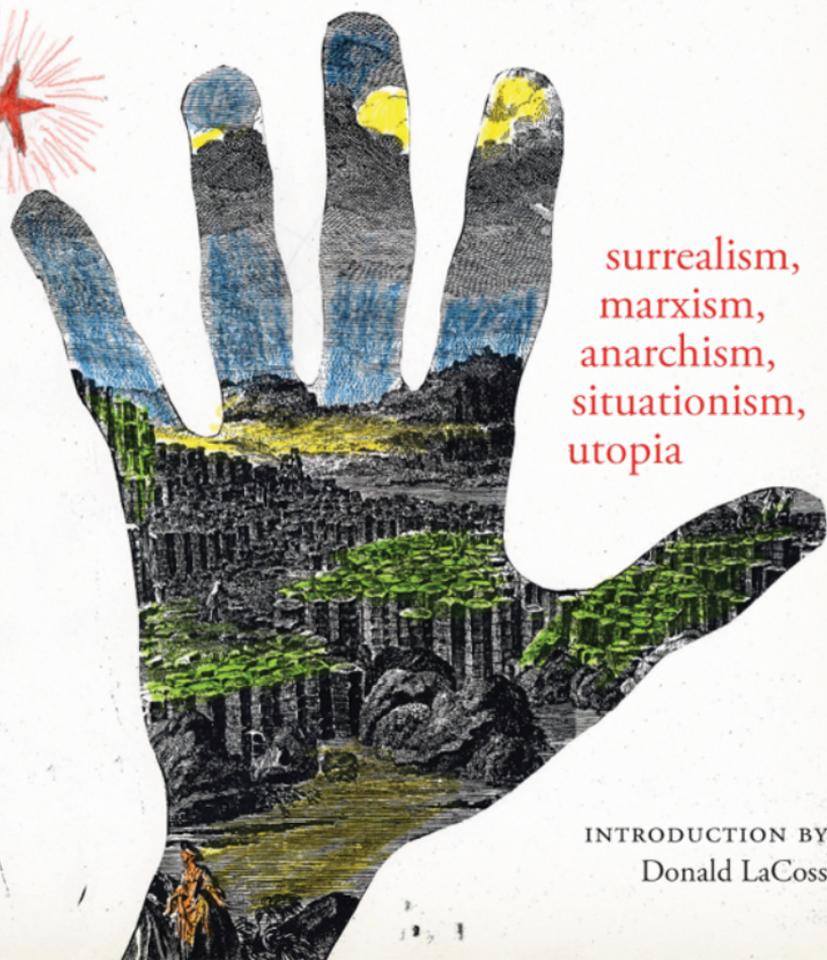


MICHAEL LÖWY

MORNING STAR



surrealism,
marxism,
anarchism,
situationism,
utopia

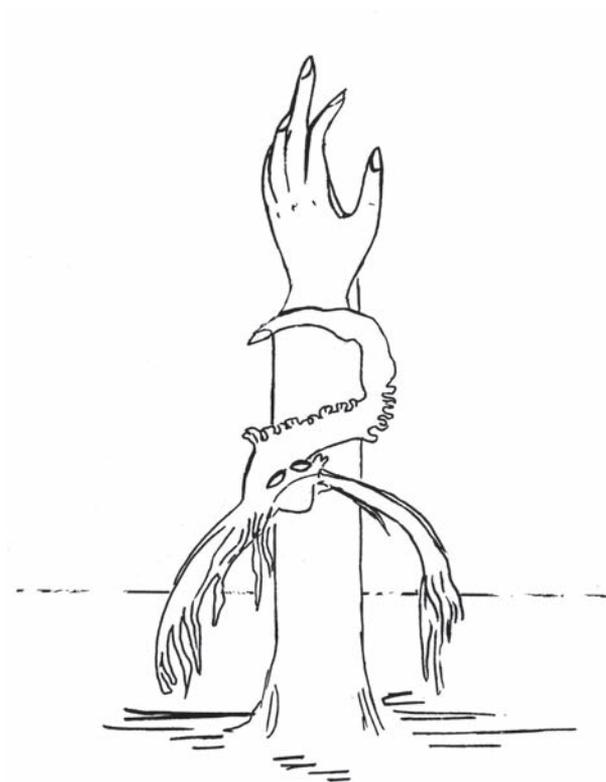
INTRODUCTION BY
Donald LaCoss

MORNING STAR

THE SURREALIST REVOLUTION SERIES

Franklin Rosemont, Editor

A renowned current in poetry and the arts, Surrealism has also influenced psychoanalysis, anthropology, critical theory, politics, humor, popular culture, and everyday life. Illuminating its diversity and actuality, the Surrealist Revolution Series focuses on translations of original writings by participants in the international Surrealist movement and on critical studies of unexamined aspects of its development.



Nancy Joyce Peters, *Drawing*, 1976.

MORNING STAR

*surrealism, marxism, anarchism,
situationism, utopia*

Michael Löwy

INTRODUCTION BY
Donald LaCoss

Copyright © 2009 by Michael Löwy
All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America
First edition, 2009

Requests for permission to reproduce material from this work
should be sent to:

Permissions
University of Texas Press
P.O. Box 7819
Austin, TX 78713-7819
www.utexas.edu/utpress/about/bpermission.html

∞ The paper used in this book meets the minimum requirements
of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (R1997) (Permanence of Paper).

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Löwy, Michael, 1938–
[Étoile du matin. English]
Morning star : surrealism, marxism, anarchism, situationism,
utopia / Michael Löwy ; introduction by Donald LaCoss. — 1st ed.
p. cm. — (The surrealist revolution series)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-292-71894-4 (cloth : alk. paper)
1. French literature—20th century—History and criticism.
2. Surrealism (Literature)—France—History. 3. Surrealism—
France. I. Title.
PQ307.S95 L69413
840.9'1163—dc22

2008033358

Previously published in part as *L'Étoile du matin: surréalisme et
marxisme*, © Éditions Syllepse, 2000

The author wishes to acknowledge Myrna Bell Rochester,
Penelope Rosemont, and Victoria Davis.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Surrealism and Romantic Anticapitalism

Donald LaCoss vii

I. BREAKING OUT OF THE STEEL CAGE! I

2. MORNING STAR

The New Myth from Romanticism to Surrealism 13

3. THE LIBERTARIAN MARXISM OF ANDRÉ BRETON 21

4. INCANDESCENT FLAME

Surrealism as a Romantic Revolutionary Movement 29

5. THE REVOLUTION AND THE INTELLECTUALS

Pierre Naville's Revolutionary Pessimism 43

6. CLAUDE CAHUN

The Extreme Point of the Needle 65

7. VINCENT BOUNOURE

A Sword Planted in the Snow 83

8. ODY SABAN

A Spring Ritual 89

9. CONSUMED BY NIGHT'S FIRE

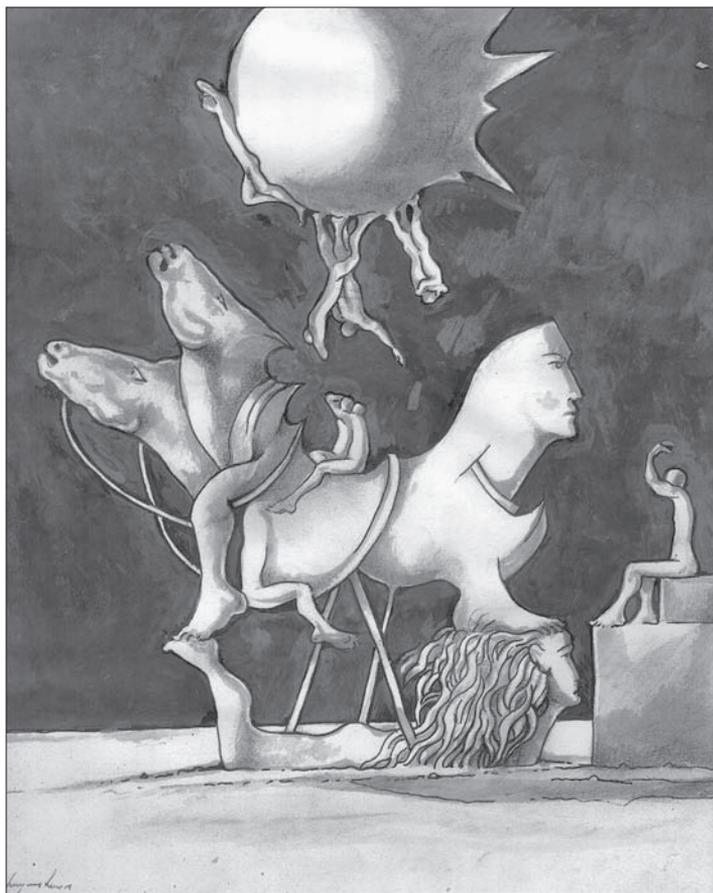
The Dark Romanticism of Guy Debord 97

10. INTERNATIONAL SURREALISM SINCE 1969 107

NOTES 117

BIBLIOGRAPHY 133

INDEX 137



Artur do Cruzeiro Seixas, *Beyond Words*, 2007.

INTRODUCTION

Surrealism and Romantic Anticapitalism

Donald LaCoss

*The world has long been dreaming of something that
it could actualize if only it becomes conscious of it.*

—Karl Marx, in a letter to Arnold Ruge, September 1843

DESPITE THEIR STUBBORN AND often impossible fight against unfreedom in all its forms, the Surrealists have long been ignored in most discussions of social change movements. Hopefully, some headway can be made against these exclusions with more English-language translations of important studies of the intersections between Surrealism, culture, and politics, such as Michael Löwy's collection from 2001, *L'Étoile du matin: surréalisme et marxisme*. From its first paragraph, Löwy lays out a stirring and highly suggestive portrayal of Surrealism as a movement of psychological revolt and the subversive reenchantment of the world, and he maintains this inspiring perspective throughout.

Surrealism is not, has never been, and will never be a school of literary modernism or a group of artists with a shared outlook, Löwy persuasively argues. Rather, it is better understood as an "anthropological study of liberty" read through an optic of independent, revolutionary Hegelo-Marxist dialectics barbed with strikingly original libertarian impulses. Löwy's approach underscores the integral necessity of binding internal revolts of consciousness to outbursts of insurgent collective action, a main thrust of Surrealist activity since at least the mid-1930s (one need only read André Breton's deliriously Hegelian *Communicating Vessels* (1931)

and *The Political Position of Surrealism* (1935) in order to excavate the theoretical frame). In short, the images, objects, and texts associated with Surrealism—let’s say Meret Oppenheim’s famous fur-lined teacup or Breton’s antinovel *Nadja*—are merely leftovers of a much more complicated process, the empty wine bottle on the table the morning after a satisfying evening of intense conversation or the footprints left behind in the snow after a passionate midnight dance under a dark sky.

Löwy’s inquiries begin with a look at the edgy persistence of Romanticism within the movement. In fact, the “morning star” of this collection’s title is a Romantic motif that refers to Victor Hugo’s unfinished epic poem of 1886 about the fall of Satan, a poem upon which Breton meditated in his essay on collective myth and liberty, *Arcanum 17* (1944).¹ “The Angel of Freedom, born of a white feather shed by Lucifer during his fall, penetrates the darkness. The star it wears on its forehead grows, becoming first meteor, then comet, then forge,” writes Breton, quoting from a study of Hugo and occult wisdom. This star, Breton explains, is the searing firebrand of rebellion: “Revolt itself and revolt alone is the creator of light. And this light can only be known by way of three paths: poetry, freedom and love,” paths that converge in “the least discovered and most illuminable spot in the human heart.”² Löwy, who has called the conclusion of *Arcanum 17* “one of the most luminous books of Surrealism,” regards the morning star—the planet Venus when it appeared in the eastern sky near dawn, also known as Lucifer (“light-bearer”) by ancient Roman stargazers—as an allegory for Surrealism’s drive to radically embody Romanticism’s revolutionary dimensions.

Without doubt, Surrealists have drunk deeply from the underground springs of Romanticism. Breton was most explicit about this when he pointed out that, although historically it appeared at the tail end of Romanticism, Surrealism was “an excessively prehensile tail.” Since the movement’s inception in 1919 and continuing to the present day, Surrealism has refused the more dehumanizing legacies of the Enlightenment that were championed by the bour-

geois and their supporters, much in the same way that so many German Romantics had objected to similar proposals advocated by enthusiasts of the *Aufklärung* (Enlightenment) thinkers.

Romanticism is a roiling buildup of social, political, and cultural forces that, like lightning in a fast-moving thunderstorm, forks and branches off in a greatly diverse number of directions. Whereas a number of German Romantics resisted the Enlightenment from a variety of perspectives across the modern political spectrum, Löwy has long argued for a hidden history to Romanticism that chronicles a specifically radical pursuit of a decentralized, directly democratic civil society committed to human creativity, artistic autonomy, and open expression. Generally speaking, the political and cultural pattern of this revolutionary form of Romanticism “refuses both the illusion of returning to the communities of the past and the reconciliation with the capitalist present, seeking a solution in the future. In this school . . . nostalgia for the past does not disappear but is projected toward a postcapitalist future.”

At times, these Romantics both opposed the Enlightenment and supported it—in the latter cases, the Romantics called for extending ruthless Enlightenment critique even further and deeper demolishing those very interests that the Enlightenment had helped to create in the first place, namely, the bourgeois-liberal mentality’s context within capitalist social relations. More generally, though, the revolutionary Romantics decried the ugly, disinterested rationality of the Enlightenment that garbled ideas of freedom and community into the modern State’s administrative systems of social control and progress. Similarly, they objected to the political economy of Enlightened liberalism that had transformed mercantilism into capitalism by furthering the unregulated circulation of capital, goods, and labor while simultaneously encouraging accumulation, enshrining private property, enforcing a class system in which alienated labor was the only thing of value for workers, and estranging the natural world from civilization in order to establish a stockpile of resources ripe for capitalist abuse. Revolutionary Romantic resistance to Enlightenment theory and

practice was organized within the innumerable spaces of irreconcilable contradictions that riddled liberal-bourgeois industrial civilization in the nineteenth century; the resistance opposed the intensifying trends of colonial exploitation, bureaucratic power, and State violence that were (and remain) so central to everyday life in a Western civilization.

Löwy's discussion of Surrealism and Marxism in the *Morning Star* collection is firmly fixed within this frame of revolutionary Romanticism. It makes a convincing case for assessing the amorphously loose clustering of Surrealism's wildly disparate, unpredictable revolutionary energies around Marxist poles over the past eight decades as an attempt by Surrealists to recover and reverse-engineer the long-lost Romantic sensibilities inherent in Marxism. These sensibilities have been systematically repressed since at least the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 by authoritarian Communist administrators and the party bosses—in the hands of these deromanticizers, Marxist theory, analysis, and critique have been retooled to emphasize productivism, industrial progress, and consent to the unchallenged vanguard authority manufactured by the party bureaucracy. In looking at this collection and a number of his other books, the reader can see how Löwy's interventions seek to salvage—and, with an eye to current events, thereby renew—those Romantic elements of Marxism that have been expurgated by party ideologues, state ministers of heavy industry, bureaucratic functionaries, secret police agents, and Stakhanovite cults. Löwy is himself a student of the important dissident dialectical humanist sociologist Lucien Goldmann, so it is no surprise that his scholarship has been focused on core principles that seem to have been forgotten by too many Marxists in the last century.

In a comprehensive overview from 1984, Löwy and Robert Sayre explored the lost continent of revolutionary Romantic anticapitalism, and their findings can help one assess the nimbly provocative ideas that thread through Löwy's remarks on Surrealism in the *Morning Star* collection.³ Löwy argues convincingly that, although the first person to apparently coin the term *Romantic anticapitalism*



Schlecter Duvall, *Carnival*, 2008.

was György Lukács in an essay from 1931 on the writings of Fyodor Dostoyevsky, its precedents began to emerge within European culture much earlier. It was fueled by disdain for the grim rise of industrial capitalism in the early 1700s and, as Löwy and Sayre maintain, will remain an essential component of modern culture so long as capitalism's bloody hegemony continues. Although there are endless excellent reasons to reject and challenge the predatory rule of capitalism, Löwy points specifically to how the resistance was (and is) triggered by the ways in which the capitalist order relentlessly degrades the imagination and disenchants the world through alienation and reification, processes which he says characterize "the deepest principles of oppression at work throughout the social fabric." Romantic anticapitalism targets those effects of the capitalist system that are "experienced as misery everywhere in capitalist society. What is involved is the all-powerfulness in this society of exchange-value—of money and market relations—i.e., the phenomenon of reification" and its corollaries, "social fragmentation and the radical isolation of the individual in society." The positive values of Romantic anticapitalism, according to Löwy, are "an aggregate of qualitative values—ethical, social, and cultural—in opposition to the mercantile rationality of exchange value."⁴

One central facet is "the development of the self in all the depth, breadth and complexity of its affectivity, and also in the free play of its imaginative capacities." Another, dialectically related, is "unity, or totality: unity of the self with two encompassing totalities—the universe of nature, on the one hand, and on the other the human community. While the first Romantic value constitutes its individual—even individualistic—moment, the second is trans-individual or collective." This manifests itself by pitting "the Romantic quest for integration and harmony" against "the capitalist principle of domination and exploitation of nature." The struggle takes numerous forms over the years and across different cultures, but it can be characterized as the effort to "recreate the human community" through "authentic communication with other selves" by tapping into the "collective imagination as expressed through mythology,

folklore, etc., or as a social harmony or a future classless society.” As both means and ends, “the refusal of social fragmentation and the isolation of the individual under capitalism” is a crucial endeavor.⁵ Surrealism, with its commitments to an unorthodox Freudo-Hegelianism that attempts to abolish capitalist unfreedom by the self-liberation of individual human consciousnesses and the simultaneous transformation of the social world, participates in this broader tradition.

Löwy and Sayre sketch a rough typology of the figures of Romantic anticapitalism; of interest to Surrealism here is the most radical matrix formulated by Löwy and Sayre, which is marked off as “Jacobin-democratic Romanticism” (for example, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Friedrich Hölderlin, Georg Büchner, Heinrich Heine, William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth); “populist Romanticism” (Leo Tolstoy, J.-C.-L. Simonde Sismondi, Theodore Herzen); “utopian-humanist socialism” (Charles Fourier, Etienne Cabet, Barthélemy Enfantin, Moses Hess, Erich Fromm); “libertarian or anarchist Romanticism” (Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Mikhail Bakunin, Pyotr Kropotkin, Gustav Landauer); and “Marxist Romanticism” (William Morris, pre-Stalinist Lukács, Ernst Bloch, Rosa Luxemburg, Li Dazhao, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, José Carlos Mariátegui, E. P. Thompson, Raymond Williams).⁶

It is within the terms of Marxist Romanticism that Löwy fixes Surrealism in his *Morning Star* collection: “What distinguishes this trend from other socialist or revolutionary currents exhibiting a Romantic sensibility is the central preoccupation with essential problems of Marxism: class struggle, social revolution, the role of the proletariat as universal class and agent of emancipation, the possibility of using modern productive forces in a socialist economy—even if the conclusions drawn are not necessarily identical with Marx’s and Engels’.” These features can be easily located in multiple manifestations of Surrealist thought and action over the past eighty years. In the article in this collection entitled “The Libertarian Marxism of André Breton,” Löwy sketches how Bret-

on's Marxist Romanticism hungrily sought to reenergize certain precapitalist cultural forms that could be used as weapons against "the capitalist disenchantment of the world, logic, quantification, mercantilization and reification of social relationships" as well as "the rationalist, scientific, Cartesian, positivistic tendencies of eighteenth-century French materialism" that dominated the duller facets of the Communist Party's revolutionary theories.

To elaborate how Löwy's work on Romantic anticapitalism opens and deepens one's understanding of both Surrealism and Marxism, I want to trace a brief history of Surrealist interest in radical social transformation. For the most part, the Romantic anticapitalist components of Surrealist thought and action have been ignored by those who have written on the movement. To make matters worse, the bulk of what has been written on Surrealist research in Marxism (and on Surrealist political action generally) has been narrowly centered on the Paris group and their dealings with the pre-World War II French Communist Party and the Third International. The narrative that follows focuses primarily on the post-World War II era because there are a number of works on Surrealist political activism from the 1920s and 1930s. More important, though, what follows is intended to show how those studies that conclude in 1939 or 1945 ignore a large, important body of work by Surrealists active in dozens of countries for over three-quarters of a century in the struggle for liberty and revolution.

POSTWAR MARXISM AND THE SURREALIST INTERNATIONAL

The Paris Surrealist group has always preferred an anarchist position, though that viewpoint went into temporary eclipse in the mid-1920s when a handful of the movement's central animators—Breton, Paul Eluard, Benjamin Péret, Louis Aragon, and Pierre Unik—signed on with the French Communist Party (PCF) in May 1927.⁷ The five were not the last to register with the PCF, but

their enlistment as a bloc at this moment was influential with those Surrealists who were unsure of the direction their revolutionary energies should take. To be generous, the Surrealists' participation in the PCF lasted six months; beyond that, there was a span of time during which they uneasily attempted to work directly with the Third International. By mid-1935, however, the relationship between Surrealism and the orthodox line of the Communist Party had become absolutely untenable—from mid-1935 forward, those Surrealists who were most actively engaged in Marxist analysis fiercely attacked Stalinism and openly loathed the Soviet state.⁸ The Surrealists believed that Marxism was elsewhere, an attitude that would become more prominent in the international Left only after 1956, 1968, and, for some slow learners, 1989. It was almost as if the structures and forms of Stalinist authoritarianism had repressed Marxism's Romanticism deep into its unconscious, and Surrealists were seeking ways to unleash or reactivate those latent impulses. To aid them in this dream work, the Surrealists returned to the ideas of G. W. F. Hegel and reconfigured the dialectic in order to assemble a Romantic alternative, a libertarian Marxism that used anticapitalism to dismantle the State instead of conquering it.

During World War II, Surrealist writings on Marx, Friedrich Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach, and Hegel were muted as Surrealists were scattered into exile or forced underground. In Occupied France, the clandestine Stalinist organizations aided in the Allied war effort and, in many cases, did all they could to curb the activities of non-Stalinist revolutionaries. Meanwhile in nonoccupied places like the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean, the political police of the liberal-democratic regimes censored, spied upon, and terrorized anticapitalists of all sorts, including Surrealists. Forced to use the coded language of analogy and inference, Surrealists wrote and lectured on poetry, alchemy, and nineteenth-century utopian socialism as a means of couching their furious rhetoric on revolutionary transformation and Romantic anticapitalism while under close scrutiny by mechanisms of governmental surveillance.



Penelope Rosemont, *The Entrance to the Magic Forest*, 2008.

When the war was over, it was obvious that the political institutions of industrial capitalism had been energized by the war against fascism. The Surrealists once again began to promote Romantic anticapitalism as an alternative to both Stalinism (at the time enjoying a brief aboveground legitimacy in Western Europe for its wartime activities against the Nazis) and the nascent Coca-Colonization campaign of U.S. consumerism, a campaign that would become even more hard fought once the extortionary terms of the Marshall Plan were put into place. For a brief time, a small nucleus of breakaway Surrealists from France and Belgium tried to launch a movement in lockstep with European Stalinists, but that fiasco quickly collapsed under a blizzard of denunciations from both the Stalinists, who said the group was too Surrealist, and Surrealists who said the group was too Stalinist.

The international Surrealist manifesto *Inaugural Rupture* (1947) spelled out the Surrealists' continuing unwillingness to adhere to the quickly emerging bipolar political landscape of the Cold War.⁹ This remarkable document laid out the terms of Surrealists' interest throughout the 1940s and 1950s: Sadean ethics, the Freudian deconstruction of the bourgeois mentality, Fourier's socialism, Marxist collectivization, Trotskyist permanent revolution, and autonomist anarchism. The pamphlet also showed the continuity between these positions and their research and engagement going back to the 1920s. In other activities that underscored their rejection of conventional party politics and Cold War nationalism, some Surrealists pronounced accord with internationalist initiatives in the late 1940s, like the universal human rights and antimilitarist activism of the Human Front. Many worked with the Revolutionary Democratic Assembly and with the Citizen of the World movement, the latter having been launched in support of a former World War II B-17 bomber pilot named Garry Davis, who had disrupted a general session of the newborn United Nations in November 1948 to decry war, relinquish his national citizenship, and pledge solidarity with stateless refugees all over the world.

The post-1945 period saw an impressive international proliferation

of Surrealist ideas and technics dedicated to furthering the cause of human emancipation. There had been active (and in some cases boldly innovative) Surrealist groups in Belgium, England, Spain, Japan, Romania, Denmark, Egypt, Cuba, Brazil, Yugoslavia, Peru, Chile, the Caribbean Basin, and Czechoslovakia in the years between the Depression and World War II, the majority of which were actively engaged in combatting the rising tide of right-wing authoritarianism. Most Surrealist groups met with harsh police repression for their subversive activities; those that managed to elude authorities were further suppressed by wartime conditions in the early 1940s. But by war's end, Surrealist activity sprouted up all over the world, pushing up from the postwar underground like so many mushrooms on a densely shaded woodland floor after heavy rains—Mauritius, Montréal, Lisbon, Caracas, Port-au-Prince, Beirut, Amsterdam, Stockholm, Istanbul, Athens, Chicago, and Buenos Aires are just a few sites of activity in the 1950s and 1960s. In most cases, these organizations, networks, and individuals attempted affiliations with far Left and anarchist groups in their respective countries, but with mixed success given the political landscape.

Efforts to find internationalized alternatives to the brutalities of predatory Western capitalism and Stalinist statism led the Surrealists in Paris to pool their resources with a faction of the Anarchist Federation (FA).¹⁰ The alliance was firmly based on the affinities the Surrealists shared with the anarchists' commitments to antipatriotism, anticapitalism, antimilitarism, antistatism, revolt, class struggle, desertion, and sabotage. A joint surrealo-anarchist manifesto issued by some twenty-five Surrealists from several European countries outlined a collaborative program for total social revolution in the face of the utter ideological bankruptcy of extant political parties locked in the sociocultural vise of the Cold War. Surrealists contributed nearly thirty short columns to the FA's newspaper that consistently and radically questioned the functions of the existing political parties in France, criticized the despotic limits of representative democracy, and expressed a longing to restore the initiative for radical liberty to civil society.

Surrealists continued their attacks on the Soviet Union and European post-Stalinism without supporting NATO's paranoid worldview—for instance, the Surrealists vociferously protested the Soviet invasion of Hungary but also took pains to connect the dots between what was happening in Eastern Europe and the conflicts in French North Africa and European imperialist adventurism in the Suez.¹¹ As activists in the Intellectual Action Committee Against the Continuation of the War in North Africa, the Surrealists urged linking with the Committee for Liaison and Action for Workers' Democracy, stressing that the struggle of workers in Budapest was in every way consistent with the anticolonial insurgency in Algeria: "The supreme trick of the modern epoch is that today's assassins have assumed for themselves the rhythm of history. It is in the name of democracy and socialism that police murder functions in Algeria no less than in Hungary." When Charles de Gaulle seized power in France in a bloodless coup d'état, the Surrealists called for popular insubordination against the new authoritarian regime while simultaneously denouncing Nikita Khrushchev's de-Stalinization program as a meaningless gesture without a rehabilitation of Leon Trotsky.

Confronted by an increasingly debased and sclerotic Marxism being practiced by so-called people's democracies and the parties of loyal opposition in the West, the Surrealist theorist Nora Mitrani anticipated the explosions of 1968 when she explained that the Cold War binary offered no real choice: "If it is a matter of political and social revolution as defined by the Marxists, let us say that it falls far short of what Surrealism wants. This type of revolution is not enough, and it will never be enough," Mitrani declared. And as for the West,

in this mass civilization, humankind has struck a miserable bargain: it has exchanged its independence and the mind's freedom for a higher standard of living and consumption of "token appearances" [a higher standard of living, the management of leisure and vacation time], and even on this level, by the way, there

is much more to do and gain. But for Surrealism, such a bargain is pitiful, and no bargain in the world can satisfy us.¹²

This restless search for more vibrant and emancipatory instances of Marxist praxis led to a brief but ardent interest in the Cuban Revolution, which had begun in 1959. In 1967, a handful of Surrealists visited the island and came back entranced; some of them wrote moving, Romantic tributes to the changes there, including the idea that anticolonial Castro-Guevaraist Marxism had historically and dialectically superseded the morbid fixations of the young Maoists in France, West Germany, Italy, and England at the time. But Surrealism's ideological one-night stand with Castro's self-identified Marxist-Leninist revolution angrily ended when the government in Havana announced its support for the Warsaw Pact invasion of Prague.¹³

THE INSTINCT FOR LIBERTY

In 1968, the year the Prague revolt was crushed, a new laboratory for experimental revolutionary theory and practice emerged in the streets of Paris. Social-democratic capitalism had collapsed under its own numbing dead weight all across the overdeveloped world in the late 1960s; in France, the late spring brought uprisings by college students in Paris against the dismal university conditions. These suddenly transmuted into waves of wildcat general strikes involving some nine million people that almost brought down the State. The battle cries that were scrawled on walls and barricades contained more than a whiff of Surrealist dialectics: "Culture is an inversion of life"; "Don't liberate me. I'll take care of that myself"; "In a society that has abolished every kind of adventure, the only adventure that remains is to abolish that society"; "Desiring reality is great, but realizing your desires is better"; "The more I make love, the more I want to make revolution. The more I make revolution, the more I want to make love." Breton had been dead

for two years, but his ghost joyfully roamed the streets: "Imagination is not a gift. It must be conquered," Breton wrote.¹⁴ The Surrealists issued a declaration that put them at the revolution's disposal. Distributed at a panoramic, all-tendencies gathering of student rebels on May 9, the document urged those in attendance to ignore ideologues, self-fashioned leaders, institutions, and political apparatuses in order to allow their rage to run free, unhindered by "preacher-shepherds" who sought to direct their social guerrilla warfare.¹⁵

The special agitprop issue of the Surrealist periodical *L'Archibras* for spring and summer 1968 was outlawed by the French government. Those responsible for its publication, including Vincent Bounoure, Claude Courtot, Annie Le Brun, José Pierre, Jean Schuster, George Sebbag, and Jean-Claude Silbermann, were charged with incitement to crime and disorder, slanderous defamation of the police, and offenses against the president of the republic. The incendiary texts collected in that issue mocked authority, hierarchy, commerce, progress, good citizenship, and class collaboration. The French Communist Party was blasted as a gang of "informers" and one of the many institutions in the French political landscape that is terrified of "the imagination which develops consciousness" and "the desire which changes reality." One particularly scathing attack on French patriotism extols civil war as "the only just war because one knows why one is killing one's enemy" and appeals for more expressions of "ill will."

Another striking example of the Surrealist effort to Romantically rework Marxian revolutionary thought from this time was "The Platform of Prague."¹⁶ In April 1968, Czech Surrealists mounted an International Surrealist Exhibition called *The Pleasure Principle*; "The Platform of Prague" is a collective declaration prepared by Surrealists from France, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere that was compiled during the two-week period of the exhibition. *The Pleasure Principle* was a showcase of offerings in the fight against the new forms of repression, coercion, and control in modern industrial societies, and "The Platform of Prague"

was a seven-point outline that reasserted Surrealist strategies that would effectively neutralize these latest, sinister threats to human liberty. The manifesto, endorsed by more than sixty Surrealists from throughout the world, spoke with added poignancy when it was published in France in autumn 1968 in *L'Archibras*; after all, the uprising in Paris had collapsed, and Soviet tanks and paratroopers were occupying Czechoslovakia.

In “The Platform of Prague,” the Surrealists insisted—as they have since the end of World War I—that the untrammelled imagination could regenerate creative, poetical thought that would re-energize revolutionary ideas: “Poetry constitutes a detonator that allows thought of the scientific or philosophic type to explode the motionless confrontation of classical criticism and reactionary stagnation, in the course of a permanent conflict that sets institutions as well as mentalities ablaze.” The document recounted the movement’s intellectual history, reaffirmed its relevance to contemporary conditions, and proposed numerous trajectories for the future within the grim context of world affairs at the end of the 1960s:

The words “revolution,” “Communism,” “internationalism,” and even “liberty” have been served in several countries . . . as the ideological and moral justification of a police apparatus . . . as absolute master. [T]he word “revolution” signifies a political crime, the word “Communism” the political bureaucratic caste monopolizing power and privileges, the word “internationalism” submission to the imperatives of Russian politics and the word “liberty” to censorship, torture and concentration camps.

It was foolhardy to think that “apparatchiks of the Communist Party (especially those of France and Czechoslovakia)” could aid at all in stimulating the desired radical changes since their “essential work consists in paralyzing or congealing all revolutionary thought,” the Surrealists explained. In short, Marxist revolution was too important to be left to the Communist Party:



Franklin Rosemont, *Juke-box for May '68*, 2008.

Marxism-Leninism must be demystified. Marxism can again become an effective weapon in the service of the Communist ideal. However, one needs to start by getting rid of its polemical aspect, obliterating the very ideology that arose from the tactical necessity by which Marx and Engels opposed theorists of the highest order like [Max] Stirner, Proudhon, and Bakunin and rejected, not without deference, the fascinating ideas of Charles Fourier.

By bringing anarchists and utopian radicals back into the fold, the Surrealists hoped to expunge once and for all those elements of Marx's thought that had allowed Stalinism to emerge "from what should have made it impossible" to form in the first place. As for Leninism, they felt that, although "there are reasons for great reservations about the commonly accepted principle of the leading role of the party," it was still worthwhile to study "the tragic experience of the deviation of Bolshevism into a police state so that it may serve today's revolutionary vigilance."

