LOOKING AT DIRTY PICTURES: SUR(SOUS)REALISM, FASCISM, AND REPRODUCING INTOXICATION IN THE 1930'S

by

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ABSTRACT

During the inter-war years in Europe a rebellion against what was perceived of as an overly rationalized society dedicated to material gain developed on both the far Right and far Left. The road to freedom against the 'mechanized' imperative of a bourgeois democracy was seen to lie through the release of an irrational drive that would rupture the seemingly impermeable screen of a rapidly developing technological world. The period was permeated with a neo-romantic impulse that suffused and engulfed the ragged edges of a broad and static center with religious ideals mingled with symbolic expressions of intoxication and sexuality embedded in a new concept of the body itself.

As a student of art history, my goal in this thesis has been to set Surrealism's aesthetic production of revolutionary convulsion (embodied in the concept of 'Convulsive Beauty') against the much broader background of its historical period in which the reproduction of intoxicating desire by the German fascists was revolutionizing the political face of Europe. In order to demonstrate how instrumental the medias were to the presentation in culture at large of revolutionary intoxication I have turned to contemporary figures like Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer who analyzed fascism's successes within the field of intoxication through its mechanical reproduction, as well as to Ernst Bloch's analysis of the fascist's colonization of a tradition of intoxication historically associated with the Left. The first chapter is devoted to presenting the various players within this revolutionary expression of rupture, and ends with the introduction of various analytic tools with which aesthetic representations of intoxication through the body can be critically approached. The second chapter is concerned with bringing out the depth of differences within the Surrealist movement itself, and with how these differences situated themselves within the traditional French Left's political representations, while the third chapter turns to the study of the various elements of the neo-romantic impulse itself, and to how these elements were driven on all sides by a masculine concept of virility, seen as crucial to the developing historical moment in which war was imminent. The thesis is concluded in the final section of the third chapter, which posits renegade Surrealist Georges Bataille's theory of "convulsive communication" against what is argued as Surrealism's and
fascism's addiction to intoxication as a utopian ideal ultimately depending upon the annihilation of the 'beautiful' body as the bearer of the convulsive message.
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REPRODUCING INTOXICATION I

"To win the energies of intoxication for the revolution - this is the project about which surrealism circles..."

(Walter Benjamin, 1929)

I. PREFACING THE ART OF 'PAS DE DEUX'

In the material this thesis purposes to examine the reader will be asked to follow what might sometimes be rather rapid shifts between the theory and then practice of 'reproducing intoxication' within a revolutionary context. This seesaw between concept/action is additionally complicated by its location within the two countries of France and Germany; intoxication itself being a political phenomenon which first arises in Germany in the late twenties and subsequently sustains itself throughout the greater part of the prewar decade. I'm aware that the illustration of any concept through such an extended passage of time and place - in which the politics of two nations, each with their own decisive boundaries in language and custom, are involved - is often cast as 'interdit' in the world of academia, which tends to favor highly focused and minutely located (both in historic time and place) studies as thesis material. Nevertheless, as I hope to show, casting such a wide net is entirely necessary if one wants, as I do, to place French Surrealism's flirtations with intoxication within the reality of its historical moment, when the practice of intoxication by German fascists was revolutionizing the political face of Europe. It is only through this shifting context of Surrealist theory versus fascist practice, I shall argue, that one can grasp the full significance of the "dialectical hook" German Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch saw embedded within the revolutionary concept of intoxication.¹

The phrase 'reproducing intoxication' that heads up this preliminary chapter and prefaces Walter Benjamin's remark from his 1929 essay Surrealism on winning "the energies of intoxication for the revolution..." refers to the mechanical means by which the presence of intoxication was most successfully made visible - documented - by both the fascists and the Surrealists.² But in advance of discussing the crucial role mechanical reproduction played in
turning intoxicating fantasies of eruptive passion into historically documented realities, I want first to lay out for the reader who the players in this revolutionary game of intoxication were and how they are to be conceptually placed in relation to each other. Thus firstly, in the course of chapters that follow, the reader will find a comparative axis set up between the opposing 'aesthetics of convulsion' French Surrealism's two warring chefs politiques - André Breton and Georges Bataille - each developed in the pre-war decade of the thirties. These two versions of Surrealist convulsion developed out of fairly lengthy and often complex textual material (to be dealt with at length in chapters two and three), but the physical forms they gave birth to can be described here as traversing a symbolic axis based on the spatial and ornamental differences found between convulsion's ideal form, cultivated by Breton and representing the high point of the axis; versus its opposite, found in the low and dirty materialism (what could be called the 'sous'-realism) of Georges Bataille.

The use of the term 'ornamental' here and its theoretical meaning will ultimately be crucial to the reader's understanding of how the ephemera of revolutionary desire is substantiated in the photograph. The intricacies and mechanics of this concept will therefore be discussed in detail in Section II (Diagrammatic Intentions) of this first chapter. But for now, I can simply say that the idea of ornamentation represents, generally, the visible stylistic figurations of the dream. Embellishment of form might also be another way to describe this concept, but I must also add here that as a stylistic device 'ornamentation' only appears in the work of Bataille as a lack; that is, as a particular form of figuration in desire that has been deliberately erased in order to replace it with another - directly oppositional - structuring of physical form.

This idea of the existence of a 'symbolic axis' of difference visible in the aesthetic representations of convulsion associated with André Breton, as Surrealism's so called "chef d'école", versus those associated with Georges Bataille, considered less the leader of a 'school of thought' and more as the political leader of Surrealism's new break away revolutionary party - its "chef de file" as fellow renegade Surrealist Michel Leiris put it in '29 - takes its justification from the political ethos of the period under examination when, as one historian put it, myth and symbol were the "political tools" of the pre-war decade. Indeed, it has been commonly
acknowledged not only by later historians, but also by those contemporary to the period, that politics in the thirties, under the pressure of fascism's mythic practices, became a symbolic battleground.

Jacques Lacan, "a son of his times", as his recent French biographer Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen put it, and acquainted with both Breton and Bataille, as well as a contributor to the Surrealist mi-decade revue Minotaure, is an important figure in this engagement with the symbolic and its political definition, having written that there was no such thing as "symbolic private property" and that the symbolic belonged "to everyone."4 It was this period which not only saw his own coming of age in psychoanalytic circles but also, influenced and underwrote much of his later work. In the sixties, when Lacan went on to formulate the unconscious as the "edge" at which the subject is structured in relation to the symbolic, he overcame the relegation of the unconscious to the back (buried behind or underneath) of consciousness by giving it a specific role to play in the construction of the social world.5 Such a formulation has, it seems to me, particular value to any analysis of the symbolic systems operative in the thirties, for it casts light on how the 'curly blond haired' dreams the fascist brought forward as the emblematic origins of the Fatherland could function to give unconscious strivings a collective social meaning.

It is this fine "edge" that joins the unconscious and what ultimately becomes the political which any researcher into the politics of desire and their symbolic representations in the thirties must be prepared to engage in. In order to facilitate my own interpretation of material which links concrete political practice to the more ephemeral but constant presence of unconscious productions in culture, I have elicited the help of intellectuals of the period like Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch and Siegfried Kracauer, who all delved into fascism's use of the irrational in creating political revolutions. These men also made cogent analysis, still widely acknowledged and referred to today, of the fascist's propagandistic use of the reproductive medias; although in the case of Bloch the analysis turns more towards the principles of montage itself (widely used in the twenties and thirties by both the avant-garde Left and later, fascism), rather than to any particular analysis of the medias per se.6 Their various analysis were, like
Lacan's work on the symbolic, born directly out of their period, in which the need was urgent as Jewish intellectuals living in Germany to not only find a means of unveiling fascism's manipulative practices; but also, to search out potential avenues of resistance to that practice. Benjamin's work is particularly important to this thesis, for not only were his major works on photography and the reproductive medias done in the thirties; but also, he looked towards Surrealism itself at the beginning of the decade as a possible medium for the transmission of intoxication on behalf of the revolutionary Left.

The production of symbolic bodies emblematic of internal unconscious states was endemic to the period of the pre-war decade in Europe and Surrealism's divergent movements took part in this political practice. By setting up a symbolic axis between these two movements' aesthetic productions, which circulated around the formulation of convulsive bodies of desire, I hope to bring into relief the theoretical differences that existed within their otherwise common exploration of unconscious desires "in the service of the revolution" (a phrase appropriated from the title of Surrealism's journal produced at the end of the twenties during their association with the French Communist Party). At this point, and as a brief introduction to Surrealism's emblematic bodies, I can say that in the 'Sur'-realism of Breton, one finds the high point of convulsion's eruptive movement; formally described by the aesthetic principles of 'Convulsive Beauty' (convulsive here describes the aesthetic movement that blasts through the formal structures of beauty rendered in the bourgeois academic style), and most often symbolically embodied in the feminine body of desire the Surrealist artist/poet always sought out as the inspiration for his work. By contrast, the low point of the axis is reached through Bataille's theorizations on the eruptive body of the deviant monster; a form ultimately taking its shape from the low and dirty, yet also virile, body of man himself. This symbolic axis of 'Beauty and the Beast', as it were, will later become central to my description of the various levels of revolutionary intoxication being put into practice by the German fascist during the pre-war thirties. But for now, I can coax into visibility for the reader, in an immediate and dramatically conflicting way (conflicting as in spatially and ornamentally), Surrealism's symbolic high/low axis by presenting the elevated body of desire, represented by André Breton's photocollage titled
L'Oeuf de l'église (fig. 1, first published in Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution, 1933), in comparative relation to the materially low and offensively dirty The Big Toe (fig. 2); one of three such images photographed by Jacques André Boiffard and published in 1929 in the revue Documents, along with an essay of the same title by Georges Bataille.  

It is important to remind readers here that my placement of Bataille within a cosmology of the low, surmounted by Breton symbolically riding above in the poetic and idealist spaces of Convulsive Beauty is far from being arbitrarily imposed, for this placement comes out of polemical positions these two men developed between themselves. Indeed, Bataille first gained his notoriety in Surrealist circles through Breton's excoriation of him as the 'excremental philosopher' in his Second Surrealist Manifesto of 1930; while Bataille, in his essay The 'Old Mole' and the Prefix 'Sur' in the Words Surhomme and Surrealist, aligned the predicate 'Sur' in Breton's Surrealism with the Nietzschean surhomme; a utopian revolutionary who maintained his position high above the world of economic facts, heedless of the Marxian old mole's subterranean labor in the materialist bowels of the earth.  

While it may appear on the surface that this symbolic opposition between high and low is, in itself, dialectical; the comparative exercise remains empty of practical (and thus truly revolutionary) meaning in the face of what ultimately remained theoretical positions for these diametrical poles of Surrealism. Thus, and turning here to the other players in this revolutionary game of intoxication, the flame that will finally light the fires of intoxication - the doubling back onto a mainly theoretical dialectic with an expressive and activating 'hook' - will come out of placing the essential and component parts of Surrealism's diametrical attempts at arousing revolutionary intoxication through the development of convulsive forms, against the German fascist's wildly successful reproduction of it in the service of an entirely real, and ultimately devastating for all of the Left in Europe, counterrevolutionary convulsion.  

At this point, I want to turn away from attempts to produce revolutionary intoxication in France in order to discuss the fascist's progressive repression throughout the late twenties and thirties of German Expressionism. My purpose in making such a detour is strategic, for with the repression of Expressionism in Germany one discovers the developing presence of a vacuum on
the political Left in the production of intoxicating unreason; one which appears not only in Germany, but in much of Western Europe as well. The presence of such a vacuum is important to what will follow in subsequent chapters, for it brings to light the existence of a historical and political gap into which French Surrealism stepped. But in addition to discovering a political gap in the field of intoxication on the Left, I also want, at this juncture, to briefly follow the course of a debate which took place between two critical theorists on the Left concerning the revolutionary content of German Expressionism. I'm referring here to an essay written in 1934 by the Hungarian communist, Georg Lukács, on *The Greatness and Decline of Expressionism*, and the later response to that essay by Ernst Bloch. The debate is of particular value to this project in the sense that it sets up some of the parameters and criteria for a later evaluation of how, in its turn, the revolutionary aesthetics of Surrealism functioned.

Following the contemporary judgment of his time, which placed Expressionism's heroic period between 1912 and 1922, Ernst Bloch had wondered, in the first of three short essays on the movement (1937), what had caused the fascist to look back so intently on a movement that was, by the thirties, already basically over. In treating Expressionism as if it were a contemporary movement blocking the establishment of their own conception of art (their own "expressio"), the fascist had only succeeded, in Bloch's eyes, in re-evoking all the passion and creative fire of this "most German" of the arts. Bloch's own response to Expressionism during its heroic period before and immediately after World War I had been positive. He saw in their works powerful representations of the "irratio" lurking everywhere under the crumbling surface world of a late capitalist culture. However, his positive view of the Expressionist's attempt to find something new in the emerging hollow spaces of capitalism through the "real underminings" of its surface coherence was not shared by Marxist contemporary, Georg Lukács, who had earlier seen in the movement only "abstract pacifism" and "a bohemian concept of escape".

In Lukács eyes, Expressionism appeared as mere "subjectivistic revolt"; functioning as part of the fashionable and all too predictable cycle of avant-garde art which, in the end, only mirrored the bourgeoisie's continuing slide into decadence and ever internalized passions of the
soul. His general theme of the decline of the West into fascism that his 1934 essay described ran the gauntlet from Impressionism straight through to Expressionism ("nothing in them but the emptiness of content"); but in addition, theorized as unwittingly complicit with this decline, Expressionism was even seen as "temporarily its engineers."\(^{14}\) Bloch, for his part, saw Lukács' critique of Expressionism as "mechanical" versus "dialectical", in the sense that it condemned bourgeois subjectivity on a wholesale basis at the same time that it stood ready to fully accept the "enlightened" ideal attached to that class's development of science and technology.\(^{15}\)

In Bloch's eyes, Lukács' "undecayed Objective Realism" had led him into creating "everywhere a closed coherent reality"; a concept of Reality (with a capital \(R\)) which left no room for an avant-garde to create newly revolutionized cultural forms which could have effectively contested the fading glamour of a quickly disintegrating capitalist culture.\(^{16}\) But his particular concern in relation to Lukács' critique of the Expressionists centered on whether it was entirely correct to see their work as exemplifying descent. In Bloch's mind, descent was never the singularly closed movement that it appeared as in Lukács, for within the downward spiral one could always find the first traces of a newly composing assent.

Bloch saw in Expressionism works that attempted to compose new worlds out of dissolving old worlds through looking at degraded or marginalized areas of modernity. In the popular art forms found in folk and primitive art, and in the art of the mentally ill, Expressionism found ways of making positive use of the fragmentation and alienation modernity was composed of. In a sense the movement restructured the first glimmerings of "a world anew".\(^{17}\) Such a move was crucial to Bloch, who saw a truly dialectical relationship between decline and assent; two movements which represented the historical moment in which a newly synthesized reality was being born.

It was the newness of the Expressionist's vision which accounted for the "barbaric" quality of their world; a barbarism seen by Bloch as very different from the blond predatory beast that the German fascists developed.\(^{18}\) But in this valorization of Expressionism it is important for us to realize that Bloch was not turning away from other avant-garde work, such as that of the German Dadaists or, in the time of the fascists, the critical photomontages of a
revolutionary artist like John Heartfield. Indeed, these works were seen by him as essential to a critique of the reality the subject was in. It was only that this reality had to be complimented by other works as well; ones which would take the state of decline and use the fragments and pieces of it to take the first steps in re-composing a new world.\(^{19}\)

Of course in the end, the debate between Bloch and Lukács on the value of Expressionism was nothing more than the flogging of an already dead horse, for the fascists, like Lukács, didn't like Expressionism either and thus efficiently disposed of it in their 'Entartete Kunst' ('Degenerate Art') exhibition of '38.\(^{20}\) Nevertheless, there is an important point to be rescued from this debate, for this stopping up of the flow of avant-garde creativity in Germany happened not just at the hands of fascism, but also through the traditional revolutionary Left's turn away from the very idea of an avant-garde. This closing of the door on avant-garde production (a move which became firmly entrenched within the Party after the Third International's Stalinization of cultural production in '34) had tragic consequences, as it ultimately shut the revolutionary Left in Europe off from developing the means to challenge the aesthetic advances into mass culture that fascism was making. Of course, there was a great irony at work in this determined move towards 'realism' by the Communist Party, in the sense that it developed despite the relatively recent example of pre-revolutionary Russian Expressionists and Constructivists, whose avant-garde works had been instrumental in creating a space for early Russian revolutionary culture to grow and flourish.

As part of what became identified after '34 as a disaffected Marxist Left, Walter Benjamin had been one of the quickest to pick up on the Party's reactionary drift towards a totalitarian cultural outlook. In his 1926/27 winter visit to Moscow (a record of which is available in Benjamin's *Moscow Diary*), Benjamin could already see how this crucial work of the revolutionary artist in composing/re-composing (and thus keeping continuously alive) new cultural forms was being slowly eroded. Now that Communist power had solidified, artists were being gradually transformed into functionaries of the Party; their formerly revolutionary creations and energies diverted into the restrictive production of Party propaganda. Where avant-garde diversity had flourished before the revolution, now conformity reigned. Aware of
the ultimate stasis in culture that rigid guidelines of State propaganda would inevitably engender, Benjamin, upon his departure from Moscow, decided rather than joining the Party to take up the role of an "outrider" (as he called it) of the Left.21

Benjamin's return to Germany and the timing of his turn to Surrealism and its intoxicating possibilities in 1929 intersected neatly with Ernst Bloch's organization in his 1935 work, *Heritage of Our Times*, of what he called "the period of intoxication" in Germany. In the preface to his book, Bloch was careful to remark on how it was "essentially written during the time it examines"; a fact the contemporary reader can't help but be struck by in the face of a text which sparkles with clarity and visionary insights into the political events of the day.22 The book's theme was, as Bloch put it, "the dust-spreading bourgeoisie in decay, and in strata and periods one behind the other: thus the 'diversion' (1924-29) is already over, the 'intoxication' (1924-33) still in full swing."23 The period of diversion Bloch brought up referred to the popular Hollywood film and revue culture that flourished everywhere in Europe in the twenties.24 The 'intoxication' that intersected with and ultimately overtook 'diversion' (a period in which the masses are both entertained and given a space to dream) arose out of a "non-contemporaneous look back into a mystical past in which ideals of community, soul and destiny are stirred up."25 Through the development of "exoticism at home" by the fascist, which took the form of a national myth, Bloch saw "the emptiness of diversion" filled up with "the energy of intoxication."26 Politically, this shift marked out the passage that German capitalism, in its depression and hyper-inflation, made into fascism. But Bloch also marks out the trajectory of this passage in relation to the German masses, who go from "(t)he lights of Hollywood, which only got into your dreams", to "the goose-step parades of Potsdam, which also gets into your blood."27

The 'hook' that takes the subject from passive dreaming to active participation (in mass rallies and other monster events) works on the basis of a transformation of the site of pleasure, which shifts from the girls in bathing suits and short sailor suits that revue culture had spawned, to "Father Rhine who has long since conquered Valencia."28 In this move to "Father Rhine" the masses can now take their pleasure directly from themselves, rather than having to look to those
other worldly stars of the stage and screen: through marching, chanting and moving about as one
great processional body under the direction of their charismatic leader the masses create their
own aesthetic forms which they subsequently see reproduced everywhere in magazines and on
the screen.

One could say that the masses dominated the aesthetics of fascism; but at the same time
they are, in turn, dominated by this projection of their own falsely seductive image. But Bloch,
with his incisive marking out of the shift from diversion to intoxication, is equally perceptive in
seeing the eruptive value of intoxication as not only dangerous to the Left, but also to the
capitalism that supported it. Here one must be reminded that Bloch's remarks were made on the
basis of a capitalism which was, by the late twenties, in desperate straits in Germany. In his
eyes, it was the exhaustion of its liberal democratic ideology that had forced it to make an
unholy alliance with fascism. But the relationship was bound to be unstable, as the capitalist
would surely have preferred, Bloch wrote, "old liberalism to romantic anti-capitalism."29 No
doubt it was true that the so-called 'socialism' of the National Socialist Party must have been
difficult for the German capitalist to justify in relation to his own economic principles and
resolutely individualist ethics. However, in the end, any problems of presentation and
organization were looked after by the fascist himself, who neatly separated the abstractions of
capital (represented physiognomically through the vilified body of the Jewish merchant/banker)
from the 'concrete' productions of German industrialists and technocrats, who were seen to
exemplify all the old Prussian virtues of industriousness, discipline, loyalty and willingness to
sacrifice for the good of the fatherland.30

Through their persecution of the Jew as the person who represented all that was abstract
and bad in modern capital, the fascist could appear as anti-capitalist, at the very same time that
he could also support those industries which would produce the objects (the war machines in
particular) which would make the nation strong. Thus, all those perceived as moving figures and
digits from one place to another could be dismissed by the fascist as engaged in, as Bloch put it,
mere "haptic materialism"; a phrase that conjures up the touching of money and counting up of
economic returns that was attributed by the fascist to both capitalism and Marxism (seen by the
fascist as nothing more than the poor man's capitalism). By contrast and in fascism, race and blood were presented as immediate and concrete solutions to a cultural crisis brought on by this excess of abstraction and intellect that the Jew personified.

One can see easily enough from the manner in which Bloch set up the dynamics of intoxication that it was alarming to the Left, at the same time that it was, in its instability and resistance to capitalist ideals of reason and utility, also full of revolutionary possibilities. It hardly seems surprising then that Benjamin, at the height of this intoxicating period in Germany, would turn to what seemed like a possible revolutionary expression of intoxication on the Left found in the Surrealist movement. He began his essay on Surrealism by remarking on a general crisis within the European intelligentsia, as well as within "the humanistic concept of freedom"; a crisis which, in its instability, vacillated "between an anarchistic fronde and a revolutionary discipline." But within this general European crisis, it was the special precariousness of German intellectuals in particular that allowed a literary critic like Benjamin to perceive, in what was a supposedly 'foreign' movement like Surrealism, something more than "the 'artistic', 'poetic' one it superficially appears." There were, for example, the intoxicating "vague de rêves" of the early Aragon (who, shortly after Benjamin's essay, will opt out of Surrealism and into the revolutionary discipline of the French Communist Party), in which the substance of a "dialectical kernel" could be found. But while Benjamin found evidence of a revolutionary position within the Surrealist movement, he also recognized that for every secretive esoteric movement like it there was a crucial moment of tension in which it must "either explode in a matter of fact profane struggle for power and domination, or decay as public spectacle and be transformed." It was at precisely this juncture that Benjamin, writing in 1929, found Surrealism.

It is rather commonly agreed upon by art and literary historians of the period that by the mid-thirties the Surrealist movement was at the end of any potential revolutionary use-value. A movement that talks revolution but produces, as it does throughout the thirties, a veritable deluge of art objects is, for example, referred to by perceptive literary historian of the era, Denis Hollier, as "the Surrealist revolution in the service of cultural reification." However, Hollier's remark is presaged by what was already being said by critics contemporary to the movement.
itself. One finds, for example, Ernst Bloch describing Surrealism's artistic productions in *Heritage of Our Times* as examples of "aesthetically rotting dynamite"; a remark which could be seen as somewhat positive - calling up, as it does, the presence of an eruptive force within the movement - except for the fact that it is quickly followed by the conclusive statement that, as a revolutionary movement, Surrealism was now "no doubt finished." And indeed, half a decade prior to Bloch's remarks, Benjamin himself, who began his essay as we have just seen by locating the movement at the apex of choice between revolution or acquiescence, wrote in the end more about the consequences of Surrealism's failures than of its successes.

As can be seen from the above, I am beginning this journey into the pre-war adventures of Surrealism with rather definitive admissions of its failure to make any kind of truly revolutionary contribution to the politics of intoxication pervasive to the thirties. But while an admission of Surrealism's failures to precipitate any kind of revolutionary eruption on behalf of the Left is inevitable, it is also important to what will follow that the reader understand where and how this movement was seen, in its promising early stages, to have opened up a cultural space for potentially revolutionary values to exist in. The first step towards answering such a question can be found in what Benjamin described in his Surrealist essay as their "extraordinary discovery": they were "the first to perceive the revolutionary energies that appear in the 'outmoded', in the first iron constructions, the first factory buildings, the earliest photos, the dresses of five years ago, fashionable restaurants when the vogue has begun to ebb from them." All these anachronistic bits and pieces of faded fame and glitter that suffused the environment of the modern subject - all these dusty "ornaments" - were grist to the Surrealist's "cat-burglar's mill." The Surrealists were "visionaries and augurs" who "perceived how destitution - not only social but architectonic, the poverty of interiors, enslaved and enslaving objects - can be suddenly transformed into revolutionary nihilism."

As both an artistic and political movement, Surrealism brought the "immense forces of 'atmosphere'" hidden within the discarded objects they found laying about the city "to the point of explosion." The formal means by which such politically and emotionally charged expressions were drawn out of what were, in and of themselves, supposedly no more than inert
objects (a premise that will be contested later) is found in Surrealism's concept of the trouvaille, which Breton formally described in *L'Amour fou* (1938) as Convulsive Beauty's third movement: "magique-circonstancielle". In its most expansive sense, the trouvaille or 'objet trouvė' can be described as laying at the very base of Surrealism's essential theory of the 'chance encounter'; the experience that always precipitated the movement's various dream productions. On a strictly material level, the trouvaille was most often understood as the once novel and now abandoned commodity/object the Surrealist encountered during his peripatetic journeys through the visionary landscape of the modern industrialized city. As a discarded nouveauté that suddenly appeared, as if by magic, before the Surrealist's axis of vision, the trouvaille was an object emptied of its previous exchange-value: all that remained within the object by the time the Surrealist encountered it was the whispering remnants of a by now long departed desire for possession. It was this condition of abandonment and removal of its mask - of the fetish and therefore, its exchange value - that made the discarded object so attractive to the Surrealist. In such a state the object was vulnerable, laying fully open and accessible to the penetration of a new desire which could, without the usual mediation of capitalism's practices of possession and consumption, envelope the object with a new and revolutionary meaning.

One can discover within the lucky chance encounter with the trouvaille a twofold purpose within the Surrealist's lexicography of desire. At a concrete level, it represented the circumstantial evidence which confirmed the reality of the wandering artists/poet's desire; that is, the object 'spoke' in terms of its visual texture and shape to the Surrealist of an earlier daydream or fantasy he might have experienced. But on a level beyond this initial encounter with the object - which could be said to 'concretize' the existence of the Surrealist's inner fantasy world - the trouvaille was also meant to function as the visual trigger for a new and as yet unformed fantasy that the Surrealist harbored within his mute unconscious being. Thus for the Surrealist, the trouvaille was seen as both the confirmation *and* future promise of desire.

It was in this use of the trashy ornament - the objects the market system, in its perpetual motion towards the latest, has cast off - that Surrealism mirrored the constructive values of German Expressionism, which had also utilized what had been de-valued by the conventions of a
modern industrial society. One could even say that, like the Expressionist, who had picked up marginalized art forms and modes of communicating in order to build a new and utopian world of expression, Surrealism had also discovered its own utopia within the material castoffs of modern culture. In a society caught in a cycle of the latest, which almost simultaneously turns into the already forgotten, the Surrealist dealt in the 'untouchables' of capitalism. The endlessly multiplying presence of these abandoned offspring - the steady repetition and build up of "useless utensils" as Benjamin put it - littered everywhere the ornamental surface world of the modern city. But modern mass culture was blind to this accumulating trash of the no longer new, for it was always looking eagerly forward (in the literal spiritual hope of redemption) to the horizon of the latest. The iron clad rule of capitalism was to never look back; a rule formed out of the 'newly invented' ideal attached to its science, technology and economic progress. Surrealism, with its love of the anachronistic and its ability to use these bits and pieces to construct its own dream worlds, broke out of this totalitarian seasonal cycle a 'free' market system imposed on its subjects. They used the objects that economy produced, its true; but in a manner that clearly negated the basic functioning principles of that order. Thus, again like the Expressionists, the Surrealists were the builders of a newly composing dream world out of the remnants of a sinking older world.

While Bloch described Expressionism's explorations of German capitalism's eroding surface world as a means towards composing a primitive and newly synthesized world, it was Benjamin who saw how the castoffs of modernity that Surrealism picked up could most effectively function in a revolutionary context: "The trick by which this world of things is mastered......consists in the substitution of a political for a historical view of the past." For Benjamin, the linear flow of history always skipped over what had already, in its own time, been quickly past over. But it was precisely this constant ignorance of its trivia that kept capitalism blind to the ever accumulating dust and decay of its past. In the Konvolut N, the theoretical heart of Benjamin's massive yet fragmented and never completed 'Arcades Project', Benjamin proposed a working method for his writings on nineteenth century Paris which came close to what he had perceived as the Surrealist's revolutionary practice: "I won't steal anything valuable
or appropriate any witty turns of phrase. But the trivia, the trash: this, I don't want to take stock of, but to let it come into its own in the only way possible: use it." (N1a,8).

