35</sup>

Such depictions are clearly removed from the immediate present of sensation, entering instead into the more temporal space of the signifier and the unconscious. This directional change in Duchamp's art, toward a state that is "more mental than visual,"<sup>36</sup> more concerned with recollection than pure observation, was inevitable given the prevailing Cubist and Futurist interest in simultaneity. For in Sonata, 1911 (Fig. 83) a multiple portrait of the female members of his family, and in his portrait of Dulcinea, 1911 (Fig. 84), Duchamp has permitted appearance to yield to a

more ambiguous and transparent temporal dimension.<sup>37</sup>

It was, in fact, the portrait of Dulcinea, that anticipated the two versions of the Nude Descending a Staircase painted a few months later. In its imagery of a woman, stern and aloof, pictured five times in varying planes and degrees of undress, Dulcinea, it has been suggested, "is obviously a precursor of the Glass [the Large Glass], whose iconography is a complex development of this theme of the mental stripping of the female by her bachelor friends."<sup>38</sup> Yet with the multiplicity of image in the earlier painting, it is clear that Duchamp's approach to the simultaneity of either Cubism or Futurism has a different goal. Neither the conflation of space and time manifest in Cubism nor the replication of the dynamics of movement seem to be of primary interest in the portrait. Rather, the trace of the woman in Dulcinea or of his two brothers in Portrait of Chess Players, December 1911 (Fig. 85), although the latter is more fragmented and conventionally Cubo-Futurist, is rooted in memory, presenting in addition to the dislocation in space a more ambiguous sense of time. One can see this in the five faces in Dulcinea, each depicted with a different degree of anatomical completeness, or, in Portrait of Chess Players, in the superimposition of his brothers' faces while playing chess.

In contradistinction to Futurism's concern with the "synthetic continuity" of movement, Duchamp demonstrates in Dulcinea an analytic sensibility concerned with dissecting the spatio-temporal continuum--a preoccupation with the analysis of mobility evidenced in the photochronographs of Marey in France and those of the Americans Eakins

and Muybridge.<sup>39</sup> Yet, what concerned him was not only the photograph's instantaneous arrest of time, but how such an instant, and its representation of space, might assume a variable or dilated temporal dimension, characteristic of the "épanouissement cinématique" (the cloud-like form in the upper register of the Large Glass, also called the "Top Inscription" and the "Milky Way"), the four-dimensional state in which he would soon present the Bride.

With the unpredictable variability of the subjective, the "immeasurability," that is, of perception as well as that of chance effects, it was no longer possible to quantify the subject per se of representation; there was little choice but to establish a principle of "inconsistency," to carry out his ideas and production with "precise indifference." In order to achieve this indifference as well as that which would conversely possess a commonality--an operation of language--Duchamp discovered mechanical drawing and its potential to project subjectivity into objective forms.<sup>40</sup> After all, mechanical drawing was a part of the culture of the commodity, the very representation of industrial production. More important, as a mode of visual instruction, that was part of the elementary school curriculum at the end of the 19th century and for the first quarter of the our own, as well as a blueprint for mass production, mechanical drawing taught one rather early and explicitly that "truth . . . was not optical."<sup>41</sup>

The retinal/painterly qualities of much of 20th-century abstraction, to which Duchamp late in life referred when he uttered his famous judgment, "bête comme un peintre," failed to adequately address reality--to

question its (painting's) modes of representation in terms other than those germane to painting, that is, through pictorial space. The "free, mobile perspective" of Picasso, as Metzinger wrote in 1910, by rejecting the convention of objective space and time, engaged the world anew.<sup>42</sup> But for Duchamp, this new visuality was still too tied to the liberation resulting from the rejection of linear perspective and Archimedean reason; it was just another language that would still claim for art a certain measure of truth in its correspondence to life. Painting, in other words, had become, as the title of his last such work, Tu m', 1918 (Fig. 86) variously suggests, uninteresting (one may read Tu m' as an abbreviation of "tu m'ennuies" or "tu m'emmerdes").<sup>43</sup> If painting was to be "put once again at the service of the mind,"<sup>44</sup> then it would have to engage a discourse within the philosophical tradition. As contemporary painting became increasingly fixated on the retinal--on appearances--art, for Duchamp, had to become involved in a necessarily nonperceptual experience--of lines, traces, semaphores--in order to unveil phenomena of its allusions to truth. As it had for Plato, art could not attain the unity or the identity of truth, since its status as representation excludes it from the world of perfectly intelligible ideas.<sup>45</sup> If a new, more realistic spatio-temporality were to be seized, it would have to signify a temporality that existed at the center of the subject, that could even touch the subject's mortality. Duchamp's enterprise of self-inquiry indeed became "philosophical": it refused the rationalists' "unity" of the self.<sup>46</sup> For the transcendental identity of the latter, as Henri Bergson pointed out, fails to account for the multiplicity and fragmentation

of the ego over time since it is always above or beyond it.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the discontinuity of space or the complexity of its forms, the empirical data of the surfaces of classic Cubist paintings gradually define the identity and totality of the objects represented. While the spectator must piece together accrued information, temporality assists one in connecting the myriad partial information faceted on the surface of a Cubist painting. Even in the most hermetic of Cubist still-lives, there is the appeal of the essential, derived from the object's transient and complex appearance, the identity of which is equated with the viewer's comprehension of it. There is, in other words, no paradigm of structure beyond that determined by the marriage of convention and perception; or, in the words of Gleizes and Metzinger, which emerged from the group discussions attended by the Duchamp brothers at Puteaux, "there is nothing real outside ourselves."<sup>48</sup>

Duchamp's approach to such a marriage of the perceptual and the objective led to his adoption of the mechanical drawing, a paradigm of structure. This is the case, for example, with the Coffee Mill, 1911 (Fig. 87), the artist's first mechanomorphic painting and the only work of this period unconcerned with the human figure. While partaking of the simultaneity of Cubism, Duchamp's schematized mechanical drawing deviates from the tangible reality that ultimately governs most Cubist work. Its analytic and symbolic diagrammatic dimension reveals not only the machine's invisible working mechanism--a metaphor for Duchamp's soon-to-be equally invisible artistic gesture (chance, readymade)--but introduces the temporality and subjectivity of language. What is explicitly projected in the

Coffee Mill's mental image of the machine and its temporality, and analogized to the self, is the projection of consciousness--one's own identity as a temporal being--that is both objectified and alienated by speech. It is in this sense that Duchamp's reductivist geometry or sublimation of the physical world must be seen (or, the way in which the "sexless" image of the Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2, for example, relates to Duchamp's autoscopic, but self-detached, procedure), contrary to the self-affirming transcendent, representational and formal analysis of many of his colleagues.<sup>49</sup>

Duchamp's arguable incorporation of the formal innovations of Cubism, its rejection of perspectivalism--as a standardization of visual space--was superseded by contemporaneous conceptual developments pertaining to the nature of aesthetics or the radical implications of both mechanical reproduction and non-Euclidian geometry.<sup>50</sup> And his soon-to-be virtual abandonment of painting was perhaps due to a sense that the conventional plastic arts were lagging behind film and photography in representing the accelerating perceptual and social dynamics of modernity.<sup>51</sup> While Cubism in general was absorbed with the formalist problematics of representation inherent to modernist painting (e.g., isolating different conventions of perceiving spatial depth), the movement was tied, despite its radical position, to a system of objectivity that did not question the transparency of the subject or of vision. In other words, within Cubism's coherent "narrative" of desire--the overriding concern for the represented object, or what Lacan would call the object of satisfaction--the problem of the alienation of

subjectivity is to a degree transcended. Contrastingly, Duchamp's eventual investigation of abstraction (as opposed to Cubism's steadfast resistance to this mode of expression) in his "Precision Optics," for example, would present the "desired" object," but only to the extent that that "object of desire" was, in its spiraling movement, ultimately unattainable.

Duchamp, in fact, expresses his clear lack of aesthetic concern for the formal advancements of either Cubism or Futurism in favor of the then fashionable intellectual current of ideas in his so-called Cubo-Futurist works, where, for example, his interest in non-Euclidian geometry, or the geometry of multiple dimensions, is first evidenced in his mechanomorphic works such as Coffee Mill or in the series of paintings commencing with Sad Young Man in a Train (December 1911) that leads to the two versions of the Nude Descending a Staircase.

Among Duchamp's first efforts to begin to radically rethink the problem of bourgeois (retinal) aesthetics, the Coffee Mill--predating his chronophotographic-inspired investigation of movement the semi-abandonment of which would culminate in the conceptual play of the Large Glass--presented an alternative visual language--mechanical diagram-matical drawing--by which visual movement could be conceptually grasped and yet yield, within this process, a particular kind of narrative. "But instead of making a figurative coffee grinder," the artist has recalled, "I used the mechanism as a description of what happens. You see the handle turning, the coffee after it is ground--all the possibilities of that machine."

Apart from the mechanical drawing's intrinsic conceptual content,

its own autonomous logic of operation and abstraction of the machine offered Duchamp an opportunity to elevate the convention of perspective to a symbolic level. Furthermore, Duchamp's merger of mechanical drawing with the subject of the nude would yield more than just a balance of precision and chance: it allowed Duchamp to extrapolate desire to the level of the symbolic.<sup>52</sup> Rather than see the machine as expressive merely in anthropomorphic terms, or as embodying the mechanical determinacy of Roussel's Impressions d'Afrique, the machine or the mechanical drawing became a vehicle through which the "phenomenal" aspects of erotic physicality could be transposed to the level of the signifier--formalizing desire at the cognitive level of language in order that desire could be understood to function on another level than appearance.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the translation of the female nude into a mechanical device, signaling the incorporation of the erotic by the machine, is clearly evident in Duchamp's Study for the "Coffee Grinder, No. 2," 1914 (Fig. 56), now in the Staatgalerie, Stuttgart.

In Coffee Mill, as in the subsequent Cubo-Futurist series, rather than deconstruct the subject in terms of its empirical qualities of texture or shape, as is the case in Analytic Cubism, for example, Duchamp's foremost concern here is to sublimate the physical, to divorce the object from an immediate sensory experience. Furthermore, by representing the object through a schematic rendering, he literally isolates the "analytical" as a symbolic process, one in which the veiled hermetic aspect of the psychosexual can be read. This objectification and conversion of the li-

bidinal into a dynamic mechanical process, as "analyzed" and "stripped," also prefigures such a process in the Large Glass.<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, Duchamp's grounding of this transition from a directly perceived and arousing physicality to its hidden containment in metaphor (like the visual oscillation in Etant Donnés . . . that I referred to earlier, the grinding of the machine, remains "still a colloquialism for having intercourse"<sup>55</sup>)--the displacement of desire and the sexual theme from the visual/physical to the linguistic realm--contributed, I believe, to his assessment of the painting "as the key picture to his complete work."<sup>56</sup> For the coffee mill's autonomous mechanomorphic motion creates an involuntary perceptual sense of movement, an involuntary spatio-temporal sensation, that is inscribed with a sublimatory sense of loss and recognition. It is now an imaginary coffee mill that one encounters, an imaginary object elevated to a fetishistic dimension, to the status of an object of desire. Breton understood the potent implications of Duchamp's psychological transmutation when he wrote of the Coffee Mill, that it "indicates the start of the purely personal development that interests us; compared to the guitars of the Cubists, it takes on the appearance of an infernal machine."<sup>57</sup> What this "infernal machine" deceptively threatened was the sanctity of appearance, beyond whose phenomenal status lay the alienating relations of the signifier, in so far as they structure the subject.

This condition of contextually removing an object paradoxically from its material connection to the world not only would become with the readymade a symbolic process--assigning to the real the status of sign--but,

by the end of the decade, with his experimentation in optics, would parallel another dialectical reversal. With the particular kind of perception experienced phenomenologically through stereometric and anaglyphic vision, Duchamp accomplishes a reversal of perspectivalism, allowing the immaterial, a flat, geometric shape, to assume a volume in the eyes of the viewer. In so doing, he subverts a cultural manner of seeing in favor of an individuated perception; and in this repudiation of the norm, Duchamp reverts to chance, intrinsic to his "idea of fabrication" and meaning. In the context of the readymade, Thierry de Duve has suggested that the function of chance is as "a subjective 'creator' which appears at the point where the psychological subject fails, that is, at the place where it accumulates defenses and intentions, where it claims decision instead of surrendering it."<sup>58</sup>

Thus, in attempting to understand Duchamp's explicit hyperrealistic return to eroticism in the tableau, and how that might relate to the multiply-linked issues of desire and the function of language so far discussed, as well as to a problematic adaptation of the individual to reality, intimated above, it would seem necessary to reflect on that period of painting--the series of psychological portraits and nudes painted prior to his pseudo-abstract mechanomorphism--in which there emerges the beginnings of such an intersubjective perceptual situation.

For if I have stressed Lacan's notions of the role of desire, the function of the phallus, and the role of language--as that which can never quite be articulated, it is to reveal this lack in terms of the deferring

function of the signifier to represent a subject only in relation to another signifier--such an emphasis has been to underscore the critical relevance of a Lacanian issue: the lack that results from the dependency by the subject on a signifier and how that signifier becomes revealed in the field of the Other.

While I contend that Etant Donnés . . . functions no less than the Large Glass as a self-portrait, its condensation of the issues--immanent in the former work and the oeuvre in general--in the specific terms of the visual, and its unique offering as such, "as the original subjectifying relation" remains its distinctive achievement. That the nude's gesture of self-illumination reveals the law of the signifier, as deferring, it does so, as I have suggested in Chapter Two, "to petrify the subject in the same movement to which it calls the subject to function, to speak, as subject." What the tableau additionally accomplishes, as spectacle, and what will be examined at length in the next Chapter, is this implicit acknowledgement by Duchamp of the failure of what Lacan calls the geometral dimension of vision to fully address the phenomenological conditions of subjectivity.

In the end, Duchamp was able to approach such "self-conscious topics as the machine, eros, and motion" in a new and, significantly, detached or depersonalized manner.<sup>59</sup> In addition, in discussing this phase of Duchamp's early development, Steefel has suggested that the notion of an evolving "esthetic distance" or an "esthetic vanishing point" allowed Duchamp to "equilibrate" this "moment" of self-reflexiveness--a moment of "retard," the delay that Duchamp speaks of in his notes.<sup>60</sup> According to

Steeffel, Duchamp eventually was able to maintain this distance--of an "esthetic vanishing point"--as a homeostasis, balancing his own determined set of values, in order to achieve both an "attainment of esthetic distance and the sensation of esthetic delight."<sup>61</sup> To what degree consciousness, itself, in a Cartesian sense, was specifically the object of Duchamp's concern, is, of course, speculative. What is less uncertain, however, is his subsequent investigations into the "objective" existence of such mental constructions as anaglyphs.