"The Platform of Prague" listed contemporary examples of this renovation of revolutionary praxis as models for future Surrealist investigation and innovation. In particular, the document advocated the radical overthrow of the West through intimate linkage of revolutionary movements with anti-Soviet democratic insurgencies in Eastern Europe and those of anti-imperialist Third World liberation—the proclamation specifically names two such proponents of this form of "revolutionary dynamism," the Argentine global guerrilla Ernesto Che Guevara and the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund militant Rudi Dutschke. "Fresh ferments in the concepts of revolutionary ideology," as seen in "the resistance of the Vietnamese people [against the invading armed forces of the United States], the tenacity of the guerrillas in Latin America in spite of the death of Che Guevara, the growing influence of Black Power in the USA," and "the youth movements in Polish, French and German universities" are all part of a worldwide tumult that can be used to recalibrate Marxism and send it

in a different direction, away from the “authoritarian centralism of Moscow.”

But, as “The Platform of Prague” counsels, the success of such a redesign and reactivation of Marxism against capitalism is critically related to first restoring integrity to revolutionary ideas and language: “The corruption of ideas themselves . . . allows the worst oppression to be concealed by the most radiant words formulated by revolutionary consciousness,” the statement cautions, and goes on to say,

The repressive system monopolizes language to return it only after it has been reduced to its utilitarian function or turned toward ends of mere distraction. Thus, people are deprived of the real power of their own thoughts; they are forced—and soon they become resigned to it—to rely on cultural agents who provide them with patterns of thinking which naturally conform to the good and efficient functioning of the system. In this way people are made to turn away, with suspicion and contempt, from the interior domain most personal to them, in which their identity is anchored.

This formulation is an accurate reading of the Frankfurt School social theorist Herbert Marcuse. Marcuse, a tireless Freudo-Marxian investigator of the totalitarian means of social control, grappled with how false consciousness and alienation warp the instinctual human desire for liberty in the name of society, particularly the capitalist variety. In order to deflect the universal human urges for liberty, the authoritarian society encourages the internalization of its infrastructures of domination by generating an endless series of “false needs” that only the existing commanding societal apparatus seems capable of satisfying. “A comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom prevails in advanced industrial civilization,” Marcuse writes in *One-Dimensional Man*. “Independence of thought, autonomy, and the right to political opposition are being deprived of their basic critical function in a society which

seems increasingly capable of satisfying the needs of the Individuals through the way in which it is organized.”¹⁷ As a result, “such a society may justly demand acceptance of its principles and institutions, and reduce opposition. . . . In this respect, it seems to make little difference whether the increasing satisfaction of needs is accomplished by an authoritarian or a non-authoritarian system.”

Marcuse’s influence on and links with Surrealism are an important component in the movement’s construction of Romantic libertarian Marxism over the past three decades. In his absorbing history of events leading up to the formation of the Chicago Surrealist Group, Franklin Rosemont relates that “Marcuse’s *Eros and Civilization*, with its Surrealist emphasis on the release of erotic energy as a defining element of revolution, was a particularly important book for us . . . we vigorously upheld a radical, non-medical, non-therapeutic analysis—a kind of Wobbly anarcho-Freudianism, with strategic implications.” In a letter to the Chicago Surrealists from 1972, Marcuse wrote,

The Surrealist effort . . . is more than a mere enlargement of our perception, imagination, reason. The restructuring and redirection of the mental faculties is not an end-in-itself, but is to undo the mutilation of our faculties by the established society and its requirements. Surrealism thus invokes an infinitely richer, denser universe, where people, things, nature are stripped of their false familiar appearance. It is an uncanny universe, for what could be more disturbing than to discover that we live under the law of another, unfamiliar, repressed causality: metaphysical, spiritual, but altogether of this world, not of some heaven or hell, a different order which interfered with the established one without abolishing it.¹⁸

Capitalism—or, more precisely, the systems of repression that the capitalist order relies upon to keep control, called the reality principle in Freudian parlance—Marcuse said, was responsible for “the mutilation of our faculties,” a mutilation that Surrealists

had also recognized when they organized the Bratislava, Brno, and Prague *Pleasure Principle* exhibitions of 1968. The insurgent, poetic struggle to liberate language and ideas called for by “The Platform of Prague” continues to be a preoccupation of Surrealist groups around the globe to this day.

Language, representation, and perception are all means of production that must be seized if emancipation is to be won. Breton long understood this—in 1956, he had coined the term “miserabilism” to criticize the widespread “devaluation of reality in place of its glorification” that he saw throughout the postwar cultures of the West, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union.¹⁹ It was at bottom the spawn of two consorting “vermin, Hitlerian fascism and Stalinism,” both of which want “to apply the death penalty to creative people by injecting them with poisons” and to paralyze them, preventing them from taking any action that could lead to meaningful change. The Chicago Surrealists generalized Breton’s discussion of miserabilism and, starting in 1976, extended it to give it more play within various pockets of the international Surrealist movement, tirelessly insisting on breaking “the death grip that produces both misery and the idea that misery is the only possible reality.”²⁰ As the Surrealist Penelope Rosemont explains,

The basic assumption of miserabilism is that misery is eternal—that there is no way out. Beginning with resignation, it passes quickly enough to the outright glorification of misery for misery’s sake. This is the function of nearly the whole superstructure of advanced capitalist society today: from religion to the advertising agencies, from the politicians to the false poets. As the quintessential ideological expression of decadent capitalism’s surge towards barbarism, reinforced by the universal institutionalisation of the death-wish, miserabilism rests on the extreme brutalization of language—a monstrous depreciation of all signs, so that it becomes increasingly impossible for men and women to think: impossible above all to express their thoughts with any coherence, lucidity or ardour.

All signs by which communication is supposed to be effected are degraded to the narrowest utilitarian function, made subservient to the fetishism of commodities, and deprived of all brilliance and fire.²¹

The more intriguing aspects of the Chicago Surrealists' upgrading of Breton's category of miserabilism include the points of conjunction found with Marx's famous passage on the "the general law of capitalistic accumulation" in the first volume of *Capital*:

Within the capitalist system all methods for raising the social productiveness of labor are brought about at the cost of the individual laborer. . . . they mutilate the laborer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into hated toil; . . . they distort the conditions under which he works, subject him during the labor-process to a despotism more hateful for its meanness; they transform his life-time into working time, and drag his wife and child beneath the Juggernaut of capital. But all methods for the production of surplus-value are at the same time methods of accumulation; and every extension of accumulation becomes again a means for the development of those methods. It follows therefore that in proportion as capital accumulates, the lot of the laborer, be his payment high or low, must grow worse. The law, finally, that always equilibrates the relative surplus-population, or industrial reserve army, to the extent and energy of accumulation, this law rivets the laborer to capital more firmly than the wedges of Vulcan did Prometheus to the rock. It establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, i.e., on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital.²²

With this connection, the Chicago group makes an important point about the struggle against miserabilism that has implications for reassessing the revolutionary Romantic Marxist project. Antimiserabilist action is not an elaborate distraction that diverts attention from the bread-and-butter dynamics of class domination by plunging one into the funhouse of culture. Miserabilism is more than just a shimmering social form of organization reflecting off of society's material base; it is a key term of social domination, and therefore it contains within itself all the inconsistencies and negations needed to break its hold over people's lives.²³

Löwy's thoughts on this period weave through his essays on the situationist Guy Debord, the Surrealist Vincent Bounoure, and the diffusion of post-1969 international Surrealist movements. But his investigations stop short of addressing one nagging question: wasn't the Surrealists' open support of autonomism during the May Commune of 1968 the best political fit for the movement's Romantic anticapitalism in more than forty years? Like much of the "postpolitical politics" of autonomist movements in Europe that were active in the 1970s and continue today, the Surrealists' heterodox and self-organized blend of anarchism and libertarian Marxism regarded anticapitalist struggle as being intent not so much on seizing and securing power as on undermining and demolishing any form of aggregating political power. The Surrealists' political objective never was to establish and rule a Surrealist People's Republic; rather, it was to short-circuit the conniving, colluding interests of the State, the capitalist order, patriarchal family structures, racial hierarchies, widespread religious mystification, relentless law-and-order moralizing, and mindless militarism, all of which continue to extend their compulsive powers profoundly and intimately into the physical, social, and psychical spaces of people's everyday lives.

With a little luck, the essays by Löwy collected here will inspire those active in today's social movements to think about Romantic anticapitalism as a star for navigation. The Surrealist quest to set loose unrepressed, spontaneous, antisystematic, and localized

patterns of resistance should be of interest to anyone concerned with the daily devastation wrought by reactionary “moral values” Puritans, neoliberalism’s transnational carpetbaggers, and the violent American Exceptionalist commissars of neoconservatism. Likewise, the Marxist tools for identifying (and changing) the conditions of alienation, reification, and false consciousness remain, unfortunately, as relevant now in a time of crisis capitalism as they were during the time of the second Industrial Revolution.

In other words, Löwy is saying that it is a mistake to think that Romanticism, Surrealism, and Marxism are obsolete and irrelevant to the world at present. Invoking the insurgent Romanticism of jazz and Harlem Renaissance poetry, the historian and cultural critic Robin D. G. Kelley told a crowd of curious students in 1998 that “Surrealism recognizes that any revolution must begin with thought, with how we imagine a New World, with how we reconstruct our social and individual relationships, with unleashing our desire and building a new future on the basis of love and creativity rather than rationality. It’s time that we follow the ancestors, transcend the limits of our current life and make a new one.”²⁴ As unprecedented, previously unforeseen means of capitalist violence and degradation make themselves manifest around us daily and continue to colonize ever deeper layers of social and mental space, people must not shy away from looking back on history to help them imagine an unimaginable postcapitalist future.

MORNING STAR



Guy Girard, *La letter G comme Gargantua à la gare Saint-Lazare*
(*G as in Gargantua at the Saint-Lazare Station*), 1997.



Schlechter Duvall, *Return of the Great Invisibles*.

BREAKING OUT OF THE STEEL CAGE!

SURREALISM IS NOT, HAS NEVER been, and will never be a literary or artistic school but is a movement of the human spirit in revolt and an eminently subversive attempt to reenchant the world: an attempt to reestablish the “enchanted” dimensions at the core of human existence—poetry, passion, mad love, imagination, magic, myth, the marvelous, dreams, revolt, utopian ideals—which have been eradicated by this civilization and its values. In other words, Surrealism is a protest against narrow-minded rationality, the commercialization of life, petty thinking, and the boring realism of our money-dominated, industrial society. It is also the utopian and revolutionary aspiration to “transform life”—an adventure that is at once intellectual and passionate, political and magical, poetic and dreamlike. It began in 1924; it continues today.

As the German sociologist Max Weber has written so forcefully, we are now living in a world that has become for us a veritable steel cage and confines us in spite of ourselves—a reified and alienated structure that imprisons us as individuals within the laws of the system of rationalism and capitalism as effectively as if we were inmates in prison. Surrealism is for us an enchanted means we can use to destroy the bars of this prison and regain our freedom. If, in the words of Weber, this civilization is the universe

of *Rechenhaftigkeit*—or the spirit of rational calculation—then Surrealism is a precise instrument that will allow us to sever the threads of this arithmetical spider’s web.

Too often, Surrealism has been reduced to paintings, sculptures, and collections of poetry. It certainly includes all these manifestations but in actuality it remains elusive, beyond the rational understanding of appraisers, auctioneers, collectors, archivists, and entomologists. Surrealism is above all a particular state of mind—a state of insubordination, negativity, and revolt that draws positive, erotic, and poetic strength from the depths of the unconscious: that abyss of desire and magic well—the pleasure principle—in which we find the incandescent music of the imagination. For Surrealism, this mental transformation is present not only in the “works” that are found in museums and libraries, but also and equally so in its games, strolls, attitudes, and activities. The Surrealist idea of drifting or aimless wandering (*dérive*) is a prime example.

To understand the subversive implications of *dérive*, let us return to Max Weber. The quintessence of modern Western civilization is, according to him, action with a rational purpose (*Zweckrationalität*), utilitarian rationality. This permeates every aspect of life in our society and shapes our every gesture, every thought, and every aspect of our behavior. The way individuals move about in a street is one example. Although they are not as ferociously regulated as red ants, nevertheless their movement is aimed almost entirely at reaching rationally determined goals. People are always going “somewhere,” they are in a hurry to take care of “business,” or they are on their way to work or their way back home. There is nothing gratuitous about this Brownian movement of the masses.

On the other hand, *dérive*, as practiced by the Surrealists and the situationists, is a joyous excursion completely outside the weighty constraints of that domain of utilitarian reason. As Guy Debord observed, people who are experiencing *dérive* “waive, for a longer or shorter period, their reasons for moving about and behaving as they usually do—let themselves be guided by the



Eugenio Castro, untitled, 1996.



Albert Marencin, untitled, 1974.

charms of the places they find and meetings they chance to have there” (Debord 1956).

In its playful and irreverent form, *dérive* breaks away from the most sacred principles of modern capitalism, with its iron laws of utilitarianism and the omnipresent rules of utilitarian rationality. It can become, thanks to the magical virtues of this point of absolute divergence, of leaving everything, an enchanted promenade through the domain of Freedom, with chance for its only compass.

In certain respects, *dérive* can be seen as a descendent of the idle strolling practiced in the nineteenth century. As Walter Benjamin observed in his *Passagenwerk*, the stroller’s laziness or indolence is “a protest against the division of labor.” However, contrary to the stroller, the “one who practices *dérive*” is no longer held in thrall by commodity fetishism, the drive to consume—even though it is possible he might purchase a “found object” in a shop or enter a café. He is not hypnotized by the glare of shop windows and their displays but is seeking something else.

With no aim and no purpose [with no *Zweck* and no *Rationalität*]: two words that sum up the profound meaning of such a *dérive*, a practice that, in a single stroke, has the mysterious abil-

ity to restore the meaning of freedom for us. This experience of freedom produces a dizzy exaltation, a “state of transport.” It is an experience that reveals the hidden side of external reality—and also of our own inner reality. Streets, objects, passersby, freed suddenly from the iron laws of rationality, appear in a different light, become strange, disturbing, or sometimes comical. Sometimes they give rise to anxiety but also to jubilation.

As Guy Debord wrote, everything leads us to believe “that the future will speed up irreversible changes in behavior and the structure of contemporary society. One day, we’ll build cities to practice *dérive* in.” Though *dérive* may be an activity of the future, it is also the inheritor of an ancient, even archaic tradition—the seemingly random activities found in so-called primitive societies.

The Surrealist approach in terms of its lofty and bold ambitions is unique. It aims for nothing less than overcoming the reified oppositions whose expression has long found its actuality through its shadow-puppet theater, culture: dualisms of matter and spirit, exteriority and interiority, rationality and irrationality, wakefulness and dream, past and future, sacred and profane, art and nature. For Surrealism desires not merely a “synthesis” but the process that in Hegelian dialectics is referred to as Negation (*Aufhebung*), the conservation of opposites, and the overcoming of them to attain a higher level.

As André Breton often stated, from his *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* to his last writings, the Hegelian-Marxist dialectic is at the heart of the philosophy of Surrealism. As late as 1952, in his book *Entretiens*, he left no doubt on the matter: “Next to Hegel’s method, all others are insignificant. For me, where the Hegelian dialectic does not operate, there is no thought or even hope of finding truth.”

Ferdinand Alquié was not wrong to insist, in his *Philosophy of Surrealism*, that there is a contradiction between Hegel’s historical reason and the lofty moral demands inspiring the Surrealists. But he does not take into consideration the distinction, already made by nineteenth-century Left Hegelians, between the (conservative)

system and the (revolutionary) method of the author of the *Phenomenology of Mind*. Alquié's attempt to replace Hegel and Marx with Descartes and Kant and to substitute transcendence and metaphysics for the dialectic misses the main points of Surrealist philosophy. Alquié himself recognized and regretted that "Breton was apt to emphasize the Hegelian structure of Marx's analyses, to clarify and valorize Marx through Hegel." He also recognized that the author of the *Manifestoes of Surrealism* always spoke against transcendence and metaphysics. But he chose to disregard the explicit content of Breton's thought in the name of a very spurious interpretation of the "spirit" of his writings (Alquié 1977, 145).

The essays brought together here in *Morning Star*, whether their approach is historical or contemporary, aim to shed light on the continuing relevance of Surrealist ideas, values, myths, and dreams. The crimson and black thread that runs through them is the ever-burning question of revolutionary change. Since 1727, astronomers have defined a revolution as a body rotating around its own axis. Surrealists define revolution in exactly the opposite way. They see it as an interruption of the monotonous rotation of Western civilization around itself, to do away with this self-absorbed axis once and for all and to open the possibilities of another movement: the free and harmonic movement of a civilization of passionate attraction. A utopia of revolutions is the musical energy of this movement (*Surr* 1996).

Most of these texts have been published in Surrealist journals, mainly in Prague, Madrid, and Stockholm. By including essays on some figures not directly belonging to Surrealism—but who drew part of their subversive force from it, such as Guy Debord—we aim to suggest links of "elective affinity" that can be drawn between Surrealism and other critical expressions of contemporary thought. A chapter deals with the continuation of Surrealism after 1969, the date of the attempt to dissolve the movement by a few who had been its prime movers (Jean Schuster, José Pierre, Gérard Legrand, etc.). The poet and essayist Vincent Bounoure, who died in 1996, spearheaded the continuation of the Surrealist adventure.



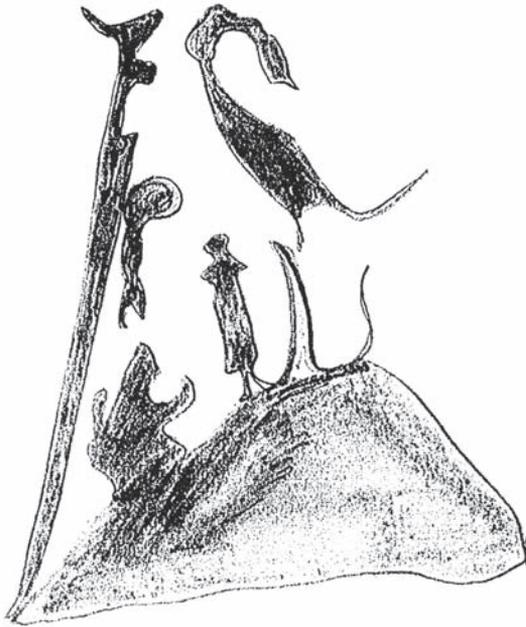
Michael Löwy, *Paysage intérieur II (Interior Landscape II)*, 1998.

His obstinate fight against the dissolution found an echo, not only in Paris but elsewhere in Europe and throughout the world. Today, collective Surrealist activity can be found in Paris, Prague, Chicago, Athens, São Paulo, Stockholm, Madrid, and Leeds.

Most of the essays published here deal with the political philosophy of Surrealism and its relation to political thought. Surrealist

identification with historical materialism, affirmed by Breton in the *Second Manifesto*, played a decisive role in the history of the movement, especially in regard to the political stands it took. We are familiar with the key points in this process; joining the French Communist Party in 1927; breaking with Stalinist Communism during the Conference in Defense of Culture in 1935; Breton's visit to Trotsky in 1938; and the founding of the FIARI (International Federation of Independent Revolutionary Art).

And later, the rediscovery of Fourier and the utopians in the postwar period; the attempts at rapprochement with the anarchists in the 1949–1953 period; and finally, the Manifesto of the 121 for the right to refuse to serve in the Algerian war (1961) and active participation in the May '68 events. During those years, the Surrealist group obstinately refused to support either the “Western



Anny Bonin, *Marc de café: Triangles (Coffee Grounds: Triangles)*, 1998.

World”—that is, the imperialist powers—or the so-called socialist camp—that is, Stalinist totalitarianism. This cannot be said of the majority of “politically committed” intellectuals.¹

If many of the Marxist thinkers discussed in this book—such as Pierre Naville, José Carlos Mariátegui, Walter Benjamin, and Guy Debord—were fascinated by Surrealism, it is because they understood that this movement represented the highest expression of revolutionary romanticism in the twentieth century. What Surrealism shares with the early works of Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, with Victor Hugo and Petrus Borel, Matthew Lewis and Charles Maturin, William Blake and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, is the intense and sometimes desperate attempt to reenchant the world. Needless to say, not through religion, as among many romantics, but through poetry. For the Surrealists, this practice is inseparable from the revolutionary transformation of society.

Pierre Naville has the distinction of being one of the founders of Surrealism and, a few years later, of the Left Opposition (Trotskyist). Although the time he spent in the Surrealist movement was relatively brief—1924–1929—nevertheless, he played a major role in turning Breton and his friends toward Marxism and political commitment. For Pierre Naville as for Walter Benjamin, the key meeting point and the most fundamental point of convergence between Surrealism and Communism was revolutionary pessimism.

Needless to say, such pessimism doesn't mean resignation to misery: it means refusing to rely on the “natural course of history” or being prepared to fight against the current with no certainty of winning. These revolutionaries are motivated not by a teleological belief in a swift and certain triumph, but by the deeply held conviction that it is impossible to live as a human being worthy of that name without fighting fiercely and with unshakable will against the established order.

Similar ideas can be found in *Le Pari mélancholique*, a book by Daniel Bensaïd: radical political commitment is based not on any kind of progressive “scientific certainty,” but on a reasoned wager on the future. Daniel Bensaïd's argument is impressive in its lucid-

ity. Revolutionaries like Blanqui, Benjamin, Trotsky, or Guevara, he writes, have an acute consciousness of peril, a sense of the recurrence of disaster. Nothing is more foreign to the melancholic revolutionary than a paralyzing faith in inevitable progress and a guaranteed future. Although they are pessimists, they refuse to surrender, to give in. Their utopia is the principle of resistance to inevitable catastrophe (Bensaïd 1997).

If Marxism was a decisive aspect of the political itinerary of Surrealism—especially during the first twenty years of the movement—it is far from the only one. Since the movement’s inception, an anarchist, libertarian sensibility has run through Surrealists’ political thought. This is evident in Breton, as I indicate in one of the essays collected here, but it also holds true for most of the others.

Benjamin Péret is among those whose work radiates with the same dual light, at once crimson and black. Of all the Surrealists, he was without a doubt the most committed to political action inside the workers’ and Marxist movements, first as a Communist, then (during the 1930s) as a Trotskyist, and finally, in the postwar period, as an independent revolutionary Marxist. However, when he fought in the Spanish civil war, he chose to combat fascism by joining the ranks of Buonaventura Durruti’s libertarian column.

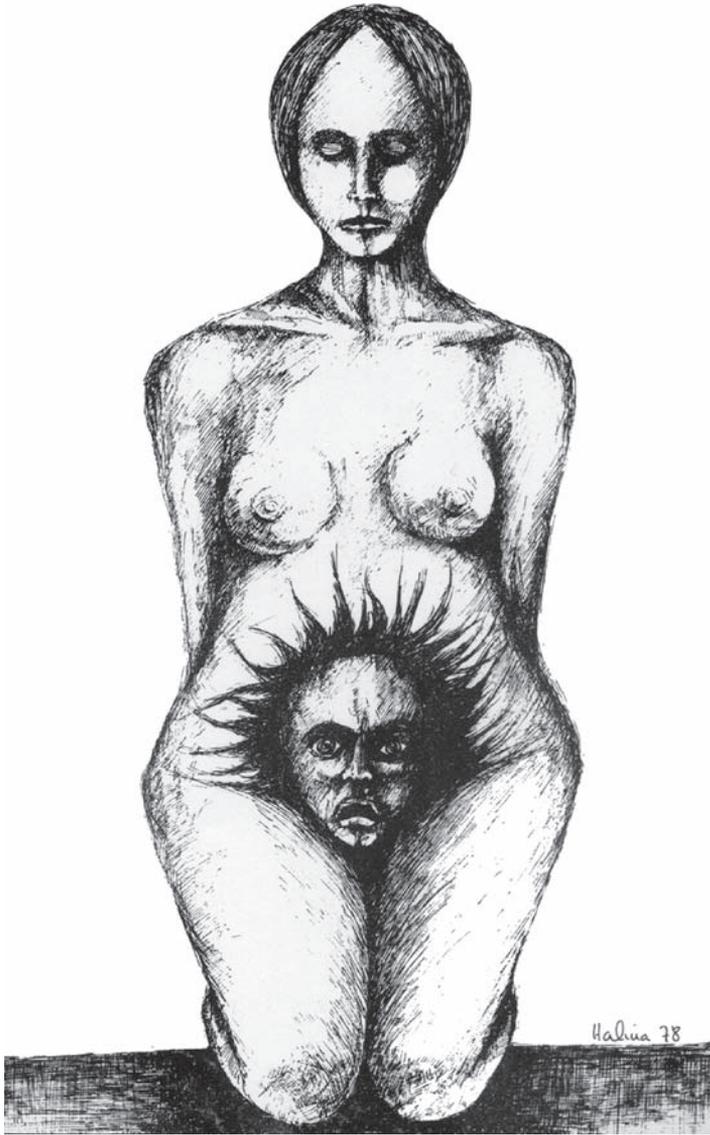
This dual light can also be seen in his political and historical writings. An interesting example is his remarkable 1955–1956 essay on Palmares, a community of “maroon” (fugitive) slaves in northeastern Brazil. Throughout the seventeenth century, this community resisted Dutch and Portuguese armies that attempted to put down their outpost of revolt. The “Negro Republic of Palmares” was not defeated until 1695, with the death of one of its last defenders, its last chief, Zumbi (Péret 1999).²

Péret’s interpretation of this event is no doubt Marxist, but his Marxism is set apart by a libertarian sensibility which gives this short essay a striking elation and originality. Péret believed that the desire for freedom is the most urgent of human desires, since freedom is the oxygen of the spirit and the heart, and without free-

dom they must wither and die. The writing of human history consists essentially in the struggle of the oppressed for their liberation, Péret reinterprets the classic Marxist thesis—class struggle as the battle of the exploited against their exploiters—from a libertarian standpoint. His essay is a road map, an outline for an anthropology of freedom.

The same libertarian outlook makes him examine more closely the “anarchic” and anti-authoritarian aspects of this self-emancipated slave community. The first period of the *quilombo*—the Brazilian word for communities of fugitive slaves—of Palmares was marked by an “absence of constraints,” a “total freedom” as well as a “fraternal generosity,” inspired by an awareness of common danger. The fugitive slaves lived in a natural state, defined as an “absence of any authority” and a basic solidarity. The way of life at Palmares Commune was “in a state of incompatibility with any form of government implying regular authority,” insofar as the egalitarian allotment of resources, the pooling of at least a part of goods, did not lend itself to a greater social stratification. Drawing on an old utopian Saint-Simonian formula (quoted by Marx), Péret argued that the internal rules within Palmares were more concerned with the administration of goods than with the government of people.

Péret’s body of work, like Breton’s—as well as the writings of many other members of the movement, not overlooking their declarations and collective leaflets—shows that in a strictly political sense Surrealism succeeded, through a process of alchemy that it secretly held, to forge into a single amulet revolt and revolution, Communism and freedom, utopia and the dialectic, action and dream. Thanks to it, Blanqui and Baudelaire, Marx and Rimbaud, Fourier and Hegel, Flora Tristan and William Blake, Leon Trotsky and Sigmund Freud, Buonaventura Durruti and the Portuguese Nun embarked on the same journey. A journey that has just begun. A long and difficult journey, but Surrealism is a precious guide. Like the astrolabe, it enables travelers to set their course by the stars.



Halina, *Éducation catholique (A Catholic Upbringing)*, 1978.

2

MORNING STAR

The New Myth from Romanticism to Surrealism

AMONG THE ROMANTIC STRATEGIES for reenchanting the world, the use of myth occupies a special place. At the magical intersection of many traditions, it offers an inexhaustible reservoir of symbols and allegories, ghosts and demons, gods and serpents. There are many ways to seek that dangerous treasure: the poetic or literary reference to ancient myth, the “learned” study of mythology, and the attempt to create a new mythos. In the third case, the creation of a new mythos, the loss of religious substance in myth transforms it into a profane image of reenchantment or, rather, a nonreligious way of regaining the sacred.

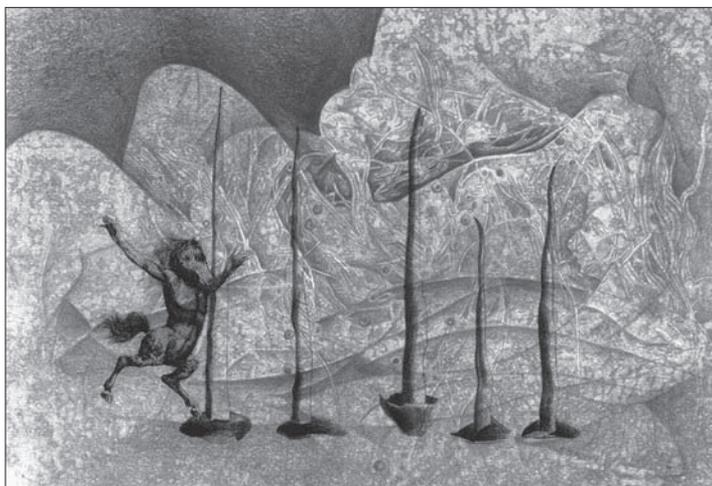
The sinister perversion of myth in German fascism, its manipulation as a national symbol or as racial heritage, contributed to discredit mythology in the aftermath of World War II. However, some German intellectuals, such as Ernst Bloch, believed in the possibility of retrieving myth from the Nazi taint—on the condition that it be illuminated by “the utopian light of the future.”¹

At the beginning, in early Romanticism, that light was omnipresent; it was the hidden lamp which lit, from within, the idea of the “new myth” invented at the dawn of the nineteenth century by Friedrich Schlegel. If one returns to that lofty source, the contrast with the morbid mythological manipulations of the Third Reich is

striking. For Schlegel, the new myth was not “German-national” but human-universal. In his *Discourse on Mythology* (1800), one of the most visionary “theoretical” texts of German Romanticism, Schlegel dreamed of a borderless mythopoetic universe, drawing not only from European traditions but also from the “treasures of the Orient.”

Above all, he imagined a new mythology, one which would not be a pale imitation of the past but would radically distinguish itself by its very nature, by its spiritual texture; while formerly myth immediately connected to the closest and most lived experience in the world of sensation, the new myth must be created, by contrast, from the “deepest depths of the mind” (*tiefsten Tiefe des Geistes*). Coming from that internal source, the new mythology would thus be produced by the mind from itself; from there it derives its elective affinity with idealist philosophy (Schlegel here is thinking primarily of Fichte), that also created itself “from nothing” (*aus Nichts entstanden*). That mythopoetic interiority coming from the depths cannot accept the limits imposed by rationalist reason; it is the realm of “whatever forever evades consciousness,” of “the beautiful disorder of the imagination” and “the original chaos of human nature.”

That’s not to say that it ignores the exterior world; the new myth is also “a hieroglyphic expression of surrounding reality under the transfiguration of the imagination and of love.”² It’s difficult to avoid the conclusion that Schlegel, in these passages, intuitively identified the domain that Freud would a century later crown with the name Unconscious. Concluding this text, saturated with fulgurant intuitions and seeming to announce now psychoanalysis, now Surrealism, Schlegel turns his eye toward the future. One day, human beings will rediscover their divinatory power (*divinatorischen Kraft*) and will greet the Golden Age, “which is yet to come.” “This is what I mean by the new mythology.” In situating the Golden Age in the future, not the past, Schlegel transfigures myth into utopian energy and invests mythopoetics with a magical power.³



Kathleen Fox, *Mémoire liquide (Liquid Memory)*, 1999 (detail).

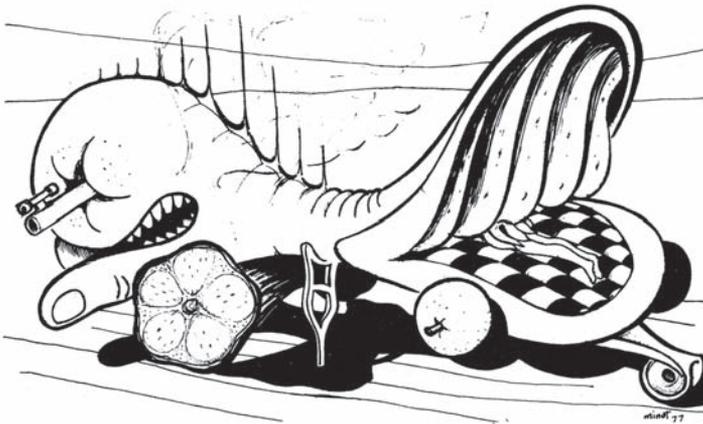
One hundred fifty years later, the Surrealists stirred those embers anew, illuminating the cave at the heart of darkness. For Breton and his friends, myth was a crystal of precious fire; they refused to abandon it to fascist mythomaniacs. In 1942, at the worst moment of the war, Breton believed more than ever in the necessity for a counterattack in this domain: “Faced with the current war mobilizing the world, the most profound minds are admitting the vital necessity of a myth opposed to that of Odin.”⁴

In 1937, in “Limits, Not Frontiers, of Surrealism,” Breton first suggested that Surrealism must take up the task of “the elaboration of the collective myth of our time,” one in which a simultaneously erotic and subversive role would be analogous to that played in the eighteenth century, just before the French Revolution, by the Gothic novel.⁵ The importance of myth to the Surrealists lies also in the fact that it constitutes (along with the esoteric traditions) a profane alternative to the irrational grip of religion. It is in this sense that we must interpret Breton’s remark (often taken as a provocative and iconoclastic statement) in the dedication of a

copy of *Mad Love* sent to his friend Armand Hoog: “Let’s demolish the churches, starting with the most beautiful, so that no stone remains unturned. Then the New Myth will live!”⁶

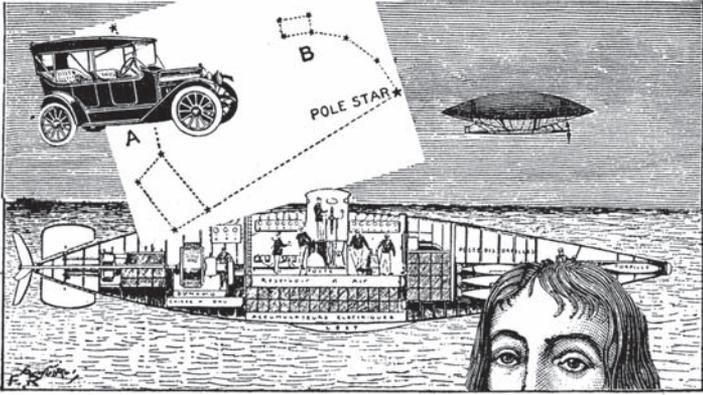
In the *Prolegomena to a Third Manifesto*, Breton asks (and asks himself) the question, “To what extent can we choose to adopt and impose a myth in relation to society that we judge desirable?”⁷ Everything indicates that for Breton myth and utopia were inseparable; if they are not identical, they are at least linked by a system of communicating vessels which assures the passage of desire between the two spheres.