46

In Surrealism, Benjamin saw an avant-garde that was attempting, in its trash collecting, to aestheticize everyday life and to use that as a means of escaping out of a repressive market system. This contrasted to fascism, which aestheticized the everyday life of the masses in order to create a decorative and seductive facade under which the pragmatic imperative of privatized production could continue to thrive. But while Surrealism's and fascism's aesthetic goals go in two different directions in terms of what they hope to politically achieve; they nevertheless meet and work within the same dream fields of modern experience. Of course, that doesn't mean that by virtue of a common association in terms of their object of investigation - the modern psyche itself - that the Surrealists and fascists were busy formulating a similar aesthetic culture. Yet, as must be pointed out here, such a critique, contemporary to the Surrealist's work in the thirties, was in fact made. Indeed, inspite of Breton's discussion in his 1934 book *Qu'est-ce que le surréalisme*? of fascism as a "disease" insidiously implanting itself within culture in order to "re-establish.....the tottering supremacy of finance capital", the French Communist Party's (PCF's) journal *Commune* published an article that same year, in which Breton was accused of utilizing the same "spiritual" approaches to revolution that "figure today in fascist manuals." 47

Breton himself entered into the name-calling fray only one year later, calling Bataille a "sur-fascist" after the rupture of their momentary mi-decade alliance in Contre-Attaque; the group Bataille had formed in an attempt to capitalize on the erupting unrest of the working class, along with coalescing street demonstrations against the French fascists in late '35.48 It was, no doubt, Bataille's aggressive rhetoric during this period urging the masses to take the red banner of revolt into the street, in order to escape the "well groomed programs" and empty "phraseology" of parliamentarians, that had frightened off Breton, whose own career up to that point encompassed the production of numerous manifestoes, political tracts and other declarative texts of intention.49 But by this time Bataille was no longer interested in platforms which could serve as a basis for the writing out of potential future actions; the moment for action was now - carpe diem!
I'll be returning later to these important mid-decade years which brought on the consolidation of a Popular Front against fascism in France, but right now I want to focus on this thorny problem of who was and wasn't a fascist in the thirties. Its a problem whose ghost lingers on even today, for survivors of the period can still be found framing damming declarations against those they perceive as having had fascist inclinations. A contemporary example surfaced, for instance, in the 1983 re-edition of *La Critique sociale* (an anti-Stalinist Marxist revue Bataille wrote for in the thirties), where that journal's former editor, Boris Souvarine, stated in his preface to the new edition that Bataille "was not only a fascist sympathizer, but a would be collaborator as well." The perverse irony of this remark is that, as literary historian of Bataille's work Allan Stoekl noted, he is denounced for the very thing he spent the decade attempting to combat. Indeed, it must have been the vision of the fascists filling the streets of Paris, as they did in their so called 'aborted coup d'etat' of February, 1934, that caused Bataille to consider the possibility of urging the masses into the streets; but this time, not only to fight against the steadfastly inert Third Republic, but against the fascists as well. In Bataille's mind, it was only through this *vision* of the "all powerful multitude" - the vision of what he called this "human ocean" - that the *force* of the people's desire would be acknowledged.

In opting for a sea of eruptive voices in the street was Bataille also opting for what is now seen as the wrong headed seduction of irrational impulses that fascism had somehow managed to claim as its exclusive preserve? Unfortunately such questions can never be entirely resolved; as Stoekl points out in relation to Souvarine's remarks on Bataille, "often a person starts to take on the colors of his enemy in the very act of fighting him." Stoekl's remark is perceptive enough, but it fails to tell us how, precisely, fascism could taint either Surrealism, or its divergent movement under Bataille, with its own fantastic and ultimately morbid excesses. To my mind, the answer to this question does not lie in assigning guilt to those who - it could be said - dared to meet the enemy on his own ground; but rather, it depends on coming to grips with the physiological structure of the unconscious itself. For instance, one can acknowledge without difficulty that the unconscious exists as the site from which a world of dreaming 'unreason' is ultimately generated. But it also exists as a site which defines itself *against* the very possibility
of a descriptive text. Instead, the unconscious lays within us all as a storage chest of images and primal motifs; images of love and hate and of all the other various forms of desire which can ravish the subject, causing him to lose his reason. It is in the process of turning inwards to this world of no-reason that one finds the wildness of pure freedom; escape into a world with no limits and therefore, certain passage into adventure. But the intoxication that comes out of such a world always takes the subject beyond what he consciously knows and can fully articulate as reality. It is this silence, interiority and resistance to the laws of discourse and a text - to which reason so docilely submits - that therefore makes any political analysis of unreason a hazardous venture.

For those who see themselves involved in deliberate attempts to engineer revolution - for those who are dedicated and self disciplined in the service of a revolutionary movement directed towards achieving the utopia of a socially collective freedom - the very idea of something as imperceptible and ideologically evanescent as intoxicating unreason appears as nothing more than a cheap magician's trick. Far better to shut away unreason and the explosive passions of irrational impulses; in short, to shut away anything that smacks of a subjectivity turned away from the reality a dedicated materialism can clearly see and define. But then one is left - as the Surrealists were - with a traditional Marxism that ultimately based its entire cultural policy of the thirties on its politically ineffective program of 'Socialist Realism' (referred to in France as the 'School of the People'). Thus, even though both Surrealism's divergent movements - and for all purposes they were virtually alone in doing so - ventured aesthetically into the luring grounds of the fascist, the place that fascism itself took unreason into made it easy for the Left to turn away from any further exploration or analysis of it. Historically, the result was disastrous for the Left, for in the end fascist aestheticians played the wild card of unreason with more finesse than a divided Surrealist movement - adrift in the small and highly fractionalized break-away Left in France - would ever do.

For any historian trying to piece together the drifting and antagonistic fragments of the convulsive pre-war decade, those texts contemporary to the period which attempt to go beyond a simple negation and turn away from the various means fascism used to make its political gains
are crucial. In Germany, members of the now well known Frankfurt Institute of Social Research, formed in the mid-twenties, were instrumental in providing a critique of fascism's illusory politics and methods of propaganda, at the same time that they were also engaged in attempting to extend the Marxist definition of revolution into including a psychological profile of man. But the man who best articulated fascist successes in the field of intoxicating unreason as partially arising out of the traditional Left's rejection of a legitimate heritage in those selfsame fields was the so called "romantic Marxist" Ernst Bloch. In the next chapter I will be sketching out how this heritage of the Left was worked out by Bloch, as well as taking a somewhat longer look at Walter Benjamin's writings on photography, in which the possibility of reproducing revolutionary dream images was theorized. The second of Benjamin's two essays on photography, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1935), is additionally important, for besides marking out the means and space for capturing and circulating the intoxicating image, it also theorized the reproductive apparatus itself as the legitimate tool of the masses. However, at the same time that Benjamin recognized the revolutionary potential of mechanical reproduction, he also acknowledged in his essay the fascist's all too successful appropriation of its revolutionary capacities. There is, therefore, the acknowledgment of a theoretical failure written into the very pages of 'The Artwork Essay' itself. Nevertheless, it is a still a work instrumental to our understanding of the form the politics of the thirties took on, as it is one of the first texts, along with Benjamin's earlier published essay on *Theories of German Fascism* (1930), to open up a contemporary dialogue on fascism's aestheticization of politics.

The goal in illustrating this final 'pas de deux' that these two refugee German Jewish intellectuals create between intoxication and its reproduction is to provide the reader with the earlier promised guide into the meaning of 'reproducing intoxication' within a revolutionary context, as well as to bring us up to the point where Surrealism's two streams of thought intersect with these revolutionary concepts. But as intoxication is an eruptive expression practiced by both ends of the political spectrum, the reader will also find throughout the chapters that follow fascism's aesthetic productions consistently juxtaposed against those of the Surrealists. One must be forewarned here that this jostling of avant-garde theory and aesthetic expression against
fascist praxis will never be clear cut and stable. Indeed, you will see in what follows later, how fascism and Surrealism's own break-away faction - the 'sous'-realism of Georges Bataille - stood, in the end, like twin pillars on either side of Surrealism; each working in its own way to reveal the ultimately anachronistic ideal of desire and beauty that avant-garde movement had put forward as its revolutionary aesthetic.

This stalking of mainstream Surrealism from both outside and inside the movement has an explicit purpose. To be specific, the ultimate goal is to show that while the intentions, methods and concepts of aesthetic production between fascism and Surrealism were significantly different, in the end they both produced scenarios of mastery and domination through the projection of their fantasies as both possible and real. If I were to translate this idea into the kind of metaphoric juxtapositions Surrealism was so prone to using, the scenario would run something like this: in Surrealism one can discover how thin is the line between love and crime; how barely perceptible, but nonetheless present, is the movement between L'Amour fou and shades of (however unpremeditated) collaboration with the enemy. I must emphasize here, however, that my idea is not to do a kind of Lukácsian turn on Surrealism, as much as it is to reveal how the pursuit of a utopian world exclusively through dreaming and fantasy, in which all of the subject's unconscious drives and desires are satisfied, always depends on the subjugation of an other's freedom and will to that desire.

This act of subjugation that the desiring dreamer performs on his object of desire comes in great part out of the essential physical attribute of desire itself. While it may seem ephemeral in its invisibility, desire nevertheless enters into the world of things as a force, whose destiny drives it to conquer and possess that which it seeks to incorporate back into its own coming-into-being self identity. However, in the face of the imperfections that exist in the real world, the subject always finds that, while some of his desires are momentarily satisfied (desire is always construing itself anew with each momentary satisfaction), others are not. But all is not lost, for the desiring subject can always fill a lack-in-being (fill the gap between what is and what is desired) with what Jacques Lacan referred to as "an imaginary function." Such a move is immediately effective, in the sense that the force of the subject's desire is suddenly quelled
through its imagined satisfaction. But this work of the imagination does not entirely resolve the problem of the subject's lack, for it is at this very point of the imagination's intercession in the service of creating the sense of a satisfied desire that, as Lacan says, "an image comes into being bearing all the price of desire."59

This image constructed by the desiring subject Lacan calls the "stand-in": it is what the subject "decks" himself out with; what creates for him "the sense of plenitude or lack of a lack, which is necessary to the ego and its functioning."60 But breeches into the subject's psychic identity are never completely healed, or "sutured-over" as Lacan put it, with this calling up of the stand-in; for as satisfying as the created image of desire might be, it also works, in the end, to subvert the subject's capacity to act.61 Here we can see how the force that drives desire out into the physical world is diverted through imaginative substitutions into a world of false illusions where its energy remains trapped. And the loss of this ability in desire to physically act is crucial to any kind of revolutionary intention on the part of the subject, as it is this common attribute of force - that all forms of desire exhibit - that must be captured and directed into the initial act of creative destruction upon which all revolutionary eruptions depend.62

Any journey towards an ideal of revolution is based on human beings capacity to dream. Ernst Bloch's writings on the revolutionary chiliasm of the medieval heretics, as well as Benjamin's work on the dreamer's creative interaction with technology (both of which will be discussed in the next chapter) are each based on this premise. But while it is the task of dreaming to set out the possibilities for creating new limits, new freedoms in the world; it is only when the creations of dreaming are complimented by the labor of waking - in which the reality of what exists is worked through into the reality of what should be - that real revolutionary change can be effected. Thus the dreamer who refuses to wake up and take on the physical tasks of revolution has taken up residence in a halfway house on the way to freedom; one filled with the deceit of ravishing but falsely satisfying illusions.

In Surrealism what one has, I will ultimately be arguing, are the dazzling individual phyrotechnics of artists/poets, who have become addicted to playing a revolutionary game which never leaves the site of the imaginary. Thus, while as a movement they find the means to create
new dream worlds, new fantasies of desire which circumvent the established order, the fact that they refuse to ever wake-up from the dream they create means that, in the end, they are sidetracked from ever acting upon the revolutionary situation existing within their very midst. Likewise in fascism, the image of a biologically crystallized self identity - the evocation of an original Teutonic bloodline; a fantasy coincident with the physiognomic structure of the nation itself as fatherland - was so powerful that the German masses marched into a totalitarian regime in which all liberty to act was lost. Frenchmen themselves were unhappily reminded of how intoxicating this image must have been for Germans on the very eve of that country's invasion of France when Jean Paulhan, editor of the literary revue La Nouvelle revue française, wrote in the October, 1939 issue that "Hitler is the elected President of a democracy." And that wasn't the whole of it either, for Paulhan went on to say, "(h)e has been elected on the program he is now applying."63

Paulhan's cryptic remarks remind us of how in fascism intoxicating dreams have the power to disguise unfreedom as freedom. But one shall also find, as this investigation into the adventures of intoxicating dreams goes on, the same existence of a wolf in sheep's clothing in Surrealism as well where, hiding under the veil of releasing suppressed passions into a utopian field of Dionysian dreams, there is a return to many of the same old bourgeois values that movement claimed to resist. Of course, historians of this inter-war period may interrupt here to point out how the failures of a rather small, if noisy, avant-garde movement in France are politically insignificant in relation to fascism's intoxicating practices in Germany, which took place on a vastly wider scale. But perhaps these differences, or even the very possibility of resistance, however small, from an avant-garde group on the Left in France didn't seem so far-fetched to some at the time. Perhaps for a Jewish intellectual like Benjamin, who would be forced to flee Germany for France shortly after his turn to the intoxications of Surrealism in '29, the hope of even the slightest "profane illumination" within the darkness of fascism was something to grasp a hold of.64

Benjamin's escape to Paris in '33 foreshadowed his flight from the fascists again at the end of the decade, when he packed up his papers once more, making for the Franco-Spanish
border this time. Upon reaching the border he was forced to stop and spend the night while his papers were checked. Exhausted and unwell, he lost heart at the prospect of ever getting out from under the long shadow fascism was by now casting over Europe. Thus at another way station between nowhere and, with a lucky role of the dice, perhaps somewhere Benjamin, tired of gambling, made the decision to take his life. This tale of one individual's tragedy was complimented by the larger flow of historic events, which saw France ending the decade in a shotgun marriage with Germany; one in which, as Sartre bitterly put it after the war, France was forced (due to the "feminine wiles" and "weaknesses" of French collaborators) into "a sexual union where France played the role of the woman."  

It is in these spaces between a private tragedy and what came to be seen as a scandalous public cohabitation that one can measure out the cost of France's failure to counteract Germany's revolutionary successes in intoxication. The political resonances of that journey - between Germany's revolutionary energy ("It is not the 'theory' of the National Socialists but rather their energy which is serious", wrote Bloch) and France's inertia (from the Third Republic to the Popular Front and back again) - have, its seems to me, been left out of contemporary analysis of Surrealism's aesthetic adventures with intoxication. But while my overarching goal is to situate Surrealism's brushes with intoxication within the broader context of its historical practice; it shall also be my intention to call into question the purpose of an 'avant-garde' Left itself, within the context of their repeatedly professed goal of contesting the social values of the established ruling classes.

II. DIAGRAMMATIC INTENTIONS: ORGANIZING AND CLASSIFYING THE TERRAIN OF INTOXICATION

The traditional Left misjudged completely the power of mysticism and originary dreams that fascism brought on in the thirties. Instead they chose, with almost naive confidence, to see these false illusions as evidence of a late capitalist breakdown. It was a period, as the popular refrain went, in which society found itself at 'a crossroads between socialism and barbarism.' That the path of social justice and liberty would ultimately be chosen seemed, in the beginning,
self-evident to many. But in the end, society chose the path of barbarism. The question then is how do we come up with the means of finding out why society made the choice it did? Wilhelm Reich, whose book *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933) was published the same year fascism came to power in Germany, developed, to my mind, a premise of central importance to answering this question when he wrote that because fascism was more a state of mind based on perceived internal characteristics, versus an external political program, it could never be overcome by a strictly political maneuver. To make his point Reich went on to stress how it was the mysticism of fascism that triumphed over the economic theories of Marxism at a time when the economic crisis and social misery were at their worst in Germany.

The role of the art historian within this process of analyzing the charismatic power of fascism is central, for perhaps the strongest proof of fascism's capacity to transform the normal rules of political exchange into an all encompassing way of life was found its ability to aesthetically, versus politically, organize the bodies of its subjects. Such a talent was of inestimable value, as it allowed the fascist to develop and present through its dramatically staged events, parades and monster rallies, a collective and symbolic representation of the Nation's passion. But in France also, this urge to find the means for a public representation of passion was also very much on the surface of events; particularly, as the reader shall later see, in the period of the Popular Front. It was an era, as Sartre later put it, "of 'Great Desire'." And the Surrealists, he went onto say, "reduced us all to the unity of powerful appetites."

In response to these appetites and in like manner to fascism, Surrealism turned to the body as the vehicle through which an eruptive passion could be transmitted. But the body that appeared on the horizon in Surrealism was relentlessly singular in its identity: 'Convulsive Beauty' appeared almost without exception, and as we will later repeatedly see, through the body of woman. But while 'woman' was the all inclusive emblematic sign of desire under which the Surrealist made his aesthetic representations (a fact given visible documentation in Man Ray's 1924 photograph of the group, assembled underneath the life-size figure of a reclining female nude suspended from the ceiling of their headquarters at the 'Centre des Recherches surréalistes', fig. 3); it was a body which lacked the capacity to incorporate the heterogeneous identities of
mass culture that fascism's aesthetic representations had achieved.\textsuperscript{71} All was not lost, however, as through the presence of a high/low axis of eruptive passion that Surrealism's break-away group under Bataille must be credited with developing there was, as Bataille himself put it, "the expression of a philosophical dialectic through forms."\textsuperscript{72} Such an expression had its own virtues, for by means of its very breadth it could function, Bataille wrote in his essay \textit{The Deviations of Nature}, as "a revelation"; one which could "determine the most elementary and thus consequential of human relations."\textsuperscript{73} Bataille's essay ended with the remark that "the determination of a dialectical development of facts as \textit{concrete} as visible forms would be literally overwhelming."\textsuperscript{74} And indeed, if we look back on the earlier introduced comparison of Convulsive Beauty, represented by Breton's 1938 photocollage \textit{L'Oeuf de l'église}, to Boiffard's \textit{The Big Toe} photographed for Bataille's essay in \textit{Documents}, there are - would you not agree - immediate and even stupefying differences to be perceived between them.

Because of their obvious and physically concrete differences, the image of Convulsive Beauty juxtaposed against the monstrous body Bataille developed while at \textit{Documents} can serve as essential representations which help the art historian to locate and analyze the extent of political differences between two men, who had each \textit{textually} declared their intentions to work on behalf of a revolutionary Left. But in fascism, while 'beauty' and the 'beast' are, as you will later see, also essential categories of representation, the problem of analysis is somewhat shifted as suddenly the crystal like clarity of opposing forms that Sur/sous-realism presents the viewer with is exploded into multiple identities. Through fascism's capacity to cross pollinate and almost endlessly mutate categories of representation, what normally appears as eternally fixed opposites - as in good and evil, dark and light, dirty and clean, beauty and beast - are transformed into a dizzying array of forms and identities. For instance, one of the more important examples among many shifts that the category 'beauty' makes in fascism is found in its transmutation of war from a tragic and devastating eruption into an object of aesthetic beauty. Such a transformation was psychologically decisive, as the reader will later see, as it allowed the modern fascist warrior opportunities for obtaining the satisfaction of drives and desires normally reserved, as they were in Surrealism, for expenditure upon the opposite sex.
Conversely, there are also examples in fascism of splitting singular categories into dialectical opposites. Here one finds representations of the beautiful blond predatory soldier as Germany's "new barbarian", who would, as Hitler proclaimed, "rejuvenate the world"; as well as those of the ugly beast in the form of the Jewish monster, who threatened to pollute and ultimately destroy Germany's identity. As an example of this capacity for splitting, one can see the scarifying appearance (in the sense of the wicked wolf in fairy tales) of the Jewish monster in a page from a German children's book, in which the beautiful German worker/soldier is juxtaposed to the Jew, who "thinks he is very beautiful, but really he is ugly." (fig. 4) Or, on the other hand and against any mistaken delusions of beauty that the Jewish monster was construed as having, there is also the image of the beautiful blond predator seen, for example, in a 1939 calendar in which a benevolent looking (!) S.S. officer kneels beside the kind of offspring the new Germany was hoping to produce. Such representations functioned ideologically to encourage participation in the renewal of the Teutonic lineage; a necessity which was further emphasized by the caption under the calendar's image that reads: "A Nation stands or falls according to the greater or lesser worth of its blood-bound racial substance."75 (fig. 5)

While the basic categories of beauty/beast, in terms of their symbolic identities in the world, will be essential to my interpretation of physical forms against political practice to follow, one can clearly see from the above how in fascism any dialectic of forms has twists and turns; 'hooks' that call for a highly developed sense of physiognomic awareness on the part of the researcher. The idea of physiognomy itself - as a method of illuminating through external form what were seen either as unconscious drives and desires or, on the part of the fascist, as interior values and characteristics essentially 'German' - is not a concept I have arbitrarily chosen here in order to present a point; rather, it was a visual mode of 'psychological' comprehension endemic to the period. Benjamin himself took note of this fact in his first essay on photography written in 1930 while still in Germany. In this essay, A Short History of Photography, he wrote that "photography cannot do without people"; a fact one has, he claimed, been taught by the best Russian film makers whose talents allowed them to transform even "milieu and landscape" from "anonymity into a physiognomy."76 But it was, above all and as Benjamin recognized, in the
photographic portrait that the science of physiognomy was best illustrated. As a contemporary example of how incisive such portraits could be Benjamin turned in his essay to the work of German photographer August Sander, whose series of photographic images were seen to compete with "the magnificent gallery opened by Eisenstein and Pudovkin...". These portraits, which were arranged according to "the existing social order", took part in the same Russian revolutionary tradition, developed as they were through the photographer's talents for "unprejudiced observation, bold and at the same time delicate...". Such work was born out of its period; a period which had made "the training and sharpening of a physiognomic awareness into a vital necessity." 

The organization of Sander's portraits according to social class had not, Benjamin emphatically stated in his essay, come about through the advice of "race theorists or social researchers". They existed, nevertheless, as essential documents of their age: they were of fundamental pedagogical value and should be approached as "an atlas of instruction". In the next chapter we'll see, through looking at Benjamin's mid-decade writings on photography, how opportunities existed for putting Sander's brand of physiognomic documentation to work for the revolutionary Left. But despite its theoretically revolutionary potential, the reality of this pseudo-science's political practice belonged to the fascists, who achieved their greatest successes through the incorporation of bodies as 'mass' into the idea of physiognomy itself.

This move towards 'mass' in physiognomic identity was central to the fascists' successes with mass culture, for it changed what had formerly been seen as a large abstract entity regulated by law - the 'Nation' - into a biological identity. But while in this art of physiognomic representation the fascist Nation moved from abstraction to inhabit a body, it wasn't just any body. Rather, it was a body constructed on precise aesthetic principles, where (and this is significant to my delineation of beauty/beast as basic categories of representation) beauty - synchronously masquerading as Nation and as masses who inhabit the Nation - was defined in clear and sharply defined forms. Such a 'body' exemplified order and discipline. It was rigid and penetrating; a body which was, in short, entirely phallic in its construction. And even if other Nations might laughingly scoff at the determined documentation of such an obsessively
precise and machine-like body, as was seen in the English *Picture Post's* 1940 publication of "The World as Hitler would Make It" (figs. 6 & 7); what the physiognomically sensitive historian must keep in mind here is that through such a simple and clarified image the humiliations of Versailles, as well as Germany's post-war social and economic chaos, were turned into visual victories of form and beauty.

In chapter three the reader will see how the German fascist's remodeling of the concept of beauty into one which had the capacity to cross both class and gender lines, as well as the capacity to be applied either with singularity to individuals or to be enlarged into an identity which defined large groups, was essential to its political successes. And these successes, born out of this newly malleable concept of beauty, stood against, as the reader will also later see, the rigid definition of beauty in terms of its gender that Surrealism adhered to. But while a concept of physiognomy is crucial to analyzing the ideology that underwrote the pervasive appearance of an ideal of 'beauty' in the thirties, and to understanding how the superficial appearances of bodies could be directly related to perceived internal physic states; other conceptual tools of analysis are also needed in order to get at precisely how the image of beauty itself was put together. One such conceptual tool - and again, as in the idea of physiognomy, I'm referring here to a theoretical approach that developed in response to its period - is found in the idea of the "mass ornament", developed in the late twenties by German film theorist, Siegfried Kracauer.

Kracauer's concept of the mass ornament offers essential insights into understanding how this presentation of bodies, molded and emblematically organized for the purposes of political expression, functioned. Simply put, *The Mass Ornament*, first published as an essay in 1927, was defined as social communication through the overall surface configuration that bodies arranged in space created. It was a concept that first appeared in Kracauer's work as an attempt to analyze the social meaning that underwrote revue culture's mania for creating schematic patterns through the decorative arrangement of bodies. But the concept ultimately became a bridge for Kracauer, which spanned the move from an era of revue culture into fascism and its own predilections for political expression through the ornamental arrangement of bodies. That the concept of the mass ornament could move so easily from one period (the period we saw
earlier defined by Bloch as that of "diversion") into another (the period of "intoxication") was not surprising, for it was a theory which had wide reaching political ramifications from the moment of its inception. Indeed, Kracauer felt that the virtual meaning of his era could be visually 'read' through these kind of surface phenomena: "(t)he analysis of the surface manifestations of an epoch can contribute more to determining its place in the historic process than the pronouncements of the epoch itself." 84

What made the theory of the mass ornament so incisive was the fact that it developed out of Kracauer's recognition that in modern mass culture the text of history was swiftly being replaced by its image. 85 And it was this development of history as image versus text that fascism seized upon; a seizure that accounted for, in the end, its wide successes with mass culture. Photography intersected with this playing out of history through decorative pattern in an essential way, as when seen in overview through the lens of the camera these ornamental images appeared as "hieroglyphics" to be read. Such photo-documents were important in the eyes of Kracauer, for they were spatial pictographs in which one could read "the basis of social reality." 86

If the mass ornament truly did represent, as Kracauer put it, "the dreams of society", it is important that we recognize that the concept of it didn't just appear with the arrival of hollywood and revue culture in Germany. 87 The mass ornament had its links to the intoxication of dreams through its initial appearance as the fetish that ornamented the commodity produced in capitalist culture. But in the journey from a commodity and later revue culture to the totalitarian fascist State there was an essential shift in the ornament/fetish, which moved from the commodity and the bodies of a commercial hollywood 'star' culture to now be laid over, as Bloch had recognized, the body of mass culture itself. Here one can see how in the path of the ornament from the commodity to the subject's own fetishized body, it was both the consumer and 'diversion' culture of capitalism that had tilled the ground for fascism's mass aesthetics. Indeed, the fascists' subsequent successes can even be read as coming out of the existence of a mass culture that was already addicted to the ornamentally shimmering surface world present everywhere in capitalist culture.
Like Kracauer, Benjamin was also profoundly aware of this decorative surface that capitalist culture produced. But he did not see the existence of it, *per se*, in a wholly negative light. In his 'Arcades Project' he had described the surface ornamentation polished onto early industrial products as "wish-images" that the social collective had attached to early technology's promise of abundance. These collective 'wish-images' had, he felt, radical political meaning: they existed as the "ur-images of the desired social ends of their development." Fourier's nineteenth century utopian designs for technology, that will be briefly touched upon in the next chapter, are exemplary here for they took up, as Benjamin recognized, "the ur-old wish symbol of leisure and plenty" and injected it with new life.

But despite its early promise, capitalism's surface dazzle exemplified in the Marxist concept of the 'fetish' really represented nothing more than the shattered remains of technology's early utopian dream. Yet these still existing remnants of the dream, ever present in the commodity fetish, were not without their revolutionary power. Indeed, the twentieth century's expansion of the powers of the fetish that happened, in great part, through the massive media circulation of the ornamental body image that the blooming of Hollywood culture in film brought on, could be read as a mirror of mass culture's addiction to 'the utopia of the fetish'. The fascist recognized and seized upon this utopian power of the ornament, transferring it to the body surfaces of the masses themselves so that even in times of social misery and economic bankruptcy the early dream wish remained visible in culture. But it is important to note here that the terms of the ornament's production never shifted in this move to the bodies of mass culture, for while the masses ultimately become the ornament/fetish itself in fascism, they never take any part in the conception of this superficial decoration that they now bear within their very physical structure as mass. This social reality meant that the shape of the mass ornament never emerged, as Kracauer put it, "from any interior reality." It remained removed, as the commodity fetish in capitalist culture did, from "the immanent consciousness of those forming it."

Through the principle of the mass ornament the reader will later see how fascism's domination over the nation's subjects ultimately comes about through symbolically reducing them to the status of "pure externality." Such an aesthetic concept had powerful consequences
for the political future of Germany, as it allowed for the domination of the masses through the incessant barrage of their image everywhere as pure and seductive surface. It was a move that was politically astute principally because it worked to successfully trap the masses in a narcissistic bind from which they could not escape. But this concept of the mass ornament laid over the body need not be limited to Germany alone; for clearly it could come to the surface in any capitalist culture under great political and economic pressure.

Within this surfacing of the ornament upon the body itself, and in relation to my particular project of juxtaposing the intoxicating productions of German fascists against French Surrealism's forays into the same territory, I want to argue that not only do both movements turn to the emblematory body as their expression of an eruptive inner passion; but also that the principles of the 'ornament' and the manner in which it dictates the form the body takes were essential to both movements. I will also argue that in Surrealism the idea of 'mass' in the mass ornament remains intact; but that there is a shift in the form of its presentation. Here I can say that the Surrealist woman will be shown to fulfill Kracauer's basic concept of the mass ornament as "empty reason", as she is a body that has been, like the masses, consigned to mute nature.93 Such a consignment bears the same sign of repression that the masses in the mass ornament show; for like them, 'woman' in Surrealist representation will be shown as cut off from any real knowledge of herself. And you will also see how, through the very sum of her images presented within this text, she is most essentially related to the masses and their mass reproduction through the endless reproduction of her own image; that is, see how fascism's 'mass' is transformed in Surrealism into what Luce Irigaray has called "the reign of the series".94

In Surrealism, there is the presence of a constant unconscious drive to reproduce as an endlessly repeated sign woman as the physical embodiment of the subject's desire. Such a drive has powerful social consequences; for it can be seen, as I hope to show, as documentary 'evidence' that the movement depended for its very existence upon the reassurance of always seeing its basic premise of a fully liberated 'desire' in men exemplified in the vision of a captured and contained body. It was this very drive towards a visual 'containment' of desire by Surrealism that led to a never ending pressure upon the desired body itself: for just one more
pose, one more image, just one more surrender to the probing Surrealist eye. And such demands inevitably resulted in increasing blows to this silenced but revered body, which was folded, pressed, bent, ripped and pushed askew by the Surrealist photographer into ever mutating patterns which signified, in the end, nothing more than a desire to visibly dominate it.