It was only after this generative decade associated with the Large Glass during which Duchamp had objectified the visual, if only metaphorically through the operations of geometry, photography, as well as through its standardization in classical perspective, that he returned to the issue of perspective as construed and representational. However, rather than speculate on the existence of a superior reality--which one could not see but only conceptualize--his quasi-scientific bent led Duchamp toward more direct optical experimentation that would allow him to organize and transform empirical data (and the notion of objectivity) in order to ultimately establish the visual/linguistic terms of subjectivity in the tableau. Only by being rooted in the "real" world of perception, could Duchamp engage more directly the psychological issues that pertained to the perceptual problems of subjectivity. And consistent with Duchamp's aggressive critique of positivism underlying his Dadaist principles, "a nihilism to which" (he would say in 1946) he remained "sympathetic,"<sup>62</sup> he proceeded to begin to deconstruct the notion of normalcy, and the idea of a

benign aesthetic/visual experience--to further undo habituated modes of seeing in art.<sup>63</sup>

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1. Robert Lebel intimates Duchamp's understanding of the subject as constituted by an interdependency between object and observer, when he relates the latter to Cubism's subjugation of the object by the overriding perception of the artist as subject. Noting this, the author claims for Duchamp the fourth-dimensional context for the sexual act, a consequence of which he read as achieving a "fusion of subjects (the subject of the painting and the subject as perceiver in a single entity. . . ." See Lebel, Marcel Duchamp, trans. George Heard Hamilton (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 29. In relating the evolution of the sexual content of The King and Queen Traversed by Swift Nudes to the drawing of The Bride Stripped Bare by the Bachelors, Schwarz also speaks of a "loss of erotic tension" and that "sexual intercourse is again displaced from the physical to the mental level" (CW, p. 115).

2. Delivered at the City Art Museum of St. Louis, Missouri, on November 24, 1964, the notes from the lecture were published for the first time, in d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine.

3. Jean Clair has suggested that Duchamp's drawing For the Menu of Simone Delacour's First Communion Dinner (June 6, 1909) is the first association of the Bride with a communicant. Marcel Duchamp: Catalogue raisonné (Paris: Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1977), p. 27. Schwarz earlier had identified the Bride with a young communicant, and likened her evocation to the female in Young Man and Girl in Spring (CW, p. 571). See also Hellmut Wohl, "Duchamp's Etchings of the Large Glass and The Lovers," in Dada/Surrealism, no. 16 (1987), pp. 173-74.

4. Hellmut Wohl has contrasted this inward aspect of the figure's turning away with the "unchecked factual candor" of the Bride of Etant Donnés . . .. See "Duchamp's Etchings of the Large Glass and The Lovers," p. 174. One might note, however, that the figure's head in the tableau is also turned away, and she too is lost in her private, mysterious world.

5. The etching is indeed a preview, another cinematic "frame" closer to the inevitable denouement, which Duchamp prematurely acknowledged by inscribing the work, "Encore une mariée/mise à nu!" and later remarked to Schwarz, "The bride has finally been stripped bare, here" (CW, p. 571).

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Duchamp's term "épanouissement cinématique," from the Green Box, referring to the cloud-like form of the Large Glass (otherwise known as the "Top Inscription" or "Milky Way"), whose amorphous opening is the enveloping form of the Bride's linguistic units, the "Draft Pistons" (or "Nets"), suggests the poetic flowering of both pubescence and orgasm. For a mathematical discussion of this term, see Adcock, Marcel Duchamp's Notes, pp. 153ff; also see Matisse in his "Translator's Note" to Duchamp's Notes, n.p.

6. Stated in a letter, in 1951, to Miss Mary Ann Adler, a restorer who worked for the Arensbergs in California. Arensberg Archive, Philadelphia Museum of Art; quoted in d'Harnoncourt and McShine, p. 249.

7. Writings, p. 26. This temporal or incipient image functions as well as a metaphor for the photographic print (see Chapter Four).

8. See Lacan, Écrits: A Selection, p. 57. See also CW, p. 130. "For me," Duchamp said of the number 3, "it is a kind of magic number, but not magic in the ordinary sense. Number 1 is the unity, number 2 is the couple, and 3 is the crowd. In other words, 20 million or 3 is the same for me" (ibid).

9. Francis Picabia, "Cubism by a Cubist," preface to the catalogue of his exhibition at Alfred Stieglitz' Little Gallery of the Photo-Secession ("291"), New York, March 17-April 5, 1913; rpt. in Frederick James Gregg, ed., For and Against: Views on the International Exhibition Held in New York and Chicago (New York: Association of American Painters and Sculptors, Inc., 1913), p. 46; also quoted in William S. Rubin, Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1968), p. 23.

10. Lebel, Marcel Duchamp, pp. 13, 15.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., p. 14.

13. Ibid., n. 1.

14. Lebel has commented on this issue in reference to Duchamp's two major works painted in Munich:

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"His German works, in contrast to the earlier ones in which geometric organization could still be detected, are characterized by the juxtaposition of mechanical elements and visceral forms. In them he realized the conception of a physiologically human machine which is seen as if it were transparent so that one can follow, estimate and predict its functioning. The suggestion of internal tissues with their pink mucous tones typical of Duchamp's keen awareness of these problems which, we suspect, struck him to the heart and plunged him into the depths of the organic unconscious. This accounts for the striking novelty of these works at a time when Freud was still little known in France and when news of his research had not yet, in any case, penetrated to artistic circles. In this instance can one assume some influence from his German trip, that Duchamp with extraordinarily acute perception was able, even incidentally, to grasp certain allusions that were in the air?" (ibid., p. 15).

15. CW, p. 117. Explaining the Brother-Sister incest as "a prototype of alchemical marriage," an allegory "for the whole conception of opposites," Schwarz sees their union representing a "primordial unity" (ibid., p. 97).
16. CW, p. 118.
17. See Chapter Two, above.
18. CW, p. 97.
19. Writings, p. 42.
20. Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1981), p. 24.
21. Ecrits, pp. 55, 234. See also Lee, p. 46.
22. Interview with Katharine Kuh, "Marcel Duchamp," p. 83.
23. In a letter to the Arensbergs, January 28, 1951. Correspondence Duchamp-Arensberg in the Archives of the Francis Bacon Foundation,

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Claremont, Calif. Here quoted in CW, p. 9. Duchamp's early friendship with Dumouchel, a pioneer in radiology in France, might also, as Clair has suggested, drawn Duchamp's attention to certain "extra-retinal" phenomena. See Clair, Marcel Duchamp: Catalogue raisonné (Paris: Musée national d'art moderne, Centre national d'art et de culture Georges Pompidou, 1977), p. 33. For more on the Portrait of Dr. Dumouchel as well as on contemporary theories and influence of the X ray and the fourth-dimension, see Linda Dalrymple Henderson, "Italian Futurism and 'the Fourth Dimension,'" Art Journal, vol. 41, no. 4 (Winter 1981), pp. 317-23.

24. I agree with Steefel's commentary in reference to the same painting, that "the comic as an inverted sublime is a major dimension of Duchamp's kind of ironic humor." See Steefel, The Position of Duchamp's 'Glass' in the Development of His Art, p. 78. Such interpretation, bolstered by the then-popular interest in the psychology of humor, with, for example, the contemporary work of Henri Bergson [such as Le Rire (Paris, 1900); translated into English by Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell as Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic (New York, 1914)], has tended to overshadow an alternative approaches, in the direction of an allegorical or psychosexual reading of Duchamp's work at this stage.

25. The colors refer, as the title indicates, to the contemporary display in pharmacy windows of bottles of colored liquid. Duchamp recalled this in conversation with Schwarz (CW, p. 445).

26. See lighting instructions in "Approximation démontable," p. 20.

27. As Duchamp revealed to Cabanne much later when asked about "the cerebral genesis" of the Large Glass:

"What I put inside was what, will you tell me? I was mixing story, anecdote (in the good sense of the word), with visual representation, while giving less importance to visuality, to the visual element, than one generally gives in painting. Already I didn't want to be preoccupied with visual language . . . consequently, retinal. Everything was becoming conceptual, that is, it depended on things other than the retina."

Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, trans. Ron Padgett (New York: Viking Press, 1971), pp. 38-39. What he focused on throughout his

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development of the Large Glass was this clearly nonvisual and ideative process, of "purely mental ideas expressed as part of the work but not related to any literary allusions," evidenced in numerous notes in the Green Box and A l'Infinif (interview with Kuh, p. 81). Although the kind of represented visuality depicted in the Large Glass appears to absorb the spatial dimension actually perceived through the work's transparency, it is still as an irrevocably solid painting within the confines of illusion that the work functions. However with the semi-abstract register above of the bride, Duchamp, of course, introduces nonobjective forms, but within the conceptual context of representation--the relationship between, for example, an object and its anamorphic shadow. While it was imperative for him to reject the idea of painting as transparent to something in the world, abstraction as a subject itself was, for Duchamp, up until the 1920s still too closely tied to base retinal painting. "More important was the intention of getting away from even the idea of painting a picture. Instead, I purposely introduced elements considered anathema to art," referring to the purely conceptual ideas mentioned above. "All along, while painting it, I wrote a number of notes which were to complement the visual experience like a guide book." See d'Harnoncourt and McShine, p. 296. Consequently, the Large Glass, considered as the initial machinery fueled by this intellectual economy of "notes" produced by Duchamp during the years 1912-20, develops fundamentally as a conceptual rather than a perceptual product of these ideas. In his exploration of the domain of "aesthetic perception," particularly in Etant Donnés . . ., Duchamp attempts to reconcile these two often conflicting agendas of modernism.

28. Writings, p. 76.

29. CW, p. 445.

30. Carol P. James also has noted this significance; see her "Duchamp's Pharmacy," Enclitic, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring 1978), p. 68-69. The simultaneous contrast of colors is not, however, analogized to the dialectical function of desire.

31. Bergson, Laughter, An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic, p. 96.

32. As opposed to classic cinema's equation of the male subject and the gaze,

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as dominant and controlling, I believe that in de-phallicizing the subject Duchamp mitigates such a situation, functioning outside it--emphasizing on the contrary a loss of control. Consequently, it is the male subject who becomes subjugated to desire and the look. For further discussion of this issue, see Chapter Four.

33. Also relevant in this period are the confluent influences that come to bear on Duchamp, as he would, within a year of finishing the intensely psychological and ritualistic series of paintings mentioned above, radically separate from his circle. Defining and asserting himself not only against the entrenched bourgeois tastes of the Salon but also independently from his friends, family, and colleagues, Duchamp resolved not to present himself professionally in the world but to go "underground," precisely the advice he would give to a generation of young artists 50 years hence (in a talk entitled "Should the Artist go to College?" that Duchamp gave at Hofstra College in 1960). As he would explain years later, responding to Cabanne's question why at this point he had stopped painting, Duchamp stated that the initial impetus was prompted by the rejection of his Nude Descending a Staircase from the Salon des Indépendants of 1912, and that his colleagues, including even his own brothers, were unaccepting of his work, considering it out of line with their idea of what Cubism should be. More shocked than any of his detractors, and in "reaction against such behavior coming from artists I had believed to be free," Duchamp said, "I got a job. I became a librarian at the Sainte-Geneviève Library in Paris" (Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, p. 17). Freedom would mark his life-long avoidance of bourgeois ensconcement, explaining later that he had "wanted to be free of material obligations, so [I] began a career as a librarian, which was a sort of excuse for not being obliged to show up socially" (ibid., p. 41). Moreover, in formulating his new artistic direction, Duchamp's aesthetic focus became markedly self-identified, more than the literature has addressed; and this profound sense of individualism that would mark his unique career was solidified by this critical episode: "[it] helped liberate me completely from the past," Duchamp recalled, "in the personal sense of the word. I said, 'All right, since it's like that, there's no question of joining a group--I'm going to count on no one but myself, alone'" (ibid., p. 31).

34. Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, pp. 39, 40.

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35. Steefel's citing of the significance of this period in terms of Duchamp's subsequent development merits quotation; see his The Position of Duchamp's "Glass", pp. 75-80. Steefel continues:

"Not only does the figure of the doctor extend from the top to the bottom of the field (resembling figures found in early medieval or late classical manuscript illustrations which transport us into the timeless world of supraphysical eternity) but it also emanates an uncanny aura, as if in a punning parody of a hallucinatory spiritualistic illumination. The body becomes almost inorganic in its cataleptic stiffness, while the aura of animation of the image is diffused into surrounding field . . . by the blurring of the figure and the play of color. . . . The figure seems to be attempting some kind of self-transformation of an obscure nature, as do many of Duchamp's mechanomorphic images. The notion of automatism, both as a psychic phenomenon and as objectified in automatic mechanisms in Duchamp's later work, finds a likely source here. The erotic flavor of this image is accentuated by the posture of the hand, the phallic suggestiveness of the pose, and the tumescence of the figure and the pictorial field as a whole. . . . It is at least suggestive to suppose that the figure of Dumouchel, like Laforgue's absurd Hamlet( is ultimately an allusion to the fatal paradox of Romantic aspiration towards self-transcendence. . . . Solipsism, or at least self-enthralment, is a major issue in Duchamp's art. His forms tend towards self-containment. His themes are either private or cryptically self-referent. His contexts deal with the problems of the disruption of asserted autonomy. The physical as mass and texture are increasingly diminished in all important works after Dr. Dumouchel, until Duchamp arrives at a point where his forms are all skeletal and/or transparent forms displayed on a field of glass."

36. Probably referring to among other things Leonardo's reference to painting as a *cosa mentale*, Duchamp said in an interview with James Johnson Sweeney, "I wanted to put painting once again at the service of the mind." "Eleven Europeans in America," Museum of Modern Art Bulletin, vol. XIII, no. 4-5 (1946), p. 20.

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37. Referring to the Portrait of Chess Players (December 1911), Duchamp said in an interview in 1915, "You will observe, in the picture of the chess players, that a very intense absorption in the game is evinced. This is produced by a technique which must be visioned to be understood. The impression of watchers, who form the background, is conveyed in the same manner. . . . You can't really control yourself; while painting by gaslight you know that whatever you put on the canvas will be quite grayish next morning when you look at it in the daylight. It worked successfully, this painting has very subdued tones, which is also part of the Cubist theory of that time--as a reaction against Fauvism and violent colors" (see CW, p. 104); and see Frederick Macmonnies, "French Artists Spur on an American Art," article quoting an interview, in the New York Tribune (October 24, 1915), IV, pp. 2-3.

38. Steefel, The Position of Duchamp's 'Glass', p. 87.

39. While referring to the final version of the Nude Descending a Staircase, Duchamp explained that there "was a convergence in mind of various interests, among them the cinema, still in its infancy, and the separation of static positions in the photochronographs of Marey in France, Eakins and Muybridge in America." "Apropos of Myself," 1964, quoted in d'Harnoncourt and McShine, p. 256. See also Margit Rowell, "Kupka, Duchamp and Marey," Studio International, vol. 189, no. 973 (January/February 1975), pp. 48-51.

40. See Steefel, The Position of Duchamp's 'Glass', p. 85.

41. Molly Nesbit, "Ready-Made Originals: The Duchamp Model," October, no. 37 (Summer 1986), p. 59.

42. Jean Metzinger, "Note sur la peinture," Pan (Paris), October-November 1910), pp. 649-51; here quoted in Edward F. Fry Cubism (New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 60.