The Surrealists have not succeeded in “imposing” a collective myth, but they have created one—using the Romantic method, by searching “the deepest depths of the mind” (Schlegel) or, in Breton’s words, “into the deepest emotional depths of our being where emotions exist that are incapable of expressing themselves in the limitations of the real world; emotions which have no other outlet than responding in desperation to the eternal lure of symbols and myths.”⁸



Jacinto Minot, *Drawing*, 1977.

MORNING STAR



Franklin Rosemont, *Collage*, 1989.

If they could not create what Schelling calls a “universal mythology, endowed with a general symbolism,” the Surrealists have at least invented—in the alchemical sense of the word—a new myth, destined to traverse the grim sky of modern culture like an incendiary comet. What is this myth? In order to answer this question, it would be useful to return to Breton’s most “mythological” work, *Arcanum 17*. The poet evokes, while transforming them, the myths of Isis and Osiris; the myth of Mélusine; the myth of Nut, the Sky Goddess, arching over the earth in a bow; the astrological myth of the 17th Arcanum of the tarot; the myth of Lucifer, angel of liberty—and above all, in Breton’s words, “one of the most powerful myths which continues to compel me,” mad love, “love that encompasses all one’s passion” and in which “resides the power to regenerate the world.”

In the conclusion of Breton’s book—one of Surrealism’s most luminous works—all these mythological figures flow, like so many rivers of fire, toward an image that contains them all and that, in Breton’s eyes, is “the supreme expression of Romantic thought” and “the most vivid symbol inherited by us”: the Morning Star, “fallen from the brow of the angel Lucifer.” This star represents

the great allegorical image of rebellion; an image from which we learn that “revolt itself, and revolt alone is the bearer of light. And that this light can reveal itself only through three methods: poetry, freedom and love.”⁹

So what is the new myth which contains (in modern form), unifies (thanks to their elective affinities), and organizes (without imposing a hierarchy upon them) revolt, love, poetry, and liberty? It can only be *Surrealism* itself, in its “divinatory power” (Schlegel), in its utopian gaze toward “the Golden Age which is yet to come” (Schlegel).

As poetic myth, Surrealism is the heir to the ideals announced a century and a half earlier by Romanticism. It has, however, a particularity of being, it is a myth in perpetual motion, always incomplete and always open to the creation of new mythological figures and images. Being above all an activity of the spirit, Surrealism cannot be fixed in an “ultimate myth,” a Grail to recover or a reified “Surreality”; perpetual incompleteness is its elixir of immortality.

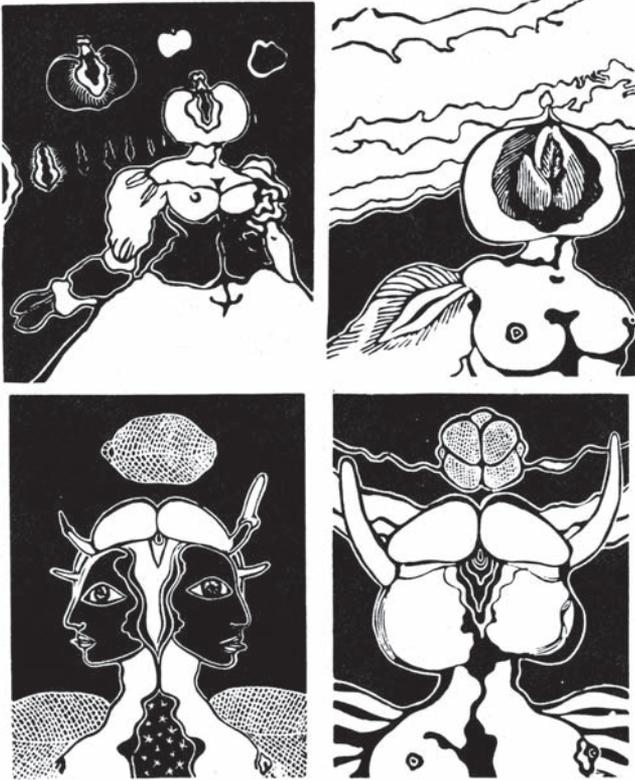
In his speech to students at Yale in 1942, Breton presented, as one of the objectives of Surrealism, the “preparation in a practical way for an intervention into mythic life, one which would need to begin with a large-scale clean up.”¹⁰ In our time that task continues to be of the most urgent necessity. In fact, it has become a river which one must divert from its course to clear away the mythological muck that has settled itself not only in the stables but in all the cottages and palaces. The obscurantist myths of religion and nationalism, these toad-headed idols (despite the respect we owe the toad) that we thought were forever swallowed up by the swamp, have left their tangled morass to haunt our consciousness again, overwhelming our minds with the overheated molten lead of dogma.

But behind these idols rises—even more formidably, omnipresent, omnipotent, and ventripotent—the real “Dominating Myth of Our Century,” the god that has devoured all other gods, the fetish that rules all other fetishes, unrivaled and sometimes presenting

itself as a plague of locusts devouring all the mind's fertile fields, sometimes as an untraceable odor, impregnating everything, making the air of our time unbreathable: the god "money."

From its origins up through our own time, Surrealism has never ceased to be a magical place of resistance, a transparent light of refusal, an ironic spirit of negation of all those manifestations of mythological servitude. The Luciferian Morning Star shines here.

TRANSLATED BY Jen Besemer.



Rikki Ducornet, *Phenomenology of the Pineapple* (linocut), 1971.



Guy Girard, *Fourier à Brocéliande* (*Fourier in Brocéliande Forest*), 1993.

THE LIBERTARIAN MARXISM OF ANDRÉ BRETON

PREDICTABLY, THE CENTENNIAL OF André Breton's birth was marked by all sorts of officious, academic, and media celebrations. However, these commercial apparitions were meaningless; Breton remains unassimilated. His vast project, inevitably unfinished, of alchemical fusion between mad love, the poetry of the marvelous, and social revolution is unassimilable by the bourgeois and philistine world. He remains irreducibly opposed to that society and is like a great bone—full of inscriptions and images, like the ornaments of the Solomon Islanders—stuck in the throat of capitalism.

Revolutionary aspiration is at the very source of Surrealism—it is not by accident that one of the movement's first collective texts, written in 1925, is called "Revolution Now and Forever." In that same year the desire to break with Western civilization led Breton to investigate the ideas of the October Revolution, especially Trotsky's essay on Lenin. Though he joined the French Communist Party in 1927, he refused to give up, as he explains in *Daybreak*, his "critical faculties."

In the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* of 1930, André Breton summed up all the conclusions of that action, affirming "totally, unreservedly, our adhesion to the principle of historical materi-

alism.” While making the distinction—the opposition, even—between “primitive materialism” and “modern materialism” (as Friedrich Engels would have said), Breton still insisted that “Surrealism considers itself indissolubly linked, through the affinities which I have pointed out, to the method of Marxist thought and to that method alone.”

It’s unnecessary to say that Breton’s Marxism did not coincide with the official vulgate of the Comintern. Perhaps one might call it a “Gothic Marxism,” that is, a historical materialism sensitive to the marvelous, to the dark moment of revolt, to the illumination which pierces, like lightning, the sky of revolutionary action. In other words, a reading of Marxist theory inspired by Rimbaud, Lautréamont, and the English Gothic novel (Lewis, Maturin)—without losing sight for even an instant of the vital need to combat the bourgeois order. It might seem paradoxical to unite, like communicating vessels, *Capital* with *The Castle of Otranto*, *The Origin of the Family* and *A Season in Hell*, *State and Revolution* and *Melmoth*. But it was at that singular moment that André Breton’s Marxism was formed, in all its unsettling originality.

In any case, this Marxism, like that of José Carlos Mariátegui, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, and Herbert Marcuse, draws upon the subterranean current running through the twentieth century, beneath the immense blockades constructed by orthodoxy: Romantic Marxism. By this I mean a kind of thought which is fascinated by certain cultural forms of the precapitalist past and which rejects the cold, abstract rationality of modern industrial civilization—but which changes that nostalgia into a force in the battle for the revolutionary transformation of the present. All Romantic Marxists struggle against the capitalist disenchantment of the world (which is the logical and necessary result of quantification, commercialization, and reification of social relations), but in André Breton and the Surrealists the Romantic/revolutionary urge to reenchant the world through imagination finds its most striking expression.

Breton’s Marxism is also distinguished from the rationalist/



Michel Zimbacca, *Lapiculcoeur (Heart of an Aspbee)*, 1955.

scientific, Cartesian/positivist tendency, strongly marked by eighteenth-century French materialism—which dominated the official doctrine of French Communism—by its insistence on the Hegelian dialectical heritage of Marxism. In Breton’s speech in Prague in March 1935 on “The Surrealist Situation of the Object,” he insisted on the critical importance of Hegel’s philosophy for Surrealism: “Hegel, in his *Aesthetic*, was beset with all the problems that today, in poetry and art, can be considered the most difficult, and with an unequalled lucidity he resolved them, for the most part . . . I would say that today, it is still Hegel who must be consulted as to the well- or ill-foundedness of Surrealist activity in the arts.”¹

Some months later, in June of that year, in his famous address to the Congress of Writers for the Defense of Culture, he returned to the subject and fearlessly proclaimed, in the face of anti-Germanic chauvinism:

In the German-language philosophers above all we have discovered the only effective antidote to the positivist rational-

ism that continues to enact its ravages here. That antidote is none other than dialectical materialism as a general theory of knowledge.²

This adherence to Communism and to Marxism did not hinder the existence of an irreducibly libertarian position at the heart of Breton's evolution. It's worth repeating his profession of faith from the *First Manifesto of Surrealism* of 1924: "Freedom is the only cause worth serving."



Guy Girard, *La lettre S comme le Soleil du Sabbat*
(*S as in the Sabbath Sun*), 1997.

Walter Benjamin, in his 1929 article on Surrealism, called on Breton and his friends to articulate the “anarchist element” of revolutionary action with its “methodical and disciplined preparation”—that is, Communism.³

The rest of the story is well known: Growing closer and closer to the position of Trotsky and the Left Opposition, most of the Surrealists (but not Louis Aragon!) definitively broke from Stalinism in 1935. This was not a rupture with Marxism, which continued to inspire Surrealist thought, but with the opportunism of Stalin and his followers which “attempted to destroy the two essential components of the revolutionary spirit”—the refusal of imposed conditions and the vital necessity to improve them.⁴

In 1938, Breton visited Trotsky in Mexico. Together they wrote one of the most important revolutionary documents of the twentieth century, the call “For an Independent Revolutionary Art,” which contained this famous passage:

The revolution must, from the very start, establish and assure an anarchist ideal of individual freedom for cultural creation. No authority, no constraint, not the slightest trace of influence! On this issue Marxists must march hand in hand with anarchists.⁵

As we know, the passage was penned by Trotsky himself, but one might imagine that it was the product of his long conversations with Breton on the shore of Lake Patzcuaro.⁶

Breton’s anarchist sympathies manifested themselves even more clearly in the postwar years. In the book *Arcanum 17*, published in 1947, he describes the emotion he felt when, still a child, he discovered a headstone in a cemetery with the inscription, “Neither God nor Master.” Commenting on these words, he reflected: “Above art and poetry, whether we wish it or not, flies a flag alternately red and black”—the colors of communism and anarchy, two colors he refused to choose between.

From October 1951 to January 1953, the Surrealist group in Paris

regularly contributed articles and leaflets to the journal *Le Libertaire*, the newspaper of the French Anarchist Federation. Their principal correspondent in the Federation was, at that time, the libertarian Communist George Fontenis. During this time Breton wrote the flamboyant “La claire tour (The Bright Tower)” (1952), which traced the libertarian origins of Surrealism: “Surrealism first came into being in the black mirror of anarchism, long before it defined itself, when it was nothing more than a free association of individuals spontaneously and openly rejecting the social and moral constraints of their time.”⁷

Thirty years and many betrayals later, he declared himself once more a partisan of anarchism—not the anarchism which is easily caricatured, but “the one our comrade Fontenis describes ‘as socialism itself, that is, that modern revindication of human dignity (our liberty as much as our well-being).’” Despite the intervening break in 1953, Breton never burned his bridges with the libertarians, continuing to collaborate with certain of their initiatives.⁸

This interest and active sympathy for anarchism did not lead Breton to renounce his adhesion to the October Revolution and the ideas of Leon Trotsky. In an intervention on November 17, 1957, that André Breton instigated and signed, “Against winds and tides, I am among those who still find, in the recollection of the October Revolution, a high degree of the same unconditional enthusiasm I felt toward it in my youth and which calls forth my total dedication.”⁹

Saluting the expression in Trotsky’s eyes, as he appeared in an old 1917 photograph in the uniform of the Red Army, he proclaimed, “Such an expression, and the light emanating from it, can never be extinguished, no more than Thermidor could alter the character of Saint-Just.”¹⁰ Finally, in 1962, in homage to Natalia Sedova Trotsky, he hoped that one day history would accord Leon Trotsky “not only justice . . . but will also be forced to accept, in all their vigor and magnitude, the ideas to which his life was given.”¹¹

In conclusion, Surrealism and the thought of André Breton are

perhaps that ideal point, that supreme mental location where the libertarian trajectory meets revolutionary Marxism. But we must not forget that Surrealism contains what Ernst Bloch calls “utopian excess,” a surplus which surpasses the limits of every social or political movement, however revolutionary they may be. That light emanates from the unending night at the heart of the Surrealist spirit, from its search for the gold of time, from its headlong dive into the abyss of dreams and the marvelous.

TRANSLATED BY Jen Besemer.



Guy Ducornet, *Transform the World*, 2005.



Sergio Lima, *Bête qui marche la nuit* (*Creature That Walks at Night*), 1965.

INCANDESCENT FLAME

Surrealism as a Romantic Revolutionary Movement

WHAT IS ROMANTICISM? OFTEN IT is reduced to a nineteenth-century literary school, or to a traditionalist reaction against the French Revolution—two propositions found in countless works by eminent specialists in literary history and the history of political thought. This is too simple a formulation. Rather, Romanticism is a form of sensibility nourishing all fields of culture, a worldview which extends from the second half of the eighteenth century to today, a comet whose flaming “core” is revolt directed against modern industrial civilization, in the name of some of the social and cultural values of the past. Nostalgic for a lost paradise—real or imaginary—Romanticism is in opposition to the melancholic mood of despair, to the quantifying mind of the bourgeois universe, to commercial reification, to the platitudes of utilitarianism, and above all, to the *disenchantment of the world*.

Surrealism is the most striking and the most fascinating example of a Romantic current in the twentieth century. It is the one which has carried to its highest expression the Romantic aspiration to reenchant the world. It is also the only one which has incarnated, in the most radical fashion, the revolutionary dimension of Romanticism. The revolt of the mind (spirit) and social revolution are the polar stars around which the movement has oriented itself

from its beginnings, driving it in a perpetual search for cultural and political practices that are subversive. At the cost of multiple secessions and defections, the core of the Surrealist group, around André Breton and Benjamin Péret, never abandoned its intransigent rejection of the established social, moral, and political order—nor its jealously guarded autonomy, despite affiliation or sympathy with different currents of the revolutionary left.

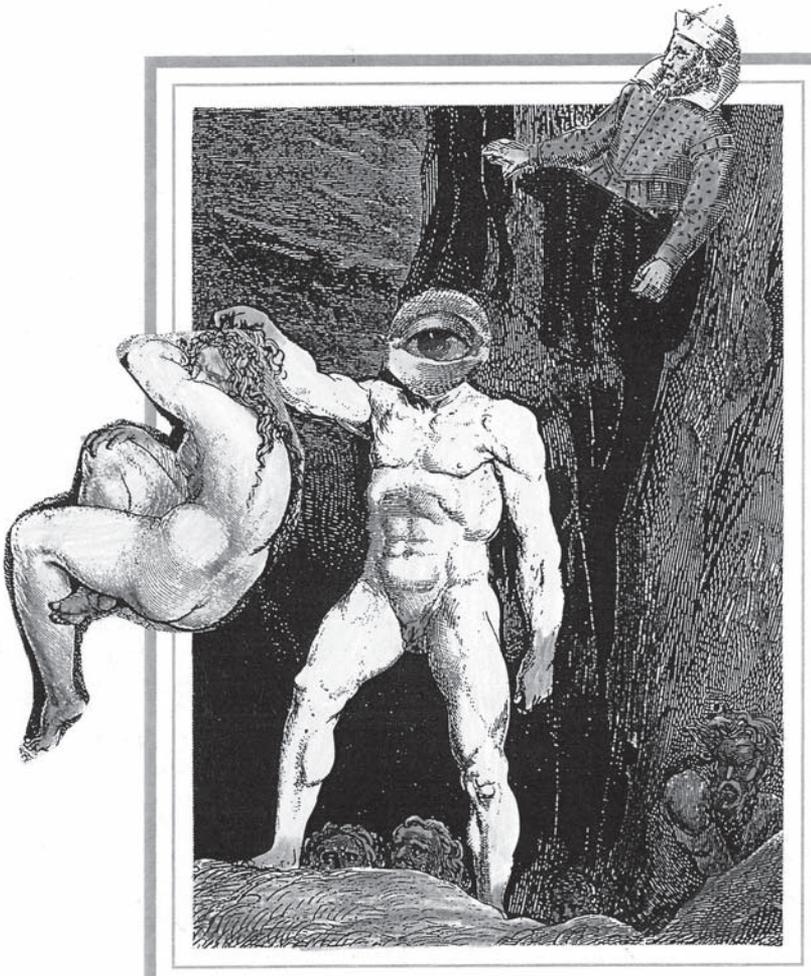
The Surrealist movement's opposition to capitalist civilization is neither reasonable nor moderate: it is radical, categorical, irreducible. In one of their first documents, "Revolution Now and Forever" (1925), the founders of Surrealism proclaimed,

Everywhere that Western civilization rules, all human relationships have ceased, with the exception of activities motivated by economic interest, "payment in cold, hard cash." For more than a century, human dignity has been reduced to the level of an exchange-value. . . . We do not accept the laws of Economy and Exchange, we do not accept enslavement to Work.¹

Much later, recalling the very beginnings of the movement, Breton observed, "At that time, the Surrealist refusal was total, absolute, unable to be channeled into the political arena. Every institution on which the modern world rested, or through its logical evolution resulted in the First World War, was scandalous and aberrant in our eyes."²

This visceral rejection of social and institutional modernity did not stop the Surrealists from referring to cultural modernity—which derived from Baudelaire and Rimbaud.

The favorite targets of the Surrealist attacks on Western civilization were narrow-minded rationalism, conventional realism, and positivism in all its forms.³ In the *First Surrealist Manifesto* (1924), Breton denounced the attitude shown in the suppression, "under the guise of civilization, or under the pretext of progress," of anything that hints of the chimerical; faced by a sterilized cultural horizon, he affirmed his belief in the omnipotence of dream.⁴ The



Michael Löwy, *Phénoménologie de l'esprit*
(*Phenomenology of the Mind*), 1998.



Penelope Rosemont, *Drawing*, 1999.

search for an alternative to this civilization would remain present throughout the history of Surrealism—including the 1970s, when French and Czech Surrealists published, with Vincent Bounoure, *La civilisation surréaliste*.

Breton and his friends had never hidden their attachment to the Romantic tradition of the nineteenth century—whether German (Novalis, Arnim), English (Gothic novels), or French (Hugo, Pétus Borel). What did Romanticism mean to the Surrealists? To them nothing was more hateful than the limited academic approach which made Romanticism a “literary genre.” Here is how Breton put it in “The Concept of Freedom of the Romantics” (1945):

The image of Romanticism imposed upon us by scholars is a falsified image. The use of national categories and absurd pigeonholes only serves to separate literary genres and impedes the consideration of the Romantic movement as a whole.”⁵

In fact, Romanticism is a worldview—in the sense of a *Weltanschauung*—which cuts across nations and eras:

It must be observed that Romanticism, as a specific state of mind and mood whose function is everywhere to instill a new generalized conception of the world, transcends those fashions—severely limited—of feeling and speaking which are proposed concerning it. . . . Through the multiplicity of works produced by or deriving from it, through Symbolism and Expressionism especially, Romanticism can be seen as a *continuum*.⁶

Surrealism even places itself within this temporal continuity of Romanticism as “state of mind.” Critiquing the official celebrations of the centennial of French Romanticism in 1930, Breton commented in the *Second Surrealist Manifesto*,

We say that Romanticism, which today we willingly conceive ourselves as the tail—but a very prehensile tail—by its very essence remains uncompromising in its negation of these bureaucrats and their festivals; its century of existence is only its youth, which has been wrongly called its heroic epoch, and in truth can only be taken for the first cry of a being just beginning to make its desires known through us.⁷

Nothing would be more false than to conclude, from that statement, that the Romanticism of the Surrealists is the same as that of the poets or thinkers of the nineteenth century. Surrealism forms, by its methods, its artistic or political choices, its outward manifestations, something radically new, which fully belongs to the culture of the twentieth century and which cannot be considered a simple reedition, or even worse, an imitation of the first Romanticism.

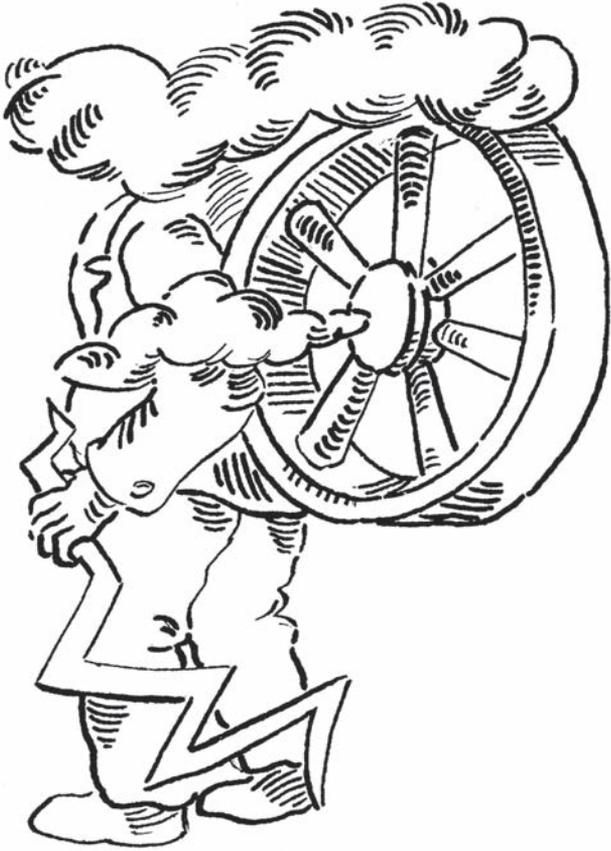
Of course, the Surrealist reading of the Romantic heritage from the past is highly selective. What attracts the Surrealists to the “gigantic structures of Hugo,” to certain texts of Musset, of Aloysius Bertrand, Xavier Forneret, and Nerval is, as Breton writes in “The Marvelous Against the Mystery” (*Le merveilleux contre le mystère*), the “desire for human emancipation in its totality.” Also, in a “num-

ber of Romantic or post-Romantic writers”—like Borel, Flaubert, Baudelaire, Daumier, or Courbet—it is the “spontaneous hatred of the bourgeois type,” the “desire to be absolutely noncompliant with the ruling class,” whose domination

is a sort of ulcer from which—one must prevent the most precious human acquisitions from being stripped of their meaning; an ulcer resulting only in the daily worsening and debasement of the human condition—it is no longer enough to bind it, but one day we must apply the cauterizing iron.⁸

Breton did not ignore the “fairly confused but ultrareactionary doctrine” espoused by Novalis in his essay “Europe, or the Christian” (1799) or the hostile position taken by Achim d’Arnim to the French Revolution. But that did not prevent their works, veritable lightning bolts, from shaking the foundations of the cultural order through their questioning of the separation between the real and the imaginary.⁹ Their thinking thus took on a profoundly utopian/subversive dimension, as for example when Novalis in his philosophical fragments, “reclaimed as his own the magical postulate par excellence (and did it in a way that barred any reservations on his part): ‘It is up to us to make the world conform to our desire.’”¹⁰

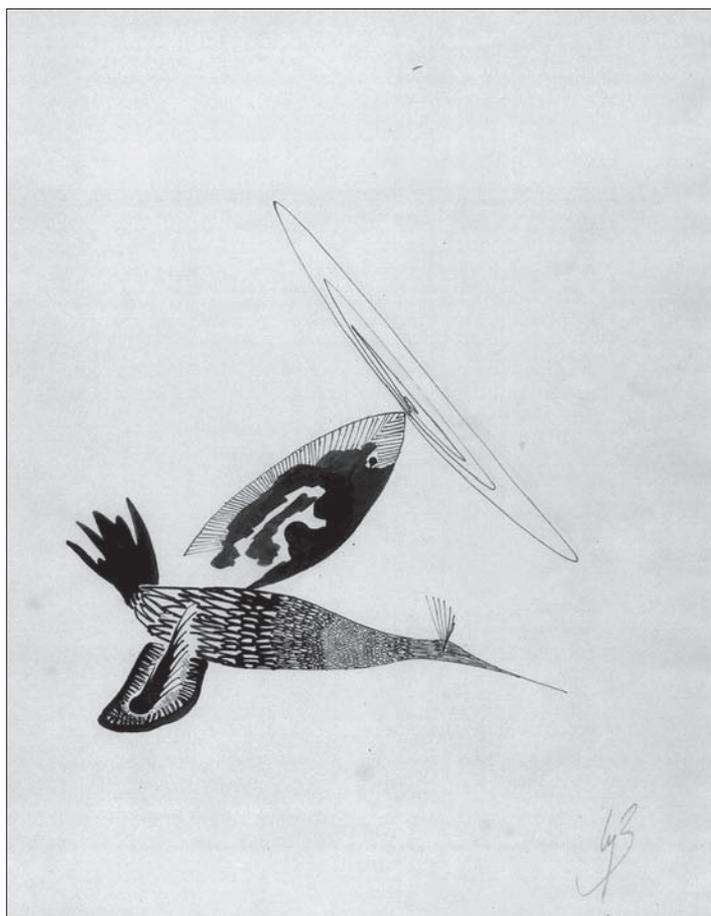
The Surrealist passion for premodern cultural forms and traditions is selective: unhesitatingly, the Surrealists draw from alchemy, the Kabbala, magic, astrology, primitive art from Oceania or America, and Celtic art.¹¹ All their activities on this terrain are aimed at exceeding the limitations of “art”—as a separate, institutionalized, ornamental activity—to enter the limitless adventure of the reenchantment of the world. Nevertheless, as revolutionaries inspired by the spirit of the Enlightenment, of Hegel, and above all of Marx, the early Surrealists were resolute and uncompromising enemies of some values at the core of the reactionary cultural Romanticism: religion and nationalism. As the *Second Manifesto* states, “Everything must be tried, every effort must be made to destroy the myths of family, nation, religion.”



Guy Girard, *La letter P comme Poésie (P as in Poetry)*, 1997.

Let's examine two examples of the Surrealist reinterpretation of "archaic" or precapitalist elements: *magic* and *primitive arts*.¹²

André Breton, in *L'art magique*, defined magic as "all human operations having as their goal the imperious domination of the forces of nature through the use of secret practices of a more or less irrational character." It "implies protest, even revolt"; pride, too, in its assumption that man "controls" (disposes of) the forces of nature. Religion, in contrast, is the domain of resignation, begging,



Michel Zimbacca, *Objet céleste (Celestial Object)*, 1955.

and penitence: "Its humility is total, because it leads [man] to pray in his unhappiness to the very power that has rejected him."¹³

For the Surrealists, the sacred, in its religious, hierocratic, clerical, institutional forms, as a system of authoritarian prohibitions, inspires only an irrepressible desire for transgression, profanation, and desacralization through irony, scorn, or black humor.

Breton borrowed the concept of magic art from Novalis. It was that "great Romantic spirit" who chose the words to describe the art form Breton hoped to encourage, both rooted in the past and blended with a "strong tension toward the future":

In the sense in which Novalis understood them, one expected not only to find the quintessential achievement of a millennium of experience, but also [to find] its supersession thanks to his bringing into being a conjunction of the most brilliant lights of the mind and heart.¹⁴

For Breton, all art had its origins in magic, but he proposed the designation of a *specifically* magical art for that art which "recreated to some degree the magic which created it." What is it that the ancient magician and the modern Surrealist artist have in common? In his inquiry into magical art, Breton declared that they "both elaborated the ways and the means of *enchancing the universe*."¹⁵

At first, magic was condemned, persecuted—there were witch-hunts!—and it was banished by institutional religion. In place of magic, religion imposed the holy, the sanctified, the venerable as separate and inviolable realms. Later, magic was eradicated by industrialist civilization, which systematically destroyed whatever could not be calculated, quantified, or turned into merchandise. The task of the total *disenchantment of the world* which, according to Max Weber, characterizes the modern world, has driven from human life not just magic, but everything that tries to escape the rigid and narrow-minded confines of use value.

If magic attracts the attention of the Surrealists with an irresist-

ible pull, it's not because they want to control the forces of nature through ritual acts. What interests them in "primitive" magical practices—as with alchemy and other hermetic arts—is the immense *charge of poetic electricity* that these activities contain. That charge allows them to drain the cultural order of the establishment of its positivist conformity. Other forms of magic give off sparks which are able to ignite and aid Surrealism in its eminently subversive enterprise of the *poetic reenchantment of the world*.

The same is true, *mutatis mutandis*, of primitive art. The attraction of "primitive" or "savage" cultures is a recurring theme in Romanticism, where it inspired, in Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others, a revolutionary critique of modern civilization. Marx and Engels did not hide their admiration for the egalitarian, democratic way of life of those still living at the stage of "primitive communism," like the indigenous peoples of North America. Engels was inspired, in *The Origins of Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), by the work of the American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan, whose writings celebrated the free and interdependent universe of primitive folk, represented by the Iroquois Confederacy. Here is a passage from Morgan's work, cited by Engels, and—in reference to the two preceding authors—quoted by Breton in his presentation in Haiti (1945):

Since the beginning of civilization, the accumulation of wealth has become so enormous, its forms so diverse, its application so extensive and its administration so skillful in the interests of the property-owners, that this wealth has become, in the eyes of the people, a force impossible to master. . . . Democracy in its administration, fraternity in society, the equality of rights, and universal education will inaugurate the next, superior stage of society. . . . This will be a revival—but in a superior form—of the liberty, equality and fraternity of the ancient gentes.¹⁶

The early Surrealist interest in primitive civilizations was not limited to their ways of life, but also focused on the esoteric quality

of their artistic works. Oceanic art represents, according to André Breton—in his famous article of 1948 “Oceania”—“the finest-ever effort conceived to understand the interpenetration of reality and dream, to triumph over the dualism of perception and representation.” He goes so far as to suggest that the Surrealist path, at its beginning—that is, throughout the 1920s—“is inseparable from the seduction, such was the fascination” exercised by the works of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, the North Pole, or New Ireland. Why such a strong attraction? Here is the explanation proposed by Breton in the same text:

The marvelous, with all its assumptions of surprise, chance, the fulgurant vista of something more than what we can fully grasp, has never known in the plastic arts the triumphs which are accomplished in great number in Oceanic objects.¹⁷

The extraordinary spark of subjectivity in primitive arts was also seductive to other Surrealists. Here’s what Vincent Bounoure wrote regarding the surprising flash, the “piercing rays,” of the eyes of Oceanic figures:

The power of the unconscious (the *mana* of old-fashioned ethnological vocabulary) is expressed through the eyes: there is nothing in reality to which Oceania has been more sensitive. This accomplishment was completely absent in Greece—Hegel reproaches Greece endlessly for its marble eyes, the vacant stare of its gods. It’s remarkable that the expression of the eyes suggested to Oceanic peoples the use of methods unknown to the art of sculpture, powerless by itself—according to Hegel—to express the interior light. Oceania had innumerable materials at its disposal to intensify that strength. They inserted in the socket of the eye cowries, seeds, and berries, pearls and shell, each in turn animating its own Oceanic subjectivity.¹⁸

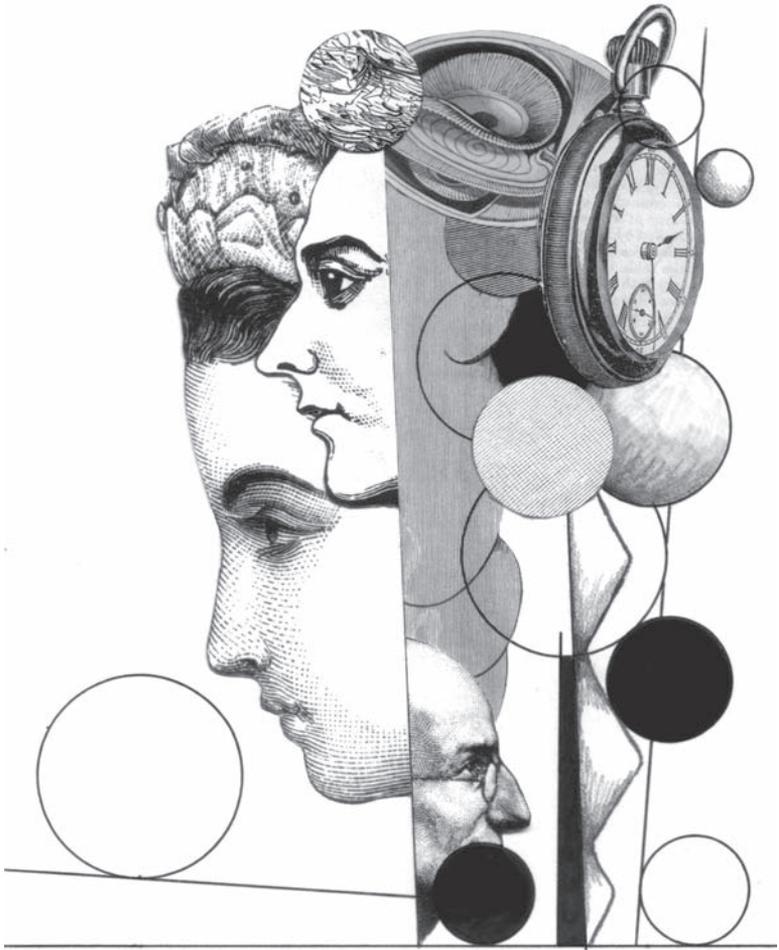
For those inclined to doubt the intrinsically revolutionary na-

ture of Surrealist Romanticism, a striking example illustrates the spark of the message transmitted by Breton and his friends, and its ability, in favorable circumstances, to stir the revolutionary spirit. We return again to Breton's speech in Haiti in 1945–1946.