One finds these exchanges between mass culture and woman, that comes to the surface through the visible presence of the body as the ornamental expression of desire, taking place more than anything through their shared intellectual homelessness. Here one must point out that, unlike the proletarian class and their industrial culture, mass culture consists in great part of a colossus of public employees who, as Bloch pointed out in *Heritage of Our Times*, think they are of the bourgeois class but who, in economic terms, belong to the working class. Benjamin, in like manner to Bloch, also refers to the "newly created proletarian masses" in his 'Artwork Essay'. However, it is unresolved even today who exactly the 'masses' were that intellectuals on both the Left and the Right in the twenties and thirties consistently referred to in their various texts and polemics. Indeed, modern theorists are still searching for a means of comfortably situating an obliquely identified mass culture within the class hierarchy. Thus one finds, for instance, a Marxist theorist like Nicos Poulantzas defining the masses as basically a petty bourgeois employee class trapped outside of the master-slave dialectic; a group, as one writer put it, emblematic of a kind of Hegelian failure in identity. But despite this failure to adequately name and classify the 'masses' in terms of class, Benjamin managed to locate rather precisely the essential identity and image which mass culture was consistently seen to take on in the early twentieth century. In his notes to the 'Arcades Project' he wrote of how the masses first experience their identity as mass in the role of the consumer: "every commodity collects around itself the mass of its customer. The totalitarian states have taken this mass as their model. The Volksgemeinschaft attempt to drive everything out of individuals that stands in the way of their complete assimilation into a massified clientele. The only unreconciled opponent......in this connection is the revolutionary proletariat. The latter destroys the illusion of the mass with the reality of class."
In Benjamin's remark one finds that it is only the more precisely defined class consciousness of the revolutionary proletariat that stands against the monolithic drive into consumption that a capitalist culture creates. By contrast, the masses are defined, precisely, by their shared desire to consume, rather than by any class conscious identity. And it is exactly at this point of lacking a specific class conscious identity, as well as in their most essential definition as a group being traced directly to their self-identifying relationship with the commodity, that, I feel, the exchange between woman and mass culture can take place: the lack of a legitimated political identity and the articulation by others of their desire to both consume, and in turn be consumed by this very drive towards consumption, is shared by both. It is therefore, to my mind, significant that in a period of great economic and social pressure an eruptive and intoxicating passion is made to pass through both of these politically undefined bodies that 'woman' and mass culture signify. Intoxication is, as both Benjamin and Bloch recognized, revolutionary; but it is revolutionary here, if we are looking at it through the bodies which make its presence visible and socially experienced, only in the sense that it is capable of revealing to us the failure of all the political parties in the twentieth century to find the means of cohering these bodies in any class conscious way.

This failure in identity remains elusive even today simply because it makes its appearance so often in the form of dreams that desire for commodities themselves bring on. Such dreams and the images they produce must, if we are to make social advances in establishing justice and equality between both classes and sexes, be read by the socially conscious cultural critic as Freudian slips of the tongue; slips made, as in the case of the Surrealist and fascist, by the creative dictator who can dominate bodies by virtue of his modern capacity to technologically reproduce his fantasies as real.

Mechanical reproduction's capacity for repetition is essential to this new science of domination practiced through the projection of the body as ornament. Its limitless potential offers a new sense of mastery to the image maker, who can now endlessly document the 'reality' of his fantasies. Repetition contributes to his sense of belonging to a limitless world; a powerful utopian concept. This sense of infinite extension is complimented by the concept of the
ornament and its capacity to endlessly re-work the body into new signifying patterns. In both Surrealism and fascism, the concept of the ornament is what extends the body beyond its normal physical outlines. Through various camera and darkroom maneuvers (such as solarization, brûlage, negative printing, multiple exposure, cliché verre and montage) Surrealism's Convulsive Beauty in its strictly feminine form (which is, I might add, its most common form) will appear before us in many fantastic guises. But significantly and as we shall later see, her form does not emerge out of any material reality, so much as it comes out of the murky and liquid stream of man's innermost desires.

It is the technique of montage which makes possible this documentation of the fantasy as real in both Surrealism and fascism. Here one notes that while montage offered possibilities for creating revolutionary images, as a technique it was not used only by revolutionary Left. Indeed, what becomes increasingly apparent in any study of fascism's image production is how successful they were in raiding the avant-garde Left's technical bag of tricks. Thus Kracauer himself would see montage in Riefenstahl's *Triumph of The Will* practiced "à la Potemkin", where there is a mixture "simulating German reality and of German reality maneuvered into a show." And Bloch, writing on how the fascists achieve the *appearance* of being a socialistic State through using visual models established by the Left, notes in *Heritage of our Times* how Goebbels "expressly declared the film *Battleship Potemkin* to be a model for the German film, so far does the formal consent go, as the crook and thieving perverter imagines it."100

It is important here to note a shift in the montage of Surrealism and fascism from the montage of Dada; one made necessary in order to document the fantasy as real. While the montage of Dada maintained the cut between juxtaposed images, in Surrealism and fascism there is what one could call, for descriptive purposes, *smooth* montage. And in smooth montage (whether in films, or in, for example, individual photocollages) the physical shock effect of montage, seen in its conflicting juxtaposition of images, is taken out of, as Benjamin perceptively saw it in his 'Artwork Essay, the "moral wrappers" in which it had been kept by Dada.101 One can see what difference this healing of the cuts that exist in reality represents between Dada and Surrealism in terms of the bodies they look at for aesthetic inspiration, if we
compare Man Ray's earlier presented photograph of the Surrealist group assembled under their emblematic feminine sign of desire to a photograph of the 'First International Dada Fair' in Berlin in 1920 (fig. 8). In the Dada group photograph, the body the group coalesces under and takes its direction from is found in the image of the dummy dressed as a soldier and suspended from the ceiling. It is this specific physiognomic identity which hangs over the group and invests all their aesthetic productions with the political sign of tragedy and betrayal that the recently ended war had brought to Germany; and it contrasts to the more 'universalized' and free floating sign of desire found in the woman's body that Surrealism appeared under.102

Dada had maintained the cut between its juxtaposed images because of its political bias, which sought to point out the fragmentation the subject experienced in reality. But once this cut is gone, 'sutured' over through the wizardry of technology, we enter into the terrain of sur-reality where fantasies are not only documented as real; they are also presented as veritable redemptions of physical reality. Desire is thus set free in the smooth montage practiced by both Surrealism and fascism, unconstrained by morality or by the reality of social conditions. But to what purpose? What must and will be repeatedly asked throughout the text that follows is: 'Does the arranged body, in this endless reproduction of intoxicating desire, mean anything beyond being the vehicle that documents - proves again ad-infinitum and nauseam - one's mastery over desire?'

It is by contrast to all this ornamental diversity and as the theoretical antidote to this unrelenting passion for surface decoration, that The Big Toe finds it most significant place in this thesis. As a 'document' published in Documents, it stands as a base and basic model for sexuality; representing, without ornament, eroticism's suppressed and dirty base: "The meaning of this article (The Big Toe) lies", Bataille wrote, "in its insistence on a direct and explicit questioning of seductiveness, without taking into account poetic concoctions that are ultimately nothing more than a diversion."103

Bataille's essay The Big Toe formed an essential part of what could be called his anthropological writings; essays which looked back on man's physical history in order to re-discover the animal in him that he had forgotten. It was an anthropological approach which had contemporary meaning, for it was directed towards uncovering the myth of 'civilization' with
which man had clothed himself. The job in practical terms meant divesting man of his
ornamental exterior, including, as you will later see, the woman as ornament. Bataille's great
virtue here (and perhaps this just came out of his own particular brand of narcissism, for Bataille
was certainly no forerunner of contemporary feminism) was his location of desire within the
physical axis of man himself, rather than in a dirtied, through its domination and degradation,
Other. What I mean to say here is that desire is not, or rarely, directed onto an other body in
Bataille's work, without the body that desire itself emanates from being included, often
tragically, in that journey. This is not to say that woman does not exist for Bataille as desire's
Other; only that she is not presented as a fantasy which is held above the physical act of desire
itself.\textsuperscript{104}

In terms of \textit{The Big Toe} itself: yes, it is true that it is both a dirty and degraded form in
its physical appearance. But significantly, Bataille developed its base appearance as one which
came about through its labor. \textit{The Big Toe} is dirty because of the work it must do in order for
man to maintain his erect position in the world. But further, it is also significant that while \textit{The
Big Toe} is, through its labor, a low and ignominious form dominated by the desires of men; in
the documentation of its 'character' by Boiffard, it appears as a bold and even, one might say, an
entirely exhibitionistic appendage. (See, for instance, its arch and entirely confident appearance
in fig. 9.) Here the outlines of form in space (the toe's spatial configuration so to speak) are
crucial to the analysis of its social meaning: it is through this kind of projective and almost
insolent physical appearance that the \textit{The Big Toe} overcomes the domination and degradation
that is found in the clean and beautiful, yet entirely passive and accessible to the penetration of
the 'master's' desire, body of Convulsive Beauty.

In relation to dirty reality (which exists but is suppressed) versus celestial purity (which
is never more than a dream), Bataille developed his language of the low while at \textit{Documents}.
Any reader of essays like \textit{The Deviations of Nature, Base Materialism and Gnosticism, The
Language of Flowers} and \textit{The Lugubrious Game} (an essay which works as an attack on Breton's
suppression of the low and dirty) will find Bataille repeatedly focusing on the negativity of dirt;
a dirty dirt which suffocates not only desire's physical expression, but also those repressed
bodies in nature forced to work in the half shadows and twilight of social existence. However, one should be aware that in supporting what existed in the basement of the unconscious so to speak, Bataille was not looking for the means to elevate abased matter into a superior ideal: dirt was not to be swept away or polished up by "sturdy housemaids with vacuum cleaners" as Bataille put it in his dictionary entry on Dust in Documents.¹⁰⁵ Rather, the appearance of dirt was essential, for it was out of this base material that something raw and powerfully new would be built. The monstrous body emblematized all that was materially present, but seen as low and obscure. It was a body full of political significance for Bataille as it was to be given the labor of making what was socially invisible not only visible, but visible in a shocking and convulsively eruptive way.

Before ending this chapter, there remain two outstanding issues to be dealt with: the first and most complex, being a description of the concept of gender which be will used in relation to my examination of aesthetic ideals of 'convulsion' to follow; the second, a more straightforward task of laying out the visual parameters of this investigation into 'Reproducing Intoxication' in the thirties. In the case of the former, I want to say directly, and to emphasize, that in all the representations of beauty and its opposite - the ugly beast - that the reader shall shortly encounter, there will be issues of representation at stake which must, in the end, be defined not only through the concept of class, but also through an examination of gender in terms of its physical and intellectual layout, as they are appropriate to the historical period under examination.

I'll try to explain what, precisely, I mean by the above. For instance, in all patriarchal cultures, we already know that woman is always placed on the side of the perceptible. She is to be seen both optically and intellectually as 'matter' and as part of the world of nature, versus the invisible abstractions of pensée, which are reserved for men who are conceptual planners and theoreticians: in sum, créateurs. As will be seen in the next chapter, mainstream Surrealism does not deviate from this stereotypical pattern of identification through gender.¹⁰⁶ However, this distinction between 'though' and 'matter' is not meant - at least on the surface of things - to demean the idea of nature and its 'matter' per se; after all, a man cannot philosophize, as Marx
pragmatically pointed out, without first eating. This is the primacy of matter in nature: as sustenance. And it is this quality of matter - as an essential and basic lifeline to existence that precedes any conceptual ideals - that we shall see valorized in Surrealism; an ideal exemplified in a photograph by Man Ray (to be examined in its details in the next chapter) published in 1929 in *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* and titled *Primat de la matière sur la pensée*. (see fig. 26, chapter two). But while 'matter' is the essential support to speculative thinking, one mustn't lose sight of the fact that it cannot, in and of itself, speculate, surmise, formulate or create. It thus also stands that desire as a force which has the power to replenish a hungry stomach must also be seen as symbolically masculine, for if women are represented under the sign of matter and as part of the natural world, then by definition they are incapable of instigating any motivating force from within themselves. This is not to say that woman/nature lacks energy; indeed, energy is seen as nature's most precious resource. But as initially inert matter, any incentive or will-to-power must penetrate nature - and by extension woman - from the outside. This is what accounts for woman as nature in representation to be shown as, above all and as you will later repeatedly see, accessible; that is, as a body like that in Man Ray's photograph, which is fully laid out and open to penetration by the viewer's gaze.

There are, however, conditions under which men can also take on this identity as 'matter'. For example, in conditions of war men are called upon to (potentially) sacrifice their bodies - their raw 'matter' as it were - in the service of the State. Men must perform this service; it is their duty, in order to maintain their all powerful phallic law. This is the price they pay for the power that they have. However, under these conditions of war representations of the body do not call up visions of either pleasure (as they do in Surrealism), or productivity (as in traditional bourgeois culture). Rather, representation is made under the sign of tragedy, mutilation and sacrifice that war visits on bodies. Here we can say that men lose their real bodies in sacrifice; versus women, who only subjectively lose their bodies in their necessary submission to men's greater power. But then, men also lose their real bodies because they have real power at stake in the State that they serve and protect; versus women who are, both in representation and in
political terms (again, as you will shortly see), already denied the subjectivity necessary to the development and maintenance of power.

From the above, one can see that there are two very different identities that men live under; ones which are expressed in the differences found between the gendered concepts of phallic law and virility: while the former retains an abstract conceptual basis (and is therefore only expressed symbolically), the latter is underwritten by the physical tasks performed in the maintenance of that law. It is in the expression of the latter of these identities that the period under examination here is important; for in the thirties in Europe men were caught up in a developing constellation of violence in which issues of virility - normally existing as a constant and pervasive undercurrent in gender relations - were brought directly onto the surface of events. The question being asked everywhere, the one which normally only haunts men rather than confronting them openly, was: 'Are you a real man, are you brave enough and strong enough (do you have enough 'balls' the symbolic phallus asks) to risk dying in war?' It was in the face of this perpetual tension towards mobilization that the growth of fascism in the thirties brought on that there was, as I hope to show, the development of representations everywhere by men in which the idea of 'convulsion' itself was immanent to the image. In the light of such a historical situation - the approach of war - one can say that Convulsive Beauty appears not only under her superficial guise as a cultic seductive image developed by the Surrealist in opposition to a traditional ideal of beauty; but also, as a convulsed body created by men who were themselves trapped in a progressively constricting framework of potential loss and violence.

The body of the monster, although based on divergent ideological and theoretical principles to those that underlay Convulsive Beauty, also takes part in this dynamic pattern of constriction pressing evermore intensely towards eruption. Here we can say then that the convulsive form itself could exist, generally, as a representational mode of anticipation; a means of framing and presenting the coming rupture. However, in the case of Convulsive Beauty what in fact happens is the psychological use of a concept of rupture as a mode of repression and displacement, where the framing of convulsion depends on its placement over a spectacular and specular Other - an Other who both absorbs and refracts the pressure of the spasm off of the
subject himself. Under such conditions, the representation of convulsion, far from releasing knowledge - acting as the space in which the catastrophic moment is made visible - works instead to hold the concrete recognition of this moment, along with the ability to act in relation to it, in abeyance. Such a moment of mis-recognition is, it will be argued in chapter three, circumvented by Bataille in his theorization of the monstrous body, which includes within its representational form the possibility of a moment of recognition and reciprocity between the creating subject and his convulsive representation.

Within a framework of potential violence and destruction, the presentation of an ideal of 'mastery' is crucial, for it is always the visible evidence of men's capacity to dominate bodies that is taken as a sign of power and control over any form of advancing violence. This can be seen in France's developing position in relation to her colonies in the thirties, where the bodies produced there were read throughout the decade (that is, before, after and during the Popular Front) as crucial to the coming war. Thus the maintenance of ownership and control over those bodies against any potentially rebellious signs of independence became central to France's political representations of its size and physical capacities within the European community at large. Here again, the exoticism and excessive sexuality that Convulsive Beauty projected shall be shown (in chapter three) to intersect with, in ways which both supported and contested, traditional French bourgeois conceptions of the colonial body. Likewise, the convulsive monstrosity of Bataille's deviant body presented the viewer with a certain kind of exoticism in its physical manifestation; an 'exoticism' often associated with the concept of ugliness itself. But in this exoticism of both beauty and the beast, the condition of domination and the way in which it leads to a specific kind of disposition of the body will be shown to vary; playing itself out over a sliding axis of property and ownership, versus resistance to those concepts.

By contrast to the above, in Germany the concept of sacrifice itself became an aestheticized image of convulsion; a beautiful and heroic image which German men themselves were represented as longing for by fascist literary agents and propagandists. Here it will again be Bataille who touches most directly upon this issue of 'virility' through sacrifice. But in contrast to the fascist State and its leaders who turn sacrifice into a beautiful ideal, one shall find
Bataille attempting in the mid to late thirties to take sacrifice on as an issue that existed outside of any "function"; that is, outside of any connection to the politics of the State. Instead, Bataille conceptualized sacrifice as an innate drive in all men towards expenditure and destruction; a drive which must be given public representation in the community outside of any of the specific political goals sacrifice is normally attached to.

From the above, you can see how 'convulsion', both in its formulation as an aesthetically satisfying (the heroics of sacrifice) and 'beautiful' image, as well as in its negation (the anti-aesthetic, as it were, of ugliness and of a 'dis-functional' sacrifice) will be a central issue to this investigation of 'Reproducing Intoxication' in pre-war politics. But it should also be clear by now that the historical story to be told here will not lay itself out in any logical or convenient pattern of investigation. There will be overlaps: streams of theories, images and the fantasies they produce that unravel into separate tributaries of thought and action; as well as those streams of unconscious thought and their representations that intersect and flow together in ways which, while they may muddy up the strictly linear pattern of historical investigation and the more readily qualified issues of class and economic relationships, nevertheless work to clarify issues that underwrite the less visible structure of gender relations. This opportunity and possibility of examining - in addition to the historically documented issues of representation that the art historian traditionally deals with - those gender relations that function at normally unconscious levels of interaction arises, as stated, out of the tensions inherent to the thirties itself, because under these conditions men were being forced in various ways to come directly to grips with their own normally assumed gender identities and sexuality. Indeed, this is a period in which men were being driven to confront core historical images of themselves not only as the 'hero' and 'warrior'; but also as the violator and ruler of property, both in its geographical and theoretically abstract sense, as well as in its physical manifestation found in bodies themselves which were politically and aesthetically represented as the 'property' of nations. Ultimately then, I can say that the convulsion that comes out of any experience of intoxication, as it is underwritten by the gender concept of virility, will essentially propel my further investigation into intoxication and its reproduction in the thirties.
In terms of the visual material itself, throughout this thesis there will be the presentation of mechanical reproductions of eruptive desire which were published in various Surrealist and other avant-garde revues, as well as other images published in broadly based popular magazines such as *L'Illustration*. The existence of a dialectic between avant-garde's esotericism and the aesthetic preferences of popular culture will thus be acknowledged at various junctures and commented on - not just in terms of their differences; but also, in terms of similarities they share, which therefore tend to absolve the traditional tensions of any dialectic. I have written 'mechanically reproduced' in describing the parameters of imagery to be presented, for while the majority of works referred to in the body of this thesis are photographs and while, when I refer to Nazi newsreels, I will be making a special case for the insertion of the still shot within the flow of the film, I am also cognizant of the fact that the various reproductive medias were not so neatly separated into their different genres in the thirties as they are by today's 'specialists'. As an example of the difference that today's critics impose on the medias, one can point to historians of Kracauer's work on film, who often remark on how his critical writing on film ignored that medium's sequential flow of time and narrative in order to focus almost exclusively on its imagery. This focus on spatial configuration versus the flow of events has caused some to see his later 'theory of film' as really nothing more than an earlier theory of photography transposed onto film.108 But what is left out of such observations are the social conditions of Kracauer's formative period in which fascism was making a "systematic translation of time into spatial categories."109

We can read the same tendency to jump back and forth between film and photography, per se, in Benjamin's writings on the reproductive medias also. In fact, Benjamin himself enunciates this tendency to mesh different medias together in the very title of his 1935 'Artwork Essay' when he states that it was an 'age of mechanical reproduction'. In sum, the real issue for both Benjamin and Kracauer was not so much an analysis of the separate structural formations particular to each media, as it was to develop a theory of modern perception which responded to all of the new reproductive medias *in terms of their social meaning.*
In the thirties, fascism penetrates so deeply into mass culture through its development of a totalitarian visual culture; a move Kracauer saw as a "necessary precondition to an instrumental control of reality." Theirs was a world, as Bloch put it, of "optic idealism", in which a continuous barrage of mechanically reproduced images flooded every aspect of the subject's social life. One can even say that fascism succeeded so brilliantly in its reproduction of intoxication through its recognition of technology's capacity to produce in a utopian, versus strictly utilitarian, manner. It was this crucial subjective shift in approaching technology that Surrealism also took part in. And it was a move that allowed them both - fascism and Surrealism - to turn their world of fantasy into a visual reality. It is in response to this capacity for utopian production by the reproductive medias as a whole, versus any specialized structural distinctions accorded to the various medias, that will therefore also underwrite my own presentation of mechanically reproduced images of eruptive passion to follow.
"To the traditional idea of beauty and the good, we will oppose our own, however infernal it may be. Messianics and revolutionaries, I agree. And you, you are traditionalists and christians, for example."

(Louis Aragon, 1924)

I. INTOXICATION AND THE ART OF LEGIBILITY

In his book *Heritage of Our Times* (1935) Ernst Bloch described a lost utopian era of "original faith", in which "there was neither art nor science, but a separate need, closely intertwined with sexuality and intoxication." However, as Bloch went on to say, "in the subsequent development of science into its mechanized modern form, the objects with which a religious primal need had appeased itself were cast aside."¹ Bloch himself found it astonishing that the transition from the primitive intoxications of a mythic dreamlike land into the totality of the modern "ratio" had ever taken place, for within the mechanical natural sciences "no sexual enlightenment and gynecology has ever disenchanted the libido, let alone destroyed it."²

But while in the developing embourgeoisement of the modern state there might have been a *theoretical* closure on ecstatic encounters with intoxication and sexuality, technology *itself* could never close the void created at the very heart of the enlightened era by the loss of a communally shared expression of passion. In Bloch's eyes, fascism was the ultimate response to the liberal democratic State's totalitarian "ratio". Its successes in Germany and elsewhere represented evidence of a mechanical breakdown in the "quantitative calculation": in the face of the fascist's eruptive "irratio", capitalism could no longer maintain mechanism "as the amen to the world."³

In the fascist's reconstruction of an originary and utopian past, Bloch was aware of a kind of occultic fascination taking over the minds of the German masses, as suddenly mythic exotica and all the romance of primitive adventures, formerly driven to the outer shores of enlightened civilization, came home again under the guise of fascist aesthetics. But this archaic mixture of
myths and utopian dreams that fascist ideologists dragged up from the swampy remains of a mythical past was not, as Bloch pointed out, to be simply taken as "a mirror for fools". In them one could still find residues of an early communally based form of resistance; one taken up, for example, in response to deprivations experienced at the hands of an authoritarian church and State. The primary purpose of Heritage of Our Times was to elucidate those elements of a radical and imaginative heritage legitimately belonging to the Left, but currently vacated to fascist colonization.

Central to his premise of re-claiming the heritage that an all too "enlightened" Left had lost was Bloch's return in his book to the early meaning of the Third Reich; one first established through the revolutionary chiliasm of the late medieval heretics who, in the face of charges of heresy, had preached with a "this worldly luster" the coming to earth of the "Third Kingdom". Through their structuring of paradise on earth the heretics had created, in Bloch's eyes, the utopian vision of a proto-communist brotherhood of man. And this creation of paradise as "an immanent image of history" had been instrumental, Bloch went on to claim, to invoking the intoxication necessary to activating revolutionary movement. Indeed, even though the heretic's paradise was only textual and mythological, in its promised inevitability it had worked to inspire peasant revolts and other underground rebellions right up to the French Revolution itself. The chiliasm of the heretics thus became, as Bloch using a phrase of Luther's put it, "the conjurer's hat of all troop leaders."

But while Luther's chiliasm was an intoxicating battle song for the rebellious peasants, in the contemporary Third Reich it was an entirely perverted and betrayed chiliasm to which the German masses responded. What was tragic in this "embezzlement" by the fascist Right of a legitimate radical heritage belonging to the Left was the fact that these "false conjurers" of utopia had only succeeded so swiftly and easily "because the genuine revolutionaries did not keep a look-out there." The anomaly of fascism thus appeared in this paradoxical appropriation of what had essentially been an anti-capitalist utopia, now used in defense of an economic order that dream had originally resisted.
Writing his book in Locarno, as a refugee from Hitler's Germany, Bloch was convinced that things would have turned out differently if only the terrain of fascist myth making and irrational impulses "had been militarily occupied and dialectically transformed on the 'enlightened' side, instead of merely being abstractly cordoned off." A partial guilt for the successes of fascism in Germany thus lay with a Left whose propaganda lacked any "opposite land to myth, any transformation of mythical beginnings into real ones, of Dionysian dreams into revolutionary ones." The result was that while "vulgar Marxists keep no watch over primitiveness and utopia, the National Socialist owe their seduction to them."

In its refusal to acknowledge the possibility of an intoxicating mythic dream world within its political program, the traditional revolutionary Left had "undernourished the imagination of the masses." Such a move had serious ramifications, as it worked against the grain of Marxism's post '33 attempts to present these broadly defined masses (versus a previously more strictly defined 'proletarian' or working class) as the decisive subjects of the revolution. They failed in their efforts precisely because, while they may have presented the masses, they nonetheless failed, as Bloch put it, "to represent them at the same time." (emphasis mine) Benjamin had similarly recognized this failure to 'represent' in traditional Marxist revolutionary theory, writing in his 'Artwork Essay' that the fascists had succeeded in their efforts with the "newly proletarianized masses" not because they offered them any fundamental changes in economic relations; but rather, because the masses were given, through the spectacular scenography of fascist parades and monster rallies, an aesthetic opportunity "to express themselves".

Benjamin's mid-decade work on the significance of the reproductive medias in the dissemination of fascist ideology was complimentary to Bloch's work on the fascist's colonization of intoxication, in the sense that he pinpointed the means by which the fascist had placed a veil of intoxicating blond blue-eyed dreams over Germany's masses. In his 'Artwork Essay' Benjamin saw "the violation of the masses" by fascism (whose "Fuhrer cult" forces them "to their knees") taking place through a parallel "violation of an apparatus which is pressed into the production of ritual values." But his theorizations on the political value of the medias were
also compatible to Bloch's purpose of rescue in *Heritage of Our Times*, for in the 'Artwork Essay' Benjamin also sets out to claim for the masses the idea of mechanical reproduction itself as a legitimate instrument for their liberation into twentieth century culture.

Benjamin began his retrieval process through tracing a crucial shift in the function of modern image production with the coming of photography, in which "the hand was freed of its most important function which henceforth devolved upon the eye looking into the lens." In such a shift we can see that visuality is a concept embedded within the technological progress of modernity itself; one which the fascist had already instinctively grasped. In the face of the fascist's brilliant manipulations of the medias for propagandistic purposes, Benjamin's essay was central to its period, as it undertook an analysis of the essential structures and properties of this shift of modern mass culture towards an all encompassing visuality.

The principle change noted by Benjamin in this move towards mechanical reproduction and the privileging of the eye over all the other senses was the destruction of an image's "aura". In this destruction of the aura (something Benjamin saw as a potentially revolutionary act of creative destruction), the once static and sheltered image became free to circulate; its 'aura' (its authenticity and our sense of distance from it, no matter how close we are) was shattered in reproduction and the image could now "meet the beholder halfway." The removal of the aura in mechanical reproduction brought on the possibility of an important shift in the function of the image, which could now move from its basis in ritual - religious or otherwise - to become, Benjamin wrote, "based on another practice - politics." Here Benjamin was referring to the fact that once circulation and availability, versus the immobility of tradition and ritual, become the dominant characteristics of any image, then the image itself begins to signify *opportunity*. It exists as a free floating space, open to whatever ideological position seeks to incorporate it into its own practice: its function is no longer clearly defined, beyond its availability.

Clearly, with mechanical reproduction the possibilities for representation were greatly extended. This is not to say that images signifying religious or secular rituals, as in the bourgeois "cult of beauty" Benjamin mentions in the 'Artwork Essay', ceased to exist; but rather, that mechanical reproduction meant, above all, an opportunity for the masses themselves to build
up a large repository of images that acceded to their own desires. Thus the decay of the aura in mechanical reproduction had crucial social meaning: it signified "the desire of the contemporary masses to bring things 'closer' spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction."\textsuperscript{19}

While it may seem here that Benjamin is theorizing an overwhelming drive in mass culture towards experiencing reality as mere simulacrum; this professed drive towards reality as its reproduction also had a positive and revolutionary meaning: it signified the right of every man to be mechanically reproduced; that is, to be seen circulating in the culture at large. As an example of what the privilege of being seen meant, Benjamin referred in his essay to films in the Soviet Union where actors are "people who portray themselves - and primarily their own work process."\textsuperscript{20} However, as Benjamin also acknowledged in his essay, the tradition of combining technology with revolutionary intention was lacking in most of Western Europe, where capitalistic exploitation of film denied modern man's "legitimate claim to be reproduced".\textsuperscript{21}

We can see for ourselves how much the ideal of mechanical reproduction as the all pervasive instrument of information and representation in culture had become in the 1930's in France through an advertisement from that period's popular bimonthly magazine, \textit{L'Illustration} (May, 1930, fig. 10). In the advertisement, mechanical reproduction is depicted as being within the grasp of everyone; a fact the outstretched arm and hand below a radiating display of the latest in reproductive devices attests to. But further, one must also see how this ideal of availability was meant to penetrate not only the minds but also, the other more psychologically affective needs of the consumer; an idea which is obliquely referred to in the advertisement through the radiant arcs of heavenly light upon which the various reproductive devices float. These devices represent, in their sum, the opportunity to record all that we see and hear; but additionally, the advertisement also implies that all we see and hear is worth recording.

In effect, such an advertisement represented the domestication of large scale reproductive devices formerly limited to use by film companies and other large business concerns. But this shift to accessibility in mechanical reproduction that the reduced format in \textit{L' Illustration}'s advertisement only underscores also represented a crucial alteration in the modern subject's
mode of visual (and aural) reception. As Benjamin put it in the 'Artwork Essay', the image in reproduction was "no longer to be contemplated"; rather, it appeared before the viewer as documentation of that which already existed as fact. However, documentation (seen as a simple re-transcription of reality) had its paradoxical side, as something more was always added to the image in reproduction than what was visible to the human eye. Through the various positionings of the lens - what Benjamin referred to in his essay as the camera's "lowerings and liftings, its interruptions and isolations, its extensions and accelerations, its enlargements and reductions" - the camera was able to penetrate into a field of "unconscious optics".