43. See CW, p. 471; also see Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, p. 60; and his Marcel Duchamp: Ingénieur du temps perdu (Paris: Belfond, 1977), pp. 102-3

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44. The Museum of Modern Art Bulletin, vol. XIII, no. 4-5, p. 20.
45. In a note dating from 1914, the year he produced Pharmacy, Duchamp discusses the nature of "contradiction" and "literal nominalism" while also referring to Plato. See, Notes, no. 185. For further discussion of this note, see Adcock, Marcel Duchamp's Notes, pp. 46-48.
46. Bergson categorized the philosophical approach to the problematics of the self as involving two dialectically opposed positions; the empiricists, who attempt "to reconstruct personality with psychical states," i.e., a series of temporally discrete states of consciousness, and the rationalists, whose "unified" self transcends the temporal multiplicity of experience. See Henri Bergson, An Introduction to Metaphysics, trans. T. E. Hulme (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), p. 33.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
48. Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger, "Du Cubisme"; here quoted in Fry Cubism, p. 110. Gleizes and Metzinger further state, "But we cannot enjoy in isolation; we wish to dazzle others with that which we daily snatch from the world of sense . . . From a reciprocity of concessions arise those mixed images, which we hasten to confront with artistic creations in order to compute what they contain of the objective; that is of the purely conventional" (*ibid.*, p. 111).
49. As opposed to the "literary" perceptual search for the hidden object or figure in Cubism, for example. See Steefel, The Position of Duchamp's 'Glass', pp. 131, 369, n. 44. Lacan's further rooting of the subject in language determines the level of fantasy at which meaning or identity cohere, amplifying what Duchamp throughout his oeuvre sought to reveal.
50. For a discussion of contemporary mathematical interests, particularly of the Puteaux group (those Cubist-related artists, such as Gleizes, Metzinger, Léger, Le Fauconnier, Delaunay, Picabia, Apollinaire, who gathered at the home of Jacques Villon in Puteaux), see Linda Henderson, The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 123-40, and passim; and for

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Duchamp's acknowledgement of various particular mathematicians, such as Maurice Princet, Gaston de Pawlowski or Henri Poincaré, and their influence, see Adcock, Marcel Duchamp, Notes, Chapter Two.

51. Walter Benjamin, in discussing Dada and film in his seminal essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," quotes Georges Duhamel's condemnation of the nascent medium of film and his sense of the loss of autonomy, and of the invasiveness of modern urban life, in terms of film, "I can no longer think what I want to think. My thoughts have been replaced by moving images." Illuminations (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 238. Benjamin, elaborating on the similar aggressiveness of both film and Dada, points out somewhat later in a footnote, "As for Dadaism, insights important for Cubism and Futurism are to be gained from the movie. Both appear as deficient attempts of art to accommodate the pervasion of reality by the apparatus. In contrast to the film, these schools did not try to use the apparatus as such for the artistic presentation of reality, but aimed at some sort of alloy in the joint presentation of reality and apparatus. In Cubism, the premonition that this apparatus will be structurally based on optics plays a dominant part; in Futurism, it is the premonition of the effects of this apparatus which are brought out by the rapid sequence of the film strip"; see pp. 250-51.

52. As he would later recall in his interview with James Johnson Sweeney:

"It was always the idea of changing, not repeating myself. I could have done ten other Nudes at that time if I had wanted to. But the fact is I did not want to. But I went on immediately to another formula, the formula of the Chocolate Grinder. I used to walk around the streets of old Rouen. One day I saw an actual chocolate grinder working in a shop window, and it fascinated me so much that I took it as a point of departure. The mechanical aspect of it influenced me then, or at least that was also the point of departure of a new form of technique. I couldn't go into the haphazard drawing or the paintings, the splashing of the paint. I wanted to go back to a completely dry drawing, a dry conception of art. I was beginning to appreciate the value of the exactness, of precision, and the importance of chance" (Writings, p. 130).

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53. The manner in which the machine is varied in both presentation and meaning in Duchamp's oeuvre has been discussed in subtly different ways. One such interpretation that contextualizes the Bachelor machine within a mythic dimension and compares Duchamp's creations with literary parallels, among them Raymond Roussel and Franz Kafka, is Michel Carrouges' Les Machines Célibataires (Paris: Arcane, 1951); and the revised edition, Les Machines Célibataires, nouvelle édition entièrement revue et augmentée (Paris: Editions du Chêne, 1976). For Duchamp's response to Breton's questioning of this interpretation, see Duchamp's letter to Breton, dated October 4, 1954, published in Medium, no. 4 (January 1955); see also Michelson, "Anémic Cinéma: Reflections on an Emblematic Work," Artforum, vol. 12, no. 2 (October 1973), pp. 64-69; rpt. in Amy Baker Sandback, ed., Looking Critically: 21 Years of Artforum Magazine (Ann Arbor: U.M.I. Research Press, 1984), pp. 143-48; and Steefel, The Position of Duchamp's 'Glass', especially Chapter Four.

54. Duchamp admitted to Steefel "that he was aware of the sensuous pleasure of synchronized grinding." Steefel, The Position of Duchamp's 'Glass', p. 123.

55. CW, p. 109.

56. Harriet and Sidney Janis, "Marcel Duchamp: Anti-Artist," Dada Painters and Poets (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 309. For additional discussion of the Coffee Mill, see Steefel, The Position of Duchamp's 'Glass', pp. 113-27; and CW, pp. 108-10.

57. "Lighthouse of the Bride," View, series 5, no. 1 (March 1945), p. 7.

58. For more on de Duve's ideas, see his "Le temps du readymade," in Marcel Duchamp: Abécédaire: Approches critiques (Paris: Musée national d'art moderne, Centre national d'art et de culture Georges Pompidou, 1977), p. 181; here quoted in translation in André Gervais, "Connections: Of Art and Arrhe," in The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1991), p. 401.

59. Duchamp revealed this initial overriding context for the "mechanics" of the Large Glass (which become subsumed within the later optical phase) to

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Steefel in an interview during September 1956; see Steefel, The Position of Duchamp's 'Glass', p. 319, n. 1.

60. Ibid., p. 236. In its temporal sense, "delay" may also relate to Duchamp's Bergsonian reference, in which he discusses the expansion or reproduction of the "fraction of duration," where "all these past and future fractions / thus coexist in a present which is / really no longer what one usually calls / the instant present, but a sort of / present of multiple extensions" (Notes, 135).

61. Ibid., and p. 300, n. 19.

62. Writings, p. 125.

63. Although Duchamp was rarely judgmental, he occasionally betrayed his abiding Dadaist spirit:

"Dada was very serviceable as a purgative. And I think I was thoroughly conscious of this at the time and of a desire to effect a purgation in myself. I recall certain conversations with Picabia along these lines. He had more intelligence than most of our contemporaries. The rest was either for or against Cézanne. There was no thought of anything beyond the physical side of painting. No notion of freedom was taught. No philosophical outlook was introduced" (emphasis added) (Writings, p. 125).

See also The Museum of Modern Art Bulletin, vol. XIII, no. 4-5 (1946), p. 20.

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## Chapter Four

### Beyond Desire: Optics and the Affect of the Real

" . . . since the seer is caught up in what he sees, it is still himself he sees: there is a fundamental narcissism of all vision. And thus for the same reason, the vision he exercises, he also undergoes from the things, such that, as many painters have said, I feel myself looked at by the things, my activity is equally passivity . . . so that the seer and the visible reciprocate one another and we no longer know which sees and which is seen."<sup>1</sup>

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Visible and the Invisible

"The geometral dimension of vision does not exhaust . . . far from it, what the field of vision as such offers us as the originary subjectifying relation."<sup>2</sup>

Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis

"The Gestalt of a circle is not its mathematical law but its physiognomy."<sup>3</sup>

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception

By literally telling us what we are "given" to see, with the title of his tableau, Duchamp, true to much of Surrealism, betrays the essentially philosophical tradition to which his work belongs. While the waterfall and the illuminating gas are indeed given to us with stunning presence, we

quickly become aware that, despite this aspect of facticity--real skin, hair, branches--it is their appearance, their artifice that we see. Even the tableau's principal event, that of the figure holding a self-illuminating bec Auer lamp (Fig. 88), is a simulated, illusory effect: the real source of illumination is hidden from sight, above the scene. In restating the illusions of theater as well as those of pictorial conventions--foreshortened figure, delineation of a foreground, middleground and background, the illusion of atmospheric conditions--Duchamp questions the field of the visual as objective representation. And, he does so through its most accessible form: naturalism.<sup>4</sup> It was clearly only through the agency of "realism" that the ideals and paradigms of naturalism could be deconstructed.<sup>5</sup>

Duchamp's revelation of the instability of visibility is an ironic contradiction of the camera obscura as visual metaphor. While the camera obscura functioned for centuries as a paradigm for the examination of empirical phenomena and served as a guarantor of classical models of vision and truth throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, it increasingly became an optical device through which the field of the observer could be both philosophically and scientifically analyzed.<sup>6</sup> It was understood, in other words, to structurally define the relationship of an internal subjectivity to an expansive world of objective truth. As John Locke observed in describing the complex apparatus:

External and internal sensations are the only passages that I can find of knowledge to the understanding. These alone, as far as I

can see discover, are the windows by which light is let into this dark room. For, methinks, the understanding is not much unlike a closet wholly shut from light, with only some little opening left . . . to let in external visible resemblances, or some idea of things without; would the pictures coming into such a dark room but stay there and lie so orderly as to be found upon occasion it would very much resemble the understanding of a man.<sup>7</sup>

The significant feature of Locke's text, as pointed out by Jonathan Crary, is the distinction made between the eye of the observer and the separate apparatus through which "some idea of things without" or their "resemblances" are produced. "As part of his general project of introspection," Crary concludes, "Locke proposes a means of visualizing spatially the operations of the intellect."<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, for Descartes, who sought to establish an objective perspective accessible to universal truths, the space of the camera obscura became the "interface" between observer and world, reconciling the necessary separation between an "interiorized subject and exterior world." With vision itself exteriorized, however, the model of perception offered by the camera obscura, of a unified and ordered space, was not for Descartes the human faculty itself but the monocular, infallible, and corrective eye of God.<sup>9</sup> Descartes' omniscient, "disembodied" eye, exemplified by linear perspective, approached vision as an a priori and measurable construct: "Perception, or the action by which we perceive is not a vision . . . but is solely an inspection by the mind."<sup>10</sup> His quest for a quantitative certainty of knowledge, and an objectivity that could confirm his understanding of human nature as constant, underlay this metaphysical understanding of the

object of perception: "Our project being, not to inspect the isolated natures of things, but to compare them with each other so that some may be known on the basis of others."<sup>11</sup>

The sense of circumscribed space and depth inherent to Cartesian logic is no different from the circumscribed and self-defined subject constructed in classical monocular perspective. For just as Alberti in his De Pictura outlines the means by which space may be unified, indeed objectified, so too is the viewer of Renaissance space unified, organized, objectified. The hierarchical objectification of the world gradually changes after the self-contained systems of the Renaissance are subsequently displaced by the analytical reasoning of the 17th and 18th centuries and with the Enlightenment reasoning that resemblance is based on empirically founded representation. Such an "infinite progression" into space, as Foucault called it, remained nontemporal and disembodied--a static taxonomy that excluded the temporal, subjective conditions of a visualizing and conscious self.<sup>12</sup>

By alluding to the camera obscura or the magic lantern, Etant Donnés . . . comments on the historically changing epistemic order of perception and representation--a questioning of the evolution of the observing subject throughout the centuries of the camera obscura's use in both science and philosophy.<sup>13</sup> Etant Donnés . . .'s deconstruction of the camera obscura's historical role, by ultimately reversing its terms through the privileging of the role of the observer and the autonomy of the "eye," contributes to the tableau's crucial staging of the experience of subjectivity.

Ultimately, Duchamp problematizes the optical experience of the camera obscura--a positivist arbiter of vision rendered obsolete by the emergence of a new psychophysiology of optics that radically refigured the concept of the subjectivity of vision.

The reconfiguration of vision that occurred during the early part of the 19th century is characterized, for example, by the work of Goethe, whose account of a subjective vision rejected the camera obscura's aperture-like opening through which an idealizing illumination of reality was projected. The function of the camera obscura could no longer serve to normalize perception; rather vision began to represent the ambiguous and idiosyncratic nature of the self.<sup>14</sup> By establishing the source of vision within the observing subject's body, Duchamp upends the camera obscura's fundamental separation of the viewer and viewed, as well as its pro-vision of the visual as spatially organized and univalent. This spatial order, which the observer enjoyed up until the 19th century, was dependent on the separateness of the field of vision from the observer. For Duchamp, the visual could no longer remain autonomous, but becomes modified by a host of sensory data that emanates both from within the body and from without--establishing an infinitely changing relationship between the empirical contents of the world and the individual.

By realizing the viewer as an interactive plane of vision, Duchamp reverses yet again the camera obscura's function: first, by transposing the terms by which the camera obscura had secured its epistemic status, its neutralization of vision's subjective dialectic--of interiority and exteriority;

and, second, by constructing a dynamic determining a psychological component in vision, namely the gaze whose effect is to produce our sense of being constituted in the visible. Etant Donnés . . . involves the viewer in a scopic relationship that reiterates the paradoxical schism that exists in vision's simultaneous severance (autonomous physiology of vision) and attachment (psychological aspect of optics) to the world, a division masked by the camera obscura.

Another important aspect of Duchamp's exploration of vision and visibility occurs in the evolution from his earlier to later work--beginning with the formation of what he would later refer to as "Precision Optics."<sup>15</sup> We see, for example, the growth of the ideative and linear visual format of the Large Glass into the phenomenological and physicalized nature of the tableau. Ultimately inverting virtually every "perspectival" aspect of his earlier work, the tableau's apparently "objective" snap-shot or stop-frame view triggers an almost constricting muscular response, compared with the transparent, ambient spatio-temporality of the Large Glass. This containment becomes centralized within the artist's "Precision Optics," as the body's freedom, autonomy, and desire became increasingly subject to the effects of his optical machines.

During the latter stages of executing the Large Glass, a significant change in Duchamp's focus occurred, when the artist apparently decided to translate the narrational dynamics of desire between the Bride and her bachelors into the particular terms of optics. This would result, as Herbert Molderings has suggested, "in the final incompleteness of the Glass . . .

when [Duchamp] introduced, instead of the juggler of gravity, the oculist charts and the Kodak lens."<sup>16</sup> In short, rather than conclude the Glass' scenario of desire with a figure of balance and "reconciliation"--the juggler of gravity--the glass becomes "ground" in the more uncertain operations of the visual, represented by such works as the Wilson-Lincoln system (or portrait), the Oculist Witnesses, 1920 (Fig. 88), and To Be Looked At (from the Other side of the Glass) with One Eye, Close to, for Almost an Hour (Fig. 5).<sup>17</sup>

The shift that would begin to redefine Duchamp's oeuvre is in fact inscribed in To Be Looked at . . .. In titling the work, Duchamp not only specifies a situation of alterity, of looking from the other side, but, in his explicit reference to the longevity of the look, he implies a degree of opacity inherent in the gaze's capacity to objectify. Duchamp makes this opacity, and the equivocation of the visual, particularly in its relationship to language, explicit, respectively, in the black leather-covered glass panes in his miniature French window, entitled Fresh Widow, 1920 (Fig. 89), and in Door, 11 Rue Larrey, 1927 (Fig. 90).