First, some little-known facts about that episode: Breton's conference on Surrealism in Port-au-Prince—which included the passionate statement, “We hold that the liberation of humanity is the sole condition for the liberation of the mind”—had stirred deep feelings among Haitian students and youth. In January 1946 they published a special issue of their review *La Ruche*—founded by the poets René Depestre, Jacques Stéphane Alexis, and Gérard Bloncourt—dedicated to Surrealism, which included the text of Breton's speech. The publication was outlawed on the orders of President Elie Lescot—a puppet of the United States—who arrested its editors, provoking a student strike which caused a general strike that overthrew the president. Commenting on these events, several observers, among them René Depestre, have corroborated that the role of Breton's speech was to spark the powderkeg.¹⁹

The revolutionary ambition of the Surrealists—like that of some Romantics—is greater and more vast than just the transformation of social or political structures. But it nevertheless includes revolutionary transformation, the act of breaking the chains of oppression, as the essential moment of emancipatory hope.

TRANSLATED BY Jen Besemer.



Joel Williams, *Portrait of Heraclitus*, 2003.



Albert Marencin, *Torse (Torso)*, 1978.

THE REVOLUTION AND THE INTELLECTUALS

Pierre Naville's Revolutionary Pessimism

PUBLISHED BY PIERRE NAVILLE IN 1928, *The Revolution and the Intellectuals* remains one of the great revolutionary cultural documents of modern French history. A member of the Surrealist group from 1924 and the Communist Left from 1927, Naville tried to bring together these two movements under the star of revolution. Such an encounter took place ten years later, when Breton visited Trotsky in Mexico, and together they wrote the pathbreaking appeal "For an Independent Revolutionary Art."

Pierre Naville was one of the most interesting figures in the French Marxist intellectual world. Born in 1903, he was raised in a family of Swiss Protestant bankers, with strong literary leanings. His father was a friend and admirer of André Gide, and in 1919 the young Pierre played the part of Ulysse in an amateur representation of Gide's *Philoctete*, in the presence of Gide.¹

Pierre Naville began his literary activities at age eighteen by joining Gérard Rosenthal (pen name Francis Gérard) in publishing a journal called *L'oeuf dur* (The tough egg). According to Rosenthal, the choice of the title was provocative and witnessed their desire to break with the Symbolist or Romantic names used by other literary journals.² Starting with number 13, *L'oeuf dur* published

poems by Naville, as well as by Philippe Soupault, Joseph Delteil, Pierre Revery, Tristan Tzara, and Louis Aragon.

In the winter of 1923–1924 Naville met Breton and his friends at the journal *Littérature*, and the two groups joined to create what would become the Parisian Surrealist group.³ In the *First Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924) Breton mentioned Naville as one of the nineteen founding members who “professed *Absolute Surrealism*.”⁴ His name appears in all the collective tracts and proclamations of the Surrealist group for the next four years. It was also at this time that Pierre Naville met his life companion Denise Lévy, a very gifted and cultivated young Jewish woman and the cousin of Breton’s first wife Simone Kahn. According to Breton, it was thanks to Denise that he discovered the German Romantics; she certainly influenced the beginnings of the Surrealist group, and it is not surprising that Breton, Aragon, and Eluard dedicated poems to her.⁵

When the newly founded Surrealist group decided to publish a journal in 1924 entitled *La Révolution surréaliste*, Pierre Naville and Benjamin Péret were chosen as editors. The reason for this choice, according to André Breton (in 1952), was that “both [Naville and Péret] could be considered the most thoroughly inspired by the new spirit and the most rebellious against any concession.”⁶ Naville liked Péret, “a man for whom all fatherlands were equally dishonorable,” and celebrated his poems in an article from 1925: “pure as crystal” and ringing like “incendiary bells,” they have the “apocalyptic vigor” of “a magic tempest.”⁷

Naville admired André Breton, and in a letter to Denise in November 1924 he acknowledged his spiritual debt to the author of the *Surrealist Manifesto*: “Breton was quite pessimistic in those days. I infinitely respect his silence. . . . I owe him enormously not only on the intellectual level but on the level of my own inner revelation.” In September 1924, Breton published “Introduction to a Discourse on the Paucity of Reality,” which ended with an ecstatic salute to the Orient, “made of rage and pearls” and spirit of the next Revolutions.⁸ Like Breton, Naville was fascinated by Oriental culture—as an alternative to corrupt bourgeois “Western

civilization”—and he invited one of the great historians of Hinduism, René Guénon, to participate in the new journal. Guénon had recently published a book on the Vedanta. Deeply traditionalist, antimodern, and an esoteric figure, Guénon shared with the Surrealists the interest in the dream, “which illuminates the soul with its own light,” but he did not understand the aims of the Surrealist movement and showed little interest in their initiatives.⁹

Naville published several automatic prose poems, some in *La Révolution surréaliste* and others in *The Queens of the Left Hand*, a book enthusiastically welcomed by Louis Aragon.¹⁰ He also wrote a short note on art for the Surrealist journal in which he argued that “there is no such thing as Surrealist painting.” This irritated Breton and prompted him to write his series of essays on Surrealism and painting.¹¹ In April 1925 Naville wrote a short declaration. Originally intended for internal debate, it was published the next year as a pamphlet including texts by Antonin Artaud, Michel Leiris, and André Masson. Naville proclaimed, “Before any Surrealist or revolutionary interest, what dominates our thinking is a state of rage. . . . The Mind is a principle which is irreducible in its entirety; it cannot be bound anywhere, neither here in this life nor beyond.”¹²

Soon afterward Naville entered military service; he provoked his officers by laughing at the flag,¹³ and it was at that time his thinking took an entirely different turn. He discovered Lenin and Communism and decided to join the party. Purely negativistic “rage” and idealistic celebration of “Mind” gave way to concrete and positive commitment. He became a member of the Communist Students at the beginning of 1926 and editor of the movement’s periodical, *The Vanguard Student*.

During the winter of 1925–1926 he wrote *The Revolution and the Intellectuals*, which aimed at reconciling Surrealist aspirations with the requirements of Marxism. Naville praised Surrealism for its attitude “inspired by the irreducible passion of freedom,” which led necessarily to conflict with the bourgeoisie and to encounters with the revolutionary movement. He urged his Surrealist friends

to go beyond a purely negative, “metaphysical,” and anarchist standpoint toward the dialectical one of Communism by accepting “party discipline” as the only revolutionary way—the way of Marxism. He insisted that they stop hesitating and choose sides: anarchism or Communism, revolution of the mind or revolution by changing the material world. While celebrating Surrealism as “the most subversive attitude of the Mind,” Naville criticized its illusions about the spiritual opposition of the Orient and the West; the excessive importance it gave to dream life; and also its hostility to modern technology. He hoped that Surrealism, in spite of its “clearly Romantic” character, would be able to move beyond revolt toward revolution.¹⁴

The pamphlet was distributed by the Bureau of Surrealist Research and was well received by the Surrealists. In a letter to Denise, Naville wrote in autumn 1926, “I received a general vote of confidence on what was expressed in my pamphlet.”¹⁵ André Breton answered in September 1926 with *Légitime Défense*, which agreed to give “enthusiastic support” to the Communist program but criticized the cultural policy of the French Communist Party and rejected any cooperation with Henri Barbusse, the literary editor of *L’Humanité*. “All of us Surrealists,” he emphasized, “want a social revolution that will transfer power from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat, but at the same time we want to pursue our experiments in the life of the Mind without any external controls, including controls by Marxists.”¹⁶

Replying specifically to Naville, he argued against any illusions on “technology,” and justified Surrealism’s “secret hope” in the Orient. But above all, Breton refused to separate “internal reality” from “the material world” and claimed that for Surrealism the ambition was to overcome their artificial opposition by using any and all means, beginning with the most primitive—the appeal of the marvelous. While praising historical materialism as an inspired theory, Breton insisted in the spirit of Marx and Engels that its implications were a “necessary and definitive” negation of materialism altogether.¹⁷

This debate showed that the disagreements between Naville and Breton were not entirely political, though Breton, at odds with Naville, claimed that a reconciliation with the anarchists was possible "to a certain extent." The author of the *Surrealist Manifesto* considered himself a Marxist, but for him Marxism dialectically superseded the old oppositions between idealism and materialism, the internal and the external. In fact, the Surrealists were divided into three tendencies: those like Naville who emphasized the material revolution; those like Artaud who believed only in a revolution of the mind; and those like Breton and the majority of the group who believed in the unity, the common essence of both. Poetry and revolution are sisters; Lautréamont and Lenin are brothers.¹⁸

During the years 1926 and 1927, with the reluctant agreement of the Communist Party, Marcel Fourier and Pierre Naville, with the help of Victor Crastre and Jean Bernier, took over the editorship of the cultural journal *Clarté* (previously under Henri Barbusse) and opened it to Surrealism, publishing writings by Aragon, Desnos, Leiris, and Eluard. For a short period, at the beginning of 1926, a fusion of *Clarté* and *La Révolution surréaliste* into a common journal, *La Guerre civile* (Civil War), was talked about, but ultimately the Surrealists were unwilling to give up their autonomy. When Naville attacked Barbusse's biography of Jesus, the Communist Political Bureau protested and declared *Clarté* "beyond the control of the party."¹⁹

At a meeting of the Surrealist group on November 23, 1926, the relations between Surrealism and Communism were once again discussed. Naville argued that there was no contradiction between working with *Clarté* and with *La Révolution surréaliste* and insisted that, for him, pure Surrealist activity was "of the utmost importance" and did not need to be subordinated to the directives of the Third International.²⁰ Breton answered, emphasizing his agreement: "Naville's pamphlet was very effective. It is one of the things that helped shake people out of their torpor. He made an impartial historical exposition, but it did not have the exact conclusion we hoped for."²¹ Naville's activity was unanimously ap-

proved by the meeting. Undoubtedly, Breton, who was confronted with the apolitical attitude of several members of the group (such as Philippe Soupault, who was severely criticized by Naville), welcomed Naville's Marxist commitment. He needed this radical counterpoint in order to work out his own dialectical synthesis, his own version of a Surrealist Marxism, beyond the traditional philosophical antinomies.²²

In spring 1927, influenced by Naville, Breton and some of the leading Surrealists decided to join the Communist Party but not without insisting on "critical autonomy."²³ This new step was announced in April in "On the light of the day"; it included a friendly open letter to Pierre Naville: "In *The Revolution and the Intellectuals*, you were the first to raise the issue that we are now discussing." Signed by Breton, Péret, Aragon, Eluard, and Pierre Unik, the letter praised Naville's "intellectual courage," "straightforwardness" and "insightfulness" and emphasized their fundamental agreement: "We have for a long time been deeply attached to the same things."²⁴ But what they did not yet know is that their friend (always a step ahead of the others!) had meanwhile decided to take sides in the conflict inside the Communist movement. Naville decided to support the Left Opposition led by Leon Trotsky.

As former editor of *La Révolution surréaliste* and now *Clarté*, Naville, who chose to side with the Trotskyist opposition, made an attempt to bring the two to a common ground by writing "Better and worse" in June 1927 (published in *La Révolution surréaliste* no. 9–10). This document, just as important as *The Revolution and the Intellectuals* and from a certain standpoint even more important, defended the Surrealists against those in the Communist Party who wanted them to abandon their activities that were not "in conformity with Marxism."²⁵ Naville, criticizing the official optimism of the (Stalinist) Communist leadership, raised a new concept that was not unrelated to his new political position: revolutionary pessimism.

Naville believed pessimism was the greatest virtue of Surrealism in the current situation, and it was even more important for



Roman Erben, *Machine for Thinking*, 1976.

future developments. Moreover, he insisted that pessimism, at the basis of Hegel's philosophy and of Marx's revolutionary method, provided the only way to "escape the nothings and nobodies in this age of compromise."²⁶ Naville rejected both the "vulgar optimism" of Herbert Spencer, whom he labeled of "monstrously reduced brain," and of Anatole France, whose "infamous jokes" he despised, as well as the contemplative and skeptical pessimism of Schopenhauer. Naville's pessimism was active, revolutionary, alive; it was a "sail raised in all winds and all storms," and above all it was organized pessimism. "The organization of pessimism is surely one of the strangest watchwords that a conscious human being can follow. But it is the one which we ask you to follow." The organization of pessimism is the only way we can avoid becoming vapid.

André Thirion later observed that Naville's argument placed the common ground of Surrealism and Communism less on the level of principles or aims than on an "organic" level: an essential "way of seeing," one found in the deepest foundations of behavior. According to Thirion, Breton's pessimism made him sympathetic to Trotsky, whom he considered an exceptional person doomed to an unjust fate by mediocrities and cowards.²⁷

There is no need to emphasize that the idea of revolutionary pessimism was hardly compatible with the empty triumphalism of the Stalinist leadership. But for the moment Naville was still a disciplined militant of the French Communist Party. In November 1927 he and his friend Gérard Rosenthal, who were editors of *Clarté*, were invited to Moscow to take part in the celebrations of the Tenth Anniversary of the October Revolution. Naville later commented that what he saw in the USSR "definitively opened my eyes."²⁸

Thanks to Victor Serge, who wrote for *Clarté*, and George Andréytchine (a friend of Charlie Chaplin's who had edited an IWW paper in Chicago) they were introduced to Trotsky, Zinoviev, Karl Radek, and other major figures of the October Revolution, now on the side of the Left Opposition.²⁹ Victor Serge was very favor-

ably impressed by Naville and Rosenthal, “two young Frenchmen, ex-Surrealists, singularly upright in character and unflinchingly intellectually acute.”³⁰ In his conversations with Trotsky, Naville discussed the prospects of an international organization. When asked about Surrealism, he shied away from the question, unable to explain to the founder of the Red Army the internal differences within the Surrealist group.³¹

Back home, Naville publicly announced his support for the Left Opposition and soon afterward, in February 1928, was accused of Trotskyism and expelled from the Communist Party.³² A few months later, *La Révolution et les intellectuels* was published.

The publication had an immediate echo beyond the borders of France: it attracted the attention of the young German Marxist Walter Benjamin and in part inspired his brilliant essay “Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia” (1929). Benjamin was attracted to Surrealism during his visits to Paris in 1926 and 1927. Fascinated by their “magic experiments with words” and their “profane illuminations,” like Naville he hoped the Surrealists would embrace the Communist movement.

Nothing seemed more irrelevant and idiotic to Benjamin than the shallow optimism common to the bourgeois and social-democratic parties. He was pleased to breathe “a very different air” in the Naville essay, which “made the ‘organization of pessimism’ the call of the hour.” Against all sorts of “dilletantish optimism,” Naville asked the question: What are the preconditions of revolution? The change of attitudes or the change of the external circumstances? “Surrealism draws closer to the Communist answer.” And this answer, according to Benjamin, is “thoroughgoing pessimism,” i.e., doubt in the future of freedom, doubt in the future of European humanity, and above all doubt of the reconciliation between classes, nations, and individuals. This is the common point on which Surrealism and Communism stand. And he added ironically, “Unlimited trust only in IG Farben and the peaceful perfection of the air force (Luftwaffe).”³³

A strangely predictive intuition! It showed a greater aware-

ness than Naville's of the danger inherent in the logic of modern technology. But even Benjamin, the most pessimistic thinker on the European Left, could not predict the monstrous degree of destruction that would be generated only a few years later by the Luftwaffe and by IG Farben (the Chemical Trust that produced the gas Zyklon B used for genocide).

Like Naville, whose book he considered "excellent," Benjamin believed that bourgeois hostility toward any expression of radical freedom of the mind moved Surrealism to the Left and to revolutionary opposition. He hoped the Surrealists would join forces with Communism, giving up some of their anarchist spontaneity: "It is not enough to know that an ecstatic [*Rausch*] component lives in every revolutionary act. This component is identical to anarchy. To accentuate this exclusively would be to subordinate methodical and disciplined preparation for the revolution entirely to a praxis oscillating between fitness exercises and celebrations in advance."³⁴

However, unlike Pierre Naville, Walter Benjamin (who defined himself as a German observer situated in a "highly exposed position between an anarchistic *fronde* and revolutionary discipline") had much sympathy for the libertarian component of Breton's movement: "Since Bakunin Europe has lacked a radical concept of freedom. The Surrealists have one." He did not ask the Surrealists to give up this anarchic quality; on the contrary, it is thanks to it that they play a unique and irreplaceable role: "To win the energies of intoxication [*Rausch*] for the revolution—that is the project Surrealism circles in all its books and enterprises." However, in order to implement this objective, they must "bind revolt to revolution."³⁵

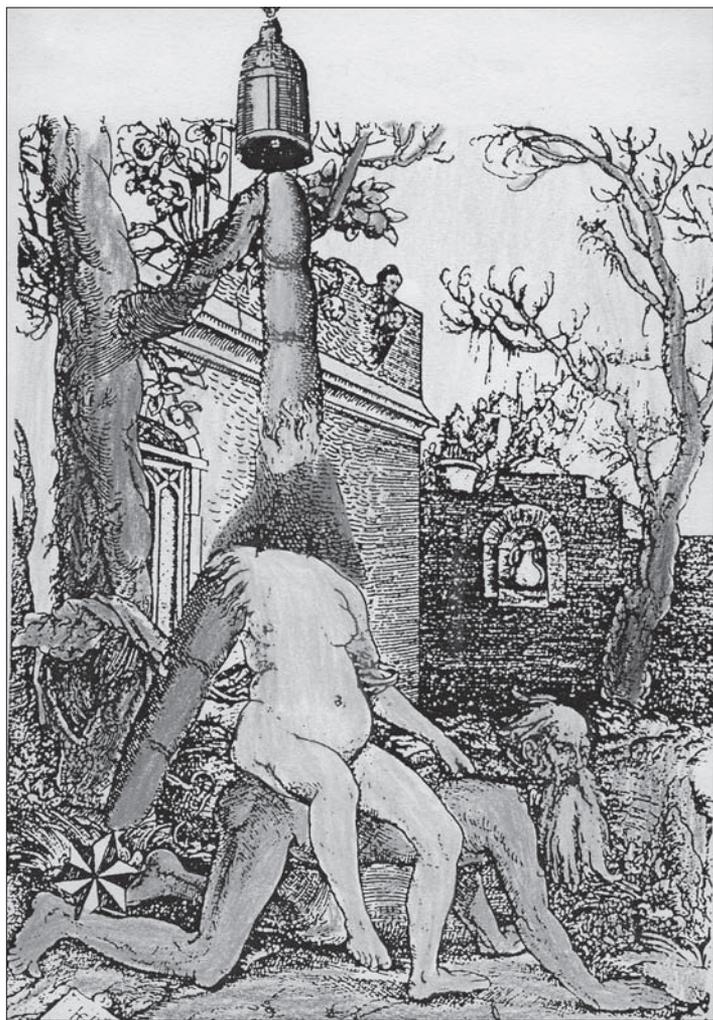
There is no evidence that Naville read or knew about Benjamin's piece. After his return from the USSR, he dedicated his full activities to the organization of the Left Opposition, primarily through *Clarté*, which in February–March 1928 became *La Lutte de Classes* and moved gradually away from the Surrealist group. Naville did take part in the Surrealist debates on sexuality in Janu-

ary 1928, but an unpleasant exchange with Breton about Victor Serge in July 1928 cooled their friendship. According to Naville (the only source on this conflict), Breton did not like the section on Brest Litovsk from Victor Serge's *The First Year of the Russian Revolution* published by Naville in *Clarté*. For Breton the Brest Litovsk peace agreement was the expression of a universal desire for total disarmament, while Serge and Naville explained it as a tactical move by the Bolsheviks to win time. After some polemical exchanges on both sides, Naville got up and walked out. He never came back.³⁶

Breton did not want to break with Naville. With Aragon, Péret, Queneau, and Unik, he wrote a friendly letter inviting him to join in a discussion on Trotsky. "Even if your main activity has now turned to other areas," they argued, "your absence from this meeting would mean a break in our solidarity, all the more regrettable since it is the attitude of the people against whom you have always struggled." "We are sure," they added, "that the fate of Trotsky cannot be indifferent to you, and we think that the author of *The Revolution and the Intellectuals* should be present at this debate."³⁷

Naville refused to come. The truth of the matter is that he no longer considered himself a member of the group. As he wrote later, "I did not answer since I had already decided to let Surrealism speak its own language." Breton spoke to the point when he commented, in *Entretiens* (1952), that "there was no 'Naville crisis' in Surrealism. There was a Naville defection of a particular kind, and that is all."³⁸

Naville came to the conclusion that there was too much conflict between the Surrealist aspiration for a revolution of the mind and the concrete needs of social revolution. He chose the second; and he did not believe in the possibilities of Breton's attempt to reconcile both through "majestuous formulations."³⁹ To this problem one could add that Naville, unlike the Surrealists, was not a Romantic. He believed in modern technology and rejected any criticism of it, as well as speculative dreams about the Orient. Moreover, he shared neither Breton's hostility to eighteenth-century materialism



Michael Löwy, *Tentation à cheval sur Saint-Antoine*
(*Temptation Astride Saint Antoine*), 1999.

(he later wrote a book on Baron d'Holbach) nor his fascination with Hegelian dialectics.⁴⁰

A few months later, Breton's "Second Manifesto of Surrealism" appeared in the last issue of *La Révolution surréaliste* (December 1929). It contained violent attacks on ex-Surrealists, including Naville. To say the insults heaped on Naville were unfair is an understatement. In one of the least offensive passages Breton compared Naville to a boa constrictor and hoped that "tamers with the strength of Trotsky and Boris Souvarine would be able to harness the eminent reptile!"⁴¹

Naville's explanation of this harsh attack is that it was political; in his view, it happened because Breton refused to choose between Stalin and Trotsky. In the *Second Manifesto* Breton insisted that the Surrealists do not want to take sides in the conflict between "two general currents . . . that have different tactical conceptions, but nevertheless have shown themselves to be frankly revolutionary." Breton had to open fire on someone, like Naville, who had become an active partisan of the Left Opposition.⁴² This analysis is only partially true. Other Surrealists like Benjamin Péret also joined the Trotskyist section without being struck by Breton's thunderbolts. Further, ever since publishing his review of Trotsky's book *Lenin* (1925), Breton had never given up his intense respect and admiration for the founder of the Red Army.

Breton offered a different interpretation much later in *Entretiens* (1952); apologizing for some "excessive language" in the *Second Manifesto*, he explained it as "a nervous tension which resulted not only from the critical situation of the Surrealist ideas, but also from upheavals in my personal life."⁴³ This may be a reference to his divorce from his first wife, Simone. Still taking this into account, it is hard to believe that it could be the main reason for the onslaught.⁴⁴

One must add a third reason for Breton's outburst: the feeling that Naville had deserted him at a critical moment—a "break in solidarity." While Naville's book seemed to aim at an alchemical marriage between Surrealism and Communism, his "defection"

implied the need to choose—either/or. Moreover, by walking away Naville prevented the building of a bridge between the Surrealists and Trotsky: this is why Breton accused Naville of “causing Leon Trotsky to be alienated from his only true friends.” He repeated this accusation many years later, in *Entretiens*, claiming that during the whole period Naville was a leading figure of the Fourth International, from 1930 to 1939, he did his best to make impossible any bringing together of the Surrealists and the (Trotskyist) Communists.⁴⁵

Interestingly enough, Naville found a defender on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean: the great Peruvian Marxist José Carlos Mariátegui. Mariátegui corresponded with him; he sent Naville a copy of his book *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality* (1928) and published a few sympathetic articles on Surrealism in his journal *Amauta*. In terms very similar to those of Walter Benjamin he insisted that Surrealism was not a literary phenomenon or an artistic fashion but “a protest of the mind,” which “denounced and condemned, in totality, capitalist civilization.” In spirit and in action, Surrealism was a Romantic movement, but “by its revolutionary rejection of capitalist thought and society, it coincided historically with Communism on the political level.” Mariátegui followed the rapprochement between the Surrealist group and *Clarté*, regretting that they did not agree on a common journal. However, he noted with pleasure that the Surrealists wrote for the Communist publication and that Breton and Aragon “subscribed to the Marxist concept of revolution.”⁴⁶

A few years later, in an article called “The Balance-sheet of Surrealism” (1930), Mariátegui praised both the Romantic origins of Surrealism and its commitment to “the Marxist program.” While showing his “sympathy and hope” for Surrealism, he criticized Breton’s “extreme personal aggression” against Naville in the *Second Manifesto*, in which Naville was characterized as an opportunist obsessed with the desire for notoriety: “It seems to me that Naville is a much more serious character. And I don’t exclude the possibility that Breton will correct his views of him (if Naville is

the person I hope) in the same noble way he acknowledged Tristan Tzara's persistence in his daring commitment and serious work after a long quarrel."⁴⁷ This prediction was accurate, but it took eight years to come true.

In 1930, Naville was one of the founders of the *Ligue Communiste*, the French branch of the Left Opposition, and a member of the International Secretariat. At the age of twenty-seven, he was one of the leading figures internationally of the Trotskyist movement.⁴⁸ Because of Breton's attacks and his ambivalent political position, Naville's attitude toward the Surrealists was extremely negative. He went so far as to refuse to let Benjamin Péret join his organization. During his stay in Brazil in 1929–1931 Péret had helped to found the first Trotskyist group in that country. Expelled by the Brazilian police, he returned to France in 1932 and applied to join the French sister organization. Strangely enough, Naville and the other leaders of the that group (Molinier, Trent, etc.) demanded that Péret end his Surrealist activities and denounce Surrealism! Péret refused and a few months later joined another Trotskyist group under the leadership of Marcel Fourrier.⁴⁹ The ice began to melt only when the Surrealists definitively broke with the official Communist leadership at the Writers Conference of 1935 and when, in 1936, Breton and his friends denounced the Moscow Trials.⁵⁰ Breton read a collective statement at a meeting of the *Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste* (POI, Internationalist Workers' Party), the group led by Naville, on "the truth about the Moscow Trials," stating that "Leon Trotsky is above suspicion" and saluting him as "an eminent intellectual and moral guide."⁵¹ A few months later, in a letter to Herbert Solow, Naville wrote about Breton in a friendly but reserved tone: "André Breton, Surrealist writer, cooperates loyally with us, but politically he is a bit confused."⁵²

The step which most contributed to a reconciliation between the two was the letter Naville sent to Trotsky's secretary, Jan van Heijenoort, on May 12, 1938, at the time of Breton's visit to Mexico. Naville included in the letter Breton's statement on the Moscow Trials and suggested that it be published. His opinion on Breton

was, "It is useless to expect any political information from him, but you can use him fully in behalf of Lev Davidovitch [Trotsky]; he has shown himself in this respect with the utmost clarity and also he is not afraid of anything." Trotsky was impressed; he appreciated courageous people.⁵³ In his memoirs, Naville recalled receiving a visit from Breton after his return from Mexico, their first real personal contact since 1929. Breton told him, "Trotsky said, 'Yes, Naville wrote to me about you.' I answered, 'I'm afraid it is something negative. . . .' 'No,' said Trotsky, 'he wrote that you are a courageous man.'" Then Breton expressed his regrets for the insults of 1929.⁵⁴

From that moment on, the relations between the two improved. A few months later, on November 11, 1938, Breton gave a moving speech on his conversations with Trotsky at a meeting of the POI; he told them about their manifesto—"For an Independent Revolutionary Art." This document, written jointly by Trotsky and Breton, stated that "true art . . . which expresses the inner needs of humankind, cannot but be revolutionary" and that revolution must establish "the anarchist regime of individual freedom in the sphere of intellectual creation." The Surrealist poet and the exiled Bolshevik called for cooperation between Marxists and anarchists, an old dream of Breton's, and for the building of an organization of revolutionary artists opposed to fascism, Stalinism, and capitalism: the International Federation for an Independent Revolutionary Art (FIARI). It concluded with a double appeal:

What we want:
 the freedom of art—for the revolution.
 the revolution—for the absolute liberation of art.⁵⁵

Naville was unreservedly enthusiastic when he commented on Breton's talk in his letter to Heijenoort the next day: "Breton made a very good speech at our meeting on the 11th. There were 350 participants. We will publish his text in our Journal. He spoke with much emotion, shared by the audience."⁵⁶ For the next few

months, the Trotskyists and Surrealists worked together in the FIARI, and its publication, *Clé* (Key), was edited by one of Pierre Naville's best friends, Maurice Nadeau. The second and final issue in February 1939 published a letter from Trotsky to Breton in which he insisted that true art consisted of "the unwavering faithfulness of the artist to his inner self."⁵⁷

When World War II began, Naville enrolled in the army, and after the French defeat in June 1940, he was sent to a German prison camp, where he remained until 1941. There he heard the news of Leon Trotsky's assassination, which convinced him that the Fourth International had no future. From that moment on, and for the next ten years, his political evolution again took him away from Breton, and paradoxically in the opposite direction from their old disagreements of 1929–1935. While Breton became increasingly hostile to the Stalinist brand of Communism, Naville sought some form of unity with it. Both were supporters of the Resistance. In 1944 Naville recalled with pleasure hearing André Breton, on Free France Radio broadcast from the United States, say, "Pierre Laval [the fascist prime minister] will receive twelve plums [bullets], it will be the first thing he hasn't stolen."⁵⁸

During the war Naville published two books: one on psychology as a science of behavior and the other on D'Holbach and the scientific philosophy of the eighteenth century.⁵⁹ The last one was warmly reviewed by Maurice Nadeau in *Information Surréalistes* (May 1944). Nadeau also wrote for an underground journal linked to the Surrealist group *La Main à plume* (Feathered hand).

After the war Naville joined the CNRS (National Center for Scientific Research) and became a respected specialist in the field of labor sociology. He published a thesis on the origins of the sociology of labor in Marx and Engels.⁶⁰ Naville continued to be politically active but had no links with the Fourth International. Sympathetic to anticolonialist movements, he contributed to the journal *Présence Africaine* (founded in Paris in 1949). He also published a book criticizing the French war in Vietnam and translated into French: *Black Jacobins*, C. L. R. James's account of the slave

insurrection led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, in eighteenth-century Haiti. Naville met James when he came to Paris in 1936 to do research for his book, and they become close friends.⁶¹ In the first postwar years he wrote for the journal *Revue Internationale* (Charles Bettelheim, Maurice Merleau-Ponty), which favored an alliance with the pro-Soviet Communist movement. In 1955, with other ex-Trotskyists (Gilles Martinet, Yvan Craipeau, Favre-Bleibtreu), he helped found the New Left, which later joined other groups to form the Union of the Socialist Left and, in 1960, the Unified Socialist Party (PSU), in which Naville remained for the next decades. Unlike Trotsky, he considered the USSR a primitive form of socialism; he used the term "state (or bureaucratic) socialism." But during the fifties he became increasingly critical of Stalinism; "The Communist Intellectual" (1956) was a strong polemic against Sartre's pro-Stalinist politics.⁶² A few years later he published a sympathetic memoir of Trotsky.

During these years Naville occasionally met André Breton. When Breton returned from the United States and published his *Ode to Charles Fourier*, Naville told him of the existence of unpublished manuscripts by Fourier on love and sexuality.⁶³ He also occasionally met Benjamin Péret. In 1975, Naville reedited *La Révolution et les intellectuels*, including the polemic against Sartre and adding a substantial introduction that gave his own account of the debate in the Surrealist group in 1925–1928. He concluded that Breton and his Surrealist friends were spared the Stalinist degradation of Aragon and others, less for political reasons than for their faithfulness to the Surrealist revolution.⁶⁴

In 1977, Naville published a book specifically dealing with Surrealism: *The Time of the Surreal*. It was the first book on Surrealism he had published since 1928. Largely autobiographical, it consisted of his poems and articles from *L'oeuf dur* and from *La Révolution Surréaliste*, as well as other material from the twenties. The introduction to the reedition of *La Révolution et les intellectuels* was included, as well as essays on automatic writing, sexuality, surrealist painting, Sade, Benjamin Péret, Paul Eluard, and Salvador Dali.



Albert Marenčin, untitled, 1965.