In the camera's reproduction of what Benjamin designated as a world of "unconscious optics" what was revealed, beyond what may have already been seen by the viewer himself, was often no more than what he had earlier sensed was there, but which remained beyond his own perceptual capacity to visualize in its entirety. An example of this special capacity of the camera to see beyond what the human eye could take in (one that is entirely appropriate to this era of mass meetings that the politics of the thirties brought on) is found in the difference between what a participant in a large crowd could take in perceptually, and what a photograph taken of the same event from an overhead view would later reveal to him. In this shift between the personal experience of a crowd to its photographic documentation what may have seemed at the time like a chaotic and fragmented, but nonetheless powerful experience, is suddenly crystallized into a visible and singularly unified event.

The intoxicating effect of having the power of the crowd made visible can be seen if we turn again to L'Illustration and its March 1938 front cover, which shows the German masses assembled on the Wilhemplatz in Berlin to greet their Fuhrer (fig. 11). The cropping of this photo-document, cutting through the crowd on all four sides, suggests to the viewer an infinite extension of people beyond those he sees; a feeling which is further supported by the caption below the photograph reading "Le Salut innombrable". However, despite the German crowd's implied size, their densely packed presence in the image also suggests to the viewer a mass of people cohesive enough in their purpose to dramatically inhabit an impressive public space; a
fact further emphasized by the overhead angle of the camera's lens which dramatically pans across the rhythmically synchronized upward thrust of the crowd's 'Heil Hitler' salute.

This cohesive sense of purpose that the photograph can capture and seal at its climatic moment is an ideologically powerful tool, for it glosses over any fragmentation that exists within the disparate daily lives of the people who make up the crowd. But in addition, one finds in this healing capacity of the camera to smoothly capture a momentary coming together of the masses that there is the permanent documentation of a new and historic 'reality'. And such a visual documentation of 'history'- as is seen in *L'Illustration's* cover, which persuasively implies the existence of a new national cohesiveness and purposefulness in Germany - would surely have had its effect upon this magazine's bourgeois subscriber, appearing as it did less than two years before the invasion of France by Germany.

Benjamin's theorization of an "unconscious optics" within mechanical reproduction was something he associated with another twentieth century passion; that of psychoanalysis: "The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses."24 Together, these two particularly modern sciences offered techniques for opening the door onto the dreams and emotions a subject harbored within his mute unconscious being. But where mechanical reproduction outshone the process of psychoanalysis (which worked to dredge up, over an often lengthy period, the repressed details of a subject's internalized existence) was in its ability to instantly record the smallest and normally unpreserved moments and details of daily existence. As an example of this ability of the camera to recover those 'unconscious' moments normally lost to history, Benjamin had written of how we have "a general knowledge of the way people walk, but we know nothing of a person's posture during the fractional second of a stride."25 Or, we might add here in the light of *L'Illustration's* 1938 cover, nothing of how the fractional second in which the explosive energy of a crowd is released really looks. The job of defining these almost imperceptible yet also meaningful moments in history fell to the mechanical device itself; to the registration of the millisecond click in which not only the hidden and infinitesimal, but also the fleeting sparks of a momentary eruption, were preserved and subsequently released in their newly documented form.
Clearly for Benjamin, the camera was capable of giving visible identity to unconscious forms of knowledge which normally remained internalized moving through the subject's storehouse of memories only as silent shapes and shadows. But besides the capacity to capture what was normally lost to the text of history, Benjamin recognized within the concept of technology itself the imaginative capacity to create newly expressive forms of living out of the world of nature; an idea he first approached, in terms of its historical documentation, in his first essay on photography, *A Short History of Photography* (1930). In this essay Benjamin wrote on the historical significance of photography in relation to scientific development, remarking that "(s)tructural qualities, cellular tissues, which form the natural business of technology and medicine are all much more closely related to the camera than to the atmospheric landscape or the expressive portrait."26 Such a remark would appear on the surface to reserve for mechanical reproduction a strictly documentary and scientific function, but Benjamin also immediately followed this remark with the statement that "photography uncovers in this material physiognomies (of cellular tissue) aspects of pictorial words which live in the smallest things, perceptible yet covert enough to find shelter in daydreams, but which, once enlarged and capable of formulation, show the difference between technology and magic to be entirely a matter of historical variables."27

In making his remark on the "magic" of technology, Benjamin had been specifically thinking of Karl Blossfeldt's close-up photographs of plants, whose forms revealed to the viewer "the most ancient column forms in pewter - glass totempoles ten times magnified, sprigs of chestnut and acorn, gothic tracery in teasel."28 (fig. 12) It was in these more than just 'scientific' close ups of nature that Benjamin was able to find the visible traces of ancient architectural forms, which had historically developed out of man's observations and imaginative application of nature's forms to the structuring of his own world. In effect, Blossfeldt's close-ups served to historically document the existence of an ancient link between art, science and their mise en scène in nature. But it was a shared link between the two major fields of investigation and creation by man that an enlightenment ideal had subsequently worked to sever. Through the separation of the fields of perception and knowledge found in art and science - fields which had
once worked in unison to create a more cohesive world of man in nature - the enlightenment ideal had ultimately led to the growth of science and its child, technology, into the sober black suit of the utilitarian: by the nineteenth century, the job at hand for this new mechanical force in nature was seen to be, above all, the maximization of production.

But it was wrong to assume that the prodigious reproductive capacity of technology had developed only in response to the enlightenment's imperative goal of continuous scientific advancement. In Benjamin's eyes, it had also developed out of a much older collective unconscious desire within the community at large to see within the advancement of science and technology the imaginative possibility of establishing a fuller and freer human identity in the world. The enlightenment ideal of progress had, in a very real sense for Benjamin, overridden this other collectively human and expressive response to technology by denying the existence of unconscious drives and desires within the concept of scientific development itself. In the end, any pretense towards giving human desires visible expression in the modern world was consigned to, as Benjamin aptly put it, "the individual as the poetic rapture of starry nights."29

It was this consignment of human desires and dreams to art that cut the evolution of technology off from making any imaginative response to the collective social needs that had led, in great part, to its development in the first place. Such a de-limitation of its entirely magical capacity to inexhaustibly re-work and reproduce nature's material forms had serious consequences, as by the twentieth century technological development had by far outstripped man's capacity to use these new inventions in any collectively imaginative and revolutionary way. The Great War had furnished the most basic proof of that, for it was here that Benjamin saw technology's potential capacity for expressing utopian desires transformed into "the paroxysms of war". In his essay The Storyteller, written one year after the 'Artwork Essay', Benjamin wrote of how the generation "that had gone to school on a horse drawn streetcar now stood under the open sky in a countryside in which nothing remained unchanged but the clouds, and beneath these clouds, in a field force of destructive torrents and explosions, was the tiny, fragile human body."30
While the measure of mankind's "convalescence" from the war would, in Benjamin's mind, only be reflected in the power of the people to take back those parts of technology that belonged to it, the first step in such a retrieval depended on restoring to man the memory of technology's imaginative capacity to dream new forms of living out of nature. It was in relation to this capacity that Benjamin turned, during his exile in Paris, to the work of nineteenth century utopian social scientist, Francoise Fourier. In his essay *Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century*, he wrote about Fourier's "phalanstry"; a contemporary social creation for communal living adapted to modern times, which took as its inspiration "the advent of machines".\(^{31}\) It seemed natural, in the light of the phalanstry's technological bias, that Fourier would choose as its site the newly built Paris Arcades, which were constructed out of the century's most modern materials of iron and glass, and lit by the first gas lamps. And it was this choice of the most fully modern site in Paris that had undoubtedly attracted Benjamin's interest, for in such a move Fourier had taken what was most modern and tied it to a design for collective living, in which the utopian golden age of a classless society was once again evoked.

Fourier's design, creating what could now be referred to as an early version of public housing, with the Arcade's galleries as both connecting walk ways and public spaces for gathering, had imaginatively interlaced "the passions mecanistes" with "the passion cabaliste", in order to produce an image of the proverbial "land of milk and honey".\(^{32}\) But the utopian dream technology produced in Fourier (whose various inventions Benjamin later described as "surprisingly sound") had, in the end, only appeared in the Arcades in its wholly reified form as the glittering and seductive commodity fetish, which stood not only at the heart of this commercial site - with its luxury shops - but also, at the heart of bourgeois culture itself.\(^{33}\) However, in Benjamin's eyes, the lusterful surface ornamentation laid over this reified world still contained fragments of technology's collective dream wish that Fourier's phalanstry had expressed. If only one was able to decipher the presence of these unrealized wish images within the always promising and seductive surface world of modern capitalism, then the melancholia of the fetish (as the always ephemeral and disappearing object which, even in its relentless
consumption, never manages to stop up the flow of human desire) would become re-invested with radical political meaning.\footnote{34}

Benjamin's massive 'Arcades Project' undertook such a project through its juxtaposition of modernity's utopian history to its contemporary degraded form that a twentieth century consumer culture represented. His method of working came out of his awareness of how much the alienation of dreams and desires from any communal expression in the modern world formed the patterns of everyday living: through such a repression it was inevitable that the alienated modern subject would succumb to an economic system in which dreams and desires were attached to the ornamental surface of things. In the section on "Louis-Philippe, or the Interior" in his \textit{Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century} essay, Benjamin remarked on how in the modern bourgeois world, "(t)he private person who squares his accounts with reality in his office demands that the interior be maintained in his illusions."\footnote{35} This separation between public and private was made, because for the bourgeois citizen, now ethically bound by utilitarian goals, the interior was the only place where the seductive excess of dreams could still freely exist.

The creation of these dreams and illusions depended upon the availability of commodities, which were captured and placed with assiduous passion by the modern subject within the ornamental spaces of the private interior. But the capacity for dreaming was not to be shared by all equally; rather, it depended upon each individual's power of purchase and private ownership. The significant writer for Benjamin in tracing out this secretly consuming ornamental passion was Edgar Allen Poe, whose most acknowledged contribution to modern literature came through his detective novellas and writing on crime. It was Poe's instincts as a detective that had caused him to be, in Benjamin's eyes, "the first physiognomist of the interior"\footnote{36}. However, going beyond the documentary capacity of the fictional writer was the camera itself; a physiognomically sensitive recording instrument which was the most adept at visibly documenting and preserving this lineage of modernity from a theoretical utopia to a private consumer's paradise. In early nineteenth century portrait photographs, with their richly embossed and object cluttered interiors that served as the portrait's backdrop, Benjamin saw the subject's desire for private ownership over any communal expression of sociability come
forward. These were photographs in which, as Benjamin put it in his 1930 essay on photography, "each customer met in his photographer a technician of the latest school and where the photographer met in every customer a member of a class on the ascendant, replete with an aura which penetrated to the very fold of his bourgeois overcoat and bow tie."37

It wouldn't be long before the optics of photography would progress from the somewhat shadowy interiors of its early portrait prints, that technical difficulties in illumination had caused, to an ability to illuminate interiors with a mirror like clarity and precision. However, the self-important bourgeois businessman, reluctant to relinquish the early auratic image that evocatively shadowed interiors had helped to create, responded to the technological possibility of a more perfect illumination in the portrait by taking up what Benjamin referred to as "a posturing stance."38 Such a stance brought on the development of the art of retouching and the photographer's deliberate use of broken artificial light reflections in his work. It was a move seen by Benjamin as proof of "the impotence of that generation in the face of technical progress": technology's capacity for a crystal like clarity in vision was rejected by the very class that had so rigorously developed mechanical reproduction's always advancing scientific capacities.39

Just as the visible ruins of the Arcades were necessary to Benjamin's project of awakening the subject's recognition of modern utopia's loss that Fourier's phalanstery had emblematized, so too in photography it was necessary to strip the illusory aura of glamour from the documentation of the material conditions of modernity. Such a documentation was found by Benjamin to exist in the works of the early twentieth century photographer Eugène Atget who acted as a photographic counterpart to Poe, the detective and physiognomist of modernity's hidden interior world. In seeking out "the forgotten and forsaken corners of the city", Atget had produced photographs which served as documentary evidence of the various "crimes" committed in the name of modernity; crimes which were repeatedly lost to the text of history, but nevertheless full of "political significance".40 One could see, for example, in the sad little man buried in the depths of his Kiosque à journaux on the Square du Bon Marche (fig. 13, 1912) the real price of modernity; now clearly visible in Atget's framing of the news vendor's despondent
dwarf-like presence, swamped within this daily tide of words and images that the modern technological world ceaselessly produced.

Atget's photographs functioned as visible evidence that the myth of a productive utilitarian society had, in reality, only produced images of alienation and loss in human terms. But they were also images seen by Benjamin as the forerunners of Surrealist photography; itself described as "vanguard of the only really broad column Surrealism was able to set in motion." Taking a cue from their eminent predecessor, Surrealist photography was analyzed by Benjamin as documenting "a salutary estrangement between man and his environment, thus clearing the ground for a politically trained eye." Such an eye was always on the look-out for the small past over "intimacies" of daily life, which could serve in the illumination of modern history's melancholia. The photographs of Jacques-André Boiffard for Breton's Nadja served as a case in point, for in them the commercially purposeful and active city of Paris was disturbingly revealed as an uninhabited and indeterminate space. (fig. 14) It was through this incoherent and disorganized space of the city that the Surrealist wandered in his quest for what Benjamin had identified in his Surrealist essay as the recuperation of the ruined and discarded remains of modernity.

The Surrealists' subversion of the marketplace through the magical appropriation of the trouvaille had coincided with Benjamin's own focus in his 'Arcades Project', which sought to textualize in all its details the presence of the commodity fetish as the essential historic object of modern capitalism. Indeed, it must have been Benjamin's own intense focus on the objects at the heart of the Arcades and of capitalism itself that had caused him to see Breton's relationship with the heroine of Nadja within the same object cluttered light: "(t)he lady, in esoteric love, matters least. So too, for Breton. He is closer to the things Nadja is close to than to her." Such a focus, however, diverted Benjamin from ever seeing the essential object that lay at the heart of the city the Surrealist wandered through; an oversight Breton corrected himself several years after Nadja had been published, when he remarked that the unexpected encounter the Surrealist eagerly anticipated in his journeys through the city "always tends, explicitly or not, to take on the features of a woman."
In such a remark, one finds that it is the physiognomy of woman - more than any other object, more than any other trouvaille - that is resolutely sought out by the Surrealist wandering through the labyrinth patterns of the city. And while cruising through the city was unplanned (it was an activity which resisted the logic of city planning principles, the clarity of maps, directional signs or specified routes); the desired culmination of the journey was tenaciously held in view: the unexpected appearance of a beautiful woman - the surprising and intoxicating eruption of her into the Surrealist's axis of vision - in which the desiring needs of the Surrealist were given ("explicitly or not") expressive form.

That an unconscious wandering "quest" as Breton called it through the city and the body of woman could come together was something which normally eluded textual representation because, as we know, unconscious everyday practices exist in a space without rationalized means or products of their own. The unconscious is without a voice; an overly silent land marginalized in the empirical world of enlightened reason by its lack of a scientifically correct text. But in the same manner as the unconscious, woman was also seen by Surrealism to be without a text; a fact unhesitatingly inscribed in a photomontage first published in the twelfth and final issue of La Révolution Surréaliste in 1929. (fig. 15) In this work by Man Ray, a female nude painted by Magritte in a pose reminiscent of Botticelli's 'Venus' is photographed surrounded by sixteen portrait photographs of male Surrealists, all depicted with their eyes closed. In the space at the center reserved for the female nude are the words "je ne vois pas la" at her head; and at her feet, the reminder of the text: "cachée dans la forêt". As both 'la' and 'cachée' are in the feminine surely the missing word from the text, its space filled instead with the presence of her image, is la (femme).

While in the modern forest of the commodity world all sexual energy and attraction have been invested in the commodity fetish, in Surrealism we find la (femme) exhibited as the unreified nature we all long to re-possess. One discovers how Breton textually saw the relationship between nature and its reified objects through Convulsive Beauty's third movement, 'explosante-fixe', which he described in L'Amour fou (1938) through an anonymous photograph of "a very handsome locomotive after it had been abandoned for many years to the delirium of the
forest."⁴⁶ (fig. 16; this work which Breton "regrets" cannot be published in his book was, in fact, published prior to *L'Amour fou* in *Minotaure* 10, 1937). Present in this anonymous photograph of triumphant nature that Breton describes in *L'Amour fou* are all the essential characteristics of Surrealism: their love of the marvelous and of the surprising juxtaposition (here of organically luxuriant nature and cold hard machines); as well as their use of the "demon of analogy" (as in the sexual analogy behind the image of metallic/phallic machines which, when they penetrate the forest, are derailed from their 'logic' into a delirious abandonment to nature's intoxicating charms). However, what Breton's literary description of 'explosante-fixe' leaves out, but what the Surrealist's own ceaseless photographic documentation of all of the movements of Convulsive Beauty reveals, is that nature in Surrealism also takes back (repeatedly, I might add) all those other 'man made' objects that belong to it - as in the woman's body, which belongs both to nature and in a state of nature; that is, unclothed and open to access; fixed into place, so that the masculine gaze might be left free to roam through all of its kingdom in nature. This slippage between the descriptive text that innocently designates what 'explosante-fixe' looks like (the text that describes the photograph which Breton "regrets" cannot be published in *L'Amour fou*) and, by contrast, the physical evidence of the actual photographic images that Surrealism itself repeatedly produced is more than just Freudian; it is, as you will later see, the source of the movement's greatest failure to engage in any truly revolutionary kind of practice.

Of course, the obvious and stereotypical evidence of this 'fact' of woman belonging to silent nature appears in works other than Surrealist. For instance, and appropriate to our period of investigation, one sees this same situating of woman in nature in a photo-essay in the luxe art revue *Verve*, published in the same year as *L'Amour fou*, where side by side photographs juxtapose a nude woman lying stretched out in a pose of abandonment next to the bit of fallen nature she herself represents. (figs. 17 & 18) However, while this seemingly inevitable fact of life is - need it be even said! - with us yet today, where Surrealism was rather clever came in its arousal of the idea of woman in nature - and as nature - without being so simplistic as to actually visually reproduce nature itself in the photograph. Thus the sweetly innocent and unblemished body of Magritte's Venus (and there will be no lack of the 'femme enfant' in Surrealism) appears
'lost' within the forest only by virtue of the Surrealist's power to *script* its presence into the image. Or, conversely and escaping from the look of a juvenile Venus into another desirable but more mature body, there is Man Ray's 1925 photograph of a woman whose pose almost exactly duplicates that of the woman appearing over a decade later in *Verve*’s photo-essay; but now, minus any specific references to the world of nature, she is shown mysteriously emerging from a liquid envelope of mossy blackness. (fig. 19, published in *La Révolution surréaliste*, 1925)

One must understand here that it is not the power of the Surrealist's *vision* that brings these feminine forms embedded in nature into being; rather, they are brought into being through the imaginative power of the Surrealist's gaze as it turned inwards to the very heart of where the body of desire lay: "Je ne vois pas la...", I do not see (you can see that my eyes are closed); rather, I *envision*; I *imagine*; I *create* the body of desire; I can, in sum, *fly above* the poverty of an empirically minded gaze, restricted in its vision by the logic and logistics of scientific ideals. Thus the Surrealist was empowered through his capacity for inner-vision - not to mention, empowered through his technological capacity for montage and the seamless re-arrangement of 'reality' - to convulse into being (the force of "explosante") and subsequently to lock into place ("fixe") his own captivating and captured vision of beauty.

The visible presence of Convulsive Beauty's body fulfilled the Surrealist's desire for an eruptive representation of his internal passions, but it was also a body which proved to be a politically flexible sign of desire. While it could be represented as a body inhabiting a utopian dreamscape, it could also appear as nature's dejected and deserted body lost within the alienated ruins of modernity; a condition exemplified by Raoul Ubac's photograph *Le Triomphe de la stérilité*, published in the Surrealist's revue *Minotaure* in 1937. (fig. 20) It was in this ability to move nature's desired body from the spaces of poetic reverie to the terrain of alienation and loss that the Surrealist theoretically approached the kind of dialectical image Benjamin was constructing in his 'Arcades Project', which juxtaposed Fourier's utopian technological dreams to its modern perverted form, found in the fetish and the ruins of the commercial Arcades. But there was an important difference between Benjamin's writing out of a communal utopia and its corruption in the fetish, and the Surrealists' approach to the expression of utopian dreams and
their negation; for while Convulsive Beauty could inhabit both the terrain of fulfillment and loss, she was, within herself, a body which could never experience the fulfillment of utopian desires, bound as she was by the personal and imperative aesthetic which dominated her.

"La beauté sera CONVULSIVE ou ne sera pas" (author's emphasis): from this last line of Breton's Nadja in 1929 to the publication of L'Amour fou almost a decade later the concept of Convulsive Beauty remained relentlessly fixed at the center of Surrealism's aesthetic productions of desire. And it was this fixation which ultimately caused the movements break with any kind of utopian vision based on the sort of communal experience that Fourier's phalanstry exemplified. In Surrealism, one could find the existence of a dreamt of utopia, but it was a utopia built by the master and inhabited by his silenced slave, as the object specifically designed and designated to serve the needs of that dream. Yes, it is true that Convulsive Beauty's physiognomy in its feminine form contested the bourgeoisie's academic canon in beauty, particularly in the realm of what was considered sexually decent. But the fact that Breton first introduced the very idea of Convulsive Beauty in Nadja as an absolute form - either it will be or else! - also means that it was proposed as a dominating ideal from which one could never escape.

It was this imperialistic outlook in relation to a concept of beauty that ultimately introduced a paradox in Surrealism's aesthetic productions. This was so in the sense that, while Convulsive Beauty as woman was created as a powerless figure through the effacement of her text and the consignment of her to silent nature - and by the way, this act of silencing is repeatedly and often violently worked out upon the body of Surrealism's la (femme); mainly through displacements and deformations to her face, as in Magritte's frontispiece to Breton's Qu'est-ce que le Surréalisme?, 1934 (fig. 21); or through some kind of enclosure of the head, as in Raoul Ubac's Mannequin, 1937 (fig. 22) - the absolute ideals which stood behind the aesthetic principles that made up her form not only sat overttop of any expression of desire in Surrealism; they also worked to control and limit the direction desire could take.

There would be no expenditure of eruptive desire upon any revolutionary cause that threatened to take the Surrealist away from his beloved body: the pursuit of L'Amour fou was the ultimate "quest"; the hunt, the chase and the bagging of the prey the singular focus in Surrealist
desire. (fig. 23, photographs by Nadar that Man Ray published with his essay *L'Age de la lumière* in *Minotaure* 3-4, 1933, which I'll be examining in the next section) But while Convulsive Beauty herself was imprisoned by the aesthetic that surrounded her; she was, at the very same time, a figure capable of rendering powerless the Surrealist's own ability to *act* outside of her presence. In sum, she was the image bearing, as Lacan put it, all the price of desire: immobilized herself, she in turn immobilized the revolutionary tension and eruptive desires of those who created her.

"Love is a trap for lovers in quest of the absolute", wrote Suzanne Muzard; the woman Breton is said to have been referring to in relation to his remarks on Convulsive Beauty at the end of *Nadja*. Bataille was also, like Muzard, aware of the dangers of this temptation to absolute ideals in Surrealism. In his 'The Old Mole and Prefix Sur Essay' he had written of how it was the movement's sense of "superiority" to their own class that had led them to seek out "subversion through the creation of its own values." (emphasis mine) It was this habit of constantly looking beyond the horizon of their class that had caused them to overlook, Bataille went on to say, those "presently lower forms whose interplay will in the end destroy bourgeois prisons....". By the time Bataille wrote his essay in late '29, the Surrealists had already begun their famous, but fraught with tension, collaboration with the PCF. But their union with the PCF had only happened, Bataille was quick to point out in his polemic against the Surrealists, after their "revolt of the spirit" (a phrase Bataille lifts directly from the Surrealist's 1925 declaration *La Révolution d'abord et toujours!* had already taken place. Thus, by the time the Surrealist came around to the Marxist point of view, it was (and here we can say not only in Bataille's eyes but also, for many of their newly found political comrades as well) too late; their "basic predilection for values *above* the world of facts" had already been established.

Bataille saw the Surrealists unhappy predilection towards absolute ideals coming out of the habits of their class. All bourgeois revolutionaries pre-Marx had represented, he wrote, "revolution as a redemptive light rising above the world, above classes, the overflowing of spiritual elevation and Lamartinian Bliss." The Surrealist, for his part, had only managed to establish a lineage of continuity with this tradition. Indeed, their inevitable path upwards had
been set from the moment of their declaration in the first *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924) of the existence of an "absolute reality, a surreality".\(^{54}\)

It would be easy to see this need to create a revolutionary context out of a set of superior values as merely an ineffective response to the reality of social conditions. But in the eyes of Bataille, superior ideals were far more dangerous than that. It was the very idea of ideals themselves that had to be defeated *in political terms*, for they paved the way for the growth of "military fascism"; the only means for achieving the standard of perfection in form that absolute values created.\(^ {55}\) If beauty could only be *one* thing; or, if race, sexual preference, or anything else for that matter, were only one thing, then the outcome was inevitable: anything that dirtied the ideal had to be removed as excess. Fascism was, if nothing else, proof of where any absolute ideal in physical form could lead to; genocide becoming the ultimate goal in the purification rites the body was subjected to. However, freeing oneself from any temptation towards the construction of superior values wasn't always an easy task. In his critical dictionary entry *Materialism*, published in *Documents* 3 (1929), Bataille acknowledged the persuasive powers of the ideal, pointing out that even the Marxist, who wants to do away with "all spiritual entities", only ended up placing "dead matter at the summit of a conventional hierarchy of diverse facts, without perceiving that in this way they gave into an obsession with the *ideal* form of matter."\(^ {56}\) (author's emphasis)

Bataille differed radically from the tendency of so many other intellectuals of his period on both the political Right and independent Left, who looked to utopian pasts as a measure for the creation of a revolutionary future. Unlike Bloch and Benjamin, whose messianic impulse drove them into retrieving, as the agents of an as yet unfulfilled future, historical clues from lost utopian dreams; unlike Breton setting out like the Nietzschean romantic on his own "Icarian adventure", who only succeeded in re-evoking already dead "chivalric" values; or finally, unlike the fascist and his re-evocation of a mythical Aryan past, Bataille never sought out the means for giving form to any utopian future.\(^ {57}\) Instead, he directed his energies towards uncovering the presence of active matter which was, *in his very own time*, described as dirty and low, as dark and even as evil.
It was in relation to this 'degraded' matter and away from the Marxist ideal in matter (which nevertheless was, he wrote, "closer than any other to what matter should be", author's emphasis), that Bataille began to develop, during the two year period of his editorship at Documents, his own theory of 'base materialism'.\(^{58}\) In his essay *Base Materialism and Gnosticism (Documents 1, 1930)*, he turned to the ancient metaphysical conceptions of the Gnostics (mind you, we mean here 'metaphysical' in an epoch when this term, as Bataille wrote in defense of his own aversion to spiritual quests, "could still be associated with the most monstrous dualistic and therefore, strangely abased cosmogonies").\(^{59}\) Gnosticism suited perfectly Bataille's purpose of escaping the imprisonment of form within the ideal, for it was a religion that circumvented the basic principle of unicity that ideals were built upon through its development out of a mélange of racial identities and religious practices. In its formative period it had borrowed from Egyptian religious tradition, from Persian dualism and from Eastern Jewish heterodoxy. It was also a religion that had the virtue of spanning the highest to the lowest, with its incorporation of elements from newborn Christian theology and Hellenistic metaphysics in combination with "the basest (and thus most upsetting) forms of Greek or Chaldo-Assyrian magic and astrology."\(^{60}\)

Into this brew the Gnostics poured their own dreams and "monstrous obsessions."\(^{61}\) But despite this mélange of traditions, there was still an overarching leitmotiv in Gnosticism which was, as Bataille put it, "the conception of matter as an active principle having its own eternal autonomous existence as darkness (which would not simply be the absence of light, but the monstrous archontes revealed by this absence)...".\(^{62}\) The monstrous archontes themselves were "evil"; but again, as in darkness, evil was not simply that which was devoid of "good".\(^{63}\) Rather, both evil and darkness represented creative autonomous existences which were "perfectly incompatible with the profoundly monistic Hellenistic spirit, whose dominant tendency was to see abased matter and evil as degradations of superior principles."\(^{64}\)

In his search for a means to find an autonomous (versus resolved) place for abased matter within the historical cycle of the dialectic, Bataille was taking part in one of the major preoccupations of the thirties for revolutionary intellectuals on the Left in Paris, which focused
on the theoretical recuperation of the dialectic's negative term. The most brilliant presentation of negativity's recuperation came from the charismatic philosopher Alexandre Kojève, whose lectures on Hegel's *Phenomenology of The Spirit* given throughout the thirties at the École Pratique des Hautes Études were attended by tout le monde in avant-garde circles. Kojève's thoroughly Marxist presentation of the Hegelian dialectic centered on the *Phenomenology's* 'Lordship and Bondage' chapter (chapter four) where the slave, through his revolutionary act of creative destruction, finally negates his negation and enters onto the historical stage. However, Bataille himself was looking for a recuperation of negativity which resisted incorporation into a newly resolved positive term that both the Hegelian and Marxist dialectic ultimately posited. By electing resolution into a 'higher' positive term both philosophies had opted for, in the end, the unicity of utopian ideals. It was in resistance to this pull towards a singular resolution - whether towards the mechanically abstract resolution of Hegel, or towards its materially triumphant form found in Marx - that Bataille turned to the dualistic possibility framed between the autonomy of the Gnostic's darkened underworld and its opposite, found in the illuminating light of all other theologies (religious, philosophical or otherwise).

In his writings on base materialism Bataille was attempting to find the means for keeping the negative factor in the dialectic alive on its own terms; so that it could remain actively responsive to materially present but socially and psychologically repressed realities in culture. Part of his attraction to the Gnostic's embrace of abased elements came out of their resistance to the unwritten law of the symbolic, which always posited not only that the high was the opposite of low; but also, that one must be accepted as superior to the other. Of course, the 'other' as low was what was always seen as unacceptable, and as what must be overcome. As the form symbolically synonymous with the minus term, it was that which took away; and ultimately, it represented a failure in the eyes of the enlightened positivist, whose instincts were always focused on the ideal of adding more to the world.