With the tableau, Duchamp recreates a scenario that engages the specific phenomenological issues of the gaze investigated by Sartre in Being and Nothingness.<sup>18</sup> The author distinguishes the intersubjectivity of the gaze (as well as the unnecessary meeting of someone else's eyes), as an agent of transformation, objectifying the viewer as one who experience him- or herself as an object seen. As a voyeur, the spectator of Etant Donnés . . . doubly experiences this reciprocity of view. Sartre's exploration of the phenomenology of shame is also relevant to Duchamp's "mirrorical"

strategy as it evolved with the tableau. And it is this process of being objectified, caught in the gaze oneself--as an object observed--that Sartre defines as shame.<sup>19</sup>

Ultimately Duchamp's (anamorphic) dis-placement of the subject, within the extraordinary dynamics of optics, indicates the extent to which he, mid-way through the development of the Large Glass, was realizing how to articulate a new formal language that would broaden the perceptual field and subjective context of the "visual." Duchamp's work, beginning in approximately 1918, presents a broad synthesis of the various procedures and processes of impression, transformation and registration that Duchamp's commentators, most notably Lyotard and Krauss, have suggested the Large Glass represents.<sup>20</sup>

What Duchamp turned to in both his notes and their application was the reinvestigation of perspective, or, as he put it, "the rehabilitation of perspective . . . [then] completely ignored and disparaged."<sup>21</sup> This reclamation of perspective is evidenced in numerous notes in the Green Box and A l'Infinif, whose examination has been principally couched in a mathematical context rather than understood as contributing to Duchamp's analysis of subjectivity and sensory data.<sup>22</sup> As opposed to an interpretation of Duchamp's theoretical investigations into optical experience at this time based on a possible four-dimensional vision,<sup>23</sup> I would like to discuss this juncture--the late teens--as marking a transitional period, a shift toward an integration of his theoretical investigations into perspective, gender, and the phenomenological examination of the subjective. The psychosexual

project of the Large Glass increasingly became interrelated with the question of optics, so that during his nine-month visit to Buenos Aires in 1918, Duchamp completed To Be Looked at . . . and wrote to Walter Arensberg informing him of his intention to include oculist charts in his work.<sup>24</sup> For it was only after Duchamp's optical experimentation, with visual perception understood as psychophysiologically grounded and equivocal and, most important, as represented, that his orientation to a superior (or  $n + 1$  dimensional) reality as it relates to the notion of the self could become less idealized.<sup>25</sup>

Ultimately, as I will show, Duchamp scrutinizes the historical representations of optical experience--especially the camera obscura, stereoscope and camera--in order to examine the complex relationship between vision and identity. By adding a second aperture and altering the physical format of the camera obscura, supplanting a monocular view with binocularity, the unitary viewpoint of the individual, traditionally sustained by the camera obscura's idealized perspectival system, is further contravened by the contingency and disparity of sensory experience produced by binocular vision.<sup>26</sup> Only by reproducing binocular vision could Duchamp allude not only to the elision in single-point perspective of binocular cues of convergence and disparity but to the ambiguity of all perspectival projections.

But before Duchamp explored binocularity, and its subjective effects, he first examined monocular perspective.<sup>27</sup> Duchamp explicitly refers to monocularity in both To Be Looked at . . . and in a note from A l'Infinifit:

A thing to be looked at with one eye

-----with the left eye

-----right---,

...

One could base a whole series of things to be looked at with a single eye (left or right).<sup>28</sup>

To Be Looked at . . .'s presentation of various symbols of exactitude--the orthogonals of perspective, geometric forms, instruments of measurement, surrounding the actual mounting of a magnifying glass, which instead of improving vision renders it opaque--along with the work's sardonic titular instruction suggest Duchamp's intent to question the belief in an idealized notion of vision. Etant Donn   . . .'s elaborate examination and discourse on visuality derives from this early investigation and critique of perspective and optics that constitute subjectivity in the visual field.

Given To Be Looked at . . .'s prominent geometry, upon which monocular space rests, organized around a central vertical element, an object closely resembling the stylus employed in classical perspective constructions, Duchamp alludes to the observer's relation to geometrical perspective. With its titular instruction to employ a monocular rather than binocular vision, and its equivalence of the former with linear perspective, To Be Looked at . . . reveals the limitation of a disembodied perspective exclusively limited to a single point. As the title also suggests, neither proximity nor time can compensate the idealized eye of monocular space. But, more important, while pitting a temporal, phenomenological experience of vision against the rational and ideated system of linear

perspective, To Be Looked at . . . underscores the inadequacy of the privileged, normative status of perspective as signifier while alluding to the dialectical and subjective nature of the role of sight in the construction of the subject.<sup>29</sup> It thus prefigures the limitations of the look that the tableau's voyeuristic transaction would enact, and suggests the symbolic and contingent aspect of the gaze, which I will discuss shortly.

In anticipating many of the tableau's perspectival concerns, To Be Looked at . . . chiefly engages the specular aspect of vision as well as the self-conscious stance of the spectator of Etant Donnés . . ..<sup>30</sup> By addressing the lack in vision, Duchamp questions the adequacy of an idealized vision to represent subjectivity--or, as well, the idealist claims of that faction of early modernist painting, such as Impressionism, who ultimately equated the picture plane with vision itself--and imbricates the visual within the temporal and libidinal context of the gaze. The key instruction of the title--"to be looked at"--is of course finally fully, and self-reflexively, enacted in Etant Donnés . . .. Thus for the nominalist Duchamp (to which philosophy he readily admitted, in short, through his aesthetics of "Pictorial Nominalism"), the readymades, the passage in the Large Glass, the photographic conditions of both the Glass and Tu m' had all come to represent more than just the understanding that the world is a constant projection, a series of representations, of a reality we believe we see but do not--they had come to reveal subjectivity itself, and how within the experience of visuality the notion of identity or of the self might be further deconstructed.

In To Be Looked at . . . or in another work, begun in the same year and place, Buenos Aires, although completed in 1919, entitled Handmade Stereopticon Slide (Hand Stereoscopy), 1918-19 (Fig. 29), Duchamp began to relate different modalities of vision, such as anamorphosis (which he was simultaneously exploring in his "last" painting Tu m' [Fig. 86]),<sup>31</sup> to a normative idea of subjectivity and identity formation; again, the artist's ostensible embrace of perspective during this period was due in part to his understanding of its role in delimiting the observer's status as signifier in the construction of the subject.

Precisely in its incorporation of a supplementary position and metamorphosis of the object, as well as its implication of the unconscious (or the phallic signifier) as a never ending chain of signification, anamorphosis fractures the notion of equivalency between perspective and a unitary position central to Surrealism. And it implicates the gaze, which, as I have mentioned, functions in numerous ways, beginning with Duchamp's incorporation of the viewer within the field of the gaze, experienced in Etant Donnés . . . initially by the museum visitor's transformation as voyeur.

Through anamorphosis not only does something become seen as other than it is (such as the readymade), but the very act of seeing is inscribed by the functions of representation and desire. The position of view assumes a critical equivocality, questioning the normal scopic paradigm. An anamorphic position also implies an alterity whose relation to perspective can be equated with the subjugation that the look of the

voyeur assumes in relation to the gaze. Lacan's determination of the voyeuristic transaction subordinates the look (which "[sees] only from one point") to the gaze (which is "prior" to the eye and issues "from all sides").<sup>32</sup>

Etant Donnés . . ., then, in addition to scrutinizing the presumed adequacy of vision in art and representation (that from the temporality of Impressionism through the simultaneity of Cubism to the transparency of Constructivism sought to supplement the fragmented and momentary nature of perception), also undermines a particular notion of modern art as a self-sufficient object. For underpinning this notion, which idealizes the perception of many of the pristine objects of modernism, is the veiled idea "that there is anything lacking in the field of vision."<sup>33</sup> While Etant Donnés . . . has been critiqued for its fetishistic nature,<sup>34</sup> it functions to reveal such a notion of modernist idealization, whose hegemony "represents a canonized empiricism which seeks to cover over the activity of the unconscious in the visual field."<sup>35</sup> The voyeur/viewer's startling registration of the nude and landscape functions in a complex of ways. Not least among them is a sensed optical schism--a split between the eye (the look) and the gaze--the scopic drive which, in its full dimension involves a symbolic lack, forcefully undermines the assumed sovereign position of the viewer or of vision in much of late-nineteenth-century and twentieth-century art.<sup>36</sup>

Duchamp's initial foray, with Handmade Stereopticon Slide, into binocular, or stereoscopic, vision involves the phenomenon of depth perception in ways that are not at once apparent but that inform his

recreation of that perception in a particularly significant way in terms of Etant Donnés . . . Handmade Stereopticon Slide implicates the observer as a producer of the "real," of a spatial depth that no longer remains enclosed and inert within the safe boundaries of pictorial convention, but rather is projected into the actual space of the viewer.<sup>37</sup> The work, consisting of two stereopticon slides of a seascape, on each of which he added in pencil a pyramid of visual rays taken from a treatise on classical perspective, recreates through the principle of stereoscopy--two views placed at a certain distance from each other as exists between human eyes--a sense of normal vision in depth. The stereoscopic image, in other words, reproduces the impression of depth that the brain accomplishes when it combines the two separate, slightly different received aspects of a scene produced by both eyes. By adding the flat, geometric diagrams, however, Duchamp produces an extraordinary effect of relief, of a three-dimensionality that seems to be projected outward toward the viewer. Thus, through this play on binocular vision, conventional perspectival rules that create the illusion of depth in monocular vision--the reduction of the three-dimensional world to a two-dimensional surface--are reversed, as the two-dimensional pyramidal diagram assumes an apparent projection, "produces a virtual image with the effect of an illusory volume."<sup>38</sup>

Duchamp may have been playing with the idea that in this instance, for some people, the virtual had become real--since stereoscopic visualization requires a specific mental function that is beyond the capability of certain people.<sup>39</sup> But it was unquestionably the work's

requisite mental synthesis by the viewer that was most important to him--the "subjective" interdependent containment in the work of both the sensory and cerebral functions. Hermann von Helmholtz, whose varied research on perception during the late 19th century Duchamp might well have read, described the stereoscope's simulation of the process of depth perception of binocular vision: "two distinct sensations are transmitted from the two eyes, and reach the consciousness at the same time and without coalescing; that accordingly the combination of these two sensations into the single picture of the external world of which we are conscious in ordinary vision is not produced by any anatomical mechanism of sensation, but by a mental act."<sup>40</sup>

It is during this early period that Duchamp would further investigate the natural, the "given" reality of the visible, and further critique the idea of objectivity (as he had with the notion of measurement in 3 Standard Stoppages [Fig. 32]), realizing that indeed the "given/readymades" of space and time were taken for granted. Rather such conceits were to be renegotiated: the task for Duchamp, in other words, in representing vision and the visible, was to demonstrate the fallibility of the visual field to embody a centered and constituted sense of self. It is thus that Duchamp in Etant Donnés . . . refers back to his early experimentation in optics, and specifically to stereoscopy.

In citing this early articulation of, and experimentation with, subjective vision--the formative stages of what would become Duchamp's "Precision Optics"--I wish to delineate certain psychophysical components

of vision that the artist distinguishes in Etant Donnés . . .. This development can be seen to evolve in a twofold manner: one path is concerned with the formalization of vision, its equivocal distinctions of form and spatial depth; the other, with the self-undermining psychic formation in vision. The former is concerned with the purely visual, and the manner in which the individual coordinates and assimilates the visual world; the latter is concerned with what threatens this autonomy in terms of one's relation to the object and the world as image, entailing the function of desire, namely, the look and the gaze.

First, Etant Donnés . . .'s re-creation of the subjective experience of visuality, whose physiological (cerebral and retinal) processes Lyotard suggests are metaphorically and schematically represented in the Large Glass, can be seen as a simulacrum of the stereoscope. In this regard, I believe that one cannot exclusively accept the inverse relationship that, for example, Lyotard maintains exists between Duchamp's two major works, in terms of apparition and appearance, the Glass, being the apparition of an appearance and the tableau, the appearance of an apparition.<sup>41</sup> Afterall, in the prefatory note in the Green Box from which the tableau's title comes, Duchamp refers to Etant Donnés . . . as an "allegorical appearance," such that it could equally represent the cerebral and retinal registration (or apparition) of the image--the role he ascribes only to the Glass. Thus, the tableau presents both sides of the coin--apparition and appearance--or, if you will, the contrary movements of "water" and "gas." Therefore, if Duchamp remains concerned with the stereoscopic image, it is because of

that image's profound effect of seeming to suspend the "real" of the world within a state of pure opticality, a condition the tableau mimics in order to replicate the phenomenological perceptions that the stereoscope itself simulates.

Duchamp's fascination with the equivocality of perception and the potential of such optical phenomena as anaglyphy and stereoscopy was, as I have suggested, due in part to the ability of these images to alter the multidimensional spatial reference of standard optical cues. (In 1920, Duchamp, in collaboration with Man Ray and with two cameras, had attempted the simultaneous filming of a single object from two different viewpoints. The film unfortunately was accidentally destroyed while being developed.)<sup>42</sup> But it is the deliberate effects of the stereoscope--spatial disparity, disjunctiveness, planarity--that the tableau renders. Indeed such stereoscopic effects depend on the conspicuous presence of objects or obtrusive forms in the fore- or middle ground, so that the viewer will be required to readjust or to recompute the changing stereo disparity produced by the different optical axes of the two eyes.<sup>43</sup> The optical illusion of deep recession in the tableau, parried by the compelling foregrounded (and foreshortened) prominence of the nude, further contributes to the same kind of reconfiguration of space and passage from one plane to another that one experiences with the stereoscope.

The artist's depiction of a lack of spatial homogeneity is in evidence from the inception of his first known study of the nude in the landscape, the photo-collage, Study for Etant Donnés . . ., c. 1947 (Fig. 52). Here, the

artist clearly is working out the physical placement of the figure against a background landscape, while also depicting the "arbor-type" Bride as if growing from a tree, and there is a deliberate lack of spatial clarity. While such spatial play is of course characteristic of the genre of montage, Duchamp's defining and layering of the components of perspectival space as flat planes or surfaces is repeated in the final tableau. The photo-collage's individual elements--whether the figure or trees or waterfall--awkwardly overlapping one another, never seem to achieve the degree of spatial unity to which perspectival constructions aspire.