In conclusion, Naville asserted his belief that “the passion for the surreal” will take on new forms and new dimensions, going well beyond the already superseded “traditional forms of Surrealist intervention.”⁶⁵

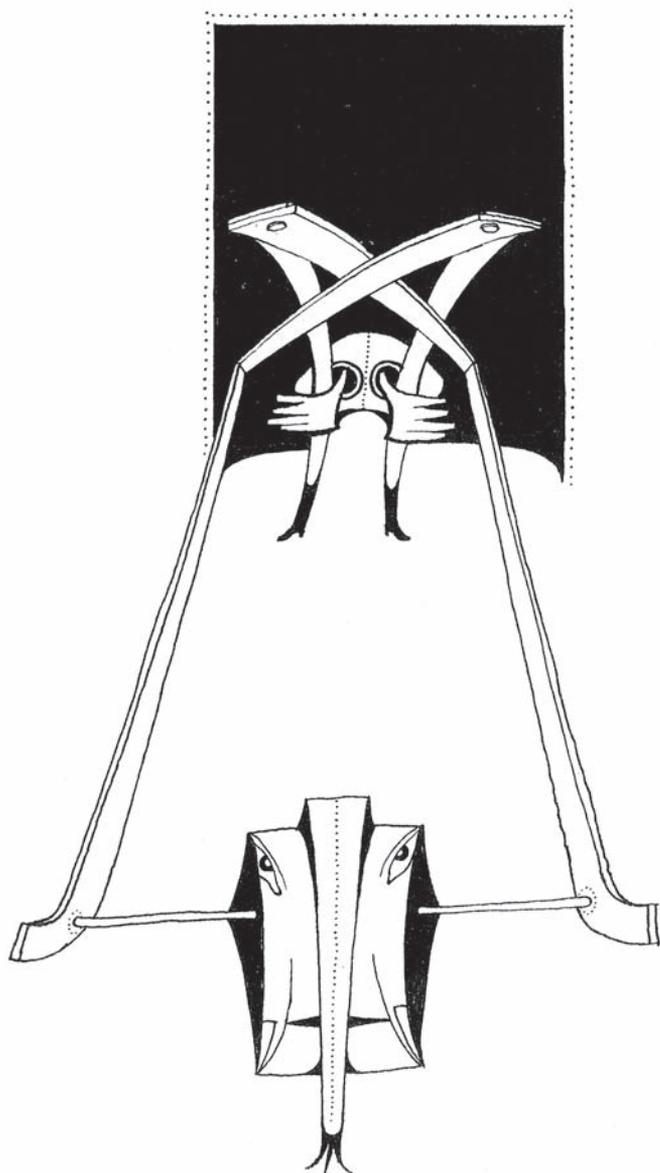
Naville’s last words on Surrealism were astonishing: on April 6, 1993, not many days before his death on April 23, he commented on a manifesto written by the Chicago Surrealists on the Los Angeles rebellion.⁶⁶ Naville wrote an enthusiastic letter to Franklin Rosemont. He not only marveled at such a beautiful and dazzling text but insisted that it represented “a new and considerably more important way of showing that the present world will know a Surrealist explosion much larger than the one which burst on Paris in 1924.” He concluded the letter with the following message: “You can tell your American friends, as well as those of other countries, that I strongly hope that your Surrealist movement will renew what we tried to do so long ago.”⁶⁷

In some way, the old Pierre Naville, in his farewell letter (a Surrealist testament), seemed to recover his youthful Surrealist hopes of the twenties. But this time, instead of revolutionary pessimism, we find what Breton once called the Surrealists’ “anticipatory optimism.”

TRANSLATED BY Marie Stuart.



Ted Joans, *Italian Miracle*, n.d.



Martin Stejskal, *Kresba*, 1971.

CLAUDE CAHUN*The Extreme Point of the Needle*

ARTISTS ARE OFTEN OUTSIDERS AND transgressors. But few of them concentrate so much of “the outsider” as Claude Cahun (1894–1954): non-Jewish Jewess, androgynous woman, dissident Marxist, lesbian Surrealist, she is strictly unclassifiable. Born Lucy Schwob, the granddaughter of a rabbi from Frankfurt, the daughter of journalist Maurice Schwob, and the niece of Symbolist writer Marcel Schwob, author of the *Livre de Monelle*—one of André Breton’s favorite pieces—she picked a gender-neutral first name, Claude, and the family name of her grandmother Mathilde Cahun. Although she did not receive a Jewish education (her mother was gentile), she was fully aware of her father’s family background and of the strong Jewish identity of her pen name, Cahun, a variant of Cohen.¹ Her childhood friendship with Suzanne Malherbe grew into a lifelong love attachment; her companion became her half-sister when, after Lucy’s mother’s death, her father married Suzanne’s mother. Cahun’s art has been recently rediscovered, and her Surrealist photographic compositions have now become known worldwide. Many of them are strange and disquieting self-portraits, almost always with her hair shaved, while others are marvelous montages of images or objects.

What I want to discuss in this short essay is a less-known aspect

of her life and work: her political commitment, her Marxist writings, and her contribution to Surrealist thought on poetry. Until very recently, her writings had been dispersed, out of print, and very hard to find.

Thanks to François Leperlier they have now (2002) been collected, together with many previously unpublished autobiographical notebooks, giving us for the first time a general view of her literary and political evolution and of her Marxist/Surrealist thinking. As we shall see, André Breton admired her as much, if not more, for her writing as for her photographic art.

Claude Cahun's sudden turn toward Surrealism and revolutionary politics took place in 1932—a belated one, compared to the other Surrealists. It was also a rather unexpected one, considering the literary pieces she had published up until then. It is true that she had, in the late 1920s, friendly relations with the Communist editors of the *Journal Philosophies*—Pierre Morhange, Norbert Guterman, and Georges Politzer—as well as with some former Surrealists, including Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes and Robert Desnos.

It is also possible that as a “sexual dissident” she sympathized with political movements that challenged both the established forms of family and the traditional religious morals. However, there is little in her earlier writings that points in the direction of either Marxism or Surrealism. Neither *Vues et Visions* (1919), a collection of Symbolist-inspired archaic narratives magnificently illustrated with drawings by Marcel Moore—Suzanne Malherbe's pen name—nor her powerful autobiographical essay *Aveux non avenue* (1930) contain any reference to revolution. At best, one can see in her fascination for ancient Rome and Greece a distaste—shared by many Romantics and Symbolists—for modern civilization. This piece from 1930 seems to be entirely narcissistic and inspired by “self-love,” but one begins to see a radicalism emerging: “I would like to sew, to sting, to kill, only at most extreme point. . . . To journey only in the direction of my own prow.” Further, there is her confession that points toward a burning aspiration for radical

change: "I spent 33 years of my life desiring passionately, blindly, that things be different from what they are."²

In autobiographical notes written after World War II she acknowledges that she discovered "historicity" only belatedly, around 1931, as "the essential reply of the Sphinx to my personal enigma."³ The reasons she and her friend Suzanne Malherbe decided to join the Association des Ecrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires (AEAR) remain mysterious. Perhaps it had to do with her growing interest in Surrealism and with the fact that André Breton and his friends, who had tried to join AEAR ever since its founding in January 1932, were finally admitted in October of that year. What is certain is that her new writings show that she moved away from the metaphysical modes of Symbolism with its frenetic idealism; and from a radical pessimism inspired by Nietzsche and Schopenhauer to a heterodox version of historical materialism.⁴

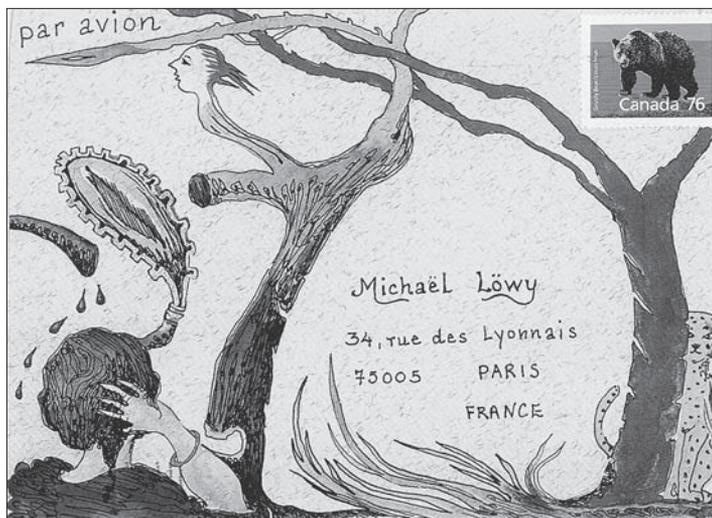
Her name appears with those of the Surrealists who signed two important tracts of AEAR: "Protest!" (March 1933), which denounced the triumph of Fascism in Germany and called for "a united front of all workers to aid the German proletariat"; and "Against fascism but also against French imperialism!" (May 1933), which criticized the "common aims of all capitalist exploiters." This does not mean that Claude Cahun agreed with every proposition of AEAR's official leadership. She rejected Paul Vaillant-Couturier's proposition to join bourgeois literary institutions such as the Société des gens de lettres, commenting ironically, "If them, why not the French Academy?"⁵

An individualist and libertarian character like Claude Cahun could not accept the authoritarian Marxism represented by the leadership of AEAR. She soon joined the Trotskyist opposition inside the association, represented by the Brunet group. These young writers were a small faction who sympathized with Surrealism—Jean Legrand, Neocles Coutouzis, Pierre Caminade. She became particularly attached to the Greek medical student and film critic Coutouzis and his companion, Lilette Richter.⁶

In an autobiographical sketch from 1945–1946, she refers to

Coutouzis as her teacher in Marxism and the history of the Russian revolution. However, there was a substantial distance between her and the Brunet group; she was not at ease in their favorite field, discursive rationality, and some of them criticized her “sentimentalism.” Her closest affinities were with the Surrealists rather than with any political group: “I chose the month of March 1932 to put myself at the service of the Surrealist group.”⁷ She probably meant “March 1933,” since she met André Breton at the beginning of that year. A few months later, in June 1933, Breton was expelled from AEAR. Right after that the Brunet group, Claude Cahun, and the rest of the Surrealists were also expelled. She summarized her oppositional stand as a struggle between democratic and bureaucratic beliefs.⁸

In 1934, inspired by Surrealism, she decided to write her first Marxist piece, *Les Paris sont ouverts* (Bets Are On). “To base my arguments on Surrealism,” she wrote, “seemed self-evident to me.”⁹ The pamphlet was written as an internal report for the literary section of AEAR (January 1933) and completed for publication with new arguments in February 1934. It is a passionate defense of the autonomy of poetry (represented by Lautréamont, Rimbaud, and the Surrealists) against bureaucratic attempts to submit art to “ideological conformity,” which was illustrated by Louis Aragon, who wrote poems celebrating the Stalinist USSR. In 1931 Aragon had broken with his Surrealist friends and offered his unconditional support for the official Soviet cultural policy. The front cover of Cahun’s pamphlet featured a quote by André Breton referring to art as “objective humor,” while the back cover featured a few ridiculous quotes from Aragon. Cahun denounced Aragon not only because he was a renegade from Surrealism, but also because of his Stalinist attitudes: “Anything that does not have the permission of a bureaucrat is suspect and ‘plays into the hands of fascism.’” In *Red Front* (1931) Aragon called for “shooting Leon Blum” and “the wise bearers of social-democracy” (an example of Third Period Stalinism that denounced social-democracy as social-fascism). At that time Cahun supported a policy of a workers’ united front. Be-



Marie S. dixit Iagatta, untitled, 1990.

yond the polemic with Aragon, it was the entire Stalinist ideology, which reduced Marxism to “a mechanical and sterile materialism,” that she rejected. She had nothing but contempt for Stalin, whom she ironically called “the brilliant chief” and “the beloved guide” (521). Above all she hoped that “the world proletariat will break this horrid spell, this bureaucratic obscurantism which maintains itself only by mass exclusions.”

Cahun’s political views in 1934 were ahead of the Surrealists, who collectively did not break with Stalinism until August 1935. Her views were explicitly shared, in 1934, only by Benjamin Péret, who had joined the Left Opposition in the late 1920s.¹⁰ Little wonder that the pamphlet is dedicated “To Leon Trotsky” (though not for any directly political reason but because he showed sympathy for Mayakowsky). In her later recollections she insisted that the document owed much to Coutouzis—she described it as a “synthesis between our two cultures”—and gave an interesting explanation for the dedication: “I was moved by the fate of an erring Jew [Mayakowsky] with a passport who could get no visa.”¹¹

The true topic of the polemic is not politics as such, but the struggle against the bureaucratic control over poetry: “The requirement of ideological conformity is the negation of poetry itself.” True poetry does not obey any external commands, but is the free expression of individuals “in their secret innermost self,” the result of “the spontaneous force of emotion of personal or collective life.”¹² One finds in such views anarchist individualism or subjectivism, not unlike the call of the Breton/Trotsky Manifesto of 1938: “Absolute freedom for art!”

Following Tristan Tzara (at this time still in the Surrealist group) she proposed a distinction between the latent (i.e., unconscious) and the manifest content of a poem. Only the first she considered relevant and valuable. Revolutionary propaganda should not take the form of poems, but of conscious prose discourse, as in journalism or political speeches.¹³ Although she did not mention it, she was influenced by an article of Tzara in *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* (December 1931) in which he argued for the Romantic definition of poetry and the Surrealist revolution of the mind against the old and superseded understanding of poetry as simply a means of expression.

How does poetry influence its readers? In a strikingly original argument, Cahun saw two forms of poetic action:

1. Direct action: that of “the great moralizing and usually rhyming poetry,” such as revolutionary songs (the *Marseillaise*), but also catechisms, prayers, proverbs, and axioms, as well as commercial and ideological advertisement. In biting irony, she gave the latest ads as examples of: “Every elegant woman is a client of Le Printemps” and “Your Fatherland is the USSR, one sixth of the planet.” She compared this pseudopoetry, again mentioning Aragon, to “revolutionary masturbation.”

2. Indirect action: which allows the reader to reach his own conclusions, “Follow desire [Laisser à désirer], said Breton.” It suggests the dialectical idea, (i.e., provoking a contradiction), as Rimbaud did when he wrote in mocking language of the rabid imperialists, “In our guts we nourish the most cynical prostitu-

tion. We massacre our logic that is in revolt against us. In the countries sun-peppered and rain-drenched!—In the service of the most monstrous industrial and military exploitations.”¹⁴ This indirect action is the only one that seemed to her legitimate, both in political and poetical terms.

The second part of her essay began with a polemic against Aragon, who in an article of October 1933 stated that “abstract” poetry, unlike proletarian poetry, can “become a snare, a machine gun or a poison in the service of the ruling class.” Cahun replied that writing cannot become a weapon in the hands of the enemy. True poetry, the kind that “keeps its secret,” is like “the paving stones.” In street battles they can be used by the revolutionaries rather than by the police.¹⁵

She compared Aragon’s “beautiful” poetry to his “Red, white, and blue” propaganda verses and to those of Péret, Crevel, and Breton. Her conclusion was that true poetry is subversive and that there is nothing in the world that can reduce it to a mercenary, low-level “role” like that played by propaganda “poetry.”¹⁶

Curiously, toward the end of the essay she quoted a document by her Marxist friends (with whom she obviously did not agree); their argument was poor and mechanical and attempted to find “the class basis of poetic inspiration” and defined Surrealism as the road to “the end of poetry.” Cahun commented that poetry can cease to exist only when it is made by all human beings (531).

Poetry for her was not the product of any “class basis” but a permanent dimension of human life. Something which “has existed in history at all times and places” and which “undeniably seems to be a need inherent to human nature . . . a need linked to the sexual instinct.” She emphasized, “If poetical specialization leads to its own ruin, this is not because poetry will disappear. On the contrary. It is because it ‘shall be done by all, not by one’ (Lautréamont)” (507).

In a “Post-Script,” she compared poetry to science and philosophy, as an “agent of change” which intervenes everywhere, “provoking human consciousness, causing some short-circuits—

‘magical’ shortcuts which sexual love and extreme suffering also know the ‘secret of.’”

The essay used several quotes by Marx, Engels, and even Lenin that sometimes seem out of focus. The most important is a quote from Marx’s *Poverty of Philosophy*, in which he argued in answer to Proudhon, “What provokes dialectical progress is the co-existence of two opposed elements, their antagonism and their absorption by a new category. As soon as one poses the problem of suppressing one side, the dialectical movement stops.” This quote introduces the second part of her essay and inspired her attempt to interpret poetry dialectically. While her politics in this pamphlet are obviously Marxist, her reflections on poetry owe more to Romanticism, Symbolism, and Hegelian aesthetics than to the vulgar Marxism which ruled in France. The few exceptions were



Eva Švankmajerová, *J'étais là (I Was There)*, 1992.

Norbert Guterman, Henri Lefebvre, and Pierre Naville.¹⁷ By emphasizing the anthropological nature of poetry, its intimate link to erotic feelings, its magical power, and its capacity to produce emotional breakthroughs, she raised the issue to a much higher level in true Surrealist spirit.

Claude Cahun's beginnings in the Surrealist group were rather uneasy. Her provocative behavior, shaving her head and painting it rose or gold, dressing as a man and wearing a monocle, did not pass unnoticed and was received with mixed feelings. Her appearance can be considered as an expression of rebel queer (lesbian) consciousness, taking the form of eccentricity, rejection of assigned identities, and constant reinvention of self.¹⁸ In any case, attitudes changed after the publication of her pamphlet in 1934, which was celebrated as "remarkable" by Breton in his essay "Qu'est-ce que le Surréalisme?" A year later, in *Minotaure*, he again referred to her essay: "In the recent polemics with Aragon, Claude Cahun has presented conclusions that for a long time will be the most valid."¹⁹

She soon became friends not only with the author of the *Surrealist Manifestoes* and his companion, Jacqueline Lamba, but also with René Crevel, Salvador Dali, and Benjamin Péret. Further, her polemical tract became the main reference for the Surrealists on the controversial issue of poetry's relation to revolutionary politics. It is noteworthy that André Breton admired not only her photographs but also her writing; a letter from September 21, 1938, showed his high opinion of her and he encouraged her to speak out: "It seems you are endowed with extensive powers. I think (and will keep repeating it to you) that you must write and publish. You know very well that I consider you one of the most inquiring minds of our time (one of the 4 or 5) but you find pleasure in keeping silent."²⁰

Breton's admiration was fully justified; Cahun's pamphlet was not just a restatement of his views, as well as those of Tristan Tzara, René Crevel, and other Surrealists, but also an original, if polemical, exploration of the meaning of poetry and its significance for the revolution. It was a pathbreaking piece, anticipating future documents of the Surrealist movement. In fact, her unique blend

of Romantic, Hegelian, Surrealist, and Marxist arguments is still, in this new century, thought provoking.

During the next three years, Claude Cahun linked herself to the Surrealist group and personally to André Breton. In 1935 she attended the Congress for the Defense of Culture (convened in Paris by anti-Fascist writers [Gide, Malraux], but under the hegemony of the Communist Party) “to support the Surrealists and the Anarchists who were defending Victor Serge.”²¹ Surprisingly, she did not sign any of the Surrealist collective declarations from 1934 and 1935, including the break with the official Communist movement in August 1935, which followed Breton’s exclusion from the Cultural Congress.

It was only in autumn 1935, with the formation of the ill-fated journal *Counterattack* (an effort of Breton and Bataille), that her name appeared among the signers. She was attracted by Bataille’s revolutionary pessimism and his attempt to combine Nietzsche and Marx, and she liked the “revolutionary defeatist” line of the new initiative, which she thought corresponded to the position of the Left Opposition. According to the notes she took of a meeting in 1936, she insisted that “revolution must be permanent or it will not be viable. It will be made by human beings who aspire to a complete liberation.”²²

Counterattack was a confused political initiative that attempted to fight Fascism by organized means based on “discipline” and “fanaticism” and was inspired by a strange mixture of Jacobin dictatorship and Nietzschean aristocracy. In March 1936, Breton and his friends, including Claude Cahun, left *Counterattack*, reaffirming the Surrealists’ belief that one needed struggle against Fascism through the “revolutionary traditions of the international labor movement.”²³

During 1936, Claude Cahun took an active part in Surrealist activities: she was present at the Surrealist exhibitions in Paris and London and signed the collective appeal “No Freedom for the Enemies of Freedom” (written by Henri Pastoureau and Leo Malet), which denounced the Fascist coup in Spain and the passive atti-

tude of the French Popular Front government. However, in July 1937 she and her companion, Suzanne Malherbe, decided to leave Paris and live on the Channel Island of Jersey. She did not sever her connections with the Surrealist group, and in 1938 she joined the International Federation for an Independent Revolutionary Art (FIARI). In June 1939 she signed the last declaration of the FIARI, "A bas les lettres de cachet! A bas la terreur grise!," which was also the last collective manifestation of the Surrealists before the war and the dispersal of the group. In 1940, with the beginning of World War II and the occupation of the Channel Islands by the Third Reich, a new chapter in Claude Cahun's political and intellectual life began, perhaps the most astonishing and impressive of all: anti-Fascist Resistance.

When the German troops arrived, Cahun's first impulse was to shoot the Kommandant; she took a small revolver and went to the woods to do target practice. However, she was too inexperienced, and Suzanne convinced her that she would miss her target. They decided to start a subversive activity addressed to German soldiers to incite them to insubordination.

From 1941 to 1944, for four years, they issued, mainly in German (Suzanne translated), thousands of anti-Fascist leaflets, posters, and fliers aimed at sowing trouble and demoralization among the occupiers. Claude Cahun also produced photomontages using images cut from the Nazi magazine *Signal* and sometimes took her inspiration from John Hartzfeld's well-known anti-Fascist works, which had been exhibited in Paris in 1935. Humor, play, allegory, nostalgia, absurdity, the marvelous, and irony were their main weapons in this unequal struggle against the most powerful war machine of Europe.

Their fliers contained anti-Nazi and antimilitarist slogans, such as "Liebknecht-Frieden-Freiheit," uncensored information, songs, manifestoes, theatrical dialogues, images, and wordplay and were usually signed the "Nameless Soldier."²⁴ One of their fliers, which enraged the occupying authorities, directly called on the soldiers to rebel and to desert and advised them that if their officers at-

tempted to stop them, to shoot their officers. Some of the material was handwritten on cardboard cigarette paper wrappers. They also wrote "Down with War" on French money. Usually, however, Cahun made twelve carbon copies of each flier with her Underwood typewriter and illustrated them with images made of typewriter letters and graphic signs. Then they attached the fliers to walls, doors, barbed wire, and parked cars or hid them inside newspapers and magazines on the newsstands or left them in mailboxes, churches, and houses used by the Nazis.

Their daring behavior, right under the noses of the Gestapo and the occupying forces, can best be described by the Yiddish word *chutzpa*, insolence.²⁵ Summarizing the spirit of her struggle, she wrote after the war, "I committed myself to revolutionary defeatism, trying to convince the German soldiers to turn against their officers. We fought for a rainbow of values stretching from the ultraromantic black to the flaming red. We fought for the Germans against Nazi Germany. We fought as Surrealist writers with weapons of chance."²⁶

And in a letter from 1950 she explains that what stimulated her to resist was her leftist, pacifist, Surrealist, and even "Communist (historical materialism)" ideas as well as the need to defend particular values, "such as freedom of expression and sexual freedom [liberté des mœurs] that were of personal concern to me."²⁷ During those four years the angry, frustrated Gestapo agents searched in vain for the dangerous "Nameless Soldier," who sabotaged the morale of the troops and preached rebellion in every corner of the small island.

Finally, someone, probably the shopkeeper who sold them the cigarette papers, denounced the two women, and on July 25, 1944, they were arrested. Trying to save her friend, Claude Cahun told the Gestapo officers, "I'm the only one responsible. I did the photomontages and wrote the fliers. Moreover, I'm Jewish on my father's side." As soon as they were jailed, both women tried to commit suicide by swallowing Gardenal pills they kept with them for just such an eventuality. The attempt failed, but they were seriously ill



Franklin Rosemont, *The Secret of Hegel*, 1968.

for some time, and this probably saved them from being deported to Germany.

At first, the Nazi secret police could not believe these two kind, middle-aged ladies were the firebrands responsible for all the subversive agitation and thought they were agents of some “foreign” power. When they at last became convinced, after searching their house and finding all the materials, they convened a military court. The German prosecutor, Major Sarmser, argued that they were illegal partisan fighters, using spiritual weapons that were more dangerous than guns. He also insisted that their flier calling on the German soldiers to rid themselves of their officers was “incitement to murder.”

The military court predictably sentenced them both to death. The two women were to be sent to Germany to be beheaded with an axe, the Third Reich’s treatment for dangerous anti-Fascist enemies whose death they intended to serve as an example. However, due to the liberation of France in the summer of 1944 the Channel Islands were cut off from Germany, and the deportation could not take place.

Seeing that the war was lost, the local commanders were afraid of reprisals and did not want to take the responsibility for an odious execution on the island itself. They told the two women that if they wrote to the German authorities asking to be pardoned, they could save their heads, thanks to the merciful policy of the Third Reich. To their dismay and surprise, Claude Cahun and Suzanne Malherbe obstinately refused to sign an appeal for pardon: they considered it dishonorable to ask favors of the Third Reich! The embarrassed local commanders were then forced to sign the appeal themselves, and the two proud anti-Fascist resisters were “pardoned” and sentenced to life imprisonment. During their time in the military prison they discovered that many German soldiers were jailed for trying to desert or for insubordination, a situation they attributed, at least in part, to their antiwar propaganda. Finally, on the last day of the war, May 8, 1945, they were liberated, in poor health but alive.²⁸

The history of anti-Fascist Resistance in France has many impressive episodes, but this story of two women, a Surrealist artist and her companion, challenging the Third Reich for four years, all alone, sowing trouble and discontent among the occupiers with an old Underwood typewriter, is certainly one of the most moving ones. Claude Cahun never published anything about her Resistance activities; all the information was found in her notebooks and in letters to her friends Gaston Ferdière (1946) and Paul Levy (1950), posthumously collected by François Leperlier in the volume *Ecrits*.

These notebooks are also interesting because they contain remarks on her philosophical, political, and social views, in her very personal and unconventional style. “I’m an asocial rebel and a revolutionary dreamer,” she writes, “and do not fit any political party; my religion is paganism, including inspired figures such as Socrates, Buddha, and Kropotkin; and my (dialectical) method of thinking is taken from Heraclitus, Hegel, and Marx. We, poets, do not admit the divine right of force; we love to challenge natural and political forces. Without this love of revolution, which has no sex or fatherland, I would have died of hatred or greed.”²⁹ The simultaneous mention of Kropotkin and Marx points to the kind of libertarian Marxist thinking she shared with André Breton and Benjamin Péret.

Pessimism had always been a key component of Cahun’s sensibility, nourished by readings of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, but it never led her to resignation: “My ‘despair’ did not prevent me from acting under the sign of crystal and the blue of dawn.” Nothing was further from her character than the passive acceptance of “reality”; she strongly believed that “the right to resist . . . natural and social evils is the first among human rights.” In the notebook in which she wrote down these comments one finds also a statement of her self-emancipatory socialist views: “A human being can be destroyed from outside” in the Nazi concentration camps, which destroyed people’s emotions, mental capacities, consciousness, and will before destroying their lives.

However, the individual “can only be built from inside, in exercising individual freedom, through one’s own efforts. . . . It seems that free will cannot be scientifically demonstrated. I don’t give a damn! . . . The time has come to keep the promises that were made from revolution to revolution, from civilization to civilization, from generation to generation.”³⁰

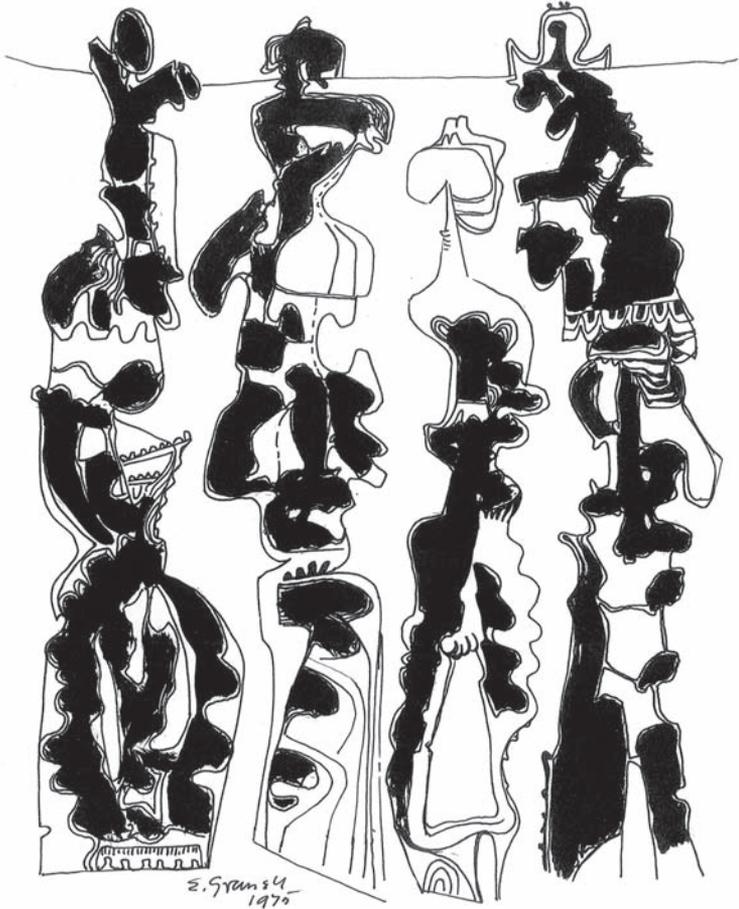
In another of her pieces from 1947, she says, “The partisan takes the responsibility for the end and for the means, for the orders given, for the acts accomplished without strings attached or excuses; he is the outsider on the misty front of the nationalistic wars that are foreign to all humankind, the citizen of the republic humanizing war itself in the civil wars, the still-free human being. He who has given himself a mission does not need to enlist himself.” In this fascinating anarchist-inspired statement one can see both a homage to the French Resistance fighters and a reference to her own struggle in Jersey, and a polemic against the Communist (PCF) and existentialist doctrine of engagement (“enlistment”).

After the war, Claude Cahun reestablished contact with her Surrealist friends; she corresponded with André Breton and Jean Schuster and considered returning to Paris. She wrote several notebooks on her experiences during the war as well as a few poems, one of which, from 1952, is dedicated to Benjamin Péret. In June 1953 she visited Paris and took part in the meetings of the Surrealist group at the Café de la Mairie, where she saw André Breton, Benjamin Péret, Meret Oppenheim, Toyen, and her other friends.

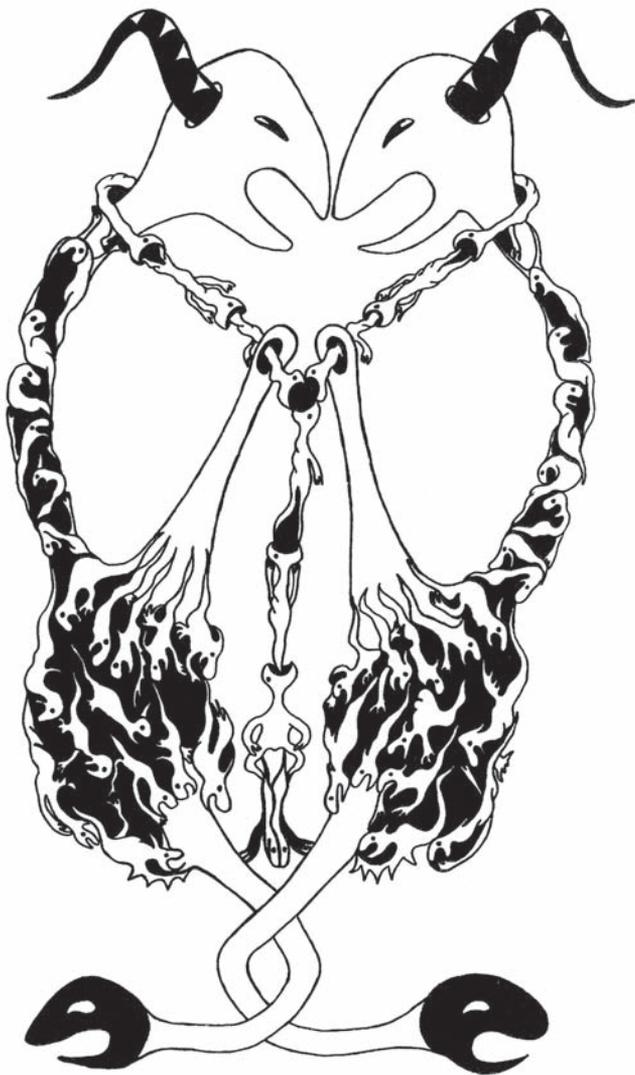
She made up her mind to return to Paris and looked for an apartment in her old neighborhood, Montparnasse, but her health was damaged by the year spent in the jails of the Third Reich, and she died in Jersey on December 8, 1954.

A fascinating and enigmatic figure, Claude Cahun occupies a unique place in the burning black constellation of Surrealist revolutionary spirits. By her thought and her action, she lived and fought at the extreme point of the needle.

TRANSLATED BY Marie Stuart.



E. F. Granell, *Ideals*, 1975.



Kateřina Piňosová, *Desire*, 1996.