It was this symbolic defacement of the material value of the low in 'enlightened' culture that Bataille approached in his essay *The Language of Flowers*, published in *Documents 3*, 1929; the same issue in which his earlier mentioned critical dictionary entry *Materialism* had appeared.
The purpose of the essay was to show how the meaning of the ideal and the form - the beautiful form - it was attached to always led, in the end, to a contradiction in human terms. For his illustrative example he turned to the red rose and its traditional symbolic representation as an ideal of love. In physically exemplifying this ideal of love it was the fragile beauty of the exterior petals of the rose, Bataille noted, that carried the burden of symbolic representation. Such representation carried with it, however, a disconcerting fragility for everyone knows, Bataille wrote, how quickly the petals of a rose fall "despondently off" leaving behind only a rather "sordid tuft"; the part of the flower considered expendable and thrown away as garbage. But there was a contradiction in this casual expenditure of the rose once it had lost its fragile petals, for what was thrown away were the internal working organs of the flower - the pistil and stamen - which had carried out the labor of reproducing this exterior sign of desire.

One can see from the above how the symbolic meaning of the rose ignores the physical reality of its internal reproductive organs in favor of its exterior ornamental beauty. Such a denial of value within the symbolic chain of meaning to the most essential part of the flower only proved to Bataille that "far from answering the demands of a human ideal", the rose is, in fact, "the sign of their failure." In Bataille's eyes, any form of idealized beauty only functioned as a cover-up of material practice. His essay points out the low material value assigned to the laboring process upon which beauty and the satisfaction of desire depends, in the sense that he reads these symbolic evaluations of beauty and expendability in terms of the political practice they materially lead to: "If the sign of love is displaced from the pistil and stamen (the working parts of the flower) to the surrounding petals, it is because the human mind is accustomed to making such displacements with regard to people." 

The low in culture was characterized as ugly, as dirty and hairy (like the sordid tuft of the flower) and thus, as expendable. It was defined as debased matter or even worse, it was effaced, through an enlightenment culture which preached an ideal of the equality of all things. Nevertheless, despite this constant pressure on culture to turn away from the low, as if its characterization as ugliness rendered it invisible, Bataille maintained that "human vocabulary continues everywhere to maintain throughout a faithful memory of fundamental categories":

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people knew what was high and what was low, and they also knew that these symbolic
categories had material identities in the world. Bataille himself bluntly proffered up a
description of with whom the low was materially identified in his essay *The Solar Anus* (1931,
Éditions de la Galerie Simon), when he wrote that "communist workers appear to the
bourgeoisie to be as ugly and dirty as hairy sexual organs or lower parts."\(^69\)

The repression of the worker, along with what Bataille saw as their synonymous
counterpart, the invisibility of 'dirty' sexual parts, are what constitute, in toto, the physically
functioning parts of our reproductive identities: together, they perform all the various acts of
labor that our unconscious desires bring on. For Bataille, the working classes were directly
symbolic of this fertile and highly productive labor in the sense that they remained in constant
contact with those dirty underground elements that a sterile bourgeoisie refused to touch. Marx's
'Old Mole' industriously digging out hollow chambers in the bowels of the earth was the perfect
symbol for those who worked in these unconscious (in the sense of hidden, or 'veiled' over)
spaces of social life. But in addition, this reproductive low was also the untapped reservoir of
destructive revolutionary forces; something the pendant clause that follows Bataille's description
of the workers in *The Solar Anus* acknowledged by stating that ".....sooner or later there will be a
scandalous eruption (of these dirty and ugly bodies), in the course of which the asexual noble
heads of the bourgeois will be chopped off."\(^70\)

The workers live within *The Solar Anus* of the earth, but these dark and suffocating
spaces occasionally explode to spread, like the spewing lava of the earth's volcanoes, death and
destruction everywhere. In this manner, that which is already seen as expendable suddenly takes
on all the explosive force that lays within the idea of 'expenditure' itself, in order to erupt into
revolutionary destruction. Images such as this one that Bataille creates for the worker in *The
Solar Anus* might seem to hinge on an overly melodramatic form of presentation. But as dark
and theatrical as they were, they were not entirely fanciful creations on the part of Bataille.
Rather, they were symbolic images that played directly into cultural stereotypes of the working
classes as a dirty contaminating force which must be contained in order to avoid its uncontrolled
spreading. One can find historical evidence of such characterizations; for instance and in
France, in a right-wing paper like *Gringoire* (a paper with fascist overtones and a mainstream readership of 600,000), which cartooned this fear of contamination by a dirty working class shortly after the Popular Front's institution of the annual two week paid holiday for workers; a concession that factory strikes in the spring of '35 had brought about. The paper's satire (fig. 24) shows French Communist Paul Vaillant-Couturier, one of the originators of the Association des écrivains et artistes révolutionnaires (AEAR, the party organ which carried out the PCF's Popular Front cultural policies), broadly gesturing to Léon Jouhaux, "Pope" of the worker's Confédération générale du travail ("La CGT c'est à moi"), saying "we are transforming Deauville according to the aesthetic of the masses."\(^71\) Such artistic finesse was, of course, viewed with horror by the bourgeoisie, who found the congés payés overloading the trains in their rush to the seashore and polluting the air with their "cheap perfume". This was not to mention, dear God (!), the beaches themselves with these insistently spreading bodies. Even beloved pet dogs, as the last caption in the cartoon quips, have to be warned away from the beaches for fear they'll catch fleas.

A famous photograph from this period, taken in 1936 of a Normandy beach (fig. 25), reveals the reality of this broad satire in *Gringoire*; documenting the historical presence of this flood of bodies, awkwardly encased in bathing suits, pale and clearly unaccustomed to illuminating rays of sunshine and fresh salty air. The masses (feared as the great unwashed masses) were taking over the social spaces formerly reserved for the leisured classes; being given a space - a two week window - in which to dream the kind of idyllic dreams that could eventually lead to dangerously inflated ideas of social place and economic rights.\(^72\)

In rendering visible the axis between the high and low, the essential point for Bataille was not so much the establishment of a separate and unique identity for each symbolic form, as it was to place these forms, *in their physical and material differences*, within the same constellation. This was because the convulsion necessary to revolutionary eruption would arise out of the visible tension that these two poles in opposition bring on. One recalls here Bataille's polemic speech during his period at *Contre-Attaque*, where it was the "vision" of the masses taking over the streets (in the same manner that, for instance, they have taken over the beaches)
that would bring on the tension necessary to revolutionary eruption. But the difficulty lay in finding the means to keep this tension alive in a Democratic State where everything was said to be of equal value. It was this very ethic of equality that had caused the rich to withdraw from their pre-revolutionary displays of wealth and social position into a private practice of accumulation that capitalism's consumer culture had made possible. For Bataille, achieving revolutionary convulsion meant uncovering the presence of the negative form as it had already been physically described; putting it out on the stage where the drama of its negativity - its deemed 'dirt' and 'ugliness'; its aggressive contaminating presence - is what brings on the tension filled response of its elevated and distant opposite, who can now no longer comfortably turn away from the insistent visibility the low have achieved.

Bataille's early writings on the eruptive value of the low were later developed into a more cohesive theory of expenditure, in which he posited man's most fundamental drive as destructive. The eruptive force of this theorized innate drive towards expenditure in man ultimately led him to see it as not only crucial to the initial revolutionary phase but also, to post-revolutionary societies. He saw that as post-revolutionary societies stabilized, the forces of expenditure that had brought the revolution into being were repressed. But in this move to deny expenditure a recognized place in the social hierarchy the creative tension between expenditure (as negativity) and productivity (leading to the positive accumulation of goods) was extinguished. And without this visible tension it was only a matter of time before society would slide into its former habits of stasis and hierarchical relations. In short, the unitary community would once again be established and man's innate drive towards expenditure would either be suppressed, deflected into service for the State (as in its various policing activities), or assigned to categories of excess such as madness or criminality.75

In chapter three I'll be returning to these notions of expenditure and their particular relation to Sur/sous-realism's explorations in madness and criminality. But right now, I want to take this theorized destructive drive in man and look at how Bataille first articulated it in relation to the feminine body in his essay The Language of Flowers. In this essay, whose central theme posits the ideal against material practice, one finds the writer stating that "many things can be
altered in human societies but nothing will prevail against the natural truth that a beautiful
woman or a red rose signifies love." But in addition, one also finds that "an equally
inexplicable and equally immutable reaction gives the girl and the rose a very different value:
that of an ideal of beauty." In the spaces between these two phrases there is an elision of terms
(and clearly Bataille is annoyed with the suavity of the slippage) in which ideals of both love
and beauty are assigned to the synonymous forms in nature of the flower and the girl/woman (an
elision in itself which has interesting connotations if one thinks of the Surrealist's desire for the
'femme enfant'). At any rate, the source of the annoyance is resolved further on in the essay -
one once Bataille has finished addressing the symbolism of the rose, which privileges exterior
ornamental petals over its reproductive organs - when he writes: "It seems, in fact, that desire
has nothing to do with ideal beauty, or, more precisely, that it is only practiced in order to stain
and wither the beauty that for so many sad and well ordered personalities is only a limit, a
categorical imperative." (author's emphasis) What is so startling about this statement is the
fact that Bataille admits here to men's desire - to his desire - to ultimately ravish the beauty that
has been constructed for the very purposes of arousing masculine desire. In making such an
admission Bataille examines, it seems to me, not only the function of any kind of ideal of
'beauty' in gender relations; but also, the essential characteristic of his own desire as a destructive
force.

Beauty in women, far from being a 'natural' truth, is a construction that exists in order
that men may constantly feel the force of their desire and thus be reassured in its physical
presence and power. Bataille in The Language of Flowers makes it clear that the construction of
beauty in women is like the beauty of the rose; linked to the superficial (that is, on the surface of
things) and to the ornamental: "Men have linked the brilliance of flowers to their amorous
emotions because on either side its a question of phenomena that precede fertilization." But
what price must men pay for this brilliant subterfuge of surface phenomena? "Don't all these
beautiful things", Bataille wonders, "run the risk of being reduced to a strange mise en scène
destined to make the sacrilege more impure?"
The pleasure of the violation - of the ultimate expenditure of the master's desire upon the beloved object - depends upon the standard of beauty to which the desired object adheres. As the mise en scène, it is nature who, in her beauty and generosity, lays herself out in preparation for the incision of this desire that comes to conquer her. Indeed, she is the site upon which the working out of all the facets of the master's dialectic takes place: in the unfolding of history, there is technology as the new force in nature over which men must struggle to gain control in order that they may guide their social and economic development; as well as the nature into which the dialectical tensions of desire itself, as arousal and subsequent expenditure, may discharge itself. What needs to be questioned here by women, in relation to this assumed use-value of nature as the dialectic's mise en scène, is not just this elision of their bodies with nature, but also the fact that these various facets of the dialectic of men and history are always assumed to take place without any resistance from nature and her objects themselves, who are reduced to the site and vessel for carrying forward all these fluid outpourings of historical desire.

Surrealism insisted on plunging into the depths of inanimate nature; into the psychic internal soul of man in order to reveal how much these silent and internal mechanisms ordered men's everyday practice. In so doing, they expanded the world of desire in men beyond its traditional boundaries. But did this expansion allow for the possibilities and meaning of 'man' himself within nature, and within its productions in the material world, to also expand? In the next section I'm going to argue that the revolutionary aesthetic the Surrealist claimed to develop was, in fact, one saturated with ideals already embedded within a nineteenth century bourgeois culture. However, such a statement is not meant to imply that Surrealism functioned without revolutionary goals that were specifically directed towards the very culture from which they ultimately failed to escape. Indeed, Surrealism set out, and in an aggressive enough fashion, to contest that culture on its own terrain. They proposed to go beyond the seemingly impenetrable aura surrounding a commodity culture (a culture that first developed under the guidance of a nineteenth century bourgeoisie) by, precisely, invading that culture's commercial spaces with the express purpose of re-possessing and re-inventing its objects (its 'fetish' objects) on their own terms.
But while the 'object' in Surrealism was superficially re-invented, what was also problematically re-invented, I shall shortly argue, was the bourgeoisie's nineteenth century 'art' of the interior, now signified in Surrealism's creation of its own private and ultimately inaccessible dream worlds. Further, it will also be argued as significant that Surrealism's interior dreamscapes more often than not held at their center the desired woman-object (as the 'trouvaille' also avidly sought out within the commercial spaces of the city) in a condition which, while appearing in a manner seductively in excess of what the bourgeoisie's own aesthetic and moral codes would ever allow, mirrored the traditional patriarchy's own enclosure and domestication of woman. But the Surrealists weren't the only ones on the French Left to succumb to nineteenth century bourgeois values. As you will also see, even the PCF, while working to present to the French masses their country's historic revolutionary figures during the period of their cultural leadership of the Popular Front, also consciously re-invoked these figures through nineteenth century bourgeois ideals of "heroism" and individual genius, promoting in turn the development of a "great realism" that revolutionary writers like Victor Hugo, for instance, had embodied.79

A central point to be made in the next section is that while Surrealism often polemically supported various working class political interests, they nevertheless held their aesthetic production as separate and above any specifically called for revolutionary representation. And their stance of being aesthetically independent contributed in its own way to a twentieth century French working class being represented by the traditional Left in nineteenth century revolutionary terms, which were also problematically tainted with the excesses of a sentimentally descriptive bourgeois style. Thus the Left in France - both the critical Left (of which Surrealism was ultimately a part) and the traditional (and after '33, Stalinist) Left - never succeeded in developing a twentieth century revolutionary culture to which the French working masses could aspire. This modern gap in representation had its repercussions, as it was ultimately juxtaposed to a counter-revolutionary fascist culture that, as you will later see, included within its aesthetic scope the seductive image of a technologically advanced working class.
II. LOOKING AT THE NINETEENTH CENTURY 'NATURE' OF THE IDEAL

The enlightenment vision of nature rested upon the image of an arcadian landscape that was fertile and productive; nature was the serene stage upon which man appeared to work in harmony with the universe that surrounded him. It was this vision of nature that Surrealism sought to contest, seeing instead a nature that was full of the kind of marvelous and uncontrollable eruptions which would, if anything, defeat the rational productions of man. Convulsive Beauty was the perfect example of this marvelous excess in nature: "Such beauty cannot appear", Breton wrote in *L'Amour fou*, "except from the poignant feeling of the thing revealed.....the emergence of a solution...which is always superior; a solution certainly rigorously fitting, yet somehow in excess of the need." (emphasis mine) As a superior form, Convulsive Beauty was the reminder of a nature that went beyond enlightenment principles of utility; a form that represented expenditure in nature without productive or, as we'll see in the next chapter, reproductive use-value. In the manner of molten liquid that bubbles to the surface and then coalesces as it cools, la (femme) herself in Surrealism was one of these convulsive forms of nature; her body seen as an eruption into the natural world without reason or logic. She was proof, as in Man Ray's *Primat de la matière sur la pensée* (fig. 26, 1931), of the existence of a nature beyond the long arm of the controlling 'thought' that constantly struggled to reduce her to reproductive use-value.

A parody of the enlightenment's attempt, under its bourgeois stewardship, to control and productively utilize all of nature appeared in the Belgian revue Variétés' special June 1929 issue on French Surrealism. At the back of the issue, there was a section reserved for the reproduction of the period's popular 'photo-essay'; a layout followed not only by the various esoteric 'art and artifacts' journals such as Variétés, Bifur, Documents, Verve or La Révolution surréaliste and later, *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution*; but also by popular magazines such as *L'Illustration*, as well as by the daily newspapers themselves. This mania for the reproduction of the photograph as the picture that was 'worth a thousand words' gives the researcher some idea of the standards of expectation attached to the viewer's capacity for recognition and association with the image in reproduction. But there was also a rule of thumb in the photo-essay that called
for prefacing the image with a quip like phrase that would trigger the viewer's associative
memory in relation to the details of the image itself. In Variétés the stage is set for the parody in
the photograph by its laconic preface, 'Ainsi va le monde', and the title underneath, Le dernier
naturaliste.(fig. 27)

With its preface and title in mind, one can immediately see how the details of the
photograph work to poke fun at the measuring, codifying and formulaic pretensions that modern
science has depended upon in order to present the world with its various 'bodies' of knowledge.
In the set-up, one finds the naturalist, a person who by definition works en plein air, all
organized for his 'nature' study in what appears to be an open air pavilion at the beach (one notes
the palm jutting out from behind the silhouette cut out from cardboard on the left, the suggestion
along the upper edge of the photograph of the pavilion's thatched roof and of course, the two
bathing beauties themselves, who have come up from the beach to participate in the naturalist's
study). One of the bathing beauties has obligingly fit herself into the full frontal cardboard
silhouette on the photograph's right and now, properly mounted and displayed in the manner of
the lepidopterist's butterfly specimen, the naturalist turns his observational talents upon her.
However, while he intently observes and records, the other bathing beauty holding the cardboard
silhouette in place smiles knowingly out at us, and we share her amusement in this futile project
of the naturalist to 'know' woman through this scientific ordering and classifying of her body.

In the advancing scientific age, the naturalist is the last dinosaur of a quickly fading era-
machines and technology work in nature now and have taken over the primitive processes that
the naturalist's methods of direct observation and recording represent. The joke in the
photograph comes from this woman as nature, who manages to elude the reach of a grasping and
reproductive world despite her doubled reification by science - once through the cold gray gaze
of the lab coated naturalist, who ponderously records the bathing beauty's genesis (as homo
sapiens; sub-species woman?), and then again by the photograph itself, which records here its
own apotheosis in the art of instantaneous observation.

Surrealism constructed its body of desire out of an awareness of the power of reason and
the rationalized State to cast aside as excessive all that did not conform to the dictates of utility
and productivity. In such a State man's 'natural' sexual proclivities were constrained to the utility of the family and its procreation. But these were ideals which only led, in the end, to the false and deceiving practice of sexuality for pleasure as a private sin. In their own projection of woman as nothing more (or less) than an uncontrollable eruption in nature, that existed solely for pleasure and not for reproductive purposes, the Surrealist saw himself letting out of the dark, and into the light of day, all the repressed sexuality the proper bourgeois hypocritically harbored within the dusty recesses of his mind. Whatever exterior identity this seemingly self-sufficient citizen of the world clothed himself in - as the distinguished diplomat, the urbane bon vivant, the financial expert and homme politique - on the inside, as the Surrealist well knew, there was the most deliciously delirious tangle of lubricious feminine bodies (fig. 28, images from Paul Eluard's reproduction of late 19th/early 20th century erotic postcards in Minotaure 3-4, 1933; one notes here that the role of 'financial expert' is played by Joseph Caillaux, several times finance minister for the Radical party).

Quoting Marx in his Konvolut N on how the Greek Gods, who die tragically in Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound, must later die once again comically in the dialogues of Lucian because humanity must, in the end, "part from its past gaily", Benjamin is moved to remark himself on how "Surrealism is the death of the last century through comedy".81 And there is no doubt that much of Surrealism's anarchical irreverence had - at least - the virtue of steering clear of an all too glib socialist poetics that painted an image in which "everyone acts", as Benjamin put it in his Surrealist essay, "'as if they were angels', and everyone has as much 'as if they were rich' and everyone lives 'as if he were free'."82 There were no angels in Surrealism; only devil-may-care irreverence, black humor and biting satire. But is this enough to kill off a century of moral dilettantism on the part of the bourgeoisie who, after a brief and selective affair with the Commune in 1871, ultimately terminated their relationship with any ideals of social 'liberty' in exchange for the solid comforts of privacy and a low profile?83

Before erecting any gaily decorated tombstones to the past, I'd like to take a look for the remainder of this section at what parts of this nineteenth century body are still alive and kicking in Surrealism itself. However, I want to preface the attack I'm about to make on the
revolutionary insufficiencies of Surrealism with a couple of important points. Firstly, while I'm going to be addressing directly Surrealism's relationship with a nineteenth century bourgeois culture; I will also, at times, be referring to their relationship with patriarchal institutions that transcend a strictly nineteenth century culture. There is no doubt that such institutions and their supporting ideologies flourished under the guidance and rule of a solidly established nineteenth century bourgeoisie, but they did not always produce social and cultural modes of thought and practice that can be attached solely to that period, nor to that particular social class. The point here is that certain masculine privileges - which existed (and still do) on an implicit rather than explicit (as in the 'law') level - were assumed by the Surrealist, as well as by other so called revolutionaries. It was because of their almost always 'unconscious' nature that these assumptions were not seen by the Surrealist to be in conflict with other more overtly visible political issues of the thirties, such as France's colonial policy, or the war in Spain; both issues Surrealism attacked directly in its various political tracts and manifestos.

It is the Surrealist text itself which brings me to my next point, which functions on two levels; the first being that Surrealism was particularly vulnerable to engaging in the objectification of other bodies - to excess and in the name of a satisfied desire - because it separated its overtly political text from its aesthetic productions, which were always seen to stand above and separate from any revolutionary practice. Their insistence on aesthetic independence - maintained throughout the inter-war period - is best summed up in the Breton/Trotskey 1938 manifesto *Pour un art révolutionnaire indépendant* which states: "If, for the better development of the forces of material production, the revolution has to erect a socialist regime with central control, it must from the very beginning establish and maintain for intellectual creation an anarchist regime of individual liberty. No authority, no dictation, not the least trace of any orders!"84 Such a separation was, in the end, problematic, for while Surrealism's political writings presented the repressive objectification of subjects in other cultures, it remained blind to practices of domination and repression in its own aesthetic productions. This issue - the separation of the political text from aesthetic production - will be dealt with briefly in this section, as well as more fully in the next chapter. But there was also
another separation between text and image in Surrealism that I'll be addressing directly in this section; one which can be found within the very parameters of its photographic practice. Here one finds evidence that what the text on photography states as its social purpose and chosen mode of presentation - and I'll be referring here principally to two texts on photography by Man Ray, written between 1933 and 1935 - differs radically from the evidence that the photographs themselves present. I will be arguing that this gap between text/image, which appears most overtly in Man Ray's '35 essay, comes out of, in great part, the cultural politics of the period. My point here is that it was the coalescing politics of the Popular Front, and its cultural policy developed under the leadership of the PCF that caused Man Ray to make concessions in his text to ideals of 'realism' and social activism which were so prevalent in this period, and to which all intellectuals and artists on the Left were feeling pressured to respond. But at the same time that Man Ray makes a partially appropriate response to the predominate politics of the period in his text, his photographic production itself fails utterly, as I hope to show, to incorporate those concessions to any visible degree.

Overall, my purpose in this section will be to show how in the middle decade years Surrealist photography consistently erased the everyday details in its dreamscapes which would communicate with the viewer in any socially significant way. And such an erasure, I shall argue, forces the viewer, in the end, to read 'meaning' in the photograph out of the very obscurity and impenetrability of the landscape itself within which Convulsive Beauty always appears. It is this lack of communicability in the photograph, outside of the absolute and specific meaning attached to the beloved body herself, that leads Surrealist photographic practice to ultimately be based on, as I hope to show, nineteenth century notions of privacy and the interior; a space traditionally set aside for dreaming by the bourgeois himself. Thus while Breton could argue, in what has been referred to as his most overtly political literary work, Les Vases communicants (1932), for an equal communication in the practice of everyday life between the two states of reality and dreaming, in terms of their photographic practice, Surrealism opted resolutely and exclusively for the interiority of the dream.85 The final result was the defeat of what Benjamin had defined as the legacy belonging to Surrealist photography; found in the tradition established...
by Atget of resistance to the reproduction of the myths of modernity (such as the myth put forward by modern industrial capital of scientific and technological advancement pursued in the service of all mankind). Instead, Surrealist photography turned away - as the Surrealist text itself often did not - from any depressing exterior realities, in order to build its own private and aesthetically satisfying mythic worlds.

The final point I want to make here about the weaknesses that plagued and ultimately defeated Surrealism's revolutionary intentions is the fact that it held certain rights to be absolute and sacred; as in the right of unconscious desires to be wholly liberated and above any kind of moralizing or rationalized judgment. In this privileging of an ideal vision of desire Surrealism complimented, as we shall see in the next chapter, fascism's own drive towards the absolute, which maintained that certain internal and essentially German drives and characteristics - like will to power, soul, race and blood - were also inviolable rights held above any of the normal moral and ethical strictures of civilized practice. It is also significant here that both of these groups - the Surrealist and the German fascist - developed beautiful exterior forms which, when documented by the photograph, were seen to stand as visible justification of these interior and - deemed as - 'absolute' values. It is Bataille once again who will play the stalking horse in both Surrealism's and fascism's construction of beautiful bodies as exemplars of absolute values; firstly, because of his own political stance against the 'ideal' as a concept in and of itself, and secondly, because of his own structuring of a body that represented the antithesis of that concept.

I'll be returning to Bataille's resistant role in defining the failures of Surrealism in the next chapter, but right now I want to turn to Convulsive Beauty and her relationship to nineteenth century views on the feminine and nature. As I'm going to begin with the obvious, I'll move very quickly and ask, for starters, how the image of Convulsive Beauty contests nineteenth century bourgeois patriarchal ideology, which had already formulated the feminine body as, like nature herself, subject to vague and uncontrollable forces? Or, and again quickly, let's ask how her ubiquitous presence everywhere within the Surrealist photographic corpus contests the idea that women's bodies belong to that part of nature that generously lends itself up for the kind of continuous reproduction Surrealism itself purportedly resisted? This is, of
course, not to even mention Surrealism's *unquestioning* acceptance of the reification of women's bodies as objects of desire; nor to point out the existence of this fetishized queen of convulsion in the very land of the fetish.

In Man Ray's *Je ne vois pas la*.... you have already seen how *la* (*femme*), whose body literally lays over the text of her self-identity, exists solely as the *image* of desire. In the light of this erasure of the feminine text, one is led to wonder what Rosalind Krauss meant, beyond her induction of semiotic theory into the structure of the photograph, when she wrote in her recent text on Surrealist photography (*L'Amour fou: Photography and Surrealism, 1985*) that "Surreality is ....nature convulsed into a kind of writing."86 (author's emphasis) Whose writing are we talking about here? Admittedly its not the text of *Le dernier naturaliste*, whose labored notations stand as the recognized sign of his identity as scientific observer of nature and all its creatures. Rather, its the text of *L'écriture automatique* (fig. 29, André Breton, photocollage, 1938) that defines nature in Surrealism. The Surrealist artist/poet, in his stance of being 'beyond' the logic and abstractions of enlightenment culture, always appeared under the guise of the visionary créateur. He represented the man who had turned away from science - as we see Breton himself look up and away in *L'écriture automatique* from the microscopic eye placed one the table before him - in order to create his own vision of nature. But make no mistake, this man *never* turned away from the 'master text' itself, as the singular sign in all patriarchal cultures of the law, of the right to authorship in one's own self-identity and ultimately, of power itself.

One can easily find repeated and clearly legible examples in Surrealism of this separation and identification of the text and its author versus the image of desire itself, which always remained mute. For instance, in Man Ray's illustration *La Plage*, done in 1937 for Paul Eluard's *Les Mains Libre* (fig. 30), one finds the feminine body floating on a gentle tide of water; an image which can be contrasted to the artist's illustration of Eluard himself, in which one finds the poet's head riding on the watery waves of his own signature, along with Man Ray's below. (fig. 31) Or again, in *The Second Manifesto of Surrealism* (first published in *La Révolution Surréaliste* 12, 1929), one finds prefacing the manifesto itself the phrase "Pourquoi la Révolution surréaliste avait cessé de paraître" - a reference to the almost two year interval
between the journal's nos. 11 and 12 issues - with the imprint of these men's wives' and
girlfriends' lips underneath. (fig. 32) One can presume here the suggestion of the power of love
to stop up the flow of the text. But never permanently, and by the way, we also get - how could
we miss it? - the bad boy explicit sexual innuendo of the wet lip imprint. This imprinting of the
body on paper appeared again in the winter issue of *Minotaure*, 1935; this time in masculine
form, only now we have the inked palm prints of various members associated with the
movement which are analyzed variously as the "mains d'artisan" (Derain); "mains de créateur et
de révélateur" (Breton); "mains d'un stratège de grand style" (Duchamp); and so on. (figs. 33 &
34) This is the hand that writes the text (and in these palm prints one finds the inescapable
association of the finger printed criminal, which cleverly serves to underscore the anti-social and
revolutionary nature of these 'créateurs'). And this, la (femme), is the body that fuels the fire......

In Surrealism, woman embodied all the pleasure and anguish desire represented precisely
because she was a body that was already mute; a body without a discourse or formal language
bound to abstract thought, science or the law (and I'll recall here the fact that full voting rights
for women in France didn't come until after World War II).87 One can see then, inspite of their
emphasis on the irrational, the logic of Surrealism's appropriation of this body as the visible sign
of an interior muteness that the unconscious itself represented. By contrast, the text is the
acknowledged work that produces the most highly valued self-identity in patriarchal culture.
The Surrealist himself emphasized, perhaps in a move of solidarity with the working class, his
literary productions as labor. But he also emphasized them as male gendered. One sees this, for
instance, in Surrealist photographer Maurice Tabard's photograph, titled *Littérature*, published
in the December 1931 issue of *Bifur*, where the book, as the object that defines 'littérature', is
shown overlaid by what appears to be an ax or hammer - at any rate a 'working' tool - at the
same time that it is also underlaid, or rather underwritten, by the thinking, creating brain of the
male author. (fig. 35)

In relation to the above, I want to suggest here that one can also find documented in the
photograph the various signs of feminine labor that go into her own representation as an object
of desire. But it must also be pointed out that these signs of labor, rather than appearing in the

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explicit and direct form of *L'écriture automatique* (this is the text I have invented, the text I write) have to be read as indirect clues and as accessory acts to the overall structuring of the photograph. They are signs which, in their indirectness, can appear as almost invisible. But they need not remain so, once the manner of looking is shifted towards a probing of the structure of the feminine pose itself and the accessories that accompany that pose. For instance, in *Le dernier naturaliste* it is one of the bathing beauties who participates in the labor of displaying the naturalist's 'specimen' by holding the cardboard silhouette in place. In like manner to the bathing beauty, *la (femme)* is, in a 1933 drawing by Man Ray, *imagined* by the artist to voluntarily hold up and turn back on herself the very 'appareil enregistreur' (if I may borrow a particularly apt phrase of Breton's here) that will record the imprint of her desirability (fig. 36, *L'Enregistrement d'un rêve*).

On occasion, *La (femme)* is also shown holding up for display, along with her body, the essential utensils she uses in performing her rites of beautification (fig. 37, Man Ray, *Nusch Eluard with Mirror, 1935*; fig. 38, Jeno Denkstein, *Budapest*, published in *Verve*, 1938).