Such disjunctive planar units not quite connecting is precisely what occurs in the detailed vellum over gesso study of 1948-49; the contoured velvet cut-out forms, with their distinct borders, that envelop the nude, articulate a space of contiguity rather than continuity. It is rather an understanding of discrete, separate forms in space that Duchamp emphasizes in his late work, as if to suggest the self's phenomenological registration of bodily space. Indeed, as one peers into the tableau's interior, one perceives the strange and almost cut-out form of the Bride pressed against the branches. Duchamp determined such an emphasis in his Preparatory Study for the Figure in "Etant Donnés . . .", 1948-50 (Fig. 91), a colorless sheet of Plexiglas on which he definitively outlined in white gouache the outline of the nude and perforated it with hundreds of pinholes. The latter procedure had been performed on a smaller scale in his earlier study in vellum, in order to hold in shape the desired form of the drying pigskin.<sup>44</sup>

Despite its hyperrealism, the tableau's variety of optical cues continue to make us question the a priori assumptions that we take for granted in vision. Its projection of a unified spatial recession on closer examination belies a fundamentally ambiguous spatial organization. The sfumato-like palpability of the atmosphere, for instance, hovering in the background obscures the distinction between the figure's originating, full-scale dimension of depth and the pictorially foreshortened placement of the body within the contiguous, illusory spatial representation of the multimedia (hand-painted, photographic and sculptural) background.<sup>45</sup> Likening the tableau's grotto-like interior to the ambiguous reflections of Plato's cave as well as to the artifices of the playwright, René Micha has observed that in contrast to the rather specific distance determined by the break in the brick wall, the initial space which separates us from the nude, is the measurably difficult distance that separates us from the distant horizon of hills, clouds and waterfall.<sup>46</sup>

This syntactic organization is also that of the unconscious or of the dream. By providing the viewer with a preconstituted "view," Duchamp manipulates perception, producing a convulsive metamorphosis from the ordinary to the marvelous that is consistent with Surrealist practice. The revelation that meets the eye is, as I have already suggested, not that rendered by ordinary vision, but of an intense clarity, acutely illuminated and manipulated, so as to seem to magnify vision by deconstructing it. Such a hyperacute act of visualization projects the viewer into the supra-naturalistic locale of the dream. And, as in dreams, there is an underlying

sense of disjunction, of almost a montage-like piecing together--in the juxtaposition, for example, of the pile of dead branches that embeds the cut-out shape of the figure's foreshortened and obtrusive form, the flat masses of bushes that oddly define the middle ground--of parts that do not necessarily add up. The prioritizing of the visual, in fact, within this sense of a dream-like act of viewing Etant Donnés . . ., renders the viewer's body immobile and useless, mimicking both the dream's visual exclusion of the body, a process that actually occurs physiologically during the REM or rapid eye movement stage of sleep, and the exclusivity of view that the stereoscope requires. One could almost say that during this moment of extreme visual absorption, there is a momentary loss of a total sense of one's own body. The stereoscopic view has in fact been likened to the cinematic experience, inasmuch as "both involve the isolation of the viewer with an image from which surrounding interference is masked out. In both, the image transports the viewer optically, while his body remains immobile. In both, the pleasure derives from the experience of the simulacrum: the appearance of reality from which any testing of the real-effect of the simulacrum is heightened by a temporal dilation."<sup>47</sup>

The stereograph's distension of time, hypnotic and dream-like sensations, and hallucinatory and subjective absorption, are all characterized in Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.'s contemporary account of viewing the device--a description that could easily be applied to the kind of absorptive viewing experience produced by the tableau--where "the mind feels its way into the very depths of the picture. . . . At least the shutting out

of surrounding objects, and the concentration of the whole attention which is a consequence of this, produce a dream-like exaltation in which we seem to leave the body behind us and sail away . . . like disembodied spirits."<sup>48</sup>

What so fascinated Duchamp was stereoscopy's shattering of the conceits of perspective, of one's conventional relation to and view of the world, a view whose rational cohesion was no longer guaranteed. Such stereoscopic observation "sees neither the identity of a copy nor the coherence guaranteed by the frame of a window," Jonathan Crary writes,

[Stereoscopy] is a radical repositioning of the observer's relation to visual representation. The institutionalization of this decentered observer and the stereoscope's dispersed and multiplied sign severed from a point of external reference indicate a greater break with a classical observer than that which occurs later in the century in the realm of painting. The stereoscope signal an eradication of 'the point of view' around which, for several centuries, meanings had been assigned reciprocally to an observer and the object of his or her vision. There is no longer the possibility of perspective under such a technique of beholding. The relation of observer to image is no longer to an object quantified in relation to a position in space, but rather to two dissimilar images whose position simulates the anatomical structure of the observer's body.<sup>49</sup>

The stereoscopic experience that the tableau provides is ultimately that of the paradigm of subjectivity. It is precisely the stereoscope's ability to replicate the specificity of one's subjective contiguous but disconnected relation to the world that Duchamp exploits in the tableau: the image's simultaneous combination of absorption and representation, the real and

the enacted. While the counterpart of the tableau's determined obscurity is the calculated, measured exactitude with which everything is sighted, there is in Etant Donnés . . .'s reconstructed stereoscopic view the unsettling sense of lack of unity, of assemblage without seamlessness, of resemblance without identical likeness, that can only characterize subjectivity's struggle to grasp a sense of self.

\* \* \* \* \*

The second and more complex construction of vision in Etant Donnés . . . involves its psychic formation. Its evolution has recourse to Duchamp's early creation in the Large Glass of the "spectacle" which fascinates, and an understanding of the visual in terms of its exterior position, that would open Duchamp's idea of the pictorial onto the space of representation. The fundamental reconfiguration of the field and function of the visual in the Large Glass would forever change Duchamp's idea of the image: it would now mirror the self's being-in-the-world, as a paradoxical state, organized from within and without, both reflective and opaque to itself. To redefine the function of the visual--as specular, oblique--was for Duchamp in many ways yet another "standard stoppage," another redefining "physical law," no different from those already experienced by the bachelors.<sup>50</sup>

While Duchamp's optical works introduce a new density into the narrative of desire, they also suggest an emerging subject--the structuration of the image--that no longer guarantees its transparent identity. If the narratives of the Large Glass concern, on one level, the

desire to possess or reach (if only visually) the desired object, it is desire itself that, as I mentioned in the Chapter Two, becomes eventually caught and problematized in the final stages of its journey through the Glass, when it is transformed by the condition of specularity into an image of itself. Representing a new context that would inform the whole of Duchamp's subsequent oeuvre, the status of this subject is the "look," that captures, fascinates, controls. After all, the very image of desire, the Bride, is itself nominally presented, mediated and structured like language. Such is the claim of the Bride: her abstract machinery is fueled by her own narcissistic desire for herself--for her own image, which she desires to be seen, is constructed elsewhere.<sup>51</sup>

As the bachelor elements gradually make their perilous way to the Bride's domain, they eventually encounter a realm of activities that--far from their own sphere, a world ruled by the mechanics of gravity and physics (material objects and metamorphoses)--is manifestly one of immaterial representation, involving the specular aspects of illusion and projection of desire that are in fact characteristic of the Bride's operations. The metamorphic passage of the malic illuminating gas is one marked by Duchamp's erotic and "Playful Physics," a dramatic and ultimately explosive series of changes: "By the phenomenon of stretching in the unit of length the gas finds itself [congealed] solidified in the form of elemental rods," which "under the pressure of the gas . . . leave their tubes, break . . . into unequal spangles lighter than air," pass through the seven Parasols or Sieves where they become "dazed" and "dizzy" from their "loss of awareness

of position." Then in a state of "scattered liquid suspension," the illuminating gas now "a vapor of inertia," after falling into the churning apparatus called the Butterfly Pump, is changed into a water-based substance and, finally, thus transformed, hurtles down the Slopes of the Toboggan in a corkscrew path and "crashes" at its base.<sup>52</sup> The resulting explosive liquid is then channeled into a stream and directed by the Scissors to the Oculist Charts, where they form a Sculpture of Drops whose "mirrorial" image is returned to the Bride through the Wilson-Lincoln system.

We may recall, however, that the horizon line of the lower, Bachelor register, which is also the Bride's transparent garment, constitutes as well the Wilson-Lincoln prism--allowing us to see from one side the same object differently from the other side. It is through this passage that the "illuminating gas," turned into a kind of "waterfall" known as the "Sculpture of Drops," passes. Addressing himself to this ultimate viewing, of Bride and Bachelor, Duchamp writes, "A mirrorial return . . . The mirrorial drops, not the drops themselves but their image, pass between these two states of the same figure."<sup>53</sup> As Octavio Paz has put it, anticipating the thematics of the gaze as that which implicates the viewer as an intra-subjective subject, "the Sculpture of Drops is transformed from something that one looks at into something that looks."<sup>54</sup>

This begins the transformation of the language of the bachelor into that of the Bride, a mode of communication that is organized by vision that has become a function of the image.<sup>55</sup> Up until this point, the Bachelors'

physical journey is marked by constant metamorphosis, by direct physical engagement; now Duchamp isolates vision, as if it were a projection, a screen. Passing through the three parallel planes of glass that constitute the Horizon, which is also the Bride's Garment, the final passage of the "image" of the drops is to form the Picture of the Cast Shadows.<sup>56</sup>

This ultimate imaging--that occurs "between the horizon and the nine holes, cast shadows formed by the splashes/ coming from below like some jets of water/ which weave forms in the their transparency" --which Duchamp referred to as the Picture of the Cast Shadows--involves a method that he imagined would "obtain a hypophysical analysis of the successive transformations of objects (in their form-outline)."<sup>57</sup> Such a "cinematic blossoming" of phenomena is in fact related more to the abstraction characteristic of the Bride's domain and especially to that of her own denouement. Through its emasculating odyssey, the bachelors' desire, in effect, having lost its malic character, its physical form and strength, assumes the Bride's uniquely specular currency of anamorphic projection. The self-identifying or Narcissistic character of both realms becomes incorporated into the abstract machinery of the Bride, a process that is fueled by her own desire--for herself. This concluding phase of Duchamp's identification with the Bride, and with her formal language, would itself continue to be mirrored in the oeuvre: from Tu m' to Rose Sélavy to Etant Donnés . . ., all works that function directly or indirectly through the gaze that defines the ever tenuous self and its desires.

Although such optical elements as the oculist charts or the lens

originate in the bachelor domain, the bachelors' ultimate accession to the realm of the Bride occurs within the specular conditions of the gaze that she exacts. There they partake of her formal and signifying patterns of representation all of which determine the ultimate context for understanding the "retinal impression and other sensory consequences" that constitute the intensely bracketed visual experience of Etant Donnés . . ..

The redefinition of the visual also allowed Duchamp to further interrogate, and to integrate, his subject within the formal terms of the gaze and, as well, those of the photographic.<sup>58</sup> For the formulation of a specular optics that occurs at the dramatic and illusive conclusion of the Bride and Bachelors' saga is represented by the lens, the last element to have been included in the Glass (but is only indicated on the Glass as a circle), which was to have focused the "dazzling" light energy passing through the Oculist Charts into a beam of light--into a look.

Within Lacan's model of a specular reversal, the viewer of Etant Donnés . . . is caught by this "return" of the look and implicated within the tableau's scopic field, becoming as much the object as the subject of the surveillance, or as Lacan put it, "the institution of the subject in the visible." The process by which the subject is thus revealed--mirroring the ultimate "stripping" or exposure of the Bride to be recorded, photographed, in the visible--and constituted in the alterity of the gaze, has been described by Lacan:

This is the function that is found at the heart of the institution of the subject in the visible. What determines me, at the most profound level, in the visible, is the gaze that is outside. It is

through the gaze that I enter light and it is from the gaze that I receive its effects. Hence it comes about that the gaze is the instrument through which light is embodied and through which--if you will allow me to use a word, as I often do, in a fragmented form--I am photo-graphed.<sup>59</sup>

But how is vision returned to the body? Or a sense of meaning derived from a work deliberately constructed to signify obscurity. The answer, apart from the nude's self-reflexivity, may be seen in the spatial and temporal registration of the gaze or, more specifically, in the area of the scopic drive.

Yet does Etant Donnés . . . remain unresolved, or does its dialectical position function toward a different end? With its aspect of trespass, in concert with other ambiguous and vagarious stimuli, Etant Donnés . . . orchestrates this momentary loss of vision in order that that faculty's restitution can be experienced anew. But if vision is to be restored (or resensitized), it is as I have already mentioned for Duchamp a psycho-physiological process involving a cross-referencing of perception across a panoply of the senses.

Duchamp's critical conception of vision in terms of tactility, for example, is central both to the phenomenological character of the tableau and to his return to realism. Various early works from the beginning period of the tableau signal this concern with the sense of touch, such as the cover for the catalogue "Le Surrealisme en 1947," to which Duchamp pasted a Ready-made pink foam-rubber breast, on the back cover of which he printed Prière de Toucher (Please Touch) (Fig. 92), or the elaborate study

of 1948-49 for the tableau's figure, Etant donnés le gaz d'éclairage et la chute d'eau, in which the sensual materials of vellum over gesso are juxtaposed with velvet (Fig. 47).

In Etant Donnés . . ., all of Duchamp's experimentations--his deconstructions of vision and the act of seeing, his awareness of the axis between the eye and the body, his phenomenological imperatives, his understanding of the nexus between how we see and how we see our selves--begin in the darkness that enshadows the door itself. This world of darkness tempts our other senses, such as our phenomenological longing to touch the highly illuminated fragments of the tableau that we witness through the frame of darkness. Duchamp's secondary note for Etant Donnés . . ., entitled "Avertissement" ("Warning"), begins with the words "Given [in the dark]"--words that, beyond their reaffirmation of the tableau's secretive status and posthumous presentation, allude not only to a condition of opacity but to the incipient production of an image that at first is unseen.<sup>60</sup> Despite the irony that such an idea presents for a work whose intention is to shock, it is entirely consistent with the dialectical thematics (mold, negative, apparition) that I have mentioned exist interdependently in the Glass and Etant Donnés . . ..

The pretensions of shock in the tableau and its allusion to a journey out of the darkness are not new to Duchamp.<sup>61</sup> The tableau's intense luminescence, the theatricality of the spectacle, and the nude recall an earlier depiction in the oeuvre, that of an illuminated Eden. The significance of this theme can not be overlooked, as it highlights a pivotal

issue of this dissertation: the convergence of vision and sexuality and the consequent problematization of the latter--the revelation that its simplicity was indeed lost in the paradise of Eden, and that the Fall involved our progenitors' ability to "see."<sup>62</sup>

The theme of Adam and Eve, and the garden of Eden, is alluded to both overtly and indirectly throughout Duchamp's oeuvre. Its best known and explicit identification was the artist's appearance in the ballet Relâche (staged by Francis Picabia and René Clair at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées [December 31, 1924] with music by Eric Satie) in which he appeared as Adam with Francine Picabia (under the alias "Brognia Perlmutter") as Eve. Duchamp's impersonation of Adam derives from Cranach's painting Adam and Eve (Alte Pinakothek, Munich) that Duchamp first saw during his stay in Munich in 1912 while he was working on the Bride.<sup>63</sup> Both Brognia Perlmutter and Duchamp were later photographed in their roles for the performance, entitled "Cine-Sketch," by Man Ray, who later recalled that "at one moment of the production the theatre was in complete darkness, then a few flashes gave one the impression that he saw a living tableau of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. It was a striptease in the most literal sense."<sup>64</sup> (Fig. 93) If the tableau's representation lacks the "tease" of "Cine-Sketch," its explicitness and element of surprise recall a more significant and radical moment of theatrical shock--involving lighting--that occurred in that same production of Relâche.<sup>65</sup> At the commencement of the second act, Francis Picabia's set, a blinding curtain of light, composed of 370 spotlights, each backed by metal reflectors, momentarily blinded the

audience.

Such an assault on the viewer was clearly founded in the Dadaist will to subvert conventional passive sensory and intellectual perceptions. <sup>65</sup> A principal goal of Picabia's blinding illumination, his strategy of visual disruption, is to obliterate the safe, detached and analytic position occupied by the spectator. Once absorbed, Rosalind Krauss writes, "incorporated into the spectacle, his dazzled vision is no longer capable of supervising its events."<sup>66</sup> While the radicalism of Duchamp's project is less ostensible, its affect more subtle, the Dadaist objective to abolish the safe remove of objectivity remains: to reveal repression in order to penetrate the vicissitudes of "being," of intersubjectivity and the unconscious, whose dimensions touch upon sexuality--the demands of the libido for which there is no satisfaction but only desire.