VINCENT BOUNOURE*A Sword Planted in the Snow*

FOR FORTY YEARS, VINCENT BOUNOURE (1928–1996) embodied Surrealism’s obstinate refusal to accommodate, to be reconciled to the world, and to disappear. Through the power of poetry and imagination alone, he kept alive the flame of the candle-bird, and the light of the cloud-lamp. Vincent joined the Surrealist movement in the mid-1950s. His signature is on all the tracts of the movement from 1957 and notably in 1961 on the Declaration of “the 121” in support of soldiers refusing to serve in the Algerian War. In the spring of 1958, his first article, “Preface to a Treatise of Matrices,” was published in *Le Surréalisme, même*—it is a voyage of the mind from Hegel to the Melanesians by way of alchemy. “What are the limits of human desire?” he asked. “Far from being satisfied. It will need the whole of the imagination, to reach the peak of the wind, to reach the crest of the moment, the view beheld will make a Scarlet Poppy blush.” The editors (directed by André Breton) introduced Bounoure in this way: “Since he discovered a star in a heather-blossom, the map to Treasure Island in the scarab’s wing, Vincent Bounoure, twenty-nine years old, educated in the sciences, but a poet above all, still has the sensibility ‘of a mad youth who gets along with time as poorly as with love,’ but all the same possesses all that is needed to make poetry shine.”

Vincent wrote for Surrealist journals in the 1960s. In *La Brèche* (1963) he published “The Paradox of Communication,” an homage to the anarchist philosopher Max Stirner, in which he wrote, “To Romanticism belongs the crown of fire that always haloes Revolt. . . . It is from this alone that all true fulfillment comes. Alone it carries the banner of the Revolution.” Vincent’s great passion, shared by his companion, Micheline, was the art of so-called primitive peoples. In an article for *L’Archibras* (1967), “Surrealism and the Savage Heart,” he celebrated the magical power of Oceanic and African objects, which expressed “the odyssey of desire among the forest of substances and the play of images.” “Laughing stars,” objects that “speak in bird-cries.” Beyond the works themselves, it was also the spirit of the people that fascinated him: “Totemistic people have never been subjected to the myopia that removes true value from all things and then assigns a price to them compatible to their use to technology.”

After the death of André Breton, when some participants in Surrealism wanted to “dissolve” the group in France and create a movement with a “different name,” Vincent blocked their path with “Rien ou quoi?” (Nothing or what?) in October 1969: “Already the academic historians of Surrealism exult at seeing us finally authenticating the date marked in their notebooks as the final ‘End of Endings’ of Surrealism, the date they have had to erase every year for forty years. . . . Nothing or What? We should not get involved in a project that has nothing to do with Surrealism.

“Must one believe, as some have confided to me, that the magic circle has been broken? I am interested in making sure that it is not so. I am convinced that it depends on us to begin anew its manifestations. I believe that to call the woman one loves by a different name is to change her. Likewise, Poetry is made invariably of words. It will disappear with them.”

Starting from that catalyst, those in France who refused to end Surrealism continued their own individual adventures while at the same time building anew the collective path they considered necessary. In the seventies, this path found its expression in the



Martin Stejskal, *Drawing*, 1968.

Bulletin de liaison surréaliste. Vincent, together with several French and Czech Surrealist friends (Vratislav Effenberger and his comrades), put together *La civilisation surréaliste* (1976), one of the most important books of the movement since Breton's death. In one of the essays, Vincent emphasized, "All Surrealist manifestation is an oppositional stand, or, to use Charles Fourier's formula, a declaration of *écart absolu*, absolute divergence. The story of Surrealism is the story of protest."

In June 1976, *Rouge* published a review of *La civilisation surréaliste*: "This book expresses all the diversity, richness and the spirit of freedom of the Surrealist message," as well as its passionate refusal of "industrial-capitalist civilization and its mercantile, rationalist/positivist conception of the world." At this time Vincent and Micheline met the militants of the Fourth International and helped

them organize the successful campaign to free Maria Regina Pilla, the Surrealist filmmaker Paulo Paranagua, and two others imprisoned by the Argentine military. In the second issue of *Surréalisme* (1977), in the fiery text “Ordealie,” Bounoure declared his rejection of the “judgment of history”—an updated version of “the perfidious judgment of God.” Surrealism remains “a pole of attraction that is indestructible,” beyond all success and all failure. Why “civilization” instead of “Surrealist revolution”? In an interview with *Communist Critique* (1978) Vincent explained, “If one wants to make a revolution, it’s to bring about a new civilization.

“To specify under what conditions the aim of the revolution will correspond to the needs of poetry, will authentically be a civilization, is the urgent task we have taken on.” In an interview with Michel Lequenne and Carlos Rossi, Vincent criticized the “contamination of Marxism by currents of thought that are foreign to Marx’s central thinking.” He insisted, “The Talmudists of Marxism and the Submarines of Christian-industrial mythology, combine their efforts to divert revolutionary energies or to lull them into stupidity. I think I know you well enough, Marxist revolutionar-



Robert Green, *Drawing*, 1981.

ies, to ask you to share with us the task of bringing those energies to their true destination.”

Micheline’s death, in 1981, was difficult for Vincent. He published little from that point on, except for the magnificent volume *Vision d’Océanie* (1992) by the Dapper museum that they had worked on together. Nevertheless, he continued to participate in the activities of the Parisian Surrealists. Strong personal ties also linked Vincent to the Czech Surrealists, whose activities had been suppressed by the long Stalinist night to semiclandestine activity. In October 1990, receiving his Czech friends for their first Parisian exhibition, Vincent could not conceal his joy: “Let us imagine that the beautiful river flowing through Prague was dammed by an accident of history for the last twenty years, and suddenly the golden skies it reflected with such patience have come to us at last, now that the dam blocking its course has collapsed” (*Bulletin Surréaliste international*, June 1991).

That the Surrealist adventure continues today in Paris, and if it continues throughout the twenty-first century in France as we hope, this is primarily because of the insurrectionary spirit Vincent Bounoure. If one could use only one word to describe his personality, it would be “poetry.” A poetry that expressed itself not only in his books of poems—illustrated by Jean Benoît, Jorge Camacho, Guy Hallart, Martin Stejskal—but in his writings and in his whole life. A life devoted to the pursuit of what he called in *Talismans* (1967), “the wolf-headed comet to come, towers of flames and a sword planted in the snow.”

TRANSLATED BY Jen Besemer.



Ody Saban, *Parle l'oiseau Montmartre* (*The Montmartre Bird Speaks*), 1993.

ODY SABAN*A Spring Ritual*

ODY SABAN IS NOT A PAINTER like any other. An outsider, a visionary artist, she creates an art that is unique and unlike anything found in the galleries of Paris or New York. A rebellious mind, she remains untamed, like a wonderful and lustful Bengal tiger. With her brush, she creates a haunting galaxy of images that burst from the paper and burn like a bonfire. Ody belongs to the great Feminine/Surrealist tradition, her own style nourished by Oriental myths and utopian dreams. Born in Istanbul into a Sephardic Jewish family, living for several years in Paris—after a stay in Israel and a long visit to New York—she is a nomadic and cosmopolitan spirit, always open to new experiences, new cultures, new discoveries.

Her paintings bring to life a disquieting fairy-tale, a delicious celebration of Eros, an imaginary universe which partakes both of the Thousand and One Nights—a tale inside of a tale inside of a tale, in an infinite loop—and of medieval illuminations, where little devils and witches celebrate with unbridled joy the spring ritual. Combining watercolors and india ink, her works have the luminosity, the transparency, and the glow of ancient stained-glass windows. The subversive Surrealist aspiration expresses itself in her paintings through mad love, the insolence of desire, the erotic

convolutions of bodies that embrace each other, the burning fusion of sexes.

Her baroque poetry fills every corner of the canvas with a fabulous array of strange and lively creatures. Ody Saban's colors—sensual reds, serpentine greens, Turkish blue enamels, poisonous yellows—contribute to give her painting a magic quality that seduces, disturbs, and bedazzles the onlooker. “Make love, not war” seems to be the imperative message of many of her paintings. The utopian dream of universal love and peace, as imagined by the ancient biblical prophets, the powerful call by Isaiah—“no nation shall raise its sword against other nation”—is at the core of Ody's art. Her colorful and sensual hymn to love and tenderness is the plastic expression of such a utopia.

This is why she is so fascinated by the Mayan Indians of Chiapas, Mexico, and their leader, the mysterious Subcomandante Marcos, whose insurgent Zapatista Army decided to replace the gun with the pen and the bullets and hand grenades with poems, manifestoes, and tales. Her paintings peacefully bring together in the same brush of color Jewish and Egyptian myths, biblical and Muslim symbols. She unites, in a same syncretic embrace, Lilith, the mythological Jewish rebellious women, and Isis, the Egyptian goddess of fertility. Nothing is more alien to her mind than religious, ethnic, or national narrowness.

Her art is playfully human, erotically universal, poetically sexual, and knows no borders. Through her colors run all the rivers of the earth. If there is a painter who deserves to be called singular, it is Ody Saban. She creates an art that is unique.

In the words of the art historian and critic Michel Lequenne, one can find in Ody's paintings “the pure colors of blood, water, heavens, luxurious vegetation, sand and mixed bodies . . . celebrating the rediscovered harmony . . . in the erotic victory of the Great Goddess.”

It is well known that the Kabbalists developed, throughout the centuries, the mystical art of letter combinations. By attributing to each letter a number, they discovered the hidden affinities between



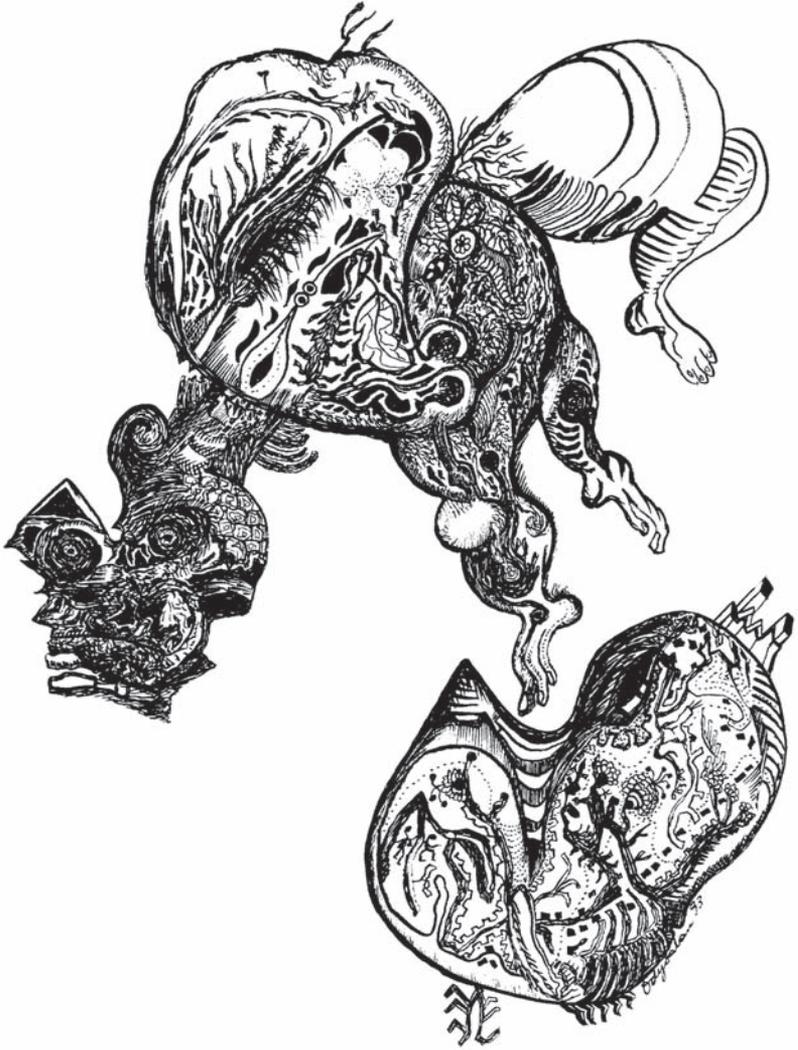
Ody Saban, *Je suis tes grilles cassées ta liberté*
(*I Am Your Broken Gates Your Freedom*), 1994.

words bearing the same number and used this secret knowledge for magical operations of “practical Kabbala.”

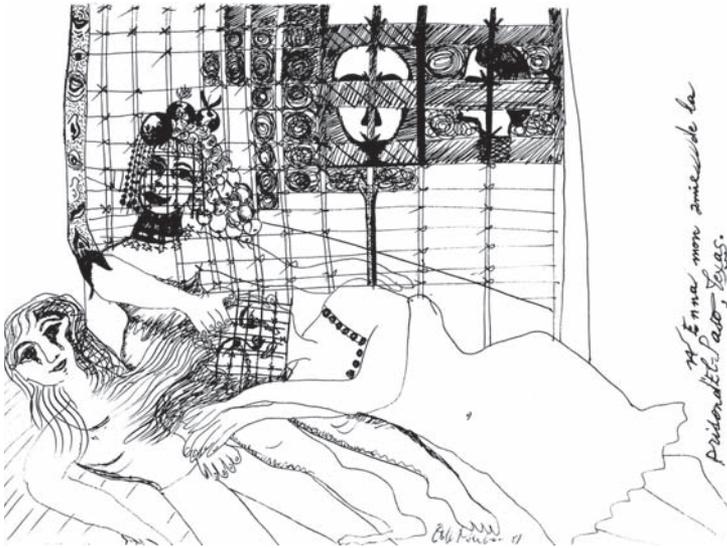
Ody Saban inherits from this tradition. But she went farther than the Kabbalists. Without fearing heresy, she added a new letter to the sacred alphabet of the Hebrew language. Starting from the belief that language has been given to us by the gods in order



Ody Saban, *Le peuple des gratte-soleil (People of the Sun Scrapers)*, 1994.



Ody Saban, *Seule l'innocence (Innocence Alone)*, 1993.



Ody Saban, *A Enna mon amie de la prison d'El Paso*
 (To Enna My Friend from the El Paso Prison), 1981.

to make erotic use of it, she proposes the letter KOUS, a word that designates in both Arab and Hebrew slang—for once unified—the female sexual organ. As an oriental ideogram, the new letter is represented by a form that corresponds, in a schematic way, to the site of female pleasure: an inverted triangle, or a great U, shot through by a small slash. Profane Kabbalist, Ody Saban has dared to represent what nobody else until now imagined: a new letter, charged with the magic force of love. Her KOUS watercolors are not only glowing and tender works of art, but also the invention of a new erotic grammar.

TRANSLATED BY Marie Stuart.



Alena Nádvořníková, *Drawing*, 1977.



Robert Green, *Drawing*, 1981.

CONSUMED BY NIGHT'S FIRE

The Dark Romanticism of Guy Debord

GUY DEBORD IS NO MORE than a “literary dandy” with a dazzling style. “All that remains of him is literature,” claims Philippe Sollers.¹ In Debord’s works, “the ethic is reabsorbed into the aesthetic.” The way the revolutionary book entitled *La Société du Spectacle* can be aseptitized is simple. You just ignore it. Claim it is unworthy of interest because, being an “impersonal theoretical work,” it is not written in the first person singular. What is more, it is too marred by a lexicon borrowed from the young Marx and Hegel, and they spoil the beautiful style. “When he abandons the great Germans, it shows in his style. For the better.” Sollers would rather refer to Rivarol and Ezra Pound than to Marx and Hegel. For stylistic reasons, no doubt.

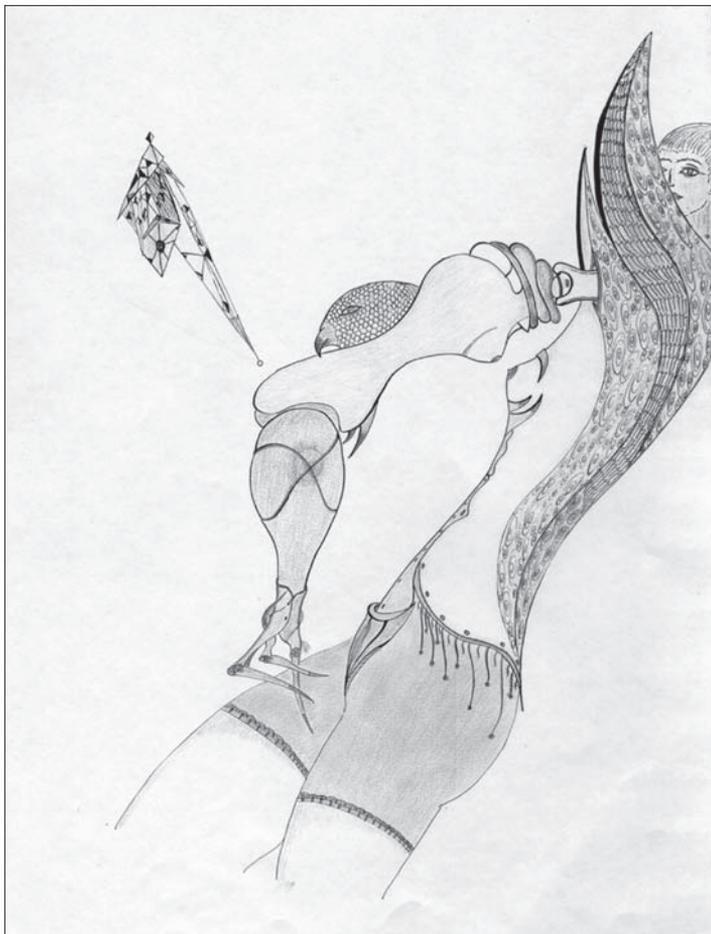
Others reduce its theses to a banal critique of the mass media. What Debord called the “society of the spectacle” is not, however, simply the tyranny of television—the most superficial and immediate manifestation of a deeper reality—but the whole economic, social, and political system of modern capitalism. It is based upon the transformation of the individual into a passive spectator who watches the movement of objects for sale (commodities) and who views events in general. This system separates individuals from each other, thanks to, among other things, a material mode of produc-

tion that constantly tends to reproduce everything—from cars to television—that generates isolation and separation. The modern spectacle, wrote Guy Debord in one of those superb formulations he was so good at finding, is “an epic poem” but, unlike the *Iliad*, it does not sing “arms and men.” It sings “commodities and their passions.”²

It may be a truism, but these days it has to be pointed out with some force: Guy Debord was a Marxist. A profoundly heretical Marxist, no doubt, but also a profoundly innovative one. He was open to libertarian insights, but he still claimed to be a Marxist. His analysis of the society of the spectacle owes much to Lukács’s *History and Class Consciousness*, which had already noted the transformation of human beings into spectators who watch commodities moving of their own accord and also contained the core of the theory of reification. Like Lukács, Debord sees in the proletariat an example of a force that can resist reification. Through the struggle and the activity of emancipating themselves, the stagnant mode is broken. From his point of view, the workers’ councils abolish the alienation between product and producer, between theory and action, and the radical antithesis of the society of the spectacle.³

In spite of all the denunciations and expulsions, the important thing to remember is that Guy Debord’s books (which will be remembered a hundred years from now) were written by one who regarded himself as “a professional revolutionary working in the cultural field.” Under his influence, situationism, that dissident wing of Surrealism, fused the best traditions of workers’ council Communism and the libertarian spirit of anarchism into a movement designed to bring about a radical transformation of society, culture, and everyday life. It failed, but the aspirations of ’68 derived some of their most audacious dreams from situationism.

Guy Debord is open to criticism. His aristocratic spirit was trapped in a haughty solitude. He admired the baroque and such cunning political strategists such as Machiavelli, Castiglioni, Balthazar Gracian, and the Cardinal de Retz. He made the preposterous claim that he was the only free individual in a society of slaves.



Jean-Pierre Guillon, *La scarabée* (*The Beetle*), 1980.

But it has to be recognized that, unlike so many of his generation, he never reconciled himself to the existing order.

What makes Debord's writings so fascinating is their irreducibility, their darkly Romantic sheen. When I speak of Romanticism, I do not mean simply a nineteenth-century literary school, but something much greater and more profound: the great tradition



Farid Lariby, *Drawing*, 1989.

of protest against exploitative society in the name of the values of the past. It begins in the mid-eighteenth century with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, runs through German *Frühromantik*, symbolism, and Surrealism, and is still with us. It is, as Marx himself noted, a critique that follows capitalism like its shadow from the day it was born to the day it dies (oh, happy day). Like a psychological structure or a worldview, Romanticism occurs in every domain of culture: literature, poetry, the arts, philosophy, historiography, theology, and politics. Torn between its nostalgia for the past and

its dreams for the future, it denounced the devastation wrought by bourgeois modernity: the disenchantment of the world, mechanization, reification, quantification, and the dissolution of human communities. Despite its constant reference to a lost past, Romanticism is not necessarily retrograde; in the course of its long history, it has taken both reactionary and revolutionary forms.⁴

Guy Debord belongs to the utopian and subversive tradition of revolutionary Romanticism that runs from William Blake to William Morris, from Charles Fourier to André Breton. He never ceased to denounce and deride the ideologies of “modernization” and was never afraid of being called anachronistic. “When ‘being absolutely modern’ became the latest decree proclaimed by the tyrant, the one thing the true slave feared above all else was being suspected of being attached to the past.”⁵

Nor did Debord ever hide that he felt nostalgia for precapitalist forms of community. Exchange value and the society of the spectacle have dissolved the human community, which was once based upon the direct experience of material reality, a real dialogue between individuals, and common action to resolve problems. Debord often mentions the past’s partial realization of an authentic community: the Greek polis, medieval Italian republics, villages, neighborhoods, and popular taverns. Adapting (implicitly) Ferdinand Tönnies’s distinction between *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*, he stigmatized the spectacle as “a society without community.”⁶

I will use one example to illustrate Guy Debord’s dark or Gothic (*noir*) Romanticism (in the sense that English novels of the eighteenth century can be called Gothic [*noir*]): the script for the film *In Girum Imus Nocte et Consumimur Igni*. At once poetic, philosophical, social, and political, it is a splendid work. The script and the images function as complementaries within the framework of an iconoclastic—in the strict sense of the word—use of classical cinema. The words have an intrinsic value independent of the function of the image. In that sense, it is significant that, in 1990, Debord republished only the text, not the full screenplay, and simply added a series of footnotes.

The film is made up of dialogue from other films and is also full of quotations, some of the sources given (von Clausewitz, Marx, and Swift), others without any sources (the Bible, and Victor Hugo). Debord deals with them in the way that highwaymen deal with their victims' property. He wrenches the passages he cites out of their contexts, integrates them into his own discourse, and gives them a new meaning.

Being a professional provocateur, Debord begins his screenplay with a direct attack on his audience. The vast majority of his audience consists of the commodity society's privileged wage earners, the willing victims of the society of the spectacle who cannot tear themselves away from "competing in the conspicuous consumption of nothing." That, however, is not his primary goal. He tells how the Paris of the 1950s gave birth to a totally subversive project. The title of the film is a Latin palindrome—"We Wander in Darkness and Are Consumed by Fire"—and its ambiguous imagery sums up the feelings and dilemmas of a group of young people whose slogan was "reject everything that is commonly accepted." The group found themselves in the forefront of "an assault on the world order" that foreshadowed May '68. And while the enemy was not destroyed, these young fighters still planted their weapons "in the heart of the system of ruling lies."⁷ It is not simply its poetic quality, its philosophical originality, its critical rigor, or its haughty impertinence that gives the script its fascinating power.

Like his Romantic forebears, Debord feels nothing but scorn for modern society: he constantly denounces its "bad, unhealthy, gloomy buildings," its technological innovations, which are usually of benefit only to businessmen, its "modernized illiteracy," its "spectacular superstitions," and especially its "hostile landscape," which meets "the concentration camp requirements of present-day industry." He is particularly savage about the neo-Haussmanesque and modernizing town planning of the Fifth Republic, which promoted the adaptation of the city to the dictatorship of the car. According to Debord, this policy was responsible for the death of the sun, as the sky over Paris was darkened by "the false mist of

pollution,” which permanently darkened “the mechanized circulation of things in this valley of desolation.” He rejected “both the bourgeois and the bureaucratic version of this modern scandal” and regarded the “abolition of classes and the state” as the only solution to its contradictions.⁸

This revolutionary antimodernism goes hand in hand with a nostalgic glance back to the past—it matters little whether it is the ancient palace of the king of Ou, reduced to ruins, or the Paris of the 1950s, which contemporary planners have tattered into a gaping ruin. A poignant regret for “beauties that will never return,” for periods when “the stars had not been blotted out by the mist of alienation,” and a fascination with “ladies, knights, armor, and amours” of a bygone era run through the entire text like some subterranean murmuring.⁹

It is not, though, a matter of returning to the past. Few twentieth-century authors have been as successful as Guy Debord in transforming nostalgia into an explosive force, into a weapon to be used against the existing order, into a revolutionary breakthrough into the future. He and his friends initially pursued this quest in *dérives*—“the search for a different, baneful grail,” with their “chance encounters” and “perilous enchantments”—that allowed them to grasp once more the “secret of dividing what once was one.”¹⁰

“Perilous enchantments.” The phrase is important. While the ethos of modern civilization is, as Max Weber saw so clearly, a disenchantment (*die entzänberung der Welt*), Romanticism is above all an attempt—and often a desperate attempt—to reenchant the world. How? While conservative Romantics dreamed of a religious restoration, Gothic Romantics from Charles Maturin to Baudelaire to Lautréamont had no qualms about taking the side of Faust’s Mephistopheles, the spirit that always negates.

The same is true of Guy Debord and his friends, followers of a negative dialectic who sided with the devil, “or in other words, historical evil which leads existing conditions to their destruction.” Living as they did in a corrupt society which claimed to be united, harmonious, and stable, their most ardent hope was to

become “emissaries of the Prince of Division.” They wished to be disciples of the “prince of darkness.” “After all, it is a noble title; the present system of thought awards none more honorable.”¹¹

Like the Romantic poets, Debord preferred symbols of darkness to those of an Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) that can be manipulated by the ruling class. But while the Romantics’ favorite nocturnal source of illumination was the moon—as in the famous phrase by Ludwig Tieck which sums up the literary and philosophical ideals of early German Romanticism in three words: enchanted moonlit night (*Die Mondbeglantzte Zaubernacht*)—the screenwriter of *In Girum Imus Nocte et Consumimur Igni* is more interested in the light of fire: “This is how a new ‘Age of fire’ is set ablaze; no one who is alive at this moment will see the end of it: obedience is dead.”¹²

The flames are licking at the walls of the fortress of the spectacle. Guy Debord thought he could read the writing on the walls of Babylon: “*Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsim.*” In any case, he was not wrong to conclude, “This society’s days are numbered; its reasons and merits have been weighed in the balance and found wanting; its inhabitants are divided into two groups, and one of them wants to see it dead.”¹³

Faithful to the goals of Gothic Romanticism, Guy Debord was a twentieth-century adventurer. But he was a member of a particular species of adventurer, one which was sketched in a manifesto of the Internationale Lettriste in 1954. The signatories there included “Guy-Ernest Debord.” “An adventurer is someone who makes adventures happen, not simply someone who happens to have adventures.”¹⁴ This maxim could stand for an epigram for his life.

TRANSLATED BY Marie Stuart.



Joseph Jablonski, *Collage*, n.d.



Alena Nádvořníková, *Drawing*, 1978.

INTERNATIONAL SURREALISM SINCE 1969

A RUMOR WHICH IN ITS persistence has taken on the crushing weight and granite-like consistency of a dogma would have it that Surrealism disbanded and disappeared as a movement and as collective action in 1969. What does this mean?

Three years after the death of André Breton in 1966, several members of the Surrealist group in France—Jean Schuster, José Pierre, Philippe Audoin, Claude Courtot, Gérard Legrand, and a few others—declared that it was necessary to end all collective activity calling itself Surrealist.

In his article “The Fourth Canto” (*Le Monde*, October 4, 1969), Schuster made the distinction between “eternal Surrealism,” “an ontological element of the human spirit,” and “historical Surrealism,” which supposedly had run its course by 1969. Such a distinction, however, had no foundation. Surrealism has recognized and continues to recognize its ancestors in all the cultures of the past, and if poetry and freedom are constants of the human species, the Surrealist movement as such is historical and has nothing to do with “eternity”—a dubious postulate in any case, for reasons convincingly argued several millennia ago by Heraclitus: *ta panda rei*, everything changes, everything flows, everything is transformed.

Moreover, thanks to the activities of many Surrealist groups around the world, the movement has long since overcome the crisis of 1969. Its relegation to the “historical” archives has proved to be premature.

The essential elements of these developments are little known, if not deliberately obscured. Vincent Bounoure countered Jean Schuster’s announcement of Surrealism’s dissolution in a text entitled “Nothing or What?” Printed in an edition of one hundred copies, this document and an accompanying inquiry were circulated in Paris, Prague, Chicago, and other places, eliciting numerous responses, mostly positive, which were collected in March 1970 and circulated under the title *Pour communication: Réponses à l’enquête “Rien ou quoi?”* The Parisian Surrealists who refused to abandon the movement regrouped, in close relation with their friends in Prague, around the *Bulletin de liaison Surréaliste*. They were also supported by the Surrealists in the United States. For ten issues, the contributors to the *Bulletin* included, among others, Jean-Louis Bédouin, Micheline and Vincent Bounoure, Marianne Van Hirtum, Robert Lebel, Joyce Mansour, Jehan Mayoux, Franklin and Penelope Rosemont, Ted Joans, Nicolas Calas, Jan and Eva Švankmajer, and Michel Zimbacca.

The editorial of the first issue of the *Bulletin* read, “No one has the right to dictate a Surrealist ‘line’ and still less to set it down. It falls to each of us to describe our own trajectory and to fix the points at which it joins those of others.” Reading the *Bulletin*, one was not only initiated into newly invented games (the game of opposites and the game of parallel stories), but also invited to participate in a debate on “Surrealism and Revolution” with Herbert Marcuse, initiated by the Surrealists in Chicago. In 1976, the Paris activity led to the publication of the book *La civilisation surréaliste*, edited by Vincent Bounoure, with the participation of the contributors to the *Bulletin*, as well as René Alleau, Jean Markale, Martin Stejskal, and others.

In *La civilisation surréaliste* Bernard Caburet denounced the “filthy civilization” in which human beings became “beautiful



Jean-Pierre Guillon, *Couronnée de Commune*
(*Crowned by the Commune*), 1980.

economic livestock for the meat-lockers of the future”; Vincent Bounoure and Vratislav Effenberger related, in a collaborative article, how in spite of “rationalist resignation and metaphysical irrationalism which continue to determine the rhythm of action,” Surrealism calls for “the subversion of the psychosocial conditions of



Kateřina Piňosová, *Drawing*, 1994.

human existence to put an end to the devastating effects of the conflict between the Pleasure Principle and the Reality Principle.”

On May 1, 1976, the World Surrealist Exhibition opened in Chicago; it was accompanied by a large catalog entitled *Marvelous Freedom/Vigilance of Desire*, featuring articles by E. F. Granell, Paul Garon, Edouard Jaguer, and Joseph Jablonski; poems and tales by Rikki Ducornet, Clarence Laughlin, Penelope Rosemont, Philip Lamantia, Shuzo Takiguchi, and others; and reproductions of works by Adrien Dax, Guy Ducornet, Gerome Kamrowski, Tristan Meinecke, Karol Baron, Jean Benoît, Mimi Parent, and many more. This international exhibition was the first in the United States organized by young Surrealists, entirely independent of the art establishment. Of unprecedented scope, it featured more than six hundred works—paintings, drawings, collages, photographs, assemblages, games, sculptures, and objects—by well over a hundred active Surrealists from thirty-one countries.

Simultaneously, the U.S. Surrealists published the third issue of their journal, *Arsenal: Surrealist Subversion*, and, a little later, the tenth title, by the poet Nancy Joyce Peters, of the Chicago group’s ongoing Surrealist Research & Development Monograph Series. This whirlwind of activity continued with the publication of the large volume entitled *What Is Surrealism? Selected Writings of André Breton*, the first major collection of his key writings in English translation, edited and introduced by Franklin Rosemont with the help and support of Elisa Breton and Marguerite Bonnet. Thirty years later, that book remains in print.

In 1977, Editions Savelli collected the issues of the *Bulletin* into a single volume and also published a new review entitled *Surréalisme*. This review was exuberantly illustrated with the works of Karol Baron, Gabriel Der Kervorkian, Marianne Van Hirtum, Albert Marencin, Pierre Molinier, and many others. In its pages one reads, among much else, an appeal from October 1976 for the liberation of Paulo Paranagua, the Brazilian Surrealist poet and filmmaker imprisoned in Argentina, a superb text by Joyce Mansour, “The Virgin Cabinet, or the Red-Sea Explorer,” and

images from the game of parallel collages. Included also is a debate between Michel Lequenne and Vincent Bounoure entitled "Perversion and Revolution," and the discovery, by Michael Zim-bacca, of 36 Verbs of Love.

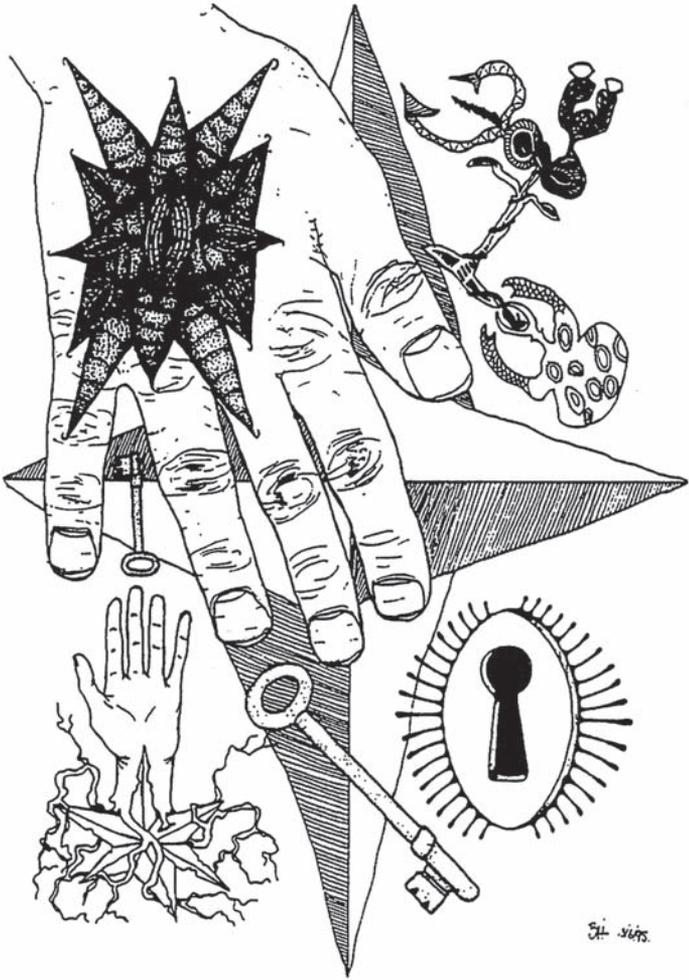
Others in France pursuing Surrealist activities included Jean Benoît, Mimi Parent, Alain Joubert, Nicole Espagnol, and Annie Le Brun—in Italy, Enrico Baj and Arturo Schwarz. In the United States, Leonora Carrington published her novel *The Hearing Trumpet*, and Paul Garon's *Blues and the Poetic Spirit* appeared, at first in London and later in the United States.