Historically, the mirror has always been the utensil that sets up the psychological conditions for a de-stabilized self-identity in women: in her gaze into its reflective surface *la (femme)* looks at herself through the eyes of the Other, for whom she must struggle to preserve her beauty. In Man Ray's photograph of Nusch Eluard there is a chain of mirrors established - found in her turn away from the hand mirror towards the camera lens itself; her eyes, done with the job of self appraisal and calculation that the mirror signifies (do I look beautiful? - enough?), now modestly cast down - that can be read right back to its source, discovered in the phallic gaze that is constantly driven, in its fetishized obsession with beauty, to seek out, steadfastly observe and objectify its prey (fig. 39, from Paul Eluard's *Les plus belles cartes postales, Minotaure 3-4*, 1933; or, in the same manner, turning back to *Budapest in Verve*, one finds the mirrored reflection of the young boy admiring the young girl, who is herself learning at an early age to work deviously and coquettishly with her mirror). Further, it is this talented observational eye of man which has been placed in all patriarchal cultures, avant-garde or otherwise, not only in charge of looking but also recording, and thus acknowledging, these acts of beautification and labors of display; an act of documentation that receives its own acknowledgment, as in Man
Ray's *Self-portrait*, 1933; or, again, in a photo-essay in *Variétés*, titled *Voir ou Entendre*, 1929, where the reference is to the newly established talkies in film, but one also notes the automatic assumption of the masculine identity behind the camera lens. (figs. 40 & 41).

In the photograph of Nusch Eluard, the almost supplicating gesture of the hands holding the mirror, the upward tilt of the head, complimented by the downcast eyes, the faintest trace of an angelic smile, the cowl like scarf that frames the head, all contribute to the impression of a woman about to receive a religious benediction given in praise of her labors in the service of man. And there's no escaping the fact that her beatific look makes her seem a willing participant in her objectification as the desirable object. But why would this be so, when it is this fetishization of her body that keeps her always silent and lacking a voice in the political events that unfold around her? Can we say that she is, like the masses who follow Hitler, trapped in a narcissistic bind in the face of her own ever present image? But one can never be certain what the motivation is here, for while we can find clues of how la (femme) participates in the work of creating her beautiful image, the psychological structure of the desire that both lays behind and drives forward this process of her objectification is never called into question in the aesthetic productions of Surrealism, as it is in the work of Bataille (and you'll see more of this in the next chapter; for now, you may recall here his acknowledgment of a masculine desire to "wither and stain" the beauty of woman, a phrase that conjures up an image of masculine desire as both a destructive and domineering force).

You read earlier how Benjamin had seen within photography the means of recording the failure of the ornamental to enter into modern culture in any socially liberating way: the nineteenth century portrait photograph had recorded how the 'utopia of the fetish' had, in the end, only worked to stimulate the hoarding instincts of those who owned and controlled the apparatus of production. Similarly, Benjamin had seen in Atget's work the capacity of the photographer to document how technology had invaded the streets of modernity at the expense of the city's human content. Such photographs were seen by Benjamin as evidence of the "crimes" modern industrial capital had visited on its subjects: in Atget one found the photographer as physiognomist who revealed the physiognomy of industrial capitalism not to be 'every-man'; but
rather, 'no-man'. Such photographs were seen by Benjamin to shock the viewer into a state of awareness of what modernity had promised, and its relation to what, in reality, had been produced.

The greatest part of what made Atget's photographs so effective, in this process of "dialectical awakening" that shock brings on, came from the always visible presence in the photograph of the site upon which the alienation of the subject was played out. It was this familiarity of everyday details that made all the difference to the viewer's recognition of loss. For instance, the familiar sight of the commercial store window displaying its wares is evoked in Atget's *Boulevard de Strasbourg, Corsets* (1912). (fig. 42) But in addition, the image of the rigidly lined up and corseted torsos in the window, and their contrast to the automatically vibrating feminine torso outside the store's entrance way - the only sign of 'life' in the photograph - pointed the way to how mechanized sexuality itself had become. The moment of 'shock' and dialectical awakening in the viewer theoretically came from this sudden vision of the 'surreal' that the vibrating torso embodied, as it was found in the midst of the disconsolate real that the deserted commercial site itself represented.

It was this capacity to capture the surreal moment in the everyday that the Surrealist recognized in Atget; and which would have, no doubt, initiated the publication of the Boulevard de Strasbourg, Corsets in La Révolution surréaliste, June 15, 1926. Part of the Surrealist's attraction to this photograph must also have come out of the subject matter itself, for the mannequin played a long and sustained role in Surrealism's own photographic productions. But between Atget's photograph of the commercial world of the mannequin and the Surrealist's own use of this feminine form, as well as in the major part of all their photographic works in which the feminine form - real or otherwise - plays the major role, one finds that evidence of the urban industrial site itself, which had provided the context for recognition of loss in the viewer, has slipped away.

We can see the difference this lack of recognizable site makes in a photograph by Man Ray of three mannequins, published in Cahier d'art, 1935. (fig. 43) In the photograph, the juxtaposition of the three mannequins' graceful rhythmic embrace to the basic geometric forms
placed in front of them - the hexagonal column, the pyramid and cone shape - all speak of an author with a classical sense of order and balance. But beyond the fastidiousness and precision of the set-up, there is the elaboration of an erotic interplay between the abstract geometric forms and their positioning in front of the mannequins. It is obvious in the placement of the geometric phallic forms that the idea of penetration is being emphasized. But in addition, these forms appear as threatening weapons: their size, their rigidity and sharpness, their dull leaden color all provide a looming contrast to the light reflective, smoothly modulated curves of the mannequins. The overall effect is titillating, at the same time that it arouses a certain sense of apprehension in the viewer. But to what end, precisely, is this clearly complex and nuanced set-up directed? The absence of any recognizable details which would situate where this drama between feminine grace and fluidity, versus overtly forceful phallic abstractions, is being played out blocks the viewer from assigning any contemporary social meaning to the image.

The lack of an identifiable site in this obviously staged drama is curious in relation to the article Man Ray published along with the photograph (Sur le réalisme photographique; the title clearly a pun on the layering of the dream onto reality that Surrealism pursued), in which the author states that "a photograph, by its dependence on the social situation, is made for its own immediate age, and in the face of that obligation the photographer's personality takes second place." From this remark one would conclude that a specific contemporary situation is being addressed in the photograph that accompanies the article (to which Man Ray makes no specific reference). And indeed, the author goes on to state that he has used his eye "to capture the documents of his time"; and how the camera's eye functions "with a social consciousness imposed by its own physiology." Such remarks almost make it appear that Man Ray is promoting a basic kind of photojournalism; one which "captures" the days events as they happen in an immediate and unself-conscious way. But do you see in the photograph that accompanies the article the two panels with mosaic patterns behind the mannequins - the one on the right with the numbers at the center of each square turned upside down; the other, on the left with the numbers right side up? Surely you can recognize in this, and in all the other obviously staged details of the photograph, the aura of an overtly self-conscious practice?
Looking at Man Ray's photograph in *Cahier d'art* brings to mind André Breton's 1933 *L'Oeuf de l'église* (see fig. 1), which is similarly structured around all sorts of esoteric arcanums. There's a similar kind of numerological imprinting upon the image, as in Man Ray's photograph; seen in the lucky number seven outside the unbroken circle, the ten below, the mysteriously floating head of the Queen of Spades. In *L'Amour fou*, Breton makes reference to the kind of symbolic ritual of the cards and numbers that appears in *L'Oeuf de l'église* when he advises the reader on the use of various "rituals" and "magic incantations" as aids which could, with luck, bring the desired object into focus (for what good is 'looking', if it fails to bring "forth the beast with marvelous eyes."). These constant esoteric referrals to luck and 'ritual', to magic and to a kind of arcane symbolism, run like a continuous thread through Surrealism; and they no doubt refer to the unexpected (convulsive) nature of the desired object, as well as to the function of luck, versus logic, in the movement. But it seems to me that there is also in all of this mysteriousness the lingering vestiges of a late nineteenth century bourgeois occultism; of astral bodies and seances, of clairvoyance and Mme. Blavatsky's spiritual revelations, which fascism itself had already tapped into and organized to its own ends. The question that remains is this: 'Is this late bourgeois spookiness visible in Surrealism being embraced by the movement, or parodied?'

At the very least, one would have to acknowledge a certain determination in the Surrealists' affair with the supra-normal; after all, in the first *Surrealist Manifesto*, Surrealism itself is defined as a form of "psychic automatism" which works to record "the actual functioning of thought." Moreover, the principle of automatism itself - which locates the poet/artist as merely the medium of the psychic message - is crucial, for it is this principle which gives Surrealism its absolute value and allows for its independence from conventional ethics and principles of conduct, in the sense that such thoughts are produced "in the absence of any control by reason" and are, therefore, "exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern". It was, in fact, precisely the power of this "psychic automatism" which Breton later called into play in a long pamphlet titled *Misère de la poésie: L'Affaire Aragon* devant l'opinion publique (1932), which he issued in defense of the position the Surrealists took against the government's charges of
sedition and incitement to murder in Aragon's militant poem, *Front Rouge*. In the original petition issued on Aragon's behalf, the Surrealists had protested the attempt to give legal significance to a poetic work; a move that had brought charges from *L'Humanité* that the Surrealists "demand political immunity for poets and poets alone"; and that, by contrast, they "don't budge when repression strikes the workers." Breton's response in 'Misère de la poésie' argued that a poem couldn't be subject to legal penalties, because the poet was not responsible for his creation; he was merely (as in the camera imagined by Man Ray) an "appareil enregistreur" for his unconscious.

If we return to Man Ray's article in *Cahier d'art* and its historical context, one notes that it appeared during the formative period of the Popular Front; a time in which, if one were an intellectual or artist on the Left, a political position of complete detachment was impossible. There's no doubt that the February 6th, 1934 fascist riots at the Place de la Concorde had initiated the original Popular Front coalition; but this was an event that had been prefaced by Hitler's own dramatic seizure of power in Germany in 1933. And it was this seizure of power, along with the complete destruction of the German Communist Party (KPD), that had initially caused the Communist Party to shift from its policy of non-cooperation with the Socialist Left to its new policy of 'la main tendue'. This policy was implemented in France by Maurice Thorez, head of the PCF, and carried with it the broadest possible definition of those on the cultural Left by appealing to an entire liberal social-democratic strata of artists and writers for solidarity in the fight against fascism.

The cultural policy that emerged at this time for party artists and writers was later formally defined at the 1934 'Congress of Soviet Writers' in Ardeenko as 'Socialist Realism'; a realism which was, as secretary of the Congress' Central Committee, Andrei Zhdanov, described it: "distinct from other realisms in the fact that it inevitably focuses attention on the portrayal of the building of socialism, the struggle of the proletariat, of the new man.....of the great historical processes of our day." And even though it was declared that "Socialist Realism dares to dream!"; it was also said that "while the literature of a dying capitalism invokes the aid of the irrational, of the unconscious and of the subconscious, the literature of Socialist Realism
demands a consciousness of the fate of humanity." Practically speaking, this translated into an art that would depict "working class heroes" and convey "a mood of optimism"; but which would discourage humor and satire as "counterproductive to art's didactic purpose".

In France, the institution of this policy brought the party's revolutionary proletarian period to an abrupt end; supplanting it with a social-nationalistic conception of culture, which became known as the 'School of the People'. This cultural policy was incorporated more or less intact into the Popular Front and carried out under the aegis of AEAR; it various 'Maisons de la culture'; as well as its journal, Commune, whose editor, Louis Aragon, having seen the 'light' as early as 1930 on his trip to the 'Second Congress of International Revolutionary Writers' in Russia, defected with finality from Surrealism after what became known as L'Affaire Aragon in the spring of '32. The loss of Aragon from Surrealism's rank and file was followed, inevitably, by their expulsion from the Communist Party; and by '33 the group had moved the publication and dissemination of its various poetic and artistic efforts from Le Surréalisme au service de la Révolution to Albert Skira's journal Minotaure, with whom they remained linked until it ceased publication in the spring of '39.

From the period of Minotaure up to the war, Surrealism more or less limited its strictly political activities to the publication of individual manifestos, brochures, or political tracts; reserving its aesthetic productions for Skira's journal, or for group exhibitions. However, falling in with the popular need after the events of February 6th, '34 to be demonstratively engagé (this was a period when those directly involved with the Popular Front coalition took to the streets in protest marches and demonstrations against the fascists), Breton and his followers joined with Bataille at Contre-Attaque. Bataille had initiated Contre-Attaque with the idea of offering an alternative and still 'revolutionary' position to what was seen by many as the PCF's compromised one, brought about through its liaison with the non-revolutionary and bourgeois parties of the Popular Front. But relations between these two former enemies deteriorated quickly, causing Breton and his followers to withdraw from Contre-Attaque after only six months (March, 1936). At the time of their withdrawal, the Surrealists issued the now well known statement against
Bataille's 'surfasciste' tendencies, and additionally disavowed any relationship to the group's prior publications (that is, from the single *Cahiers de Contre-Attaque* of January, 1936).  

Man Ray's name, of course, never appears in the original *Contre-Attaque* manifesto, nor on Breton's et al's 'Statement of Rupture' with the group. In fact, the photographer was truly an adept at staying in line politically with Surrealism, without ever having to commit himself to any party or group membership per se. One gets a glimpse of how deliberate his political evasiveness was after the war, when he wrote "I wasn't getting myself mixed up in politics because it might create some misunderstanding by leading people to think I was politically minded." As an American expatriate, he was no doubt less vulnerable to the court martial procedures to which Breton subjected other group members - for real or imagined ideological lapses of faith. Or at least, one can surmise he was exempt for such reasons; for despite his apolitical stance within a group that prided itself on its 'revolutionary' intentions, he fared extremely well in terms of the group's various exhibitions and its publications. His photographic work appears significantly more than that of any other Surrealist photographer in the group's various journals; as well as being featured in Breton's *Nadja* and *L'Amour fou*. In addition, one finds that Breton's own testimony to Man Ray's capabilities as a photographer placed him at the heart of Surrealism's aesthetic cause, when he wrote in Ray's book, *Photographs 1920-1934*, that his portraits were "the real Ballad of Woman of the Present Day".

The above social, cultural and political schematics of the mid-decade years allow me to place Man Ray's essay *Sur le réalisme photographique* in its historical context. But in addition, I want to compare this '35 essay - with its language of "obligation" and documentation, its emphasis on impartiality and current events - to another essay Man Ray wrote two years earlier, in which any sign of the need for the photographer to focus outwards on external reality for his subject matter is erased. It is this essay of comparison - *L'Age de la lumière*, published in *Minotaure* in 1933 - which ultimately allows the reader to get much closer to Man Ray's real photographic purpose and style of representation, in the sense that the text and its illustrative photographs are linked by a common purpose: one which can be defined as, in the author's own words, "autobiographical".
This discovery of a specifically described purpose or function, which is then, as you will shortly see, visible in the photograph itself is important, as it provides the foundation for seeing how the privilege of privacy and non-communicability in the Surrealist photograph is established. My argument here is that there is a wholly internalized process the Surrealist goes through in his aesthetic productions that is at its most legible in the photograph, where the interiorized desire that fuels the production of the object is able to emerge as if it were 'real' in the concrete sense of the word. Here it is the mimetic capacity of the camera that guarantees - however manipulated the image is later on in the darkroom - a degree of clarity and precision that goes beyond what can emerge in a painting or sculpture or, for that matter, in the text itself. However, attaching such importance to the camera's mimetic capacity brings with it a specific responsibility in analysis of the image, which now hinges on a description of the photograph's various details and arrangements in relation to what we already know and recognize in the material world. It is an analysis which has a much more inflexible 'materialist' basis, so to speak, than other modes of stylistic analysis, which depend more on the historic precedent of aesthetic schools of thought.

While in *Sur le réalisme photographique* one finds a certain emphasis on the documentation of external reality, that does not mean that Man Ray has taken up the cause of Socialist Realism, or even of 'realism' per se. But what it does mean is that this turn to the exterior world in Man Ray's text came at a time when the stasis of the Third Republic had finally been broken, and when those on a combined Left took, however briefly and ineffectively, to the streets of Paris. This was a time when, as one historian of the period referring to the numerous demonstrations and marches against fascism put it, "politics became a pageant". By contrast, in 1933 events had not yet come to a head in France, although there was much talk of a 'crisis' by this time: the financial and economic crisis at the closing of the 20's, and the drift towards war that continued throughout the thirties all contributed to a sense of unrelieved tension throughout the decade. In response to this tension there were those - ever hopeful revolutionaries in the main - who spoke of a "total crisis", in which the entire structure of the liberal democratic State would be collapsed; as well as those who submitted to a 'politics of resignation' and spoke of
crisis as something that was "endemic to society". Man Ray signals his own recognition of the tensions within his period at the beginning of his essay when he remarks that it may seem "irreverent" to produce works "whose only inspiration are individual human emotions and desire." Nevertheless, the expression of such desires before the social revolution still to come have their use-value he maintained; for "what can be more inspiring to action than the confidence aroused by a lyrical expression of this desire?"

It is the artist - or "the developed mind" as Man Ray put it - who creates the images that "stirs our subconscious to our innermost depths"; the artist who understands that "the awakening of desire is the first step to participation and experience." And it is in this spirit of "experience", versus that of "experiment", that, as Man Ray tells us, "the following autobiographical images are presented", which include the earlier mentioned photographs by Nadar (see fig. 23), as well as those of Man Ray's. Man Ray describes his unique and personal choice of images as being those of "the creator dealing in human values", who "allows the subconscious forces to filter through him, colored by his own selectivity, which is universal human desire......which should form the basis of a confident fraternity".(emphasis mine) But, he admonishes, if these photographs of desire seem full of "apparent artificiality or strangeness", it is only because the social conditions of the period constrain the freedom of "automaticism or the subconscious self". Once complete freedom has been obtained (how this will be done and by whom is never mentioned), there will be, the artist informs us, "(t)he removal of inculcated modes of presentation."

If we turn now to the two sets of "autobiographical" prints that accompany the essay - Nadar's and Man Ray's - one finds first and foremost (and this is where the "inculcated" mode of presentation arises) two sets of studio prints; the one, Nadar's, with an emphasis on the studio prop and background painted 'landscape' common to that era's studio photographs; while in the other, Man Ray's, evidence of a certain agility in lighting and in the darkroom prevails (as in the double negative printing in the top right photograph), along with a capacity to play with the artificial mode that the portrait and studio set-up imposes (as in the woman with Greek style sculptured curls, whose head is juxtaposed to a sculptured torso, on the lower right). There is
also, of course and in the Surrealist manner of letting everything escape out of its subconscious repression, a much more liberal display of flesh in Man Ray's works. Louis Aragon had recognized and commented on the studio adroitness of Man Ray in a talk he gave on the historical relationship of painting and photography in the spring of '36 (given as part of a series of cultural talks held under the auspices of the AEAR, and later published in book form as *La Querelle du réalisme*). Man Ray's work represented, as Aragon put it, "a studio art, with all the term implies: the eminently static character of the photograph." His work embodies, he went on to say, "to perfection the classical in photography." Stylistically, it was this sense of harmony and balanced juxtaposition that we saw in the photograph for *Cahier d'art* that accounted for this sense of classicism in Man Ray's work. But there were also often classical references which appeared thematically in his work; seen, for instance, in the three mannequins in the *Cahier d'art* photograph, whose rhythmic embrace called up a vision of the 'Three Graces', a popular subject in nineteenth century academic art.

It would be easy enough to see a note of irony in Man Ray's portrait of the three sister goddesses; and to interpret their lifeless (and headless) condition as symbolically signifying the absence in modern times of their control over pleasure, charm, elegance and beauty in human life and nature. Or conversely, one could take the three figural forms not as contemporary mannequins; but rather, as antique sculptural forms (the figural details and the play of light over the bodies sensual curves, along with the responsive tone of the flesh - seen in the creases at the waist formed by the contrapposto stance of the central figure - do imply that these feminine forms are much more than modern mannequins), which have been unearthed (one notes the portion missing from the back of the central figure's left calf) by Surrealism, thus representing the restoration of pleasure and beauty within the movement itself. However, if one sets aside stylistic and thematic references (which only provide ambiguous results at best), to turn instead to a location and naming of the site from which the image of desire emerges, it seems to me that *all* these works - whether Man Ray's or, for instance, André Breton's or Raoul Ubac's - with their studio set-up and complete detachment from external reality, mark a return to the nineteenth century parlor where, in the absence of his bourgeois ancestor, it is the Surrealist artist/poet who
covetously draws to his breast his own personal and ornamentally captivating vision of desire. Thus while the various props and objects (including the woman as trouvaille) the Surrealist photographer utilizes may have their source in mass culture - as in the mannequin, or real model herself (one thinks of Man Ray's model 'Kiki of Montparnasse' here) - in their removal from the urban site and installation in the studio interior, we end up with the same old emphasis on a fetishized display of proprietorship over the desired object (or objects) that Benjamin saw in the nineteenth century photographic portraits of the bourgeoisie.

There are, one must admit, changes in the parlor: in the blankness of the twentieth century portrait backdrop, the nineteenth century velour plush of the parlor is gone. Indeed, in the Surrealist parlor, with its esoterism and eccentricities, one is situated well outside of any association with solid middle class comfort. Far from the conventional mode, one finds instead something much closer to the haut gout taste of the fine de siècle decadents and symbolists; an assumption supported by Breton himself, who professed his admiration for the decadent writer J.K. Huysmans in *Nadja*, remarking that "although unhappily I have never known him other than through his work, he is still perhaps the least alien of my friends."\textsuperscript{114} One can see easily enough how Breton could have felt a sense of affinity for the central protagonist of Huysmans' *À rebours*, des Esseintes (whose highly interesting "intoxications" Breton refers to in his *Les Vases communicants*), who is driven by a desire to reduce to nothing the difference between imagination and reality.\textsuperscript{115} In the privacy of his interior, des Esseintes works to willfully control and manipulate his own sensations to the point of creating a "real fiction" that is so enveloping that it leaves no room for penetration by any exterior form of uncontrolled reality.\textsuperscript{116}

One finds the literary apotheosis of the art of the interior in des Esseintes, which is later photographically reproduced in Surrealism through the magic of twentieth century technology. But this fin de siècle esthete also demonstrates through his manner of processing data from the exterior world a methodological approach harmonically in tune with Surrealism. For instance, the method des Esseintes utilized in dreaming up the perfect image of desire turns on a "light subterfuge", in which one substitutes "an approximative sophistication of (ie: surrogate for) the object pursued by those very desires"; a technique that neatly subverts any possible sense of
alienation and loss in the subject in relation to the real and out of reach object. One can see how Surrealism duplicates this very technique in its own use of the trouvaille as the surrogate object that triggers the artist/poet's dream sequence. In Surrealism the 'subterfuge' occurs, specifically and in Breton's own words, through "une volonté d'objectification sans précédent" (and from this phrase we get some idea of Surrealism's violent will to power in relation to desire and the object it seeks to reproduce), in which objects deriving from familiar surroundings are "reassembled......by a simple change of role." But what also takes place in the subterfuge is the blocking out of any of the concrete details that would socially situate the insufficiency the subject has already experienced in the external world; a lack for which he has only been able to compensate through the fiction of the dream. It is through this blockage of the real that always surrounds the dream (the surreal in the midst of the real, as in the work of Atget) that the dreamspace that surrounds the desired object in Surrealism is collapsed into a kind of no-man's land; as, for example, in Man Ray's *Primat de la matière sur la pensée* (see fig. 26), where the desired object exists in an empty void of the above, below and beside - a void which inevitably remains nothing more than a void if all it does is recompose into yet another smooth surface. (fig. 45, Man Ray, *Untitled*, 1936)

Rosalind Krauss wrote that the experience of Convulsive Beauty is something that "shakes the subject's self-possession, bringing exultation through a kind of shock - an explosante-fixe". But in Surrealism, the spasm does not end up, as it theoretically does in Benjamin's analysis of Atget's work, in reminding the subject of his cultural alienation and loneliness. There are no traces left in the Surrealist image of an encounter which has social and political significance. Lost in a grey void, convulsion in Surrealism is experienced more as a private maladie, than as a shock which will potentially lead to a revolutionary release of energy. Thus in the end, the Surrealist only produces a private ritual of intoxication, in which Convulsive Beauty holds center court as the spellbinding ideal. But as the absolute and sacred 'ideal', she exists in a space where nobody gets in or out; and there's no subject matter per se here, only the palpitating presence of lonely addictions lost forever within the spaces of a private and fully internalized world.
Incommunicability, the regime of privacy and abdication from the external world that came to flower under the leadership of a nineteenth century bourgeoisie are, far from being laid peacefully to rest in the aesthetic productions of Surrealism, preserved by them. Or rather, not just preserved, but advanced, in the sense that these aspects of the modern capitalist State, emblematized in the turning away from intra-subjective relations and notions of the social collective, are raised to a veritable art form through the movement's photogénie and decorative talents for arranging the internally expressive - the "autobiographical" - tableau. This autobiographical impulse in Surrealism (a rhetoric of repetition that beats out the rhythm of the ever present personal pronoun; its visible pulsation found in Breton's description of his mode of dream analysis "which leads me to my own experience, to what is for me, concerning myself, a virtually continuous subject of meditation and reverie") is one which inevitable drives the subject towards the production of an object which not only can never be shared; but also, can never be fully understood in any revelatory sense by the creating subject himself.120

One must mention here, however, that within the Surrealist interior a new space is opened up for women who, no longer morally restricted to a strictly reproductive economy, are now liberated (!) into a fully expressed - no holds barred - masculine libidinal economy. But in this feminine shift from duty to pleasure, the powers of the master of the household remain intact. Inside the Surrealist "castle", the one Breton fantasizes in the first Manifesto of Surrealism, where all his friends come (Eluard, Desnos, Jean Paulhan, Benjamin Peret, Naville, the not yet ex-communicated Boiffard, Duchamp, Picabia and lots of "gorgeous women"), "isn't what matters", as their fearless leader put it, "that we be masters of ourselves, the masters of women and of love too?"121 And so it goes in the end, that the intensity with which the fantasy is pursued in Surrealism erases any presence of a potentially real beloved; whose body is irretrievably lost beneath the massive and ever present traces of her lover's fantasies.

Breaking down the mythology of the past depends on our ability to break through the aura that surrounds it; to free ourselves from old rituals and traditions that bind us to a no longer viable past. In the 'Artwork Essay' Benjamin saw in mechanical reproduction the capacity for breaking through the seemingly impermeable aura of old conventions and traditions. The
camera's capacity for mimesis and repetition dismantled notions of privilege and authenticity associated with the cultic image (the religious icon, as well as the secular icon of 'beauty'). Yet at the very same moment that he attributed to mechanical reproduction this creative destructive force, Benjamin also acknowledged the modern perversion of it. Not only by the fascist through their developing 'cult of the Fuhrer'; but also, more generally, its perversion by modern critics who were incapable of interpreting the real meaning of the new medias. Here Benjamin wrote disparagingly of film critics who continually read into films "ritual elements with a striking lack of discretion."122 It was in this very tendency towards reading the old into the new that one came directly up against the difference between the rapid pace of technology, versus the subject's own lack of imagination in grasping the full range of possibilities within the newly invented.

The use-value of the medias for Benjamin lay not only in their capacity to break down the old mythologies; but also, in their capacity for making legible all those bodies and momentary everyday events lost to the text of history, whose narration was reserved for great men, great battles and the spectacle of great events. In the click of the mechanical apparatus the never spoken (nor written) 'instant' could be projected into the visible spaces of history. But if the image the camera could capture was, as Benjamin saw it, particularly important to the realities of a twentieth century mass culture and its legitimate representation, what can we say about a photographic body of work in which any idea of mass participation is cut out? Under certain circumstances such an image could have cognitive value; for instance, when the object of the image itself was directed towards the revelation of modern culture's alienation from its technical and industrial reality. Here both the camera's capacity for mimesis as well as its complicity with its milieu - as a breeder of images it was, through the very size of its output, compatible with the physical size of the culture it was put to work in - were essential to the pedagogical value of the image. But the problem with Surrealism and its interaction with the mechanical apparatus lay in the conviction of its turn away from present reality, and in its refusal to ever entertain notions of waking-up and making contact with the external world within the parameters of its constructed dream images.
In the Konvolut N, while thinking of Aragon's Paysan de Paris, Benjamin wrote of how he was "(s)etting off the slant of this work (the 'Arcades Project') against Aragon: Aragon persistently remains in the realm of dreams, but we want here to find the constellation of waking. While an impressionistic element lingers on in Aragon ('Mythology').....what matters here is the dissolution of 'mythology' into the space of history." (N1, 9)\(^\text{123}\) Of course, Aragon later had his own 'awakening', critiquing in his turn the Surrealist propensity towards dreaming; writing in his Pour un réalisme socialiste (1935) "lets have done with hallucinations, the unconscious, sex, dreams, etc. Enough of fantasy! I hereby proclaim the return of reality!"\(^\text{124}\) It was also during this period that he made an indirect critique of Surrealism's devotion to Convulsive Beauty through his review of an exhibition of John Heartfield's photomontages in Paris underwritten by the AEAR. In the review, published in Commune in April, 1935 under the title John Heartfield et la beauté révolutionnaire, Aragon, paraphrasing a line from Rimbaud's (much admired in Surrealist circles Une Saison en enfer (1873) - "This happened, today I know how to salute beauty" - wrote "John Heartfield today knows how to salute beauty."\(^\text{125}\) (author's emphasis)

The veiled critique of Surrealism's religious devotion to Convulsive Beauty (and I'll note here that Aragon's own 1924 expression of that devotion prefaces this chapter) comes out of this expression of Heartfield's 'à la Rimbaud'; the phrase itself repeated like the beat of the metronome several times throughout the article. But there were also other lightly veiled remarks in Aragon's text aimed at the Surrealist: of how in Heartfield's work "the socially forbidden was quickly substituted for the poetic forbidden"; or that in this work "there is also meaning, and meaning hasn't disfigured beauty."\(^\text{126}\) (author's emphasis) Clearly for Aragon what was revolutionary in the traditional Marxist sense of the word was also beautiful. And while Heartfield's montages held a structural relation to those of Surrealism - both most often appearing as 'smooth' montages, in which the cuts between the pieced together fragments of the montage are healed over in the final processing of the image - the forms of erotica and fantasy ever present in Surrealism vanished in his work to be replaced by the politically direct image.
However, at the same time that Aragon was updating the traditional allegorical model of beauty and its associations with an idealized femininity into a model of political commentary, he was also and conversely, along with all the other members of the PCF, succumbing to other mythologies from the past. Historian Phillipe Ivornel, in his article *Paris, Capital of the Popular Front* (1986), has argued how in their cultural presentation of a "great realism" the PCF utilized a kind of overblown rhetoric that promoted the hero worship of past revolutionary figures. Such techniques were much in evidence in the Party's cultural journal *Pour la défense de la culture* (formerly Commune); as was seen, for example, in Aragon's exhortation to artists and intellectuals to restore and preserve their revolutionary legacy in the May, 1936 edition: "Raise it higher one more time, above the waves and the flames" urged Aragon, adding "(s)tretch out your arms they carry a precious burden." It was within this context of adhering to a kind of 'worshipful' posture that the PCF also presented its various contemporary "great" artists and intellectuals as spokesmen for the masses. The party and public assembly Aragon organized for the seventieth birthday of Romain Rolland was a perfect example of this political line; the celebration being such a success that *Vendredi* was moved to later report how "one single passion animated the huge vibrant assembly - the passion for greatness!"