Another analogy to Duchamp's flash-like illumination out of a field of darkness is the photograph itself. As its subtitle "Delay in Glass" implies, the transitory La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires même, otherwise known as the Large Glass (Fig. 4), was conceived of as a photographic plate or negative, whose image is brought to light through the textual illumination of the Green Box. Lyotard in fact describes the Large Glass as "the film that lets us to see the conditions of impression that reign on the inside of the optical box."<sup>67</sup> Such a reading establishes the most obvious way in which the tableau metaphorically completes this photographic transaction: in the "dark-room," as the final exposure, the developed, readymade print. One could easily draw this felicitous conclusion when one considers the various

features of Etant Donnés . . .: The aperture-like opening in the brick wall that appears behind the door; the transparent plane of this opening that serves as a kind of lens; the bellows-like internal space; the flash-like interior illumination; and the cropped and perpetually undistorted stop-motion shot of the Bride.

But for Duchamp things are never what they appear to be. Indeed, they are almost always to be construed in the reverse, "according to a certain vanishing point at a certain distance." And so, the assemblage--with its photographic accoutrement of bellows, aperture, lens, and the additional hand-held high flash bulb--can be seen to function as a camera whose viewfinder, now represented by the hole that is the figure's genitalia, redefines by 180 degrees the subject of what is seen. More important, the work establishes a symmetrical equivalence between the organizing vanishing point of pictorial perspective and the geometral point of observation, otherwise known as the viewpoint. Lyotard, for example, has observed that "the viewing point and the vanishing point are symmetrical: If it is true that the latter is the vulva, then the vulva is the specular image of the voyeur-eyes . . . when these eyes think they see the vulva, they are seeing themselves. A cunt is he who sees."<sup>68</sup> It is this experience of the "viewing point and the vanishing point as symmetrical" that Lacan calls the "scopic register." This convergence of the gaze and the look intrigued Duchamp. It is the "lookers," after all, as Duchamp said, who make the picture: the subject is placed "in the visible," in order that he or she be "looked at," and, more than just "make the picture," become a picture, be re-

presented as an object, so that the viewer's identity will always be a representation beyond his or her grasp.

Though Duchamp frames one's view of Etant Donnés . . ., through a complex "aperture" of lens and shutter, his restriction of the spectator's perspective is deceptive. Rather, with the broadest and insistent sense of difference, he seems to have it both ways: the figure's seemingly individualist yet universalist gesture is both elementary and complex (revealing and hidden), and the tableau's ambiguity is matched only by the precision with which it is carefully designed (to be seen). As receptive as he was to chance, Duchamp demonstrated the consummate control of a composer--an idea a recollection of John Cage confirms: "The only thing he said in the last years, and it was almost like a refrain in his conversation, was that he thought it would be interesting if artists would prescribe the distances from which their work should be viewed."<sup>69</sup>

Duchamp's control could not be more directorial.<sup>70</sup> This concern and understanding of the "theatre" of perception is clearly conveyed in his manual, Approximation démontable, that outlined the 15 operations necessary to disassemble and remount the tableau. The variously configured angles and oblique planes of the tableau, for example, from the placement of the door<sup>71</sup> (slight concavity) to the glass of the landscape (placed at "91 or 92 degree angle"), the complex construction of perspective, is designed to magnify visuality and to produce a densely concentrated perceptual effect. Moreover, the work's multiple spatial and pictorial cues, such as the various lighting effects, the foreshortened recumbent nude, the

atmospheric mist or the signal tactility of the branches against flesh, all contribute to this phenomenological staging of the nature of the "visual." But it is the registration of the image through a binocular or stereoscopic viewing that--apart from content or any symbolic vectors of psychosexual and linguistic import that conjoin with the visual--signals this production of a kind of interior or subjective consciousness, necessary for a phenomenological orientation. Such an acute opticality and didactic space--a readymade vision, encompassing a range of genre from nude to landscape--functions on many levels, at once both immediate and historical, phenomenological and allegorical.

The complex lighting of the tableau--specially illuminated by fluorescent lights and incandescent spotlights to produce a surreal luminosity--is precisely and elaborately prescribed. Duchamp in fact could not be more explicit: in order that the "exposure" of the work's focal point, a light which "doit tomber vertical, exact, sur le con" (must fall vertically, precisely on the cunt), be perfectly controlled.<sup>72</sup> While it is the figure's act of self-illumination--the bec Auer lamp's appearing to provide the light--that one sees, it is a much stronger, stunning illumination which immediately strikes the unknowing viewer. It is not solely the voyeuristic discovery that shocks. Rather, regardless of any unexpected visual novelty, I believe it is a particular kind of visual response that Duchamp sought to effect--in order to radicalize the passive relationship between the observer and the art object.

If one's consciousness is indeed shaped by what one sees, then one

encounters in Etant Donnés . . . a heightened experience of sight constituted both inside and outside the body. In phenomenological terms, the exteriorized aspect of sight is seen as a perception that "is not in me, that it is on the objects that it apprehends"--a perception, that is, outside the individual.<sup>73</sup> Our earliest efforts to form a sense of self, according to psychoanalysis, also depend on the subject's construction of identity through the internalization of that which is outside. This process of an externally formed self has a name in Lacanian analysis: the mirror stage. As Rosalind Krauss writes:

Occurring sometime between the ages of six and 18 months, the mirror stage involves the child's self-identification through his double: his reflected image. In moving from a global, undifferentiated sense of himself towards a distinct, integrated notion of selfhood--one that could be symbolized through an individuated use of 'I' and 'you'--the child recognizes himself as a separate object (a psychic gestalt) by means of his mirrored image. The self is felt, at this stage, only as an image of the self; and insofar as the child initially recognizes himself as an other, there is inscribed in that experience a primary alienation. Identity (self-definition) is primally fused with identification (a felt connection to someone else). It is within that condition of alienation--the attempt to come to closure with a self that is physically distant--that the Imaginary takes root.<sup>74</sup>

From the infant's initial distinction of a bodily image, which establishes the agency of the ego, the process of self-identification continues, first through the superego's initial introjection of parental authority, and, subsequently, through self-observation and conscience, which are a function of the

developing ego-ideal.<sup>75</sup> Lacan's scenario of the mirror stage further charts the process of negotiating an exteriority, extending this to a series of first parental and then cultural representations, or "imagoes," that continue to impose themselves from without.<sup>76</sup>

Duchamp's reconfiguration of the optical processes are critical for understanding his final, fundamentally visual manifestation of the subject. For if Duchamp championed individualism, while at the same time revealing many of its identifying bases as illusory, it is because he realized that one had to be conscious of the subjective alienation inherent in the formation of identity.<sup>77</sup> The failure to do so meant that one would experience, what Lacan generally defined as typical of neurosis, "the inertia characteristic of the formations of the 'I,'" without being able to recognize the various formations of that identity. Or, what is even worse, the psychotic's inability to even recognize that he or she is actually experiencing a subjective formation of the self.<sup>78</sup> Duchamp, in other words, takes nothing for granted. He dramatically questions vision's greatest conceit of the modernist epoch: the unexamined idea that vision emerges autonomously from within the opaque, psychophysiological source of the observer's body.<sup>79</sup>

The attempt to establish in the tableau--at the level of the optical--a particular condensation of the binary modalities mentioned above, and to relate them to other pervasive issues in the oeuvre--n-dimensional geometry, gender, language--requires that the subject be presented in a particular way, as both objective and illusory. This represents a departure

from the abstract, conceptual, referential and textual realization of the Large Glass, a "machine," that Jean Suquet has said, "runs only on words."<sup>80</sup> Duchamp, in effect, transposes the terms of the Large Glass, isolating the dimension of subjectivity at the level of both the specular (the imaginary) and language (the symbolic) --both of which, as I have indicated, hinge on the notion of exteriority and representation. By stressing the component of the gaze in vision, Duchamp allows for vision to be symbolically structured and, more important, analogized to speech. Indeed, Lacan has likened the way vision unfolds to one's experience of language in psychoanalysis, where speech is independent, driven by its own force, its paths unpredictable and bewildering. Vision, in Etant Donnés . . ., received as preconstituted and symbolic, reveals itself to us from the scopic field of the gaze, which, "symbolic of what we find on the horizon," always appears to exceed our sense of experience or knowledge. In relating this split between the eye and the gaze, Lacan wrote, "I see from only one point, but in my existence I am looked at from all sides."<sup>81</sup> Our relationship to the world may be likewise characterized inasmuch as the individual must ultimately yield to the social and linguistic constructions that determine him or her.

Duchamp's literal foregrounding and questioning of the self--and the concomitant experience of language and gender--consequently occurs foremost in the space of the visual. But as we have learned from the phenomenologists, among others, subjectivity exists not as a transcendental and autonomous state but, as Merleau-Ponty writes, "lies in the perpetual beginning of reflection, at the point where the individual life begins to

reflect on itself."<sup>82</sup> "To see is to enter a universe of beings which display themselves," he continues, reiterating that preeminent condition that fascinated Duchamp, of seeing and being seen. It was the pure and initially manifest interaction with the visible that concerned Duchamp throughout the period he completed Etant Donnés . . .. Beyond the symbolic, enveloping generalities of experience, Duchamp wished to preserve a sensible quality of the body's visual and spatial interaction, which, without the flow of temporal contemplation, sees and experiences in a limited way, never fielding more than one facet of the object.<sup>83</sup>

Inasmuch as the subject's relation to the world always depends on "the symbolic realization of the subject," of the real, the latter's formation always assumes a reconstituted effect.<sup>84</sup> Indeed the subject's placement in the symbolic order (defined by language) involves, as Lacan has suggested, a process in which "the entire real is little by little retransplanted, recreated, remade."<sup>85</sup> It is just such an incremental introduction of the real that characterizes Duchamp's late series of etchings on the theme of "The Lovers," a series whose formal simplicity belies its complexity. As I mentioned in Chapter Two, this series of nine etchings Duchamp engraved to illustrate Arturo Schwarz' second volume of The Large Glass and Related Works, in 1968, crystallizes the transitive nature of Duchamp's late work--its embodiment of the artist's concept of infra-thin--both as a connection to something else and in terms of its delicate capture (with its threadlike linearity) of the dynamic of objectivity, of our momentary withdrawal from the objective world as perceiving subjects.<sup>86</sup> In these rather austere

etchings, Duchamp seems to be positing his own phenomenological position, which also reflects his ideas concerning "self-knowledge," that "sensation admits of no philosophy," to again quote Merleau-Ponty, "other than that of nominalism, that is, the reduction of meaning to the misinterpretations of vague resemblance or to the meaninglessness of association by contiguity."<sup>87</sup>

With these etchings, Duchamp culminates his lifelong preoccupation with temporality and the conditional terms that govern the construction of art history, largely determined by the onlooker to whom he granted virtually equal status with the artist.<sup>88</sup> "[A work] goes to the Louvre," Duchamp told Dore Ashton, "because of the onlookers."<sup>89</sup> And appropriately, the artist became, at the end of his life, that art historical gazer himself.<sup>90</sup> Turning his attention to quotation, Duchamp chose various well-known Old Master works, "Morceaux choisis," as he called them, after Cranach, Rodin, Ingres, Courbet, reexamining in detail not only certain of their works but including his own among them.

In their directness, transparency, and aspect of quotation, these etchings return us once again to the highlighted details of the fenêtrier, or window-dresser, an occupation that on occasion delighted Duchamp.<sup>91</sup> While they create familiar works from the history of art, for the most part the true content of the series "The Lovers" is only obliquely given; their ulterior meanings remain concealed on the other side of their transparency. Through the subtle, containing contour of the line, and through a composite form of quotation and subsidiary message--that make

these final virtual rectified readymades appear at first to have been emptied of their initial import while retaining their essential mold--Duchamp extends his discourse on the "name," on the nature of boundaries, between outside/inside.<sup>92</sup> Duchamp's deployment of the most basic, immemorial element of art, the line, that so boldly and simply characterizes his last series of works, is present as well in the tableau.

In their odd reductivist combination of detail and vagueness, the shapes of Duchamp's bodies suggest that they are in a state of becoming--not unlike the state of incipience one feels when viewing Etant Donnés . . . and its ambiguous body. It is consequently within the amorphous linearity of the etchings that Duchamp further synthesizes his ideas on representation, gender and identity.<sup>93</sup> Thus the importance he attached to not being "engaged in any groove," his desire "to be free . . . to be free for myself, foremost"; a freer notion of "being," as constituted by the interplay of psychic, optical and sexual drives and desires, had to be articulated--as in Etant Donnés . . .--from a position of critical self-consciousness.<sup>94</sup> Such a vantage may be traced in the vicissitudes of identification present in his series of appropriations, and that inform Duchamp's reduction of the fundamental discordance of the human subject to its "ultra-thin" depiction as line.<sup>95</sup>

Beyond a critique of absolutism, Duchamp situates this area of engagement and difference, by articulating through the severe linearity of his etchings, a dialectical encounter and circumscription of form, isolating the surfaces and contours of his subjects. The artist had emphasized this

aspect of enclosure in his preparatory studies for the Bride in the tableau, such as his relief Etant donnés le gaz d'éclairage et la chute d'eau, from 1948-49, and, especially, in his slightly later Preparatory Study for the Nude Figure in "Etant Donnés . . ." (Fig. 91). It is through the linear circumscription of the etchings--now representative of the "bodily" formation of the "ego"--that Duchamp further navigates the specific, but elusively intangible, infra-thin encounter with the real--where Freud situated the drives, "at the boundary of the somatic and the psychic."<sup>96</sup>

As one of Duchamp's notes regarding infra-thin suggests, the concept assumes a kind of supra-plastic value, exceeding its understanding merely as a formal (mold) or conceptual (spatio-temporal) connective tissue: "The possible is an infra-thin . . . The possible implying the becoming--the passage from one to the other takes place in the infra-thin."<sup>97</sup> Rather, as the concept of infra-thin became codified within Duchamp's lexicon, involving more than just the processes of passage or displacement, it became a kind of semiotic containment of difference. As yet another manifestation of Duchamp's critique of representation as logocentric, infra-thin formalized the artist's acknowledgment of the impossibility of the symbolic.<sup>98</sup> And it is this ungraspable element of the real that one is left with when one encounters Marcel Duchamp's late work.

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1. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Visible and the Invisible, trans. Claude Lefort (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), p. 139.
  2. Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1987), p. 87.
  3. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul and New York: The Humanities Press, 1962), p. 61.
  4. In March 1961, at a symposium at the Philadelphia Museum College of Art, Duchamp delivered a talk entitled "Where do we go from here?" in which he discussed the future of the artist. After citing the realism of Courbet and Manet as having begun "the more or less" recent past of art, that is, "the birth of all the 'isms' . . . during the last century," Duchamp further situated realism "at the heart of the liberation of the artist as an individual. . . ." For the text from the symposium and a facsimile of the French manuscript, see Studio International, vol. 189 (January-February 1975), p. 28.
  5. Duchamp clarified to Pierre Cabanne that his earlier restoration of perspective in the Large Glass was not that of realistic perspective but "a mathematical, scientific perspective." Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, trans. Ron Padgett (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. 38.
  6. For an excellent discussion concerning the role of this artifact and its "multiple identity" and "status as an epistemological figure" in the evolving history of Western European awareness and construction of the self, see Jonathan Crary, Techniques of the Observer (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1990), p. 30. Crary has discussed the historical evolution and discontinuity of models of scopic tradition founded in the scientific or philosophical exploration in the field of perception, focusing on the nature of the individual as observer. His revaluation of vision, in terms of its modern heterogeneous nature, has buttressed much of my reading of Duchamp's convergence of many of the Large Glass' themes in Etant Donnés . . . through a visual matrix. See also his "Modernizing Vision," in Vision and Visuality, ed. by Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988). For a bibliography on the camera obscura, see Aaron Scharf, Art and

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Photography (Harmondsworth, 1974); and Crary, p. 29, n. 1.