An "Arab Surrealist Group in Exile" was active in Paris and in London for several years. Several older Surrealist groups—the Dutch group started by Her de Vries in Amsterdam in the late 1950s; the Brazilian group formed by Sergio Lima and his friends in Sao Paulo in 1967; and the Japanese circle around Shuzo Takiguchi, whose activity in the movement had begun in the 1920s—were noted for their persistent agitation in the 1970s and 1980s and particularly for the variety and quality of their publications.

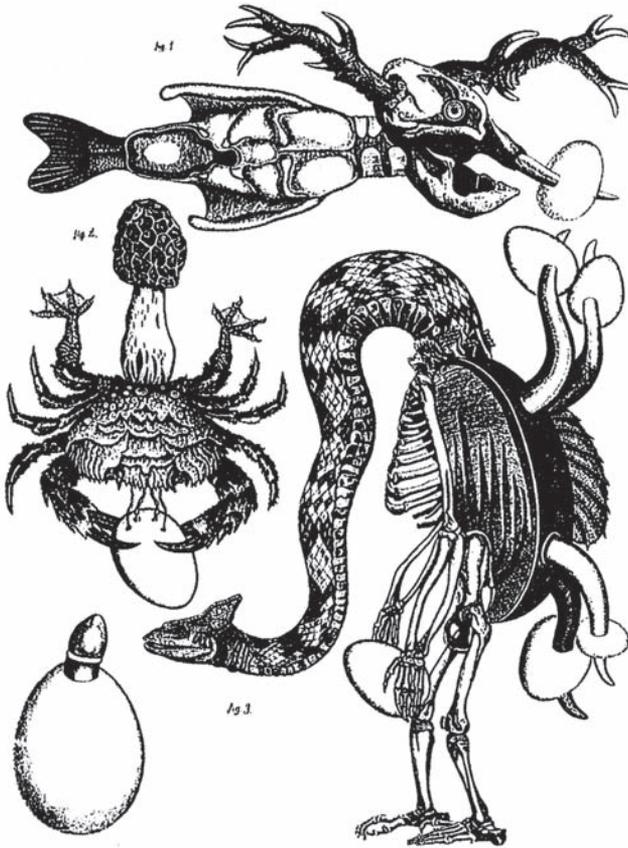
In 1978 a Surrealist group was organized in Australia by Hilary Booth, Anthony Redmond, Michael Vandelaar, and others. The group expanded considerably in the following decade and produced a number of tracts and pamphlets as well as a lively journal, *The Insurrectionist's Shadow*.

In Prague and elsewhere, amazing films by Jan Švankmajer received international distribution. Fernando Arrabal produced the masterpiece on the Spanish Civil War, the film *Guernica*. Luis Buñuel's film *Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* also appeared, challenging the tone of filmmaking.

In Romania, the poet Gellu Naum was the center of a group of young people oriented toward Surrealism; his novel *Zenobia* appeared after the repressive Ceaucescu government fell and later appeared in many translations. In Portugal, the works of Artur do Cruzeiro Seixas were given a major exhibition, and Mario Cesariny edited several books on Surrealism. In Argentina, the poet Carmen Bruna was active as poet and anarchist agitator.



Bill Howe, *La page talisman* (*The Talisman Page*), 1995.



Jan Švankmajer, *Fellacius Oedipus*, 1973.

In the United States, from the early 1970s on, the African American poets Ted Joans and Jayne Cortez were increasingly in the forefront of Surrealist activity. The Sicilian-American poet Philip Lamantia, an editor of *Arsenal*, also published several volumes of poems.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Surrealist group in Paris renewed its public activity. A new journal, *SURR—Surréalisme, Utopie, Rêve et Révolte*—was begun, and collective exhibitions took place, includ-

ing “Internal Landscape,” a title inspired by a work of the Argentinian Surrealist Silvia Grénier (1993); “Playing at Revolution” at the space of the anarchist CNT (1996); and “Paradoxical Waking” at the House of Art in Normandy (2000). In 1993, posters were pasted on the walls of Paris bearing the message “The marvelous is sexually transmissible.”

Collective tracts against the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and in solidarity with the Zapatistas, with the March of the Unemployed, with immigrant workers, and with the Italian political refugees were distributed in the streets. A “Surrealist Ultimatum to President Bush” was published in *Le Monde*. Marie Dominique Massoni summarized this activity as “Insubordination: imagination brings fire to dry powder. Without it, no rebellion can be sustained.” Surrealist activity flourishes not only in Paris but also in Chicago, Prague, Stockholm, Madrid, Athens, Leeds, London, and, more recently, Portland, Oregon, and St. Louis, Missouri.

The 1980s and 1990s also saw a proliferation of journals which manifested that activity: *SURR—Surréalisme, Utopie, Rêve et Révolte*—in Paris, *Arsenal: Surrealist Subversion* in Chicago, *Analogon* in Prague, *Salamandra* in Madrid, *Stora Saltet* in Stockholm, and *Manticore* in Leeds. *International Surrealist Bulletins* were issued in 1986, 1991, and 1992, with debates, inquiries, and documents, most notably a collective declaration signed by all the groups denouncing the so-called Columbus Quincentennial—the 500th anniversary of the “discovery of the Americas.” If, in Paris, these activities did not meet with the same response they’d had there twenty or thirty years earlier, in Prague it was just the opposite; not since 1945 had the group made such a cultural impact. As for the Surrealists in Madrid, Stockholm, and later Portland and Leeds, it was the first time they were able to participate openly in collective international Surrealist activity.

Surrealism cannot be spoken of as either “eternal” or “historically ended,” but rather as actively *engaged*. The Surrealists are active, as an organized movement, collectively, in several countries and continents. Their activity, far from being an imitation of past

efforts, consists rather of new intervention and innovation continuing the adventure and discovering new and never-before-seen forms of the marvelous, exploring the unknown rooms, corridors, and closets of the “invisible castle.” Capacity for innovation is the only guarantee of true relevance for the present and the only means of escaping the suffocating coils of the serpent of eternal repetition. This is a matter of *untimely relevance*, in the sense of Nietzsche’s *Untimely Meditations*, nourished by an irreconcilable hostility toward hypertechnological Western culture. *Webster’s II New Riverside Dictionary* defines *untimely* as “1. Occurring or done at an inappropriate time: *Inopportune*.” It is impossible to imagine an activity more inopportune, more contrary to these times, and less opportune than that of a Surrealist group at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Surrealism must not be confused with the so-called artistic avant-gardes that succeed one another after flourishing for a short period—such as Fauvism, Cubism, Expressionism, Futurism, Dadaism, Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, and others. Surrealism is simultaneously artistic, philosophical, and political, as were the Baroque and Romantic movements. Like alchemy, socialism, and the Romantic philosophy of nature, Surrealism has a history. It has an ensemble of writings, manifestoes, and documents that transmit its esoteric, philosophical, and political message as well as a continuity of magical and poetic practices. It refuses to erase the past. Anything that cannot find a spark of hope in the past has no future.

But Surrealism, like hermeticism, sorcery, piracy, and utopia, is above all a matter of creative imagination. Like the *cangaceiros*, the noble bandits of the Brazilian woods, the Surrealists are doomed to innovate, invent, and explore. The old ways, the paved roads, and the beaten paths are in the hands of the enemy. New ways must be found—the wanderer makes the path.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Auguste Viatte, *Victor Hugo et les illuminés de son temps* (Montréal: Éditions de l'Arbre, 1943). Translated excerpts from Breton's *Arcanum 17* are reprinted in Breton, *What Is Surrealism?*, edited by Franklin Rosemont (New York: Pathfinder, 2000), 325–333.

2. Breton, “What Is Surrealism?,” reprinted in Breton, *What Is Surrealism?*, edited by Franklin Rosemont (New York: Pathfinder, 2000), 177.

3. Michael Löwy and Robert Sayre, *Révolution et mélancolie: Le Romantisme à contre-courant de la modernité* (Paris: Payot, 1992), translated by Catherine Porter as *Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001). For more on the subject, see Max Blechman, ed., *Drunken Boat 3: Revolutionary Romanticism* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1999); Sarane Alexandrian, *Le Socialisme romantique* (Paris: Seuil, 1972); Jonathan Beecher, *Victor Considérant and the Rise and Fall of French Romantic Socialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); and Claire Goldberg Moses and Leslie Wahl Rabine, *Feminism, Socialism, and French Romanticism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

4. Löwy, “Marxism and Revolutionary Romanticism,” in *On Changing the World from Karl Marx to Walter Benjamin* (New York: Humanities Press International, 1992), 3, translation by David J. Parent.

5. Ibid.

6. Robert Sayre and Michael Löwy, “Figures of Romantic Anti-Capitalism,” *New German Critique* 32 (Spring–Summer 1984), 42–92.

7. As a recent scholar explains, the Surrealists' brief association with the PCF in the late 1920s constitutes little more than a quick experiment that deviates from Surrealism's long-standing and deeply entrenched passion for anarchist cultural politics. Carole Reynaud Paligot, *Parcours politiques des surréalistes, 1919–1969* (Paris: CNRS, 1995). For more on Surrealism and anarchism, see Fernand Drijckoning, "Surréalisme et anarchisme entre les deux guerres," *Avant Garde: Revue interdisciplinaire et internationale des arts et littératures du XXe siècle*. Special issue: "Anarchia" 3 (1989), 39–66; Alix Large, *L'Esprit libertaire du surréalisme* (Lyon: Atelier de création libertaire, 1999); José Pierre, ed., *Surréalisme et anarchie: Les "billets surréalistes" du Libertaire, 12 octobre 1951–8 janvier 1953* (Paris: Plasma, 1983); André Bernard and Pietro Ferrua, eds., *Surréalisme et anarchisme: "J'en suis encore à me le demander. . ."* *Écrits pour débattre* (Lyon: Atelier de création libertaire, 1992); André Bernard, ed., *Surréalisme et anarchisme: Le Pied de grue. Écrits pour débattre et aller plus loin* (Lyon: Atelier de création libertaire, 1994); Ulrich Vogt, "Osiris anarchiste: Le Miroir noir du surréalisme," *Mélusine: Cahiers de recherché sur le surréalisme* 5 (1983), 142–158, an excerpt from his *Le Point noir: Politik und Mythos bei André Breton* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1982), 255–277. See also Ron Sakolsky's "Surrealist Subversion in Chicago," the introductory essay to his edited anthology *Surrealist Subversions: Rants, Writings and Images by the Surrealist Movement in the United States* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2002), as well as Sakolsky's "Surrealist Desire, Anarchy and the Poetry of Revolt," *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* 56 (Fall–Winter 2003–2004), 47–57.

8. A concise account of this opposition is Gérard Roche, "Le Surréalisme et le rejet du stalinisme en Europe, 1935–1956," *Mélusine: Cahiers de recherché sur le surréalisme* 14 (1994), 221–239.

9. An eight-point questionnaire was circulated in May 1947 to Surrealists in France, Belgium, England, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Egypt, the United States, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, Iraq, Japan, Mexico, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, and Turkey. The purpose of this exercise was not only to report on the Surrealist project at large but also to synchronize the movements' intentions and direction. Included were questions related to such subjects as Surrealism's objectives; Surrealists' position toward revolutionary action; the relationship between rationality, knowledge, and reality; the role of love, literature, and plastic arts in Surrealism; and whether or not religion improved the human condition at all. The data supplied by the replies were synthesized into the pamphlet *Rupture inaugurale: Déclaration adoptée le 21 juin 1947 par le groupe en France pour définir son attitude*

préjudicielle a l'égard de toute politique partisane (Paris: Éditions surréalistes, 1947), excerpts available in translation as “Inaugural Break” in Breton, *What Is Surrealism?*, edited by Franklin Rosemont (New York: Pathfinder, 2000), 452–455.

10. Aurélien Dauguet, “Organique ou organique?” in Bernard, ed., *Surréalisme et anarchisme*, 12–13. Dauguet says that the small group of anarchists in the Fédération anarchiste who had the most contact with the Surrealists broke away to start the Fédération communiste libertaire (1953–1956), some of whom later formed the Groupes anarchistes d’action révolutionnaire and the Groupe Noir et rouge. On the Surrealist reception of the Noir et rouge anarcho-Communists, see Jean-Jacques Lebel, “Noir et rouge,” *Bief: Jonction surréaliste* 2 (15 December 1958), 4. Via this route there is also a connection between Surrealism and the collective surrounding the journal *Socialisme ou barbarie*.

11. Collective declaration, “Hungary: Sunrise,” reprinted in Breton, *What Is Surrealism?*, edited by Franklin Rosemont (New York: Pathfinder, 2000), 457. For details on how the Algerian war affected the work of the far Left and anarchists in France, see Sylvain Pattieu, *Les Camarades des frères: Trotskistes et libertaires dans la guerre d’Algérie* (Paris: Éditions Syllepse, 2002); and Sylvain Boulouque, *Les Anarchistes français face aux guerres coloniales, 1945-1962* (Lyon: Atelier de création libertaire, 2003), 45–68.

12. Nora Mitrani, from *BIEF: Jonction surréaliste* 12 (April 1960), translated by Guy Ducornet as “In Defense of Surrealism” and excerpted in Penelope Rosemont, ed., *Surrealist Women: An International Anthology* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 294.

13. Looking back on the episode now, it is easy to scoff at Surrealist interest in revolutionary Cuba, but a more careful attempt to understand its appeal could lead directly to Surrealist Romantic anticapitalism. One can begin by reading Michael Löwy’s essay, “Ché’s Revolutionary Humanism,” *Monthly Review* 5:49 (October 1997), 1–7.

14. Photographs of graffiti from the uprising can be found in Walter Lewino, *L’imagination au pouvoir* (Paris: Losfeld, 1968); Julien Besançon, *Les murs ont la parole* (Paris: Tchou, 1968); Gérard Lambert, *Mai 1968: Brûlante nostalgie* (Paris: Pied de nez, 1988); and Dark Star Collective, ed., *Beneath the Paving Stones: Situationists and the Beach, May ’68* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2001). More work needs to be done on the influence and activities of Surrealism in these events; interested readers can begin with Löwy and Sayre, “The Fire Is Still Burning: From Surrealism to the Present Day and Beyond,” in *Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity*. Two brief translated excerpts

from the Surrealist journal *L'Archibras* from Summer 1968 appear in Michael Richardson and Krzysztof Fijałkowski, eds., *Surrealism Against the Current: Tracts and Declarations* (London: Pluto Press, 2001), 132–135.

15. Collective declaration, *Pas de pasteurs pour cette rage!*, reprinted in José Pierre, ed., *Tracts surréalistes et déclarations collectives. Tome 2: 1940–1968* (Paris: Terrain vague, 1980), 276–278.

16. Excerpts from “The Prague Platform” have been taken from the translation found in Richardson and Fijałkowski, eds., *Surrealism Against the Current*, 58–66. The volume also contains two intriguing follow-ups to the “Platform” by the Czechs, “The Possible Against the Current” (from 22 September 1969), and “The Platform of Prague Twenty Years On” (from 1987). Guy Ducornet was the first to translate “The Prague Platform” into English for publication in the “Surrealism in the Service of Revolution” issue of *Radical America: An SDS Journal of American Radicalism* (January 1970), 89.

17. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 1–2.

18. Herbert Marcuse, letter to Franklin Rosemont, 12 October 1972, reprinted in Sakolsky, ed., *Surrealist Subversions: Rants, Writings & Images by the Surrealist Movement in the United States* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2002), 417.

19. André Breton, “Sus au misérabilisme!,” *Combat-Art* 26 (5 March 1956), 11; an English translation by Simon Watson Taylor called “Away With Miserabilism!” can be found in André Breton, *Surrealism and Painting* (London: Macdonald, 1972), 347–348.

20. David Roediger, response to the inquiry on “Surrealist Subversion in Everyday Life,” reprinted in *Race Traitor: Journal of the New Abolitionism* 13–14 (Summer 2001), 208.

21. Penelope Rosemont, “A Brief Rant Against Work, With Particular Attention to the Relation of Work to White Supremacy, Sexism and Miserabilism,” *Surrealist Experiences: 1001 Dawns, 221 Midnights* (Chicago: Black Swan Press, 2000), 168.

22. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. F. Engels, volume 1, part 7, section 4 [1867] (New York: International Publishers, 1970), 645.

23. More recently, the Surrealists have turned their antimiserabilist actions toward globalization’s triumphalist fantasies, its dizzying eddies of economic dislocation, and its practice of reinvesting human distress into a system of sustained immiseration. In 1999, in a collective tract that circulated among their friends and comrades in the streets of Seattle, the Chicago Surrealists

identified the World Trade Organization as an agent in “the globalization of miserabilism” whose “task is to oversee US capital’s worldwide campaign to lower wages, restore sweatshop conditions, shield corporate polluters and wilderness-wreckers, facilitate the commercial annihilation of endangered species, and above all keep the profits soaring.” Taken from the flier *Who Needs the WTO?* [22 November 1999], recently reprinted in Eddie Yuen, Daniel Burton Rose, and George Katsiaficas, eds., *The Battle of Seattle: The New Challenge to Capitalist Globalization* (New York: Soft Skull Press, 2002), 21–24.

24. Robin D. G. Kelley, “Freedom Now Sweet: Surrealism and the Black World,” reprinted in Sakolsky, *Surrealist Subversions*, 149–150.

I. BREAKING OUT OF THE STEEL CAGE!

1. On the meeting between Trotsky and Breton and the founding of the FIARI (IFIRA), see the book by Arturo Schwarz, *Breton/Trotsky* (Paris: UGE, 1977), as well as the precise and rigorous studies by Gérard Roche published in the *Cahiers Léon Trotsky*, no. 25 (1986) and in *Docusur*, no. 2 (1987). On the relationship between Surrealism and Trotskyism, see the remarkable essay by Michel Lequenne, “Surréalisme et communisme,” published in the review *Critique communiste*, no. 8, (1982) and no. 15 (1983) and reprinted in *Marxisme et esthétique* (Paris, *La Brèche*, 1985). Finally, on the affinities between Surrealism and anarchism, two rich compilations published by l’Atelier de Création libertaire de Lyon, *Surréalisme et anarchisme* (compiled by André Bernard (1992) and *Le pied de grue* (1994).

2. On the conflict between Péret and the libertarian current, see Guy Prévan’s work, *Benjamin Péret, révolutionnaire permanent* (Paris: Syllepse, coll. “Les archipels du surréalisme,” 1999).

2. MORNING STAR: THE NEW MYTH FROM ROMANTICISM TO SURREALISM

1. Manfred Frank, *Der Kommende Gott: Vorlesungen zur Neuen Mythologie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1982).

2. Friedrich Schlegel, “Rede über die Mythologie,” in *Romantik* 1 (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1984).

3. Ibid.

4. André Breton, *Arcanum 17* (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1994).

5. Breton, “Limites non frontières du surréalisme” (1937), in *La clé des champs* (Paris: 1973), 27–34.

6. Michel Beajour, “André Breton mythographe. Arcane 17,” in Marc Eigeldinger, *André Breton* (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1970).
7. Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*.
8. Breton, “Limites non frontières du surréalisme,” 27–34.
9. Breton, *Arcanum 17*.
10. André Breton, *What Is Surrealism? Selected Writings*, edited and introduced by Franklin Rosemont (New York: Monad, 1978).

3. THE LIBERTARIAN MARXISM OF ANDRÉ BRETON

1. André Breton, “Surrealist Situation of the Object,” in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and H. Lane, 128–129 (Ann Arbor: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, University of Michigan Press, 1972).
2. Maurice Nadeau, *Histoire du Surréalisme: documents surréalistes*, 2:298 (Paris: Seuil, 1988).
3. Walter Benjamin, “Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia,” in *Benjamin Reflections*, edited and introduced by Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken Books, Random House, 1989).
4. Nadeau, *Histoire du Surréalisme*, 309.
5. André Breton and Leon Trotsky, “Manifesto for an Independent Revolutionary Art,” in *What Is Surrealism? Selected Writings*, edited and introduced by Franklin Rosemont (New York: Monad, 1978).
6. Arturo Schwarz, *Breton/Trotsky* (Paris, 1977). Also Gérard Roche, “La rencontre de l’aigle et du lion: Trotsky, Breton, et le manifeste de Mexico,” in *Cahiers Léon Trotsky*, no. 25 (March 1986).
7. André Breton, “La claire tour,” in *La Clé des champs* (Paris, 1973).
8. Atelier de création libertaire de Lyon, *Surréalisme et Anarchisme* (1992, 1994).
9. Schwarz, *Breton/Trotsky*, 194.
10. Ibid.
11. Breton, “Homage to Natalia Sedova-Trotsky,” in *What Is Surrealism?*, 306–308.

4. INCANDESCENT FLAME: SURREALISM AS A ROMANTIC REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

1. *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 5 (1925). The text was signed by a large number of artists and intellectuals of the group, including Breton, Aragon, Eluard, Leiris, Crevel, Desnos, Péret, Soupalt, Queneau, etc.

2. André Breton, “La Claire Tour” (1951), in *La Clé des champs*, Paris 10/18, and J. J. Pauvert (1967), 42.

3. As Marie Dominique Massoni, editor of the journal *SURR* (*Surréalisme, Utopia, Rêve et Révolte*), published in Paris since the 1990s, has stated quite well, the Surrealists share with the Romantics “the refusal to see the world as existing only on a logical, mathematical, useful, verifiable, quantifiable basis—in sum, a bourgeois basis.” M. D. Massoni, “Surrealism and Romanticism,” in Max Blechman, *Revolutionary Romanticism* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1999), 194.

4. André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), 19, 37.

5. André Breton, “Evolution of the Concept of Liberty Through Romanticism” (1945), in *Conjonction: Surréalisme et révolte en Haïti*, no. 194 (June 1992), 82.

6. André Breton, “Perspective Cavalière” (1963), in *Perspective Cavalière* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), 227.

7. André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, 110.

8. André Breton, “Le merveilleux contre le mystère” (1936), in *La Clé des champs*, op. cit., 10, and “Position Politique de l’art” (1935), in *Position politique du Surréalisme* (Paris: Doniel-Gonthier, 1972), 25–26. There is an interesting analysis of the relationship between the Surrealists and German Romanticism in a recent book by K. H. Bohrer, *Die Kritik der Romantik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1989), 48–61. On the link between Surrealism, Romanticism, and the student revolts of the 1960s, see R. Faber’s essay, “Fröhromantik, Surrealismus und Studentenrevolte, Oder die Frage nach dem Anarchismus,” in *Romantische Utopie, Utopische Romantik*, edited by R. Faber (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1979), 336–358.

9. André Breton, “Introduction” (1933) to Achim d’Arnim, *Contes Bizzares* (Paris: Julliard, 1964), 18, 20, 21. See also Tristan Tzara, in his essay “Le surréalisme dans l’après-guerre”: “Romanticism is essentially revolutionary, not only because it celebrates the ideas of liberty, but also because it proposes a new way of living and feeling, according to its dramatic visions of the world, made of contrasts, nostalgias, anticipations” (in Tristan Tzara, *Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. 5, edited by Henri Bèhar, 62 [Paris: Flammarion, 1982]).

10. André Breton, “Sur l’art magique” (1957), *Perspective Cavalière*, 142.

11. As Marie Dominique Massoni observes, “The power of desire and the marvelous inclines them [the Surrealists] toward hermeticism, as with the Romantics before them. From *Enter the Mediums* to the canvases of Camacho or Stejskal the Surrealists follow close behind the alchemist Eugène Canseliet and the esoteric tradition, divested of its occultist hodgepodge,

very often in honor of the Romantics. Breton had inscribed on his tomb: 'I seek the gold of time.' The reference to Romanticism as well as to alchemy is obvious there." *Revolutionary Romanticism*, 197.

12. In the same spirit, I have examined the place of *myth* in Surrealism in my book (with Robert Sayre), *Romanticism against the Tide of Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

13. André Breton, *L'Art magique* (Paris: Ed. Phébus, 1991), 27.

14. Breton, "Sur l'art magique," *Perspective Cavalière*, 140.

15. *Ibid.*, 27, 261.

16. Breton, "Evolution du concept de liberté à travers le romantisme," in *Conjonctions*, 90. For a remarkable analysis of Marx's *Ethnological Notes* and his interest in Lewis Morgan, see the North American Surrealist Franklin Rosemont's essay, "Karl Marx and the Iroquois," in *Arsenal* (Chicago: Black Swan Press, 1989).

17. André Breton, "Oceania" (1948), *La Clé des champs*, 278–280.

18. Vincent Bounoure, *La Surréalisme et l'arts sauvages* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001), 204. Here is how Bounoure, the principal instigator of the pursuit of the Surrealist adventure in Paris after 1969, explains the Surrealists' fascination for Oceanic art: "The systematic recourse, with which the Surrealists pursue their program, to the mental functions which had been choked off bit by bit through the course of several thousand years of pretended civilization, their refusal of that dismemberment and that mutilation, cause them to impatiently listen for the secrets which seem to them to have been preserved by the Oceanic peoples, and which their formal creations leave transparent." *Ibid.*, 285.

19. René Depestre, "André Breton in Port-au-Prince," in Michael Richardson, ed., *Refusal of the Shadow: Surrealism and the Caribbean* (London: Verso, 1996), 232. The joy was short-lived: after a few days of freedom, the Lescot regime had been replaced by a military junta, which expelled André Breton from Haiti.

5. THE REVOLUTION AND THE INTELLECTUALS: PIERRE NAVILLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PESSIMISM

1. Pierre Naville, *Mémoires imparfaites: Le temps des guerres* (Paris: La Découverte, 1987), 83.

2. Gérard Rosenthal, *Avocat de Trotsky* (Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, 1975),

33. We can perhaps find in this "tough egg" the first signs of the anti-Romantic tendency that would later lead Naville to separate himself from Surrealism.

3. We may consider the first Surrealist group the result of a fusion of three groups around three magazines: *L'œuf dur* (Naville, Rosenthal), *L'aventure* (René Crevel, Max Morise, Roger Vitrac), and *Littérature* (Breton, Paul Eluard, Benjamin Péret). See Marguerite Bonnet, *André Breton, Naissance de l'aventure surréaliste* (Paris: Editions Corti, 1975), 378–379.

4. André Breton, *Manifestes du surréalisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), 38.

5. See Bonnet, *André Breton*, 231. Denise Naville later helped translate and publish works by the German romantic poet Hölderlin in France. Breton's and Eluard's poems to Denise can be found in Pierre Naville's Surrealist memoir, *Le Temps du surréal: L'espérance mathématique* (Paris: Galilée, 1977), 1:15–21.

6. Breton, *Entretiens* (1952) (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 110. Aragon was also impressed by Naville's "powerful rages and fierce resolve"; see Aragon's piece "Une Vague de rêves," published in *Commerce* (Autumn 1924).

7. Naville, *Le Temps du surréal*, 171–179.

8. *Ibid.*, 276, and Breton, "Introduction au discours sur le peu de réalité," in *Point du jour* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), 28–29.

9. *Le Temps du surréal*, 285–290.

10. See Louis Aragon, "Les Reines de la main gauche," *La Revue européenne*, August 1, 1924.

11. Naville, "Beaux-Arts," *La Révolution surréaliste*, 3 (1925). This article prompted Breton to take over the editorship of *La Révolution surréaliste*. In *Entretiens* Breton appears to consider this incident the start of Naville's falling out with Surrealism. See Breton, *Entretiens*, 129. However, as Bonnet perceptively points out, in Breton's answer to Naville's provocation, "Surrealism" and "Painting" appear as two separate terms. The concept of "interior model" reduces but does not quite abolish the distance between psychic automatism and visual expression (Bonnet, *André Breton*, 381).

12. April 2, 1925. See Bonnet, *Archives du surréalisme*, vol. 1, Bureau de recherches surréalistes (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 128.

13. Like his friends in the Surrealist group, Naville deeply despised nationalism. Accused by his officers of "laughing at the French flag," he was sentenced to one month in a military jail. See Naville, *Mémoires imparfaites*, 30.

14. Naville seemed to consider modern technology a neutral tool: a machine gun in the hands of Western powers is an instrument of domination, he claimed, but in the hands of Chinese revolutionaries it is one of liberation. If, however, we replace the reference to "machine gun" with "nerve gas" or "nuclear bomb," the problematic nature of this viewpoint becomes obvious.

15. *Le Temps du surréal*, 325. The historian Robert Short, in a well-known article on the politics of Surrealism, presents Naville's pamphlet as the work of a "former Surrealist," which is a total misrepresentation. Naville's piece was clearly part of an internal debate by the group. See Robert S. Short, "The Politics of Surrealism, 1920–1936," in Walter Laqueur and George Mosse, eds., *The Left-Wing Intellectuals Between the Wars 1919–1939*, 11 (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

16. Breton, "Legitimate Defense," trans. Richard Howard, in *What Is Surrealism?*, ed. Franklin Rosemont (New York, London: Pathfinder/Monad, 1978), vol. 2, 39. From *La Révolution surréaliste*, no. 7 (1926); reprinted in Maurice Nadeau, *Histoire du surréalisme: Documents surréalistes* (Paris: Seuil, 1964), 228–241; *The History of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Macmillan, 1965).

17. With great insight, Breton complained that the "old" materialism rejected by Marx was creeping back into the minds of some Communist Party leaders. A review of both Naville's and Breton's essays by André Gaillard appeared in the literary journal *Les Cahiers du Sud*, no. 85 (December 1926), 327–375. Sympathetic to Breton, it criticized Naville for trying to separate thought and action and denounced the beginnings of a process of bureaucratization in the USSR.

18. See the illuminating comments of Victor Crastre, a *Clarté* editor who sympathized with Surrealism, in his memoir, *Le Drame du surréalisme* (Paris: Les Editions du temps, 1963), 95–96.

19. The statement was published in the party's daily, *L'Humanité*, on April 1, 1927.

20. See Bonnet, *Archives du surréalisme*, vol 3: *Adhérer au Parti communiste?* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 52–55.

21. *Ibid.*, 55.

22. A few days later, on November 27, 1926, Naville stated, in the name of *Clarté*, "The revolutionary tendency of the Surrealist group agrees with the revolutionary aims of bolshevism" (*Adhérer au Parti communiste?*, 89). However, he opposed the Surrealists' collective adherence to the French Communist Party; their revolutionary role was to work from the outside.

23. See Nadeau, *Histoire du Surréalisme*, 103–106. Maurice Nadeau's lively presentation of this debate is in his chapter 3, "La Période raisonnante," 97–110.

24. Nadeau, *Histoire du Surréalisme*, 260–262.

25. Naville, *La Révolution et les intellectuels* (Paris: Gallimard/Livre de poche, 1975), 109.

26. Nadeau, *Histoire du Surréalisme*, 262.
27. André Thirion, *Révolutionnaires sans révolution* (Paris: Robert Lafont, 1972), 131–132. Years later in his *Entretiens*, in a polemical reference to Camus, Breton took a more reserved stance toward the issue of “Surrealist pessimism,” stating that it concerns only the present situation of the world, but not the future, which should be considered with “anticipatory optimism.” See *Entretiens*, 251.
28. *Le Temps du surréal*, 343.
29. Franklin Rosemont, “A Tribute to Gérard Rosenthal (1904–1992),” in *New Politics* (Winter 1993), 103.
30. Victor Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary 1901–1941* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 231.
31. Naville, *Trotsky vivant* (Paris: Maurice Nadeau, 1979), 90.
32. The three main accusations against Naville were (1) supporting the positions of the “Trotskyist” opposition, (2) continuing to publish *Clarté* outside of party control, and (3) signing a public protest against the first deportations of oppositionists in the USSR. See *Le Temps du surréal*, 468.
33. Walter Benjamin, “Der Sørrealismus: Die letzte Momentaufnahme der europaischen Intelligenz,” *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt/Main: Shurkamp, 1977), vol. II-1, 308; English translation: “Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of European Intelligensia,” in Benjamin, *One-Way Street and Other Writings* (London: Verso, 1979), 237–238. Benjamin was one of the few “non-Surrealists” outside France who responded to Naville’s essays. Surrealists in Czechoslovakia (Karel Teige) and Belgium (E. L. T. Mesens) commented on them during the thirties.
34. Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. II-1, 307; *One-Way Street*, 236.
35. *One-Way Street*, 225, 236.
36. *Le Temps du surréal*, 344–345.
37. *Ibid.*, 346.
38. *Entretiens*, 129.
39. See Naville’s later comments in *Le Temps du surréal*, 501.
40. In his book on Breton, Franklin Rosemont’s presentation of this debate seems a little unfair to Naville. See Rosemont, *André Breton and the First Principles of Surrealism* (London: Pluto Press, 1978), 41–42; also in Breton, *What Is Surrealism? Selected Writings*, edited by Franklin Rosemont (New York: Monad, 1978). One can agree with Rosemont, however, that “Breton had a surer grasp of the dialectic involved, but the intense debate with impassioned, lucid, merciless critics [such as Naville] certainly heightened his

awareness of the philosophical/theoretical/practical issues at stake.” Letter from Franklin Rosemont to Michael Löwy, April 8, 1997.