But while Rolland's speech to the 'masses' was causing, as *Vendredi* poetically put it, a "magnificent confusion"; the Party was also liquidating "agit-prop" troops, who had been advocating proletarian self-organization while working collectively in the streets. Certainly Benjamin had recognized the danger of losing touch with the working classes current interests and problems in this cultic turn to the past by the Party, writing in a letter to Max Horkheimer in October, 1936 of the development on the Left of "the Cult of the Great Revolution". His criticism of the PCF's politics surfaced again in a letter to Fritz Lieb in July, 1937, in which he wrote of how the French left-wing press "all fetishize the notion of a 'left majority' and are not disturbed by the fact that this majority implements policies which, were they to come from the right, would provoke insurrections." Perhaps most directly to the point and with the greatest insight, Benjamin also critiqued the way in which the abstract ideals of 1789 - of liberté, égalité
and fraternité - were unquestioningly re-evoked in France with each revolutionary turn (in 1830, 1848, 1870 and now, once again, in 1936) as if they were brand new.\textsuperscript{132}

This turn to the past by the PCF evidenced itself most clearly within the realm of imagery, as was seen in the various marches and demonstrations of the period where participating workers often carried posters painted or designed by contemporary Popular Front artists and depicting cultural and revolutionary heroes from the past like Paul Signac, Emile Zola, Voltaire, Marat and Robespierre. One of these artists wrote of the May 24, 1936 Mur des Fédérés demonstration that "we carried the museum into the street........and returned to the people knowledge of their most precious images, at the same time that Aragon and other writers gave them back Hugo and Anatole France."\textsuperscript{133} (fig. 46). The most spectacular demonstration of the period came on July 14, 1936, where two columns of marchers set off separately to converge at the Place de la Bastille, where the July column was decorated with a massive tricolour. Many of the demonstrators were dressed in costumes of the revolutionary period and there were floats depicting various events from the Revolution. (fig. 47) Looking back on this period, Jules Guéhenno, editor of \textit{Vendredi}, later wrote in his \textit{Journal d'une Révolution} (1939) that "it sometimes seemed to me as if we were playacting the Revolution."\textsuperscript{134} And so one could say it was merely 'playacting', if we compare the contemporary political situation to Jean Renoir's reworking of \textit{La Marseilles} in 1937: a film subsidized by the workers syndicates of the CGT and produced at the very moment that the Popular Front government had made its decision \textit{not} to intervene in the Spanish Civil War - so far did revolutionary intentions actually go into the field of material practice!\textsuperscript{135}

The years for 1935 to 1937, under the Popular Front coalitions and then government, saw extraordinary working class effervescence in the form of strikes and factory occupations, but by the end of '38 and the re-appearance of the right to government, the gains of the working class were minimal. The historical interpretation of this period often sees the inability of the Communist Party to turn the worker's effervescence into revolutionary movement as evidence of a betrayed revolution. And there's no denying that it was the PCF, with its interest in seeing the Popular Front government under socialist Léon Blum stay in power, that ultimately called the
working class back to a 'retour à l'ordre'. But further and in light of the above, can we not also say that the greatest problem of all in making revolution in France in the thirties was tied to the idea that working class effervescence in its image (the sign of the revolution displayed through its heroes portrayed from a previous century; or in the reworking of La Marseilles) was working from an aging out of date revolutionary model; one which had already been effectively and successively betrayed in the previous century.

This return of an already old revolutionary model in the midst of a twentieth century working class in France ultimately has to be compared to the twentieth century revolutionary model the fascist was working from; the only model in this period to successfully overcome a Republican State. As Bataille wrote during the period of Contre-Attaque, "(l)iberal revolutions are the result of the crisis in autocratic regimes. The crisis within a democratic regime will necessarily result in a revolution of a different type". In terms of the adequacy of the revolutionary image itself, one can encapsulate the passage from what ultimately became an impotent nineteenth century revolutionary culture into the twentieth century by comparing the Nazis' politically contemporary film, Triumph of the Will (fig. 48, montage taken from Leni Riefenstahl's Triumph of the Will; published as the centerfold in Illustrierter Film Kurier, special issue, Autumn, 1936), to this resurrection of the corpse of La Marseilles in France (fig. 49): in Riefenstahl's film of the Nazis' 1935 Nuremburg rally not only is there the incorporation of a twentieth century mass culture into the politics of fascism, emblematized in the endless and utopian repetition of party formations and their insignia, all placed within the massive architectural forum of the Nuremburg stadium; but also, fascist 'history' is being both created and documented at the very same moment.

III. SUMMING UP AND MOVING ON

Germany lacked the powerful enlightenment tradition of France. Thus, while the fascists' looked back to the past for the establishment of an originary model in terms of race; in terms of revolution they were able to turn, without a backward glance, towards a fully
mechanized contemporary world for the construction of their revolutionary image. By contrast, the failures of the nineteenth century hung like a shroud over France, obscuring and infecting all her revolutionary aspirations with a defunct, in twentieth century terms, revolutionary past. The loss experienced in this turn to the past in France can be seen not only in the ultimate result of the Popular Front, which only paved the road for the return of a once again triumphant bourgeois class; but also in the failure of France's literary and artistic avant-garde to develop any effective form of twentieth century revolutionary culture. Benjamin himself carried out his work in Paris because for him it remained the incarnation of the nineteenth century and its bourgeois aspirations; a viewpoint he neatly inscribed within the very title he affixed to two of his exposés: *Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century* (1935 and 1938).

One could say from the above that the 'Cult of the Great Revolution' in France proved, if nothing else, that the chiliasm of the heretics was inadequate to the realities of a twentieth century mass culture. But Bloch's work in the thirties was still important to his period, in the sense that it not only pointed to an underground tradition on the Left associated with intoxication, but also articulated the presence of a void at the heart of an enlightenment culture; one which the abstract economic theories of Marxism could never fully describe. Thus, rather than dismissing the trend in the twenties and thirties in Germany towards the formation of 'cults' and the popularity of various obscure religious practices, Bloch saw this response as a warning sign that an unsatisfied hunger for a collective and passionate form of communication existed in modern mass culture; a hunger so great that ultimately it would accept the vision of a perverted utopia, rather than look into the void an alienating capitalist culture had created. Bloch's work, which pointed out the connection between religion and intoxication that later became so important in fascism, also complimented that of Wilhelm Reich, who was writing during the same period about fascist ideology as an expression of unconscious sexual strivings, which were given communal expression through organized mysticism.

Bloch linked the underground tradition of intoxication on the Left to the possibility of representation for the masses; seeing Marxism's own post '33 'presentation' of the masses as inadequate to their psychological needs. For his part, Benjamin tied this failure to represent to a
mechanical failure to reproduce; that is, the failure to give 'everyman' the right to a visible and self-identifying image of himself in culture. This lack was one he attributed to an overall mechanical failure in enlightenment culture, in which technology, as it developed, was stripped of its capacity to dream. Or rather, that capacity was, in the development of a capitalist economy, diverted into the false utopia of the fetish.

Benjamin turned to photography as the instrument most capable of revealing the ruin of the utopia of the fetish. But in addition, he also saw that the interaction of the artist with the technological apparatus itself was crucial to the development of any new and revolutionary image of man in nature. Here the task lay in overcoming the enlightenment's division and isolation of dreaming and fantasy into the field of 'art'. In Benjamin's eyes, in order to re-activate this capacity within the technological apparatus to progress imaginatively into the future, the artist had to, in some way, take over the tools of technology and use them against the grain of modern capital's organization of space and time. It was this very idea that he addressed in his 1936 talk (later published as *The Author as Producer*) given at the *Institute for the study of Fascism* in Paris.

But while in Benjamin's eyes, it would be the job of the artist to find the means of re-investing technology with its utopian capacity to dream the future, the fact that the artist did this meant that he himself had been liberated from producing the kind of illusory fantasies to which capitalism had consigned him. In sum, the artist had to be, in the capitalist sense of the word, transformed through his social responsibilities to the community into an alchemist, who creatively interlocked with the mechanical apparatus science had developed. In such a newly composing world, it would be art which ruled over science, which itself only provided the base from which revolutionary fantasy could take over.137 Benjamin would no doubt have been thinking of his work on Fourier within this context of a creative re-direction of technology into a 'dream' for the future; as well as perhaps recalling pre-revolutionary Russian constructivist's creative plans for interlocking their designs with factory production.

Ultimately, the measure of any artist's revolutionary success would, in Benjamin's eyes, be directly connected to whether he changed the conditions of capitalist production in any
significant way. Here we can say that Surrealism, through its technological adeptness in the field of mechanical reproduction, created the vision of a new nature versus the mere mimesis of an already old nature. Yet at the same time, within this new nature - this so-called 'Sur-reality' - there were still the lingering vestiges of old traditions and rituals; the most important of which was the maintenance of a (however perverted and transformed) bourgeois 'cult of beauty' that depended in its representation upon the domination and silencing - the stripping of subjectivity - of other bodies.

The self-reliant bourgeois, whose identity was formed through the mirror of his possessions - as was documented in the nineteenth century portrait photograph - remained intact in the Surrealist's equally seductive display of the woman object: "Commodities, women", writes Luce Irigaray, "are a mirror of value of and for men." What is meant here is that in all patriarchal cultures men speak to each other through the woman object; they affirm their virility - the potency of their sexuality - to each other through the constant and visible presence of this lush and receptive object. But in the next chapter, the reader will see how some men in the thirties affirmed their heroic destiny as men by removing the woman object and replacing her with war as the new object of aesthetic pleasure. In the 'Artwork Essay' Benjamin quoted the Futurist Marinetti on why men sought to turn war into an aesthetic experience: "War is beautiful because it established man's domination over the subjugated machinery by means of gas masks, terrifying megaphones, flame throwers and small tanks. War is beautiful because it initiates the dreamt of metalization of the human body." (emphasis mine) My argument in the next chapter will be that it is man's ability to produce the beautiful object itself (in Fascism that object is war and its aestheticization) that both justifies and clarifies his right to domination. In such a scenario, any ideal of beauty becomes a weapon through which both objects (that is machines) and people are subjugated.

The role of the ornament in the development of the beautiful object is crucial here, as it is this shimmering exterior presence (and I'll include in this concept of surface ornamentation the alabaster skin of the model) that allows the viewer to be continuously diverted from the material conditions of reality. Siefried Kracauer, in his post-war analysis of *Triumph of The Will*, wrote
that its powerful propagandistic effect came out of the Nazis' clever use of party formations to create "living mass ornaments", whose sole purpose was to seduce the spectator "with their aesthetic qualities......leading him to believe in the solidity of the swastika world."  

Through the mass ornament, the fascist transformed the central, and one could say 'revolutionary', creation of industrial capitalism - the commodity fetish - into a living, breathing, moving and penetrating ornamental surface world. By contrast, the Surrealist stole the fetish out of its original context - its commercial world - in order to create his own private and seductively ornamental world. But in both cases, we have the presence of a 'fetish' (as the ornamental surface), whose original function in the capitalist State was to surround and obscure the origins of the object (the labor of its creation) with an impermeable aura, that maintains its essential characteristic: its use in the creation of a surface of illusion (or fantasy) which cannot be penetrated by any reality external to that illusion.

In fascism, the explosante of the Surrealist explosante-fixe becomes a release of sexual energy on the battlefield, versus a private spasm of desire. Nature now becomes the battle landscape upon which the soldier releases his sexual drive in fiery destructive acts: "Now we ourselves were the storm", as one fascist writer put it, "we were the force, unstoppable, crushing thrust and power, breaking into the forest's edge, trampling bushes and roots to explode against the enemy."  

In fascism also, the convulsive fluidity of woman in nature that we saw in Surrealism (as in Man Ray's *Primat de la matière sur la pensée*) becomes men with exploding bodies: in battle men's blood "boils" and also "flows towards the enemy."  

In the writings of proto-fascist aestheticians like Ernst Junger (who was highly influential in the developing ideology of Nazi youths; as one Nazi commentator put it, they "have made his beautiful confessions to technics born from fire and blood their own"), one finds a fascist warrior who hungers for "(t)he voluptuousness of blood (which) hangs over war like a red storm sail over a black man-of-war."  

But while the reader will see in the next chapter how Surrealism shared with fascism many of the crucial visual signs of eruptive intoxication - of flowing desire, of liquidity and the presence of stormy discharges, as well as the nurturing of a kind of religious ecstasy that
combines with ideals of sexual release - at the same time, the difference between these two aesthetic cultures lies in their disposition of the desired and ultimately dominated body. In Surrealism the desired body is always shown as one to be penetrated; versus the fascist body, which is always seen as one which penetrates. However, whether the body was shown as penetrated or as penetrating, the end result for both scenarios was, I shall also argue, the presence of a body (or bodies) sacrificed to the dominating demands of an omnipresent dream image. Here I want to, once again, emphasize how the representations of fascism and Surrealism will be shown to have some common aesthetic ground not because Surrealism was, in its own political aspirations, in any way fascist. Rather, I will argue that they become tainted with the same visual excesses that fascism developed precisely because they separated their aesthetic productions from their overtly political texts; an action which took place within an era where the political had, through the successive advances of fascism in Europe, become little else other than, precisely, aesthetic expression.

If we turn from the however inadvertent complicity of Surrealism/fascism to the case of Bataille and 'sous'-realism, one finds that the image that comes out of base materialism represents, above all, a revolutionary escape or convulsion out of the constraints that the beautiful ideal imposes on form. In Bataille's construction of *The Big Toe* that will be discussed in the final section of the next chapter, man himself is set up as a historical and anthropological site of investigation: the essay traces the physical development of man's erect condition, along with his psychological dependence on that erection for his own masculine self-identity. Ultimately then, 'convulsion' in Bataille is situated within the body of man himself. And it is this turning of desire back onto the body it emanates from that allows Bataille to circumvent this constant craving for other bodies as a means of affirming masculine self-identity that both Surrealism and fascism became addicted to. Thus in its development, *The Big Toe* represents sexuality without transposition into a beautiful ideal: in this image there are, as I hope to show, no processes of reification, nor of fetishization.

While Breton elevates his image of Convulsive Beauty into, as you have seen, a categorical imperative, the reader shall find that Bataille refuses to elevate his theory of desire
without taking into account the axis along which desire rises and subsequently falls. Here it is no mistake that *The Big Toe*, as a parody of desire, is the singular digit upon which, as Bataille theorized it, the erect condition of man is based. In this realm of laughter (which the sexual parody of *The Big Toe* encourages), and its capacity, as Marx saw it, to finally 'kill off' the past, *The Big Toe* is both a dirty joke and a dirty reminder to men of the true nature of their desire. By ferreting out (digging out, like the 'old mole') the destructive play of desire in men, Bataille, I shall argue, points the way into - rather than veiling or obscuring in illusory and seductive images - the violence and tragedy that exists at the heart of men's desire.

The monstrous body of man that Bataille writes about in his essay *The Deviations of Nature* allows him, like Breton, to write about nature's excesses. But the deviant body that convulses out of nature in the writings of Bataille lacks all the polish and ornamental presence of *Convulsive Beauty*. The monstrous body, in its ugliness, in its lack of charm and smooth sensuality, only evokes in the viewer tension; anguish even, in the sense that Bataille describes in his essay the presence of an inescapable theoretical moment of recognition in this body that the viewer must come to terms with. The image of *The Big Toe* also takes part in, as you will see, this central characteristic of a reciprocal moment of 'recognition' between viewer and viewed that the deviant body in nature represents; a moment which is emphasized through the microscopic attention Boiffard gives to this ubiquitous and lowly digit. Here the photographer, like Benjamin, seizes upon the scientific capacity of the camera to trace out a developmental history; only now, rather than the optics of mechanical reproduction illuminating the history of the object man constructs out of nature (as is seen in Blossfeldt's close-up photographs of the plant world), it is the developmental history of the body itself in nature that the camera illuminates.

Through utilizing to its maximum the scientific clarity of vision that the reproductive apparatus possessed, *The Big Toe* is presented to the viewer in all its virile prowess: seduction, eruption and revolution are, I shall be arguing, all immanent to the image itself, which far from being composite (montaged), or idealist (depicted as above or beyond external matter), is base (dirty and unkempt) and basic (non-composite): in sum, a form relevant to all human life. Yet
significantly, at the same time that *The Big Toe* is presented as a universally recognizable human form; it is also, through its very lowliness and dirt, expressive of a humanity from which we turn away in fear and loathing. In the end, it is the dialectical tension that lies between this gesture of recognition and identification by the viewer, followed by a sense of aversion and rejection, that makes Boiffard's digit so powerfully affective for the viewer.
REPRODUCING INTOXICATION III

"Ô beauté, monstre énorme, effrayant, ingénus..."

(Baudelaire, Les Fleurs du Mal)

I. SACRED BODIES AND ROMANCING THE TECHNOLOGICAL

"Since Bakunin, Europe has lacked a radical concept of freedom. The Surrealists have one. They are the first to liquidate the sclerotic liberal-moral-humanistic ideal of freedom, because they are convinced that 'freedom, which on this earth can only be bought with a thousand of the hardest sacrifices, must be enjoyed unrestrictedly in its fullness without any kind of pragmatic calculation, as long as it lasts.' And this proves to them that 'mankind's struggle for liberation in its simplest revolutionary form (which, however, is liberation in every respect), remains the only cause worth serving.' But are they successful in welding this experience of freedom to the other revolutionary experience that we have to acknowledge because it has been ours, the constructive, dictatorial side of revolution? In short, have they bound revolt to revolution?"

..............................................................

"To win the energies of intoxication for the revolution - this is the project about which Surrealism circles in all its books and enterprises. This it may call its most particular task. For them it is not enough that, as we know, an ecstatic component lives in every revolutionary act. This component is identical with the anarchic. But to place the accent exclusively on it would be to subordinate the methodical and disciplinary preparation for revolution entirely to a praxis oscillating between fitness exercises and celebration in advance. Added to this is an inadequate, undialectical conception of the nature of intoxication. The aesthetic of the painter, the poet, en état de surprise, of art as the reaction of one surprised, is enmeshed in number of pernicious romantic prejudices."
The above quotations, both taken from Benjamin's 1929 essay *Surrealism*, reveal to the reader the slippery slopes upon which the Surrealist movement deposited its poetic excesses.\(^1\) However, the essential problem for any researcher of this movement turns on finding the means to historically articulate what social and cultural differences, precisely, lay between the Surrealist's own radical "experience of freedom", represented within the poetic and visual parameters of the dream; and that other collective experience of freedom, which is always ultimately and concretely expressed within the revolutionary act itself. Certainly we can now (in terms of what we already know from the previous chapter) read into Benjamin's question of whether Surrealism had bound "revolt to revolution" the parallel question of whether they had, in fact, bound the liberating excesses of dreaming to any process of waking itself; the state of being required - whatever its "ecstatic" content - for any revolutionary action. But further, between the infinitely elevated spaces of revolutionary possibility (expressed in the globalized concept of serving "mankind's struggle for liberation" in its purest form) and Surrealism's fall into the mere inadequacies of "pernicious romantic prejudices", one can also see how much Benjamin himself wavered in his approach to the movement between his own brand of romantic dreams of revolution; and a countering anxiety founded upon his recognition of the dialectical insufficiencies embedded within Surrealism's practices of intoxication.

The romantic prejudices that infiltrated Surrealism's practices of intoxication will be central to this section's critical project, based in part on an analysis of how they were ultimately photographically documented within the group's aesthetic representations of Convulsive Beauty. But in order to begin a critical investigation into the "unconscious optics" at work in the documentation of Surrealism's aesthetic enterprise (art made *en état de surprise*; that is, in a state of intoxication as it were), and in order to illuminate the voice, the particularly masculine voice, that directed it, it will be necessary to first put the romantic prejudices and excesses Benjamin saw within the movement into the historical context of a much wider ranging aesthetic project that arose in both France and Germany in the inter-war years; an enterprise which, also holding to an ideal of 'intoxication' as its functional goal, was based on the reformulation of nineteenth century Romantic ideals.
The twenties and thirties in Europe represented an era suffused with both major and minor variations on the original Romantic quest for freedom outside the boundaries of a constricting Enlightenment ideal of reason. In what follows for the first part of this section (Part A, *The Romance*), I'll be fleshing out some of the historical details of this neo-Romantic impulse, beginning first with its most technological variations: as they are found on the far Right in the German fascist ideal of "stahlende Romantik" (steely or steellike Romanticism); and conversely, on a disaffected new Left, as expressed in Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project*. An investigation into Benjamin's Romantic project is particularly appropriate here, as he himself saw the development of it within the context of Surrealism and its aesthetic project, writing in 1928 that the *Arcades Project* would be developed as "a philosophical Fortinbras, who will claim the legacy of Surrealism."2 However, in addition to this brief rehearsal of the new technological emphasis that arose within twentieth century re-evocations of the Romantic ideal, I want to also present the concurrent development of a 'sociological' impulse within many of the new Left's various Romantic projects; an impulse which, for many, helped to re-energize and collectivize what was seen as a formerly withdrawn, passive and solitary nineteenth century Romantic expression. It was this last 'sociological' addition to the Romantic ideal that caused what I will later refer to as a 'dialectic of possibility' to develope within many of the theoretical arguments of the new Left; a dialectical turn which ultimately functioned as a form of political response and potential contestation of what was already taking place in counterrevolutionary fascist culture.

While I'll be presenting all these twentieth century neo-Romantic impulses and their various contesting possibilities as a contextual framework for my subsequent investigation into the visual expression of 'sacred bodies' produced within both Surrealism and fascism, I'll also be following up on these with the introduction of another 'dialectic of possibility'; one found in the realm of gender relations. This latter dialectic is an alternative one that already, I shall propose (in Part B, *Under the Shadows of Romance: Critical Theory and the Instability of Gender*), existed visibly within the contemporary realm of social and cultural relations; but which, while also present within the developing visual and theoretical material of the new Left, remained
repressed in terms of its social and political significance. The introduction of this other
repressed 'dialectic of possibility' is also contextually important to what follows in the latter
portion of this section (Part C, *Scripting Light: The Documentation of Sacred Bodies*) as it will
facilitate our understanding of how, in the move from Surrealism's 'sacred bodies' to those of
fascism, there is a shift of masculine sexual drives off of the embodied feminine body of desire
and onto the newly metallized and technologized body of man himself that first came into being
in the twenties in Germany. Psychologically such a shift can be allegorically articulated here as
one which goes from the erotically driven and wholly individualized pursuit of 'mad love' into
the far darker and more dangerous erotic pursuit of 'mad machines', now collectively harnessed
in the service of an all powerful State.

**PART A. THE ROMANCE**

Germany's "landscape of total mobilization", first created by proto-fascist writers such as
Ernst Junger and Ernst von Salomon, was later more fully developed in the fascist's own
technological revision of the Romantic ideal. In 1933 Joseph Goebbels, as National Socialism's
new propaganda minister, announced that Germany was witness to a new era of "stahlernde
Romantik". In his November radio broadcast to the Nation, in which this new Romantic ideal
first appeared, Goebbels spoke of their "era of technology" and acknowledged the danger that
"modern technology will make men soulless." In order to avert this danger, National Socialism
must, Goebbels went on to say, "consciously affirm it (technology), to fill it inwardly with soul,
to discipline it and to place it in the service of our people and their cultural level." In the end, it
would only be National Socialism, Goebbels warned, which could understand how "to take the
soulless framework of technology and fill it with the rhythm and hot impulses of our time."4

The 'steely' Romanticism Goebbels spoke of counterpoised itself as directly antithetical
to Germany's nineteenth century Romanticism: no more, as Goebbels put it, "false and
saccharine romanticism" of the past. This new Romanticism was to be "harder and crueler"
than its pastoral predecessor. And as far as its new aesthetic outlook; well, one could see that

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"the Reich of droning motor cars, grandiose industrial creations, an almost unlimited and
unenclosed space which we must populate to preserve the best qualities of our Volk - is the Reich
of our Romanticism."  

Not surprisingly, considering his nationality and the political forces against which he
juxtaposed much of his own work, it was within the same industrial spaces of technology that
Benjamin himself articulated his own twentieth century 'Romantic' project. In light of his early
work on the nineteenth century German Romantics, Benjamin was aware of how their protest
against enlightenment rationality had centered on the call for a rebirth of mythology, based on a
universal and symbolic vision of nature that existed outside the confines of mere reason.  
From
his own perspective, especially as it developed in his work on the Arcades Project, Benjamin
saw how, in contrast to the nineteenth century Romantic's escape into nature, an entirely "new
nature" had developed out of modern industrial culture; one which was capable of generating, as
Susan Buck-Morss in her detailed study of Benjamin's project notes (The Dialectics of Seeing,
1990) put it, "all the mythic power for a 'universal symbolism' these Romantics might have
desired."  

It was here within the new industrial landscape that the Surrealist came into focus for
Benjamin, as they made contact with this 'new nature' in their wandering perambulations
throughout the city. Their entirely contemporary muses were taken from the myriad signs of the
city; from its transient fashions and billboards advertising the latest novelty, from life on the
boulevard and surprise encounters experienced within the city's various 'secret' passageways.
The nature of their experience was best expressed for Benjamin in Louis Aragon's Le Paysan de
Paris which, as late as 1934 and despite his reservations with it, he was still referring to as "the
best book on Paris". In Aragon's work the new mythic forces of technology were present
everywhere in exhaustively multiple form. The Paris 'peasant' (the narrator of the book,
appearing as Aragon himself) embodied the ideal modern subject, possessor of an entirely naive
consciousness; one who, like his idealized rural counterpart, was instinctively in tune with the
mysterious ebb and flow of his natural surroundings: "Each day the modern sense of existence

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becomes altered. A mythology ravels and unravels. It is a knowledge, a science of life open only to those who have no training in it."

Certain objects and sites within the city "possessed the intoxication of the modern" for Aragon; especially those objects that embodied the transformative prowess and evanescent transience of modern life. Thus the iridescent transparency of an industrial product such as gasoline, and its "simulacre" (the "strange statuary" of the petrol pump), could provoke in our author enraptured fantasies of the divine: "Painted brightly with English or invented names (as in Shell, Esso or Texaco), possessing just one long supple arm, a luminous faceless head, a single foot and a numbered wheel in the belly, the petrol pumps sometimes take on the appearance of divinities of Egypt or of those cannibal tribes which worship war and war alone." In like manner, the Paris Arcades themselves possessed transformative powers, appearing to Aragon as "human aquariums", the light filtering through these mysterious covered 'passages' with a "glaucous gleam." Such places, and the objects encased within them, reigned with a power "predicated on their novelty". They were, for Aragon, "transitory tyrants" and "agents of fate" that embodied, above all, the fugacious mobility of modern life.

While Benjamin could admire the suppleness of the Surrealist's unconscious vision as it intersected with all these historically transient objects of the modern city, he also knew that their mythical dream images remained rooted in the world of the alienated individual, where all action was limited to an anarchic and self-fulling re-creation of modernity. In contrast to the Surrealist's internally motivated dreamlike investigations into the modern mythology of the city (the Arcades and its objects existing for Aragon as, for example, "interior boundaries of myself, ideal views I have of my laws, of my ways of thought"), Benjamin worked from the assumption that the dream veil laying over the modern city was a collective phenomenon: "We conceive", he wrote, "of the dream 1) as an historical 2) as a collective phenomenon." It was only the fetish nature of capitalist culture that led its subjects, each functioning as detached and independently motivated individuals, to imagine "their commodity dream world to be uniquely personal.....and who experienced their membership in the collective only in an isolated, alienating sense, as an anonymous component of the crowd." Ultimately, Benjamin saw Aragon's book within this
context; as one that "reflected the illusory experience of mass existence rather than transcending it."\textsuperscript{19}

In contrast to the Surrealist's romantic dreaming vision of the modern city, Benjamin's own goal was not to simply re-present the dream; but rather, to draw it out into a conscious state where it could take its place as historical knowledge. Yet this process was not to be simply one of reaching an awakened state, in which the dreamer suddenly experienced the real alienation of his existence; for the "luster with which the commodity world surrounded itself" - the veil and romance of the dream - was to be, \textit{in terms of its expressive potential}, preserved and re-directed (versus de-constructed and discarded) for the good of the collective.\textsuperscript{20} Benjamin recognized that the Surrealist, for his part, stood on the very threshold of perceiving this revolutionary and expressive power embodied in the unconscious dreaming face of the city. Thus it was within the context of the expressive moment itself that he assessed the value of the movement: awakening was, as he put it, "the moment of recognition in which things put on their true Surrealist face."\textsuperscript{21}

From the above, one can see that even as a consciously materialist historian, Benjamin nevertheless understood human history as being \textit{also} a dream, in which the desires and longings of human beings received expression; but only in the disfunctional and tyrannical form that the commodity fetish of a capitalist culture represented. His own "doctrine of the historical dreams of the collective" sought to restore to history all the ambivalence of these dreams, and their alienated expression; and in so doing, to express in simultaneous fashion both the historical possibility of technology, along with its present failure.\textsuperscript{22} In looking back today upon Benjamin's collective dream theory with our privilege of hindsight it might seem, in the face of what we know was already taking place in Europe's political arena, that he was holding out a vain hope for what really amounted to no more than - what is today - a utopian and wholly theoretical exercise, existing within the margins of dream psychology. But what historians have to remember, and to keep alive within their own work on this period, is the great sense of \textit{possibility} that existed within this inter-war period for critical theorists, writers and artists on the new Left, who harbored romantic and utopian dreams for the future.
During the inter-war period in Europe, there was *everywhere* a sense of rupture with the established Democratic regimes that had arisen out of the losses sustained in the Great War. The gulf between the old and new that the war had created led to the crumbling away of old traditions and their expression; a breakdown aided and abetted by the complimentary rapid development of new and technological forms of perception. The ultimate result in this shift of one's vision of the world was both exhilarating and frightening, in the sense that a still fundamentally nineteenth century world was now suddenly filled with new and often chaotically conflicting signs. For many writers and critical theorists on the new Left in Germany, it was the psychological imprint of the war upon men - the communal experience of the trenches, along with the war's technological impact within the realm of destruction - that opened up a virgin field for the creation of entirely new modes of sociability. Ernst Bloch, for example, acknowledged the transformative power of this uniquely modern experience in his 1918 *Geist der Utopie* by announcing the purpose of his book as a turn away from what was a now destroyed past ("what existed now will probably soon be forgotten. Only an empty gruesome memory hangs in the air....Its not worth talking about anymore."); and towards the construction of new forms of living as a "synthesis of music and mysticism, metaphysics and socialism." A new form of life loomed on the horizon; one which for all practical purposes was to be, as Bloch simply stated it, "conjured up out of the blue." 