7. John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed. Alexander Campbell Fraser, Two vols., 1894 (New York: Dover, 1959), II, xi, p. 17; quoted in Crary, Techniques of the Observer, p. 42.

8. Ibid., p. 42.

9. Ibid., pp. 48-50. See also Jean-François Lyotard, Discours, Figure (Paris: Klincksieck, 1978), pp. 155-60.

10. Descartes, The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, 2 vols., trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), vol. 2, p. 21; here quoted in Crary, p. 43.

11. Descartes, "Rules for the Direction of the Mind," in Philosophical Writings, pp. 19, 21; here quoted in Crary, p. 56.

12. Michel Foucault, The Order of Things (New York: Pantheon, 1970), p. 60. For a discussion of the historical development of the phenomenology of perception, see Donald M. Lowe, History of Bourgeois Perception (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 11.

13. Paz notes the connection between Duchamp's wish to "obtain a hypophysical analysis of the successive transformations of objects (in their form-outline)" and the principle of the magic lantern in the seventeenth century, which was consistent with Duchamp's intention (expressed in his note "Cast Shadows") to analyze the object as if "constructed in three dimensions" (Writings, p. 72). See also Octavio Paz, "The Castle of Purity," in Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare, trans. Rachel Phillips and Donald Gardner (New York: Seaver Books, 1981), p. 57.

14. See Crary, Techniques of the Observer, especially Chapter Three.

15. In his conversation with Cabanne, Duchamp recalled the period when he was finishing work on the Large Glass, and was engaged in the technical process of constructing his first motorized optical device, Rotative Plaque Verre (Optique de précision) (Rotary Glass Plates) [Precision Optics], 1920:

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"And then even so I was finishing work on my "Glass." I had taken it to a factory to have the right corner silvered, to a place where the 'Oculist Witnesses' are. These witnesses were optical charts, or oculists, three sort of round, superimposed shapes which I copied. To copy them, I had to have the "Glass" silvered, then transfer the drawing, and scratch away the rest. That took at least six months, because it was very tiny and demanded high precision. It was precision optics, in short" (Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, p. 64).

16. The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, p. 130. The other missing elements from the Glass are the Toboggan, Boxing Match, and Picture of Cast Shadows.

17. For further discussion of the juggler of gravity, see Jean Suquet, Miroir de la Mariée: Essai (Paris: Flammarion, 1974), pp. 186-216. Suquet, whose musing on the Glass dates back to 1949, does not waver on the critical nature of this juncture. He views Etant Donnés . . . disparagingly, as an outgrowth of this shift in the oeuvre. His poetic elaboration of the erotic narrational "mechanics" of the Glass hinges on the unrealized figure of the "troubadour, whom Duchamp called the "Soigneur de gravité" (variously referred to as the juggler, handler or tender of gravity). As Duchamp turned more to the optical, Suquet has concluded, "the machine I've described . . . doesn't run as well . . . everything is thrown out of gear, begins to break down and continues to break down until this 'cochonnerie' which is Etant Donnés . . .." See Suquet, "Possible," trans. Tamara Blanken, Thierry de Duve, and Dennis Young, in The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, ed. Thierry de Duve (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1991), p. 130.

18. Sartre distinguishes the gaze as not requiring a meeting of the other's eyes; all that matters is that something signify the possible presence of others. See Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness (1943), trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1956). Lacan speaks of Sartre's importance in this regard. See, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, p. 84; also Le Séminaire I (Paris: Les Editions du Seuil, 1975); ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. John Forrester, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan--

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Book I: Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-54 (Cambridge University Press, 1988) and (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1991); and especially pp. 215-24 for a discussion of the intersubjective relation and its relevance to Sartre's conception of the gaze. Charles Stuckey sees in the apron that the mannequin wears in Lazy Hardware a biblical reference to the acquisition of self-consciousness, i.e., visual shame, in Eden. Covering the sex signifies the impossibility of returning to that "sinless" or innocent state. Citing Duchamp's galvanized plaster sculpture of 1950, Female Fig Leaf, Stuckey quotes Duchamp's statement that while eroticism may be hidden in his work, it is not "disguised out of shame." See Stuckey, "Duchamp's Acephalic Symbolism," Art in America, vol. 65 (January 1977), pp. 97; and Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, p. 88. Stuckey, however, does not elaborate on this theme in terms of the gaze or its intersubjective implications. Krauss also discusses the gaze in Duchamp in relation to that of Sartre, in "The Blink of the Eye," in The States of Theory: History, Art, and Critical Discourse, ed. David Carroll (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 178-79.

19. "It is shame which reveals to me the Other's look and myself at the end of that look. It is the shame . . . which makes me live, not know the situation of being looked at." Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 352; here quoted in Krauss, "The Blink of the Eye," p. 179.

20. See Introduction.

21. Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp, p. 38.

22. While invoking Jacques Lacan's distinction between the "geometral" and the "visual," Clair discusses Duchamp's "almost unique [among 20-century artists]" awareness of the laws of perspective and anamorphic phenomena. Clair cites the artist's early work in stereoscopy as an example of the manipulation of this antithesis, his collapse of an idealized (geometral) sight, perspective, into the sensory (visual) space of experienced depth. Although Clair discusses Duchamp's stereographic and anaglyphic constructions in terms of their perspectival reversal, he does not, however, relate the purely subjective production of a "virtual" image to Etant Donnés . . ., or elaborate on what the implications of this might have meant to Duchamp, since, as Clair reminds us, the artist was during the day

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he died involved in planning another anaglyph, in the manner of a Spanish chimney, entitled Anaglyphic Chimney:

"In the morning he had received my letter with the news that the abridged paperback edition of his monograph had just come out in Italy. Teeny [Mme Marcel Duchamp] remembers that his made him happy the whole day. The Librairie Vuibert called later that morning--the red and blue colored glasses he had been hunting for weeks to accompany the drawing to be included in the French edition were finally available. After lunch he went out immediately to get them. 'He has always been like this, impatient like a child,' commented Teeny."

See Schwarz' account, in Marcel Duchamp (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1975), n.p.; also quoted in Clair, "Opticerics," October, no. 5 (Summer 1978), p. 109. Elsewhere Clair has referred to the "trous de voyeur," the viewing holes of the tableau, as possible oculars of a stereoscope; see his Marcel Duchamp: Catalogue raisonné (Paris: Musée National d'art Moderne, Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, 1977), p. 95. Adcock has similarly written, "Etant Donnés . . . can be interpreted as a three-dimensional 'slice' analogous to the two-dimensional 'slice' of the stereopticon slide," in Marcel Duchamp's Notes, p. 131.

23. For a complete discussion of Duchamp's investigations into perspective and its perceptual circumstances in n-dimensional geometry, or what Duchamp called "four-dimensional perspective analogies," see Adcock, Marcel Duchamp's Notes from the "Large Glass": an N-Dimensional Analysis, Studies in the Fine Arts, The Avant-Garde, No. 40 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983), especially, pp. 87-136.

24. Duchamp-Arensberg correspondence dated January 7, 1919, in the Archives of the Francis Bacon Foundation, Claremont, Calif. See also CW, p. 135.

25. See Introduction. Krauss has also suggested a similar avenue of investigation, that Duchamp's "preoccupation with n-dimensional geometry must itself . . . be seen as a way of thematizing the problem of invisibility raised by the unconscious." "Where's Poppa," in The Definitively

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Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, p. 459.

26. As an excellent source on the decline of Cartesian perspectivalism and the theoretical implications of a shift from geometrical optics toward a physiologically constituted vision, see Crary, "Techniques of the Observer"; and his "Modernizing Vision," pp. 29-44; and also on the subject of the body and vision, see Rosalind Krauss, "Anti-vision," October, no. 36 (Spring 1986), pp. 147-54; and "Where's Poppa," pp. 433-59.

27. See Clair, "Opticerics," pp. 101-12.

28. Writings, pp. 75-76. Tu m', for example, in its involvement with anamorphosis, is also concerned with such a manner of seeing. See also Clair, "Opticerics," p. 102.

29. The kind of phenomenology, however, that I am positing underlies Duchamp's work challenges scientific objectivity. Its preeminent aim is to expose the paradox of sight, which is rooted both in the individual and in the object of fascination. Thus, while Duchamp is almost always championing the subjective, he is also busy exploding its claims. In this, and particularly with the artist's optical work, one is reminded that "Only phenomenology--that is to say, consideration of the onset of the image in individual consciousness--can help us to restore the subjectivity of images and to measure their fullness, their strength, their transsubjectivity." See Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. XV.

30. See Anne d'Harnoncourt and Walter Hopps, "Etant Donnés: 1. la chute d'eau 2. le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections on a New Work by Marcel Duchamp," Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin, vol. 64, nos. 299-300 (April-September 1969), p. 22. For a discussion of the ways in which this work relates to Duchamp's n-dimensional investigations, see Adcock, p. 111ff.

31. After a four-year hiatus, in 1919 Duchamp executes Tu m', commissioned by Katherine Dreier, after which he ceases to oil paint. In addition to its various indexical representations (both of the oeuvre as well as the literal shadow projections of readymades) and its status as a kind of photograph, Tu m' is capped with a perpendicularly attached bottle brush that, in order to be seen, requires the viewer to skew or alter, anamorphically, his or her

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particular perspective to the work.

32. The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, p. 72. Similarly, one can distinguish Duchamp's dialectical relationship of the eye and the gaze, and, as I suggest in Chapter Two, Duchamp's understanding of the symbolic value of the phallus. Or as Kaja Silverman has pointed out, "the relationship between the eye and the gaze is thus analogous in certain ways to that which links penis and phallus; the former can stand in for the latter, but can never approximate it." "Fassbinder and Lacan: A Reconsideration of Gaze, Look and Image," in Camera Obscura: A Journal of Feminism and Film Theory, no. 19 (January 1989), p. 59.

33. Victor Burgin, The End of Art Theory: Criticism and Postmodernity (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press International, 1986), p. 108.

34. Robert Morris, as quoted in Maurice Berger, "The Politics of Experience: Robert Morris, Minimalism, and the 1960s," Ph.D. dissertation, The City University of New York, 1988.

35. Ibid.

36. One finds within Lacan's theory of the gaze the eye functioning as objet a, operating, that is, at the level of the lack. See The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, pp. 103-4.

37. Crary, pp. 131-32.

38. Clair, "Opticeries," p. 103

39. As Clair notes, not everyone (only six out of ten) is able to perceive stereoscopic photography, lacking the necessary ability to convert the pair of photographs into an illusion of relief. Ibid., p. 104

40. Helmholtz on Perception, eds. Richard Warren and Roslyn Warren (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1968), p. 110; here quoted in Krauss, "The Blink of the Eye," pp. 190-91. For additional discussion of Helmholtz's possible influence on Duchamp, see Linda Henderson, "The Artist, 'The Fourth Dimension,' and Non-Euclidean Geometry 1900-1930: A Romance of Many

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Dimensions," Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1975, p. 274n119; and The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 154, n. 111. For further discussion of Helmholtz's work in optics and its implications, see Crary, Techniques of the Observer, passim.

41. In referring to the part of the "Preface," or subtitle of the tableau, in which Duchamp discusses "a succession of a group of facts seeming to necessitate each other under certain laws, in order to isolate the sign of accordance . . .," Lyotard writes, "But the Glass is indeed this isolated sign, an immobile sensitive surface (retina) on which the diverse facts of the story come to be inscribed, according to the possibilities meticulously chosen by Duchamp and such that the viewer will have literally nothing to see if he ignores them." In determining the inverse relationship between the Glass and Etant Donnés . . ., Lyotard goes on to say that the tableau, on the contrary, "effaces this sign . . ."; that while "the Glass shows the apparitions of the appearances . . ., Etant Donnés . . . appears . . . to offer merely the appearance of what it makes us see. What the viewer sees on the Glass is the eye and even the brain in the process of composing its objects, the images of these objects impressing the retina and the cortex according to the laws of (de-)formation, which are their own and that organize the glass partition . . . The Glass, being the film, lets us see the conditions of impression that reign on the inside of the optical box." Jean-François Lyotard, Duchamp's TRANS/formers, trans. Ian McLeod (Venice, California: The Lapis Press, 1990), p. 170.

42. See Frames from an incompleated stereoscopic film, 1920, in Marcel Duchamp, Anne d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine, eds. (New York: Museum of Modern Art; Philadelphia: The Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1973), p. 293.

43. For further discussion of the stereoscopic image, see Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces," The Originality of the Avant-Gard and Other Modernist Myths (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press), pp. 136-39; and Crary, Techniques of the Observer, pp. 119-29.

44. See d'Harnoncourt and Hopps, p. 63.

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45. See Duchamp's manual of instructions, "Approximation démontable."
  46. René Micha, "Etant donné 'Etant donnés,'" p. 173.
  47. Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces," p. 139.
  48. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., "Sun-Painting and Sun-Sculpture," Atlantic Monthly, no. VIII (July 1861), pp. 14-15; quoted here in Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces," p. 138.
  49. Techniques of the Observer, p. 128.
  50. "The sleigh . . . after having been drawn from A to B, returns to its 1st position by the phenomenon of inverse friction. The friction of the runner on the rail [instead of changing into heat] is transformed into a returning force equal to the going force" (Writings, p. 56).
  51. The bachelor domain is involved as well with a narcissistic function. When the illuminating gas is cast, and they hear the onanistic litanies emanating from the neighboring Water, "the refrain of the whole celibate machine . . . they will never be able to pass beyond the Mask = They would have been as if enveloped, alongside their regrets, by a mirror reflecting back to them their own complexity . . ." (Writings, p. 51).
  52. See the Green Box, in Writings, pp. 46ff.
  53. Writings, p. 65.
  54. Paz, Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare, p. 55.
  55. Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, p. 86.
  56. This is of course achieved in Duchamp's last painting, Tu m'. As far as the conclusion of the passage of the illuminating gas is concerned, Duchamp left the final stages of narrative unrealized in the Glass, basically stopping with the introduction of the Oculist Witnesses and the lens. The Splashes' kinetic energy is turned into light energy as the Splashes pass through the Oculist Charts, the last element of which was to be a lens, whose

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position in the Glass is indicated by a circle. This magnifying lens was to have focused the rays of light, now powerful enough to set in motion the final elements and activities--never realized, such as the Combat Marble, the Boxing Match, with its two rams, or the Juggler of Gravity--precipitating the final stripping and the unfastening of the Bride's Garment. CW, p. 170.

57. This note, written around the same time as the notes in the Green Box and entitled "Ombres Portées" (Cast Shadows), was first published by Matta in the magazine Instead (New York), no. 1 (February 1948). Writings, pp. vi, 72.