41. *Manifestes du surréalisme*, 105–106.

42. *Le Temps du surréal*, 498–500. Breton argues, in defense of his political “non-choice,” that Trotsky himself agreed, in a letter on September 25, 1929, that the leadership of the Third International had moved to the Left. Since Trotsky supported Rakovsky’s and other left oppositionists’ call to be readmitted to the Soviet Communist Party, why should the Surrealists be any more uncompromising? This is accurate, but we must add that Trotsky was not too optimistic about the prospects of this appeal and pointed out that, meanwhile, the oppositionists were still in exile or deportation. See *Writings of Leon Trotsky* (1929) (New York: Pathfinder, 1975), 325–331.

43. *Entretiens*, 150.

44. *Ibid.*, 152.

45. *Ibid.*, 137.

46. José Carlos Mariátegui, “El grupo suprarrealista y *Clarté*” (July 1926), in *El artista y su época* (Lima: Biblioteca Amuata, 1973), 42–45.

47. Mariátegui, “El balance del superrealismo” (February–March 1930), in *El artista y su época*, 50–51. See also “El superrealismo y el amor” (March 1930). Mariátegui used the term “superrealism,” and Naville’s name is misspelled as “Maville,” but all three of his articles on Surrealism evidence a perceptive understanding of the political debates within the group.

48. Relations between Naville and Trotsky during the thirties were not easy. They often disagreed on tactical issues, and Trotsky criticized Naville’s “non-dialectical” and “abstract” thinking (see Trotsky’s summary of a debate with the French Trotskyists in August 1934, in *Writings of Leon Trotsky 1934–1935* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971), 60. However, on other occasions, as in his statement to the Dewey Commission hearings on the Moscow Trials, Trotsky referred to Pierre and Denise Naville as “our best friends.” *The Case of Leon Trotsky* (New York: Harper, 1937), 137.

49. See Péret’s letter to the Brazilian Liga Comunista (March 19, 1932) in his *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: José Corti, 1989), 5:37–39.

50. Already in 1934, in the collective statement “Planet without visa,” Breton and his Surrealist friends had protested Trotsky’s expulsion from France, while stating that they were “far from sharing all his present ideas.” See “Planète sans visa,” in Arturo Schwarz, *Breton/Trotsky* (Paris: Union Générale d’Editions, 1977), 105–106.

51. After World War II Breton and Naville oddly disagreed about this

event. Breton claims that Naville and the leaders of the POI tried to prevent him from speaking and that it was only thanks to Victor Serge, who sent a telegram from Brussels, that he was able to read his statement (*Entretiens*, 181). Naville, on the other hand, writes that it was thanks to him that Breton was allowed to read his text (*Le Temps du surréal*, 502). I have no way of determining who was right.

52. Léon Trotsky, Pierre Naville, Denise Naville, Jean Heijenoort, *Correspondence 1929–1939* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1989), 100.

53. Trotsky et al., *Correspondence*, 175–176. Trotsky's reaction was described by Van Heijenoort to Arturo Schwarz. See Schwarz, *Breton/Trotsky*, 57–58.

54. Naville, *Trotsky vivant*, 91–92.

55. Breton and Trotsky, “Pour un art révolutionnaire indépendant,” in Schwarz, *Breton/Trotsky*, 122–128. Trotsky, not being an artist, asked his friend Diego Rivera to sign in his name.

56. Trotsky et al., *Correspondence*, 202. See also Breton, “Visite à Léon Trotsky,” in Schwarz, *Breton/Trotsky*, 130–144.

57. See *Clé*, no. 2 (February 1939), 3. Among the authors who contributed to this publication, we find André Breton, Jean Giono, Georges Henein, Maurice Heine, Pierre Mabille, Henri Pastoureau, Benjamin Péret, Herbert Read, and Victor Serge. This heterogeneity—and the imminence of war—prevented the continuation of *Clé* beyond its second issue.

58. Quoted in Schwarz, *Breton/Trotsky*, 86. Breton used the word *pruneaux* (“plums”), French slang for bullets or “slugs.” Pierre Laval, the collaborationist, pro-Nazi prime minister of Vichy France, was indeed tried and executed by a firing squad.

59. Naville, *La Psychologie, science du comportement* (Paris: Gallimard, 1942), and *D'Holbach et la philosophie scientifique au XVIIIème siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943). After Naville's death in 1992, the Belgian sociologist Mateo Alaluf called him “the last Encyclopedist in the Enlightenment tradition.” *Formation-emploi*, no. 42 (April–June 1993).

60. *De l'Aliénation à la jouissance: La genèse de la sociologie du travail chez Marx et Engels* (Paris: Librairie Marcel Rivière, 1957). For a general assessment of Naville's work in sociology, see Michel Elierd, ed., *Naville, la passion de la connaissance* (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 1996).

61. Naville, *La Guerre du Vietnam* (Paris: Editions de la Revue Internationale, 1948), and C. L. R. James, *Les Jacobins noirs*, translation and preface by Pierre Naville (Paris: Gallimard, 1949). Naville described his friendship with James in a letter to Franklin Rosemont (June 20, 1989).

62. During the seventies Naville published four volumes on “bureaucratic socialism” under the collective title *Le Nouveau Léviathan* (Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1970–1974).

63. *Le Temps du surréal*, 150. They may have also met at gatherings of the Toussaint Louverture Committee, founded in Paris in 1948, of which Breton (and most probably also Naville) was a member.

64. Naville, *La Révolution et les intellectuels* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975). See particularly his “Introduction,” 13–56.

65. *Le Temps du surréal*, 396. The book also includes a short chapter in which Naville settles some thirty-seven-year-old accounts and answers in kind the unfair attacks against him in the *Second Manifesto*, by using some equally unfair arguments against Breton. This explains why in 1977 French Surrealists, such as Vincent Bounoure, reacted negatively to Naville’s book. *Le Temps du surréal* was to be the first volume of two, under the joint title *L’Espérance mathématique*, but the second one never came out. Naville retained an active interest in Sade, contributing an important article (“Une mathématique de la délivrance”) to the large catalogue of the 1989 Paris Art Center exhibit on Sade curated by Annie Le Brun.

66. Chicago Surrealist Group, “Three Days That Shook the New World Order: The Revolt of Los Angeles, April–May 1992,” in *What Are You Going to Do About It?*, no. 2 (April 1993).

67. The letter was published as an introduction to the French edition of the document, *Trois jours qui ébranlèrent le nouvel ordre mondial: La révolte de Los Angeles, avril-mai 1992* (Lyon: Atelier de Création Libertaire, 1995), with an afterword by Guy Girard.

6. CLAUDE CAHUN: THE EXTREME POINT OF THE NEEDLE

1. One can find some comments on her Jewish background in her later autobiographical notes, “Confidences au Miroir” (unpublished, 1945–1946), *Ecrits* (Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 2002), edition established by François Leperlier, 593.

2. C. Cahun, “Aveux non avendus” (1930), in *Ecrits*, 178, 428.

3. C. Cahun, “Feuilles détachées du Scrap Book” (unpublished, 1948–1951), in *Ecrits*, 659.

4. See François Leperlier, “L’exotisme intérieur,” in *Claude Cahun photographie* (Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 1992), 149.

5. See Leperlier, *Cahun, l'écart et la métamorphose* (Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 1992), 149.

6. This and other biographical information in this essay is borrowed from Leperlier's excellent book *Cahun, l'écart et la métamorphose*.

7. C. Cahun, "Confidences au Miroir," in *Écrits*, 579.

8. "Lettre à Paul Levy" (1950), in *Écrits*, 718.

9. *Ibid.*, 594.

10. C. Cahun, "Les Paris sont ouverts," in *Écrits*, 522–526.

11. C. Cahun, "Confidences au Miroir," in *Écrits*, 584.

12. C. Cahun, "Les Paris sont ouverts," in *Écrits*, 508–509.

13. *Ibid.*, 510.

14. *Ibid.*, 511–512, 515.

15. *Ibid.*, 521.

16. *Ibid.*, 530.

17. Of course, neither Marx and Engels, nor Trotsky or Rosa Luxemburg, ever thought of reducing art or poetry to a "class mechanism."

18. See Diane Lamoureux, "De la tragédie à la rébellion: le lesbianisme à travers l'expérience du féminisme radical," in *Tumultes*, no. 21–22 (November 2003), 261–262. One should add that Cahun very seldom comments on her lesbianism in her writings, including the intimate notebooks written after the war. But it is quite probable that this was one of the motives of her sociopolitical radicalization.

19. A. Breton, *Qu'est-ce que le surréalisme?* (Paris: Henriques, 1934), 28, and "La grande actualité poétique," *Minotaure*, no. 6 (1935). Twenty years later, in his well-known radio interview, he still refers to her pamphlet as the most significant image from those years. *Entretiens* (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), 169.

20. Quoted by Leperlier, "L'exotisme intérieur."

21. "Lettre à Paul Levy," (1950), in *Écrits*, 718. Victor Serge, the well-known Russian and "Libertarian Trotskyist" writer, was at that time interned in a prisoners' camp in the Soviet Union.

22. C. Cahun, "Réunion de Contre-Attaque" (1936), in *Écrits*, 564.

23. See José Pierre, ed., *Tracts surréalistes et déclarations collectives* (Paris: Lofsfeld, 1980), 1:301.

24. C. Cahun, "Le muet dans la mêlée" (unpublished, 1948), in *Écrits*, 629. The slogan called for "Peace and Liberty" and paid homage to Karl Liebknecht, the only socialist member of the German Reichstag who voted against the war credits in 1914—and in 1919 one of the founders of the German Communist Party, assassinated by the military soon afterward.

25. Unfortunately, they were discovered by the Gestapo, and most of the clandestine participants, which included some German anti-Fascist soldiers, were shot.

26. C. Cahun, “Confidences au Miroir,” in *Ecrits*, 580, 613.

27. C. Cahun, “Lettre à Paul Levy,” in *Ecrits*, 713–714. This is, by the way, one of the few passages in her writings that points to her sexual preferences as one of the motives for her revolutionary commitment.

28. *Ibid.*, 720–750.

29. C. Cahun, “Le muet dans la melee” (1948), in *Ecrits*, 634, 644–648.

30. C. Cahun, “Feuilles detachees du Scrap Book,” in *Ecrits*, 657–658.

9. CONSUMED BY NIGHT’S FIRE: THE DARK ROMANTICISM OF GUY DEBORD

1. Cécile Guilbert, *Pour Guy Debord* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996).

2. *La Société du spectacle*, 66; translated into English as *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1994).

3. Cf. Anselme Jappe, *Guy Debord* (Marseilles: Via Valeriano, 1996). This is probably the best book on Debord to date.

4. For a more detailed discussion of the paradoxical nature of Romanticism, see Michael Löwy and Robert Sayre, *Révolution et mélancolie: Le Romantisme à contre-courant de la modernité* (Paris: Payot, 1992).

5. Guy Debord, *Panegyrique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), 83; translated into English as *Panegyric*, trans. James Brook (London: Verso, 1991).

6. *La Société du spectacle*, 154.

7. Guy Debord, “In Girum Imus Nocte et Consumimur Igne,” in *Oeuvres cinématographiques complètes* (Paris: Editions Champ Libre, 1978), 224, 257, 264. A partial translation of *In Girum Nocte*, with an introduction by Lucy Forsyth, appeared in *Block 14* (Autumn 1988).

8. *Oeuvres cinématographiques complètes*, 193, 202, 212, 220–21.

9. *Ibid.*, 217, 219, 221, 255.

10. *Ibid.*, 247–249.

11. *Ibid.*, 249, 251.

12. *Ibid.*, 242.

13. Guy Debord, *Preface à la quatrième édition italienne de ‘La Société du spectacle’* (Paris: Editions Champ Libre, 1979), 41; translated into English as *Preface to the Fourth Italian Edition of the Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Frances Parker and Michael Forsyth (London: Chronos, 1979).

14. “Une Idée neuve en Europe,” *Potlatch*, no. 7 (August 1954), 46.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alquié, Ferdinand. *The Philosophy of Surrealism*. Translated by Bernard Waldrop. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*. Translated by Harry Zohn. London: NLB, 1973.
- . *Illuminations*. Translated by Harry Zohn. Edited by Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken Books, 1969 (1955).
- . *One-Way Street and Other Writings*. London: Verso, 1979.
- . *Reflections*. Edited and introduced by Peter Demetz. New York: Schocken Books, Random House, 1989.
- Bensaïd, Daniel. *Le pari melancholie*. Paris: Editions Fayard, 1997.
- Biro, d'Adam, with René Passeron, eds. *Dictionnaire général du surréalisme et de ses environs*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1982.
- Blechman, Max. *Revolutionary Romanticism*. San Francisco: City Lights, 1999.
- Bonnet, Marguerite. *André Breton, Naissance de l'aventure surréaliste*. Paris: Editions Corti, 1975.
- . *Archives du surréalisme, 3, Adhérer au Parti communiste?* Paris: Gallimard, 1992.
- . *Archives du surréalisme, 1, Bureau de recherches surréalistes*. Paris: Gallimard, 1988.
- Bounoure, Vincent. *La civilisation surréaliste*. Paris: Payot, 1976.
- . *La Surréalisme et l'arts sauvages*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001.

- . *Moments du surréalisme: Avant-propos de Michael Löwy*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999.
- . *Vision d'Océanie*. Paris: Éditions Dapper, 1993.
- Breton, André. *Arcanum 17*. Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1994.
- . *Entretiens*. Paris: Gallimard, 1952, 1969.
- . *La Clé des champs*. Paris: 10/18, 1973.
- . *L'Art magique*. Paris: Ed. Phébus, 1991.
- . *Manifestes du surréalisme*. Paris: Gallimard, 1967.
- . *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Translated by Richard Seaver and H. Lane. Ann Arbor: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, University of Michigan Press, 1972.
- . *What Is Surrealism? Selected Writings*. Edited and introduced by Franklin Rosemont. New York: Pathfinder, 1978.
- Cahun, Claude. *Ecrits*. Edited by François Leperlier. Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 2002.
- Cohen, Margaret. *Profane Illumination: Walter Benjamin and the Paris of Surrealist Revolution*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Crastre, Victor. *Le Drame du surréalisme*. Paris: Les Editions du temps, 1963.
- Debord, Guy. *Oeuvres cinématographiques complètes*. Paris: Editions Champ Libre, 1978.
- . *Panygérique*. Paris: Gallimard, 1989.
- . *Panegyric*. Translated by James Brook. London: Verso, 1991.
- . *The Society of the Spectacle*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York: Zone Books, 1994.
- . "Theory of the Dérive," *Les Lèvres Nues* #9, November, 1956.
- Ducornet, Guy. *Le Punching-Ball et la Vache à lait: La critique universitaire nord-américaine face au Surréalisme*. Paris: Actual/Deleatur, 1992.
- , ed. and trans. *Ça va chauffer! Situation du Surréalisme aux U.S.A. 1966–2001*. Paris: Éditions Talus d'approche, 2001.
- Ducornet, Rikki. *The Butcher's Tales*. Toronto: Aya Press, 1980.
- Durozoi, Gérard. *Histoire du mouvement Surréaliste*. Paris: Éditions Hazan, 1997.
- Garon, Paul. *Blues and the Poetic Spirit*. San Francisco: City Lights, 1996 (1975).
- Girard, Guy. *L'Oreille du souffleur*. With drawings by Sabine Levallois. Paris: Éditions surréalistes, 2008.
- Guilbert, Cécile. *Pour Guy Debord*. Paris: Gallimard, 1996.
- Jappe, Anselme. *Guy Debord*. Marseilles: Via Valeriano, 1996.
- Joubert, Alain. *Le Mouvement des surréalistes ou le fin mot de l'histoire: Mort d'un groupe-naissance d'un mythe*. Paris: Maurice Nadeau, 2001.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Kelley, Robin D. G. *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.
- LaCoss, Donald. *Surrealism in '68: Paris, Prague, Chicago*. Chicago: Surrealist Research & Development Monograph Series, 2008.
- LaCoss, Donald, with Raymond Spiteri. *Surrealism, Politics and Culture*. Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate Press, 2003.
- Laqueur, Walter, and George Mosse, eds. *The Left-Wing Intellectuals Between the Wars 1919–1939*. New York: Harper and Row, 1966.
- Leperlier, François. *Cahun, l'écart et la métamorphose*. Paris, Jean-Michel Place, 1992.
- . *Claude Cahun photographe*. Paris, Jean-Michel Place, 1992.
- Losfeld, Eric, ed. *Tracts surréalistes et déclarations collectives*. Volume 1: 1922–1939. Paris: Le Terrain Vague, 1980.
- . *Tracts surréalistes et déclarations collectives*. Volume 2: 1940–1969. Paris: Le Terrain Vague, 1982.
- Löwy, Michael. *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin's "On the Concept of History"*. London: Verso, 2005.
- . *Franz Kafka: Rêveur insoumis*. Paris: Éditions Stock, 2004.
- . *On Changing the World: Essays in Political Philosophy, from Karl Marx to Walter Benjamin*. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1993.
- Löwy, Michael, and Robert Sayre. *Révolution et mélancolie: Le Romantisme à contre-courant de la modernité*. Paris: Payot, 1992.
- . *Romanticism against the Tide of Modernity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Marcuse, Herbert. *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*. New York: Vintage Books (Random House), 1962 (1955).
- Mariátegui, José Carlos. *El artista y su época*. Lima: Biblioteca Amuata, 1973.
- . *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality*. Translated by Marjory Urquidi. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971 (1928).
- Nadeau, Maurice. *Histoire du Surréalisme: Documents surréalistes*. Paris: Seuil, 1988.
- . *The History of Surrealism*. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Macmillan, 1965.
- Naum, Gellu. *Zenobia*. Translated by James Brook and Sasha Vlad. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1995 (1985).
- Naville, Pierre. *D'Holbach et la philosophie scientifique au XVIII^{ème} siècle*. Paris: Gallimard, 1943.
- . *La Psychologie, science du comportement*. Paris: Gallimard, 1942.
- . *La Révolution et les intellectuels*. Paris: Gallimard, 1975.

- . *Le Temps du surréal: L'espérance mathématique*. Volume 1. Paris: Galilée, 1977.
- . *Mémoires imparfaites: Le temps des guerres*. Paris: La Découverte, 1987.
- . *Trotsky vivant*. Paris: Maurice Nadeau, 1979.
- Péret, Benjamin. "O que foi o Quilombo de Palmares?" *Anbemi* (April–May, 1956).
- Pierre, José, ed. *Tracts surréalistes et déclarations collectives*. Paris: Losfeld, 1980.
- Prévan, Guy. *Benjamin Péret, révolutionnaire permanent*. Paris: Syllepse, coll. "Les archipels du surréalisme," 1999.
- Roediger, David. *History Against Misery*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2006.
- Rosemont, Franklin. *The Forecast Is Hot! Tracts and Other Collective Declarations of the Surrealist Movement in the United States 1966–1976*. Edited and introduced by Penelope Rosemont and Paul Garon. Chicago: Black Swan Press, 1997.
- . *Jacques Vaché and the Roots of Surrealism—including Vaché's War Letters*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2008.
- . *Revolution in the Service of the Marvelous*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2004.
- Rosemont, Penelope. *Dreams & Everyday Life—André Breton, Surrealism, Rebel Worker, sds & the Seven Cities of Cibola*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2008.
- . *Surrealist Experiences: 1001 Dawns, 221 Midnights*. Foreword by Rikki Ducornet. Chicago: Black Swan Press, 2000.
- , ed. *Surrealist Women: An International Anthology*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998.
- Rosenthal, Gérard. *Avocat de Trotsky*. Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, 1975.
- Sakolsky, Ron. *Surrealist Subversions: Rants, Writings & Images by the Surrealist Movement in the United States*. Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2002.
- Schwarz, Arturo. *Breton/Trotsky*. Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 10/18, 1977.
- Serge, Victor. *Memoirs of a Revolutionary 1901–1941*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- Thirion, André. *Révolutionnaires sans révolution*. Paris: Robert Laffont, 1972.

INDEX

Page numbers in italics refer to images.

- Alaluf, Mateo, 129n59
Alquié, Ferdinand, 5–6
Analogon, 115
Anarchist Federation (FA), xviii
Andrétychine, George, 50
Aragon, Louis, xiv, 44–48, 53, 56;
 Red Front, 68
Arcanum 17 (Breton), viii, 25
Archibras, L', xxi, xxii, 84
Arnim, Ludwig Achim von, 32, 34
Arrabal, Fernando: *Guernica*, 112
Arsenal: Surrealist Subversion, 111,
 114, 115
Artaud, Antonin, 45, 47
art magique, L' (Breton), 35, 37
Association des Ecrivains et
 Artistes Révolutionnaires
 (AEAR), 67, 68
Aveux non avendus (Cahun), 66
Baj, Enrico, 112
Bakunin, Mikhail, xxiv, 52
Barbusse, Henri, 46, 47
Bataille, Georges, 74
Baudelaire, Charles, 30, 34, 103
Benjamin, Walter, 9, 10, 22, 25,
 51–52; *Passagenwerk*, 4
Bensaïd, Daniel: *Le Pari mélan-
 chologique*, 9–10
Bernier, Jean, 47
Black Jacobins (James), 59–60
Blake, William, 9, 101
Blanqui, Louis Auguste, 10
Bloch, Ernst, 13, 22, 27
Bonin, Anny, 8
Bonnet, Marguerite, 111, 125n11
Borel, Petrus, 9, 32
Bounoure, Micheline, 84, 85, 87,
 108
Bounoure, Vincent, xxix, 6, 32, 39,
 83–87, 108, 109, 111, 124n18;
 Vision d'Océanie, 87
Brèche, La, 84
Breton, André, vii–viii, xiii–xiv,
 xx–xxi, xxviii, 5, 8, 10, 15–18,
 21–28, 30, 32–34, 35, 37, 38, 39,

- 40, 44, 46, 48, 50, 53, 55–59, 60, 62, 67, 70, 71, 73, 74, 79, 80, 84, 107, 123n11, 130n65; *Arcanum* 17, viii, 25; *Entretiens*, 5, 53, 55, 127n27; *First Manifesto of Surrealism*, 24, 30, 44; *L'art magique*, 35, 37; *Légitime Défense*, 46; *Ode to Charles Fourier*, 60; *The Political Position of Surrealism*, viii; *Prolegomena to a Third Manifesto*, 16; *Second Manifesto of Surrealism*, 21–22, 33, 34, 55, 56, 130n65
- Bruna, Carmen, 112
- Bulletin de liaison surréaliste*, 85, 108, 111
- Buñuel, Luis, 112
- Bureau of Surrealist Research, 46
- Caburet, Bernard, 108–09
- Cahun, Claude, 65–80; *Aveux non avendus*, 66; *Vues et Visions*, 66
- Canseliet, Eugène, 123n11
- Capital (Marx), xxviii
- Castro, Eugenio, 3
- Cesariny, Mario, 112
- Chicago Surrealists, xxvi–ix, 62
- Civilisation surréaliste, La*, 85, 108
- Clarté*, 47, 52, 56
- Clé*, 59, 129n57
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, 9
- Comintern. *See* Third International Committee for Liaison and Action for Workers' Democracy
- Communist Critique*, 86
- Communist Party of France. *See* French Communist Party (PCF)
- Communist Students, 45
- Congress of Writers for the Defense of Culture, 23, 74
- Cortez, Jayne, 114
- Counterattack*, 74
- Coutouzis, Neocles, 67–69
- Crastre, Victor, 47
- Crevel, René, 71, 73
- Cruzeiro Seixas, Artur do, vi, 112
- Dali, Salvador, 60, 73
- Davis, Garry, xvii
- Debord, Guy, xxix, 2–6, 9, 97–104; *La Société du Spectacle*, 97
- De Gaulle, Charles, xix
- Depestre, René, 40
- Desnos, Robert, 47, 66
- Discourse on Mythology* (Schlegel), 14
- Ducornet, Guy, 27
- Ducornet, Rikki, 19
- Durruti, Buonaventura, 10
- Dutschke, Rudi, xxiv
- Duvall, Schlecter, xi, xxxii
- Effenberger, Vratislav, 85, 109
- Eluard, Paul, xiv, 44, 47, 48, 60
- Engels, Friedrich, xiii, xv, xxiv, 22, 72; *The Origins of Family, Private Property, and the State*, 38
- Entretiens* (Breton), 5, 53, 55, 127n27
- Erben, Roman, 49
- Eros and Civilization* (Marcuse), xxvi
- Ferdeière, Gaston, 79
- Feuerbach, Ludwig, xv
- FIARI. *See* International Federation for an Independent Revolutionary Art

INDEX

- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb, 14
First Manifesto of Surrealism
 (Breton), 24, 30, 44
- Fontenis, George, 26
- Fourier, Charles, xxiv, 8, 60, 85, 101
- Fourrier, Marcel, 47, 57
- Fourth International, 56, 59, 85
- Fox, Kathleen, 15
- France, Anatole, 50
- French Communist Party (PCF),
 xiv–xv, xxi, xxii, 8, 14, 21, 47, 50,
 51, 80, 126n17, 126n22
- Freud, Sigmund, 14
- Gérard, Francis, 43
- Gide, André, 43, 74
- Girard, Guy, xxi, 20, 24, 35
- Goldmann, Lucien, x
- Granell, E.F., 81
- Green, Robert, 86, 96
- Guénon, René, 45
Guernica (Arrabal), 112
- Guevara, Che, xx, xxiv, 10
- Guillon, Jean-Pierre, 99, 109
- Halina, 12
- Hatzfeld, John, 75
- Hegel, G. W. F., vii, xiii, xv, 5–6,
 34, 79, 97
- Heijenoort, Jan van, 57, 58
- Heraclitus, 107
- History and Class Consciousness*
 (Lukács), 98
- Hoog, Armand, 16
- Howe, Bill, 113
- Hugo, Victor, viii, 9, 22, 33, 101–102
- Human Front of World Citizens,
 xvii
- Humanité, L'*, 46
- Inaugural Rupture*, xvii
- In Girum Umus Nocte et Consum-
 imur Igni*, 101–102, 104
- Insurrectionist's Shadow, The*, 112
- Intellectual Action Committee
 Against the Continuation of the
 War in North Africa, xix
- Internal Landscape (exhibition), 115
- International Federation for an
 Independent Revolutionary Art
 (FIARI), 8, 58, 59, 75
- Internationalist Workers' Party, 57
- Jablonski, Joseph, 105
- James, C. L. R.: *Black Jacobins*
 (James), 59–60
- Joans, Ted, 63, 108, 114
- Journal Philosophies*, 66
- Kahn, Simone, 44, 55
- Kelley, Robin D. G., xxx
- Khrushchev, Nikita, xix
- Kropotkin, Peter, 79
- Lamantia, Philip, 114
- Lamba, Jacqueline, 73
- Lariby, Farid, 100
- Lautréamont, Comte de, 22, 47, 68,
 71, 103
- Laval, Pierre, 59, 129n58
- Légitime Défense* (Breton), 46
- Lenin, Vladimir, 21, 47
- Leperlier, François, 66, 79
- Lequenne, Michel, 90
- Lescot, Elie, 40
- Lévy, Denise. *See* Naville, Denise
- Levy, Paul, 79
- Lewis, Matthew, 9
- Libertaire, Le*, 26

- Liebknecht, Karl, 131n24
 Ligue Communiste, 57
 Lima, Sergio, 28, 112
Littérature, 44
Livre de Monelle (Schwob), 65
 Löwy, Michael, vii–xxx, 7, 31, 54
 Lucifer, viii
 Lukács, György, xii; *History and Class Consciousness*, 98
Lutte de Classes, La, 52
 Luxemburg, Rosa, xxxvi

Main à plume, La, 59
 Malet, Leo, 74–75
 Malherbe, Suzanne, 65–67, 75, 78
 Mansour, Joyce, 111
Manticore, 115
 Marcos, Subcomandante, 90
 Marcuse, Herbert, xxv–xxvii, 22, 108; *Eros and Civilization*, xxvi
 Marencin, Albert, 4, 42, 61
 Mariátequi, José Carlos, 9, 22, 56–57
Marvelous Freedom/Vigilance of Desire, 111
 Marx, Karl, vii, xiii, xv, xxiv, xxviii, 6, 34, 38, 72, 79, 97
 Massoni, Marie Dominique, 115, 123n3, 123n11
 Maturin, Charles, 9, 103
 Mayakowsky, Vladimir, 69
Minotaure, 73
 Minot, Jacinti, 16
 Mitrani, Nora, xix–xx
 Moore, Marcel, 66
 Morgan, Lewis Henry, 38

 Nadeau, Maurice, 59
 Nádorníková, Alena, 95, 106

 National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), 59
 Naum, Gellu: *Zenobia*, 112
 Naville, Denise, 44, 46, 125n5, 128n48
 Naville, Pierre, 9, 43–62, 73, 128n48, 129n59; *The Queen of the Left Hand*, 45; *The Revolution and the Intellectuals*, 43–48, 51, 53, 60–61; *The Time of the Surreal*, 60
 Nietzsche, Friedrich, 67, 79
 Novalis, 9, 32, 34, 37

Ode to Charles Fourier (Breton), 60
oeuf dur, L', 43–44
 Oppenheim, Meret, viii, 80
Origins of Family, Private Property, and the State, The (Engels), 38

 Palmares, Brazil, 10–11
 Paradoxical Waking (exhibition), 115
 Paranagua, Paulo, 111
Pari mélancholique, Le (Bensaïd), 9–10
 Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste (POI), 57, 58
Passagenwerk (Benjamin), 4
 Pastoureau, Henri, 74–75
 Péret, Benjamin, xiv, 10–11, 30, 44, 48, 53, 55, 57, 60, 69, 71, 73, 79, 80
 Peters, Nancy Joyce, *ii*
 Piňosová, Kateřina, 82, 110
 “Platform of Prague,” xxi–xxv
 Playing at Revolution (exhibition), 115
Political Position of Surrealism, The (Breton), viii

INDEX

- Présence Africaine*, 59
- Prolegomena to a Third Manifesto*
(Breton), 16
- Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph, xxiv, 72
- Queen of the Left Hand, The*
(Naville, Pierre), 45
- Red Front* (Aragon), 68
- Rêve et Révolte*, 115
- Revolution and the Intellectuals, The*
(Naville, Pierre), 43–48, 51, 53,
60–61
- Revolutionary Democratic Assem-
bly (RDR), xvii
- Revue Internationale*, 60
- Richter, Lilette, 67
- Rimbaud, Arthur, 22, 30, 68, 70–71
- Rivera, Diego, 129n55
- Rosemont, Franklin, xxiii, xxvi, 17,
49, 62, 77, 108, 111, 127n40
- Rosemont, Penelope, xvi, 32, 49,
108, 111
- Rosenthal, Gérard, 43, 50
- Rossi, Carlos, 86
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 38, 100
- SURR—Surréalisme, Rêve et*
Révolte, 114, 115
- Saban, Ody, 88, 89–94, 91–94
- Sade, Marquis de, 130n65
- Salamandra*, 115
- Sartre, Jean-Paul, 60
- Satan, viii
- Sayre, Robert, x, xii, xiii
- Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Jo-
seph von, 17
- Schlegel, Friedrich, 9, 13–14, 16, 18;
Discourse on Mythology, 14
- Schopenhauer, Arnold, 50, 67, 79
- Schuster, Jean, 80, 107–08
- Schwarz, Arturo, 112
- Schwob, Lucy. *See* Cahun, Claude
- Schwob, Marcel: *Livre de Monelle*,
65
- Schwob, Maurice, 65
- Second Manifesto of Surrealism*
(Breton), 21–22, 33, 34, 55, 56,
130n65
- Serge, Victor, 50–51, 53, 74, 128n51,
131n21
- Société des gens lettres, 67
- Société du Spectacle, La* (Debord), 97
- Sollers, Phillippe, 97
- Solow, Herbert, 57
- Soupault, Philippe, 44, 48
- Spencer, Herbert, 50
- Stalin, Joseph, 69
- Stejskal, Martin, 64, 85, 87, 108
- Stirner, Max, xxiv, 84
- Stora Saltet*, 115
- Stuart, Marie, 69
- Surréalisme*, 86, 111
- Surrealisme au service de la révolu-
tion, Le*, 70
- Surréalisme, même, Le*, 83
- Švankmajer, Jan, 108, 112, 114
- Švankmajerová, Eva, 72
- Takiguchi, Shuzo, 112
- Talismans*, 87
- Third International Committee for
Liaison and Action for Workers’
Democracy, xix, 22, 47, 128n42
- Thirion, André, 50
- Tieck, Ludwig, 104
- Time of the Surreal, The* (Naville,
Pierre), 60

MORNING STAR

- Tönnies, Ferdinand, 101
 Toussaint L'Ouverture Committee, 130n63
 Toyen, 80
 Trotsky, Leon, xix, 8, 10, 21, 25, 26, 43, 48, 50, 53, 56, 57–59
 Trotsky, Natalia Sedova, 26
 Tzara, Tristan, 44, 56, 70, 73, 123n9
- Unik, Pierre, xiv, 48
 Unified Socialist Party (PSU), 60
 Union of the Socialist Left, 60
- Vaillant-Couturier, Paul, 67
Vanguard Student, The, 45
- Van Heijenoort, Jan, 57, 58
Vision d'Océanie (Bounoure, Vincent), 87
Vues et Visions (Cahun), 66
- Weber, Max, 1–2, 37, 103
What Is Surrealism? Selected Writings of André Breton, 111
- Williams, Joel, 41
 World Surrealist Exhibition, 111
 World Trade Organization, 120n23
- Zenobia* (Naum), 112
 Zimbacca, Michel, 23, 36, 108, 112
 Zumbi, 10