58. Another reason for conceiving of the tableau as both apparition and appearance--both negative and positive image is its simulation of the photographic. Just as the commands or language of the Bride pass through the three nets, or Draft pistons, "so that nothing remains but their firm imprint i.e. the form . . ." (Writings, p. 36), the pervasive theme of an abstract language, of the negative or of infrathin outline prevails. One process that disembodies content, yet yields "a firm imprint" of the subject, is, of course, that of photography. And it is the "photographic method" that Duchamp had hoped to employ to obtain the shape of much of the Bride's domain (specifically the three draft pistons and "the alphabetic units [their number, form, and significance]" (ibid., p. 38).

59. The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, p. 106.

60. Originally the two peepholes in the doors were obstructed by bolts that had to be removed in order for the viewer to see the scene within.

61. For both the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme, in Paris in 1938, and the exhibition First Papers of Surrealism, in New York in 1942, Duchamp perpetuated his dual artistic role as both Dadaist and Surrealist by creating disorienting environments: in Paris, hanging 1200 coal bags made to look full with coal dust falling from them (although, as in Why Not Sneeze . . ., they were in fact empty), illuminated by a fake stove whose light was produced by an electric light; and in New York, laying a mile of string throughout the exhibition hall, he succeeded in providing the necessary "disturbance" that prevented the viewers' simple and safe access to the

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works of art. In the Paris exhibition, in addition to the confusion and ominousness presented by both a threatening ceiling and an unsupportive floor (an unstable carpet composed of leaves), there was the central and disturbing visual aspect of the lighting, which illuminated the foreboding coal bags above while placing most of the paintings in shadow. As metaphors for the complex and often incomprehensible repressed mysteries of the unconscious or of the subject, these installations stressed the relation between the problem of seeing and the problem of understanding. For more on Duchamp's installations, see CW, pp. 506-7, 515.

62. Charles Stuckey suggests a similar thematic reading in relation to Duchamp's mirrorical theme, in "Duchamp's Acephalic Symbolism," p. 97.

63. CW, p. 566.

64. Man Ray, Self-Portrait (Boston: Little Brown, 1963), p. 238. Man Ray's photograph is reproduced in CW, p. 565. The image serves as the model after which Morceaux choisis d'après Cranach et "Relâche", the first in a series of nine etchings on the theme of "The Lovers," illustrating the two volumes of The Large Glass and Related Works, was made. For an account of the ballet, see William Camfield, Francis Picabia (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 213; and for an article on the series of etchings, see Hellmut Wohl, "Duchamp's Etchings of the Large Glass and The Lovers," Dada/Surrealism, no. 16 (1987), pp. 168-183.

65. Relâche was produced by the Ballets Suédois in 1924.

66. Rosalind Krauss, Passages in Modern Sculpture, p. 213.

67. Lyotard, Duchamp's TRANS/formers, p. 170.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

69. "John Cage on Marcel Duchamp: An interview," by Moira Roth and William Roth, in Marcel Duchamp in Perspective, ed. William Maschek (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1975), p. 155. Cage likened Duchamp's manual to music, "It looks a lot like modern music. Because there are directions for taking something down and putting it up. And a great

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deal of avant-garde music consists of directives to "do" something." See Alain Jouffroy, "Entendre Cage, entendre Duchamp: Dialogue avec Alain Jouffroy," Opus International, no. 49 (March 1974), p. 62; cited in translation in Carol James, "Duchamp's Silent Noise/Music for the Deaf," Dada/Surrealism, no. 16 (1987), p. 125, n. 50.

70. In 1955 Duchamp revealed this integral sense of order, often overlooked in his work, that counterbalanced his philosophical embrace of chance: "All the glass was imagined and was drawn in 1913 and 1914, on paper. It was based on a perspective view, meaning complete control of the placement of things. It couldn't be haphazard or changed afterwards. It had to go through according to plan, so to speak." Quoted in "Marcel Duchamp" [an interview by James Johnson Sweeney], in Wisdom: Conversations with the Elder Wise Men of Our Day, ed. James Nelson (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1958), p. 93. See also d'Harnoncourt and Hopps, p. 12.

71. "Les 2 panneaux inferieurs de gauche font un très léger angle concave avec les 2 panneaux de droites (vu du devant de la porte)." See "5th opération de montage général," in "Approximation démontable."

72. Ibid., p. 20. Lyotard, Duchamp's TRANS/formers, p. 193.

73. Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, p. 80.

74. Krauss, "Notes on the Index, Part I," in The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, 1985), p. 197.

75. Sigmund Freud, "The Ego and the Id," in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-74), vol. 19, p. 27; vol. 22, p. 66.

76. Lacan, "'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I," in Ecrits: A Selection, trans. Alan Sheridan Ecrits: A Selection, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), pp. 1-7. For Lacan's discourse on the family and the individual, and the related maternal, fraternal and paternal imagoes, see Les complexes familiaux dans la formation de l'individu: Essai d'analyse d'une fonction en psychologie (1938) (Paris: Navarin, 1984). This early process

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of self-identification is one of captivation, and of narcissism, which establishes its special relevance to the founding narrative of the Bride and bachelors. According to Lacan, "it is this captation by the imago of the human form . . . which between the ages of six months and two and a half years, dominates the entire dialectic of the child's behavior in the presence of his similars. During the whole of this period, one will record the emotional reactions and the articulated evidences of a normal transitivity. The child who strikes another says he has been struck; the child who sees another fall, cries." Ecrits: A Selection, p. 19.

77. The radical implications of the mirror stage rest on the Lacanian notion that once the infant identifies with the mirror image, one is taking oneself to be something other than oneself; thus the mirror stage also marks the infant's fundamental alienation from the self, an alienation that for Duchamp remains at the core of human identity.

78. Ecrits: A Selection, p. 7. Lacan actually distinguished between the designations je and moi, determining that the "primordial form" of the je is "precipitated" in the mirror stage "before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject" (ibid., p. 2). But, as Lacan notes, "the important point is that this form situates the agency of the ego [moi], before its social determination, in a fictional direction, which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone, or rather, which will only rejoin the coming-into-being (le devenir) of the subject asymptotically, whatever the success of the dialectical syntheses by which he must resolve as I [je] his discordance with his own reality" (ibid.).

79. For further discussion of this idea and how it relates to Duchamp's rejection of the "retinal," see Krauss, "The Blink of the Eye," pp. 175-99.

80. The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp, p. 86.

81. Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, p. 72. An idealist mathematical view of Duchamp might analogize this statement to Duchamp's note that there is a "resemblance between a perspective view and a circle" and a correspondence between "a vanishing point and the center" of a circle. Writings, p. 87; see, for example, Adcock, Marcel

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Duchamp's Notes, pp. 102-03. While such ideas derive from the conceptual mathematical system of n-dimensional geometry, they fail to account for the alienating subjectivity of the look and the desubstantializing aspect of the gaze.

82. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, p. 62.

83. Lacan, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book II, p. 169-70. In his notes concerning the origin and evaluation of the art object that appear, for example, in A l'Infinitif (e.g., "Can one make works which are not works of 'art'?" "Try to argue on the plastic duration. [I mean space into time]," "A kind of pictorial nominalism (Check)," Duchamp is engaged in more than just a philosophical investigation into the nature of art. In addition to his efforts to nominally redefine the art object in terms of the readymade, Duchamp's various investigations, his attempt "to argue on the plastic duration"--to establish "a kind of pictorial Nominalism"--inform Etant Donnés . . .'s complex interrogation of appearance or of the fantasy of the image, extending that question to the very issue of naming. See Duchamp's subsets of notes entitled "Speculations" and "Dictionaries and Atlases," in A l'Infinitif, that appear in Writings, pp. 74-79. See also Adcock, Marcel Duchamp's Notes . . ., pp. 16-20.

84. The emphasis in the tableau is on the formalization of the various dynamic and conflictual interactions that define the status and makeup of the individual or human subject. However, since Duchamp considered that the subject could only be grasped as a series of interconnected but unstable structures, such as knowledge or truth, for example, it was the function of the image to ultimately embody the same illusory effects as reality. The human subject is represented, as present yet elusive, exceeding our grasp and mastery. In this last Duchamp forges a new topology of the self: the subject's place, thoughts, and feelings, in short, subjectivity, are addressed while at the same time a basic "lack of being" is formalized.

85. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book II, p. 322.

86. Lyotard first stressed this fundamental aspect of Etant Donnés . . ., entitling the chapter on the tableau, "Hinges," in Duchamp's TRANS/formers, p. 117ff. Dalia Judovitz also refers to the work's transitive

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nature, in "Rendezvous with Marcel Duchamp: Given," Dada/Surrealism, no. 16 (1987), p. 192.

87. Phenomenology of Perception, p. 15.

88. In an interview with James Johnson Sweeney in 1956, Duchamp commented on his certain disregard for and displeasure in pleasing a contemporary audience, and indicated his preferred public, a posthumous one. "It is only a way of putting myself in the right position for that ideal public. The danger is in pleasing an immediate public; the immediate public that comes around you and takes you in and accepts you and gives you success and everything. Instead of that, you should wait for fifty years or a hundred years for your true public. That is the only public that interests me." "Regions which are not ruled by time and space," in Writings, p. 133; also quoted in Rudolf E. Keunzli, "Introduction," Dada/Surrealism, no. 16 (1987), p. 4. For Duchamp's remarks concerning both his own success and that of art and artists in general, see Dore Ashton, "An Interview with Marcel Duchamp," Studio International, vol. 171 (June 1966), pp. 245-47. Calvin Tomkins quotes Pierre de Massot, Duchamp's Dadaist colleague and life-long friend, as saying, "ever since 1920 he has been preparing his pedestal--he always knew just what he was doing." The Bride and the Bachelors: Five Masters of the Avant-Garde (New York: Viking, 1965), p. 64.

89. *Ibid.*, p. 245.

90. In 1953, Duchamp referred to the Large Glass, as not "an original work, it was copying an idea, execution, technical execution, like a pianist executing a piece of music that he composed. The same thing with that glass, it was a mere execution of an idea." Interview with Harriet and Sidney Janis, 1953; quoted here in de Duve, Pictorial Nominalism, p. 173

91. Duchamp told Arturo Schwarz, "Instead of being a painter, I would have liked on this occasion [Fresh Widow, 1920] to be thought of as a fenêtrier! . . . a person concerned with the possible developments a window might undergo." CW, p. 480.

92. According to d'Harnoncourt and Hopps (p. 55, n. 9), in addition to the Old Masters, Duchamp referred to recent advertisements as a source for his series of etchings. See also CW, p. 569. Just before one comes to artist's notes

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in the Green Box, organized under the heading "the conditions of a language," there is another note, under the category "Laws and General Notes," that suggests a phenomenological imperative: ". . . to reach the Impossibility of sufficient visual memory, to transfer from one like object to another the memory imprint" (Writings, p. 31).

93. "For the position of the axes of the malic moulds, I had to yield to the demands of the perspective." Marcel Duchamp: Die Schriften, translated and edited by Serge Stauffer (Zurich: Regenbogen-Verlag, 1981), p. 254; quoted here in Duchamp (Barcelona: Fundación Caja de Pensiones, 1984), p. 228. See also Clair, Duchamp and the Classical Perspectivists," Artforum, vol. 16 (March 1978), pp. 40-49.

94. Originally quoted in Richard and George Heard Hamilton, "Marcel Duchamp Speaks," initially broadcast by the BBC Third Program in the series, "Art, Anti-Art," 1959; reproduced as a sound recording, Marcel Duchamp: An Interview by Richard Hamilton in London and George Heard Hamilton in New York, London: Audio Arts, 1975; here quoted in CW, p. 193.

95. "To lose the possibility of recognizing 2 similar objects," Writings, p. 31. In the series, "The Lovers," the artist explores and formalizes memory as yet another vestige of the fragility and difficulty of being. By appropriating masterpieces of French art, Duchamp exploits their aspect of familiarity, which can be likened to his manipulation of language.

96. Freud here quoted in Victor Burgin, The End of Art Theory, p. 84.

97. Notes, no. 1.

98. One could draw the analogy to Derrida's concept of "différance," which functions as a neutral term that operates beyond simple opposition or difference, involving instead the relationship between elements, that is, their traces of similarity. See Jacques Derrida, Positions (Chicago: University of Press, 1981), pp. 27-8; originally published (Paris: Minuit, 1972).

## APPENDIX : Memorandum of Agreement

Cassandra Foundation, an Illinois nonprofit corporation (the "Foundation") and Philadelphia Museum of Art, a Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation (the "Museum") hereby stipulate and agree:

1. Foundation has given Museum Marcel Duchamp's Etant Donnés: 1. la chute d'eau, 2. le gaz d'éclairage ("Etant Donnés"), and said object of art is now being installed by Museum without cost to Foundation in the art galleries of the Museum at Parkway and 26th Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

2. "Etant Donnés" will be displayed by Museum in a gallery within or adjoining Museum's collections of works by Marcel Duchamp, in a setting specially designed and constructed for the purpose of housing the same, the exhibition thereof in said location and setting to be continued for a period of at least fifteen (15) years, and indefinitely thereafter until such time as the Trustees of the Museum, in their discretion, determine that such exhibit and display is no longer feasible.

3. All publicity pertaining to this gift, and to the installation and display thereof by Museum, is left to the discretion and good judgment of its director and trustees subject, nevertheless, to the subsequent conditions and

provisions of this agreement. "Etant Donnés" will not, under any circumstances, be permitted to leave the premises of Museum on loan or otherwise.

4. The installation and future maintenance of "Etant Donnés" will be the sole responsibility of Museum without contribution thereto by Foundation, and said object of art shall be maintained by Museum at all times in a condition as close as possible to its present condition, ordinary wear and tear, and damage by fire or other casualty excepted; but Museum will exercise at least the same high degree of care in maintaining and protecting "Etant Donnés" which it exercises in the care and maintenance of its other collections.

5. For a period of 15 years from this date, Museum will not permit any copy of reproduction of "Etant Donnés" to be made, by photography or otherwise, excepting only pictures of the door behind which said object of art is being installed.

6. The gift by Foundation to Museum includes also one copy of the two-volume notebook prepared by the artist concerning the said object of art, the other copy of said notebook being in Foundation's possession. It is understood that neither party will release said notebooks, or the contents thereof, for publication, or allow the same out of its possession, during the aforesaid fifteen (15) year period, and that thereafter neither party will release the same without previous notice to and consultation with the other. Nothing herein contained, however, shall prevent Museum, its its discretion, from giving reputable scholars access to said notebook for

purposes of study at the Museum and under its supervision, at any time after the installation of said object of art. These provisions with respect to the notebook shall apply equally to any other documentation accompanying the gift.

7. Museum will exercise its best efforts to consult the wishes of Mrs. Marcel Duchamp in respect to the maintenance and exhibition of "Etant Donnés" insofar as this can be done consistently with the foregoing provisions hereof.

8. This memorandum shall be deemed to be the equivalent of a deed of gift from Foundation to Museum of said object of art, notebook and any other documentation accompanying the same, and confirms Museum's title to the same.

Dated: -----July 1, 1969

Cassandra Foundation

By: Barne Hodes  
Secretary-Treasurer

Philadelphia Museum of Art

By: Evan H. Turner  
Director

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