This same romantic spirit that turned towards a re-definition of sociability through the creation of new mythologies and their communal religious expression existed within the minds of many French revolutionary writers and intellectuals on the independent Left as well. Perhaps the most direct, if somewhat late expression of such a movement, and one that intersects with our own interests, can be found within the formation of the *Collège de Sociologie* in 1937. The *Collège*'s avowed purpose was the development of a contemporary "Sociology of the Sacred"; a venture which posed itself as a research project into the topology of modern culture and its individual "obsessive tendencies", with the ultimate aim of inducting these tendencies into a collective political option for the future. As an example of how such an enterprise could put its own spin on newly mobilized 'sur' sensations of reality, one finds *Collège* member Roger
Caillois describing (in a 1937 book review for *Les Cahiers du Sud*) primitive religions and their sacred symbols as a potential force of "reunification and communion" within the modern social collective which could function as a new form of "sursocialization". Bataille, a founding member of the Collège, was likewise vigorous in his emphasis on the importance of ritual and myth within everyday practice, stating in his inaugural lecture at the Collège (published later as the *Sorcerer's Apprentice* in *Nouvelle revue française*'s July 1938 issue at the instigation of its managing editor, Jean Paulhan, who himself gave a lecture one year later at the Collège on *Sacred Language*) that "a community that does not carry out the ritual possession of its myths, possesses only a truth in decline." On this last point, Caillois appeared to be in complete agreement, for in an October, 1937 article published in *NRF* he himself analyzed the failure of the Popular Front on the basis of its religious ineptitude; complaining that the real problem with Léon Blum's leadership had been his lack of "a pontifical conception of power." On this last point, Caillois appeared to be in complete agreement, for in an October, 1937 article published in *NRF* he himself analyzed the failure of the Popular Front on the basis of its religious ineptitude; complaining that the real problem with Léon Blum's leadership had been his lack of "a pontifical conception of power." On this last point, Caillois appeared to be in complete agreement, for in an October, 1937 article published in *NRF* he himself analyzed the failure of the Popular Front on the basis of its religious ineptitude; complaining that the real problem with Léon Blum's leadership had been his lack of "a pontifical conception of power." 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(1939), Levy Bruhl's *La Mythologie primitive* (1935); and most representative of the fascist Right, Nazi theoretician Alfred Rosenberg's 700 page tome *Mythos der 20. Jahrhundert*. One could even say a veritable mythomania had developed by the thirties at both ends of the political spectrum in both Germany and France. It was a mania that caused Sartre to write in exasperation at the decade's end that this particularly potent fashion "had gone so far that today, I fear, there is a myth of myth, which should itself be the object of a sociological study."  

French sociologist Jules Monnerot, one of the *Collège*’s founding members, who nevertheless had quickly broken away from it after its inception (its members had an unfortunate tendency towards "Surrealist overstatement" he claimed; and that, along with their ill directed mixing of sociological and literary genres, had led in the end to the production of nothing more than a "Sorbonnic Dadaism"), neatly summed up in the June, 1939 issue of *Volontés* the confusion of groups and stated positions that proliferated on the new Left in the wake of this era's romantic and utopian perspective: "There can be no question of ridiculously serving the modern cult of the collective-for collective's sake, by setting up in the space of forty-eight hours one 'group', two manifestos, and four members, and crying Hey! I am founding a religion. I am the Pope. Are you with us?"  

But while in all these competing quests within the disaffected Left to capture what was really no more than the ineffable power of the 'beyond reason', it may have seemed to some that there was less evidence of differences in kind, and only more or less differences in intensity of practice; taken as a whole, they must be seen as responses developed in relation to what fascism was already successfully doing. The essential point was that, as *contesting religions*, they flourished precisely because it was never ever really clear how long the fascists could continue to fill the communal and affective void created by a disaffected capitalist culture, in the face of its also clearly developing totalitarian goals.  

While acknowledging accumulating traces of resignation and forecasts of doom prevalent in the thirties as well, one must recognize how much these various ideals of transcendence and rescue through a renewal of society's affective ties defined alternative Leftist culture in the inter-war years. Indeed, it was this very sense of a potential future beyond the clearly spreading power of fascism that explains the incongruity of Lacan's remark, made while attending the
International Psychoanalytic Association's conference at Marienbad in the summer of '36, that "(t)he day after my address on the mirror stage, I took a day off, anxious to get a feeling of the times, heavy with promises, at the Berlin Olympiad."32 (emphasis mine) The ambiguity of 'promise' that Lacan articulates three years after the Nazi's seizure of power in Germany is continuously spun out into a 'dialectic of possibility' on the new Left in the thirties. It is what animated Bloch's investigations into the utopian intoxications of the medieval heretics; as well as what allows Benjamin in his Arcade's Project to acknowledge the ruin of a commodity driven culture, at the very same time that he also proposes its rescue and transformation in terms of the very illusive dream surface that supported and promoted that repressive culture. The same restorative impulse appears again in Benjamin's '36 Artwork Essay where, at the same time he acknowledges the fascist's perversion of the medias of reproduction (in their development of the cult of the leader and in their reproduction of mass spectacles), he also theorizes the 'unconscious optical' capacities of the camera to document, and thus represent to culture at large, those socially invisible identities laboring underground within capitalism's economic systems of production.

PART B. UNDER THE SHADOWS OF ROMANCE: CRITICAL THEORY AND THE INSTABILITY OF GENDER.

In both Benjamin's and Bloch's work the 'ruin' stands as a schematic model of the past, within which lies as yet still buried forms of knowledge that, when uncovered and released into the present (through the efforts of the researcher himself), will bring new promise for the future: theirs is a form of historiography and social criticism which takes its measure and methodology not only from Marx, but also from the Jewish Messianic tradition.33 While belonging only peripherally to such a tradition, one finds the same back and forth between a 'lack' and its paradoxical promise (as knowledge, as new forms of 'enlightenment') in the work of Siegfried Kracauer in the twenties on the mass ornament and the cinema. In these early works, Kracauer initially saw film and the revue spectacles of the twenties as a diversionary culture not only
suitable to the daily living conditions of modern mass culture, but even potentially redemptive of it. Unlike other Weimar cultural critics who denigrated the new pastime of going to the cinema, Kracauer felt it should not be criticized, for it had, as he put it, "the advantage of being sincere." Modern demands for distraction found their answer, Kracauer wrote in his 1926 essay *Cult of Distraction: On Berlin Picture Palaces*, "in a display of pure externality": in such externality "the audience encounters itself; its own reality is revealed in the fragmented sequence of splendid sense impressions." Such a reality should be neither reviled nor hidden from the "working masses" (the blue and predominately white collar workers who attend the cinema), for without its reproduction in entertainment "they could never attack nor change it."

In viewing modern cinematic entertainments in a distracted and superficial way appropriate to the meagerness of its internal meaning, the audience potentially continued and expanded the alienation, boredom and multiple superficial tensions of their day up to the point of consciously recognizing the paucity of their own psychic reality. However, such a potentially revolutionary and redemptive moment of recognition was subverted for Kracauer by two things: firstly, by a capitalist cinematic aesthetic which, through editing, worked to seal off all the fragmentary similarities between the economic processes of a rationalized work force and its reproduction in diversion; and secondly, by the audience itself, often predominantly female, who instead of being further distracted by the cinema, had become absorbed by the seductive excesses and pure escapism of it.

Patrice Petro, in her recent work on Weimar cinema (*Joyless Streets*, 1989), has pointed out how Kracauer never questioned why this escapist Romantic mode of film making was so compelling to the feminine viewer, to whom he assigns a wholly negative identity. This turn away from a feminine response, characterized within Kracauer's developing critical modernity as a regressive and subverting lack, is unfortunate in Petro's eyes for several reasons; the first being that the cinema was one of the only places in Germany open to a public gathering of women: "the cinema, in its formative years, also embraced a utopian potential: to be a place of the feminine and a place for women." For Petro, Kracauer's attempt to overlook the feminine audience (by classifying the feminine gaze as uncritically 'absorbed') works to preserve male
authority in critical theory, as well as in spectatorship; an authority which has, as she points out, remained preserved in many contemporary theories of film (including feminist theories of spectatorship), in which cinematic vision is seen as inherently masculine. By contrast, Petro attempts to read female spectatorship in terms of its historical context, where in Weimar Germany women had taken on a much greater visibility in public life; particularly seen in their invasion (beginning with World War I) of the traditionally masculine sphere of labor.

The intensive rationalization of industry and labor in the Weimar years after 1925 made the hiring of cheap unskilled labor possible, and women were the most readily available source. While women never actually came close to replacing men in industry, or in achieving economic parity, they were nevertheless considered a powerful challenge to an already wounded (in the loss of the war) German masculine identity. But for women themselves, the opportunity to leave the home for the factory or office was a highly mixed blessing; for while often doing the same work as men at the factory (and being paid less for it), they were nevertheless also expected to carry on after work with all their traditional duties at home. Life for these working women became a never ending cycle of labor that they dreamt of escaping. And escape they often did, to the cinema after work where the psychic deprivations of an ever present household labor were briefly overcome in the spectacle and melodramatic romances of the cinema. Thus while Kracauer implies in his 1927 essay The Little Shopgirls go to the Movies that the absorbed attention of the feminine audience has nothing to do with contemplation (a mode of looking that implies a concentrated intellectual response); Petro states that "a contemplative aesthetic may actually account for women's emotional and highly concentrated gaze, precisely because it afforded the kind of heightened sensory experience which simultaneously responded to and compensated for women's experiences of everyday life."38

Petro articulates in her book a feminine identity in Germany in the twenties in the process of breaking free of the traditional roles that she previously labored under. But the problem coming to the fore with this break was that while in the factory, department store or office, women, like their male counterparts, experienced the repressions seemingly inherent to their working class status, they also experienced an additional gender repression imposed upon
them by a purely masculine authority that had further claims on their services once at home. Escaping to the cinema has to, therefore and in the face of this doubled burden of labor, be read as one aspect of a multi-faceted feminine challenge in the twenties to an omnipresent patriarchal authority in Germany.\textsuperscript{39}

In turning from this newly developing social reality for German women to Kracauer's critical reflections on the mass culture of the early twenties one can read, between the lines as it were, of a destabilized masculine identity, which works to repress the emergence of any 'dialectic of possibility' as it relates to women's separate and identificatory experience at the cinema. By brushing off 'the little shopgirls' visits to the cinema, Kracauer keeps any fears and anxieties provoked by an emergent and specifically feminine culture at a safe and measured distance. This does not mean, however, that his work lacks critical value. Far from it. Kracauer was, along with Benjamin, one of the first to take seriously the new forms of perception that mechanical reproduction brought into being. Further, both he and Benjamin rightly saw these emergent forms as the potentially legitimate expressions of a mass culture that lacked recognition and identity within the political scheme of things. However, the same dialectical gap that crops up in Kracauer's work, as a result of his blindness to gender differences in visual perception and to their social meaning within capitalism's organized systems of production and labor, appears, albeit in a much different form, in Benjamin's observations on Surrealism, as well as in his writings on his own experience of the modern city.

For the rest of this theoretical passage into the developing instability of the traditional male/female identity axis in Europe in the twenties and thirties, I want to turn to this vacant space in critical theory, in order to look at it from a somewhat shifted viewpoint, which will have particular resonances for our investigation into the romantic adventures of Surrealism in the 1930's. With the introduction of this new viewpoint, we shall encounter the image of a 'transgressive' woman becoming inextricably intertwined with a revolutionary vision of modernity and of the modern city itself. It is an image which, as you will shortly see, was assiduously cultivated by various critical writers and avant-garde artists on the Left in the advancement of their own coming-into-being revolutionary identities. This dialectical gap that
appears here, however, is found in this *superficially* expressive image of 'woman', which is ultimately, despite her assumed marginality, frozen into place and subsequently elevated over the more mundane, yet nevertheless swiftly changing, social identities of working French women in the late twenties and thirties. The depth of this contrast and difference - between an image (which ultimately becomes nothing more than a kind of free floating signifier of desire capable of being attached to almost any kind of ideological twist or turn), versus the concrete economic and cultural experiences of women - will later be argued as significant in relation to the photographic conditions of *framing* the feminine body that Surrealism pursued in its documentation of sacred bodies.

Certainly Benjamin had been perceptive in recognizing the Surrealist's fascination with the city's industrial and commercial phenomena, and its relation to the dreamlike appearance of a commodity filled world. Further, he was also deeply aware, unlike the inward looking Surrealist himself, of how far the romance of technology that Aragon in *Paysan de Paris* paid his respects too had, through capitalism's own artful talents for spectacle, seeped into the collective unconscious of the French. We can see evidence of this ourselves in, for example, a 1930 Mobil Oil advertisement published in *L'Illustration* (fig. 50), where a litany of the company's various supra-mechanical feats in driving and aviation is juxtaposed against a full page photograph of a clearly pre-industrial colonial Africa. In such a juxtaposition the mechanics of exchange, flowing from the 'borrowed' exoticism of the photograph (itself devoid of any technified references to mobility) into the text and its abstractions of kilometer and record times, becomes readily transparent to the critically attuned eye (which does not generally include, I might add, the more distracted reception of the image by *L'Illustration*'s casual and principally bourgeois reader).

But while writers like both Breton and Aragon were able to evoke, however unconsciously, the truly exotic and "Surrealist" face of modernity for Benjamin, he nevertheless steadfastly overlooked the importance of that other essential Surrealist object, embodied by la (femme) herself, who was so often used by that movement's various members to mythically frame the modern city, its various sites and multiple meanings. Here you may recall that in the
last chapter I noted this slippage of Benjamin's critical perspicacity in relation to Breton's *Nadja*, and that Breton himself corrected the oversight when he later admitted that it was 'woman' above all (who appears, I must emphasize here, within this kind of essentialist and 'universal' format through the representational strategies of the Surrealist himself; a strategy I will shortly attempt to de-code) who inspired the Surrealist's voyages through the labyrinth patterns of the city. Similarly, in *Paysan de Paris* one finds it is 'woman' - above and beyond any latest technological turn - who defines the expressive transience, the newness and the infinitely metamorphosing genius of modernity.

One reads of this allegorical sympathy of la (femme) to these essential experiences of modernity in, for example, a surprise encounter Aragon has in the Passage de l'Opera with a woman he has met but cannot readily place. The woman, called "Nana", responds to Aragon's confusion by exclaiming, "Have you forgotten already? It was only yesterday!"...to which Aragon, memory now jogged, replies by complimenting effusively, "Why you look divine today." His remark has, of course, the weight of social recovery through flattery; but Nana, with remarkable ease, puts the recovery into its properly mythical and rapidly transient modern context by retorting gaily, "I am the divinity of the day....Through me all things breathe and have their being...I am Nana, the idea of time."

In selecting the name "Nana" for the woman who emblematized all the fluid and quickly evaporating experiences of the modern city we have to assume that Aragon was making a calculated and ultimately highly descriptive point for the French reader. The word itself, meaning 'chick' or simply 'jeune fille', is often seen today as mildly chauvinistic. However, in its original context it was considered very pejorative, and was primarily used when referring to working prostitutes. Naturally, for any French art lover, the name "Nana" additionally conjures up the image of Manet's famous and scandalous coquette who, momentarily pausing in her toilette to coolly gaze out at her admiring audience, embodies all the allure and brazen seductiveness of a potentially transgressive modernity developing in and around the margins of an already fading traditional world.
This mythic figure of the prostitute, born one could even say alongside the very idea of the avant-garde artist himself (think of Degas' *Les Femmes devant un café, le soir*, 1877; or again with Manet, of his *Olympia*, 1863), continued to circulate as an allegory for a modernity that exceeded the confines of a traditional bourgeois world well into the twentieth century. Indeed, Benjamin himself first experienced both the fascination and danger of the modern metropolis through the presence of her signifying body, which framed for this emerging critical theorist the essential meaning of his adolescent revolt from the stagnating traditions of his own class.

In *A Berlin Chronicle* Benjamin described his early and independent ventures into the city. They are sharply etched personal memories of youthful adventure, in which he first experiences a sense of liberation from the constraining hold of his mother through his aimless explorations of the city. Significantly, his forbidden wandering "without purpose" of Berlin's streets are later recalled within a revolutionary context by him as "a sabotage of real social existence." Such wandering, itself an emphatically 'Surrealist' experience, gave Benjamin "a feeling of crossing the threshold of one's class for the first time"; a revolutionary move which held for him "the almost unequaled fascination of publically accosting a whore in the street." However, it also occurred to Benjamin that perhaps this experience did not so much anticipate a "crossing" as it did "an obstinate and voluptuous hovering on the brink, a hesitation that had its most cogent motive in the circumstances that beyond this frontier lies a revolutionary nothingness." And significantly, it is while standing at the edge of the void that the figure of the prostitute emerges for Benjamin once again: appearing in relief against the murky outlines of a still developing modern city, she is seen slumped against "the doorways of tenement blocks" and loitering on desolate streets near the railways "like the household goddesses of this cult of nothingness."

Clearly for Benjamin both the pleasures and dangers of 'knowing' the prostitute have merged with the shadowy outlines of an as yet to be discovered city. It is a city in the margins: as yet a mirage; exotic and distant; the undefined site of a potentially revolutionary, yet also dangerous (as in the void), future cut loose from its traditional nineteenth century bourgeois
moorings. Here we need to recall some of the general characteristics of a romanticized modernity: pervasive everywhere in the inter-war period were ideals of intoxication, of convulsion and of catastrophe; all of which intersected with a rapidly developing cult of the image as spectacle. Men like Benjamin clearly imagined that within these ideals there lurked a dangerous, yet at the same time potentially transgressive utopian space. But further, we can also see how, in Benjamin's eyes, this excessive and wholly imaginary space came to be picturesquely framed by a certain kind of woman. Indeed, in his essay *Central Park* (1938/39) Benjamin confirms this, writing that "with the rise of the great cities prostitution came into possession of new secrets. One of these is the labyrinthine character of the city itself. The labyrinth, whose image had passed into flesh and blood in the flaneur is at the same time colorfully framed by prostitution."47

While the prostitute, as a transgressive woman who represents the 'petrification' of traditional feminine beauty (a body no longer seen as "the announcement of the celestial beauty of love" and lacking essential womanly essences as 'mother' and nurturer of the family) frames this entry into a potentially dangerous, yet also revolutionary social zone; one must also recall here that the abstract outlines of the city itself - its gridlock of streets, its architecture and monuments - belong specifically to men.48 Not just to the traditional bourgeois male subject; but also to the critical theorist and avant-garde artist, who roam the city as modern reincarnations of the nineteenth century flaneur searching for the key to unlock their own developing revolutionary identities.

An ownership codified in law, the phallic outlook of the city is expressed in many ways, the most common of which is found within the phallic tower or monument itself. But while the masculine identity of the city's schematic outlines is acknowledged and even, in the transparency of this fact, joked about - as in a nineteenth century lithograph of the Eiffel tower (fig. 51), or the twentieth century documentation of this monumental organ by Surrealist photographer Georges Hugnet (fig. 52, 1936) - the abstract and transcendent nature of the all powerful phallic sign is never truly called into question through the unveiling of its, in reality, shyly retiring and entirely vulnerable physical presence. In this abstraction of a supposedly ruling force within the
city, the phallus (a singular and bold signifier that stands against the more complex materiality of the masculine genitalia itself) remains, like any god, all powerful and transcendent by the simple fact of its invisibility.\textsuperscript{49} And such an abstract configuration versus directly the symbolic essence of woman, which is universally represented through the transparent materiality of her corporeal body. Thus while the whore represents on one level a challenge to the traditions of femininity (through her there is, as Benjamin puts it, "the dissipation of appearances"); on another level, that of her gender's universal materiality, she appears, once again and as always, as the scenic frame to the creative activities of her male authors.\textsuperscript{50}

In laying claim to the schematics of the city, the male voyeur asserts his right to wandering the city without purpose beyond his hunting and tracking down the object of desire. For Benjamin, as for Kracauer, it is male spectatorship which remains the (unspoken) subject of his theoretical explorations, in the sense that he looks to the masculine flaneur - like Baudelaire or the Surrealist agent provocateur - for their descriptions of this new experience of modernity. By contrast, while the woman as prostitute theoretically becomes for writers like Benjamin the figure that subverts traditional ideals of feminine beauty and sexuality, she also, as "colorful" backdrop, fills her traditionally assigned gender role as decor and as fetish. Because of this contrast between a specific and revolutionary function, versus the ambiguity of more diffuse and non-specific role, one finds a veritable confusion of metaphors developing in and around the persona of the prostitute or 'degenerate' woman in the 1930's. There is, for example and on the Left, Jean Virgo's low budget film \textit{A propos de Nice} (1930), in which the moral deficiencies of Nice are symbolically played out by a frivolous and decadent woman who has prostituted herself in exchange for the material luxuries of life. In the film, this allegorical figure is ultimately stripped bare of her jewels and expensive clothing in a metaphoric purging of that city's corrupt and dissolute habits. (fig. 53). Or again, and this time from the bourgeois press, a \textit{Paris-Midi} cartoon critiquing the cost of the Popular Front's 1937 \textit{Exposition internationale} through the image of a seductively turned out woman (wearing a hat with "Expo '37" written across the brim), who archly makes it clear to an older and obviously infatuated gentleman that her services are available, but only for a price. (fig. 54)
All of these feminine images - as metaphors for both the deficits and charms of the city and the State - reveal above all, it seems to me, a masculine incapacity to, in any concrete political sense, identify the status of women who have exceeded the confines of their traditional roles as wives and mothers. These transgressive women are at one and the same time everything and nothing: that is, they represent desire and passion, at the very same time that they are also seen as lure and potential trap. Indeed, such women, whether appearing as dissolute whore or as a revolutionary figure, essentially represent nothing more than a free floating sign of desire and its lack. In the end, the prostitute is, like all women, nothing less than global in her capacity to fetishize events and scenic layouts. (fig. 55)

This incapacity to stabilize the transgressive feminine metaphor must be seen within the context of the period. The war had brought a flood of women into the office and factory, as it had in Germany. But while after the war many women left their jobs (were in fact forced out of them by various government regulations that allowed men coming back from the war to replace them in the work place), the perception that women were a threat to men's working status remained intact throughout the inter-war period. Thus even though the working conditions of French women deteriorated in the 1930's; they were, along with immigrant workers in France, often targeted as scapegoats for the economic crisis the depression years brought on. One finds evidence of a developing prejudicial attitude towards both populations in various discourses and texts of the period; such as the article in the January 1939 issue of L'Illustration, titled L'Homme au travail, la femme à la maison, where the three million "strangers" France had incorporated into its workforce were contrasted to 400,000 unemployed native French workers. Such unemployment was said to be pushing French wives and mothers out of their homes - where they belonged taking care of "household chores and children" - in order to find poorly paid supplemental incomes.

This fear that France was filling up with foreigners was accompanied by a further fear that the nation itself wasn't producing enough manpower to sufficiently maintain and control its third world Empire. This perceived malaise, blamed upon the nation's decreasing birthrate, was literally instituted as a discourse into the French educational system during the thirties, as is seen
in standard scholastic texts such as Etienne Baron's *Geographie de la France et du Monde*. The author of this text, in discussing France's falling birthrate, proclaims in highly emotional language that "(t)he declining birthrate is a *grave danger, which risks killing our country.*"[54] (author's emphasis)

Because of France's falling birthrate, keeping women at home became a rallying point for traditionalists, a turn reflected in the 1933 meeting in Paris of the "International Congress for the Return of Mothers to the Home". The heart of the perceived problem was laid at the feet of working women who were, as the article in *L'Illustration* noted, encouraged by their independence to stay single. Clearly the decline in birthrate wasn't to be taken lightly, particularly in the face of another potential conflict with Germany. Baron's text itself acknowledged such a danger when he wrote that "(a) nation which is depopulated becomes a tempting prey for its enemies."[55] The State itself joined in the battle against this advancing dénatalité by attempting to regulate sexuality along reproductive lines, instituting a pronatalist campaign under the aegis of the *Conseil Supérieur de la Natality*. Included in the program were laws attacking women's reproductive rights, such as those passed in 1920 and 1923 that mandated fines and prison terms for those either caught disseminating birth control information or facilitating abortions. Of course such programs and laws only helped to further foster hostility towards working women, who by their refusal to settle down and bear children were, as can be seen in one of the government's tricolor posters ("Call to Frenchwomen", fig. 56), seen to be literally endangering the future of the nation.

The important point here is that these discourses on reproduction and immigration survived intact through various regimes; from a conservative Third Republic through to a Popular Front leftist alliance and back again. They counted therefore and in sum for more than the superficial political issue of counting bodies and issuing statistical figures. They were also racial and gender issues which pointed to a general fear among many Frenchmen *on both the Right and Left* of losing control. It is in this same light that we must see the comparative population graph from the years 1865 to 1939 produced by the *Alliance National Contre la Dépopulation* and published in the May 1939 *Larousse Mensuel Illustré*. (fig. 57) The
physiognomic format of the graph relates not just to population statistics throughout Europe and Asia (represented by Japan); but also to the fact that Frenchmen were becoming, to quote the Collège de Sociologie's own response to the September '38 Munich Accords, "devirilized": the elegantly turned out, but getting ever so 'petit' Frenchman was in danger of losing his empire, and with it his powerful position within the European community (not to mention his suave image as Europe's most 'civilized' colonizer; fig. 58, advertisement, L'Illustration, 1935).

In the face of a growing fascist threat and of a democracy in crisis, one finds evidence in France throughout the twenties and thirties of a certain phallic anxiety, which is subsequently allegorically inscribed within geographical readings of the State: France is either seen as feminine and as passively dreaming in the face of multiple crisis (fig. 59, Paul Iribe, Le Temoin, 1933); or, conversely, as a masculine body which was becoming puny and dangerously insignificant in relation to other European physiognomies. The fact that it was difficult to find representations of a contemporary heroic body in France (which led to this constant look back into a revolutionary past; or to nineteenth century phallic monuments, as embodied in the Eiffel Tower) was brought into relief by the heroic body building going on elsewhere in Europe (fig. 60, from the '37 Exposition internationale, Joseph Thorak's sculptures in front of Albert Speer's award winning pavilion, itself a twentieth century version of the phallic tower).

Against all this emphasis on France's demographic lack, the figure of the prostitute can be seen as a contesting body; a woman who dispenses sexual favors which are divorced from any of the procreative functions so valued by the bourgeoisie. But for working women, the prostitute also stood as an emblem of what resistance to the familial reproductive ethic could potentially lead to: social marginalization in culture through consignment to the streets and all the dangers that lurk there. Benjamin briefly pointed the way into a more structured analysis of the relationship of women to labor and mass marketing through the figure of the prostitute by noting that she combined both seller and wares within her own person; and that she "appears not merely as a commodity but as a mass produced article." But in the end, for him, as for the historical figures like Baudelaire that he turns to, the prostitute is never really addressed in terms of what her degraded subjectivity meant in relation to other working women's interactions with
mass culture and its productions. Rather, she was a figure valued for the fantasies that she
brought to mind; fantasies liberated from all ties to a traditional world. The prostitute remained,
above all else, a landscaped terrain of symbolic meaning: she marked out a rite of passage for the
revolutionary writer and artist who, in his passage through her body, achieved a kind of
masculine sexual self-sufficiency that cohabitation without reproduction signified.

While both Benjamin and Kracauer saw a potentially subversive aspect within the
reproductive medias, they also pinpointed the coincidence of mechanical reproduction with a
crisis in perception. They recognized that reproductive technology had, in the end, turned vision
into a process of absorbing 'shock' where the modern subject, faced everywhere with a constant
barrage of images and unable to ever take it all in, became distracted - indeed, even impassive -
in the face of the visual excesses that bombarded him daily. But what these men failed to also
clearly articulate - and this comes partly from their own immersion within this new age of ocular
excess - was that this crisis of vision was inseparable from a concurrently developing crisis of
masculine identity and authority in the modern world. It was technology itself and the rapid
pace it set up that had brought women out of their homes and into the public workforce where
they could potentially challenge men's authority. And it was again technology and the
convulsions it could produce that also brought onto the horizon the specter of yet another war, in
which men's virility (versus their abstract phallic power) would be defined by their ability to
sustain the force of a violent mechanistic attack against their bodies.

In light of the terrible anxiety the very real possibility of another war evoked for men in
the thirties (fig. 61, front cover Vu, December,1933), there developed in much of Europe an
ideal of the "new man". He was someone who would either be adequate to the pressures of an
eruptive modernity (that is, develope a mechanistic body himself); or one who would somehow
be able to circumvent or defuse the technological complexities of the twentieth century. The
images and politics evoked by such ideals were various; found in, for instance, the mechanistic
ideal attached to the fascist storm pioneer or conversely, in the vision of a 'new man in nature'
that a fascination with (so-called) primitive cultures in the twenties and thirties had evoked (this
fascination was propelled in great part by various ethnographic studies coming principally from
the Left - the works of Marcel Mauss and Levi-Strauss are two names among many here.)

However, in this context of man and nature, one must also cite the fascist 'beast of prey' as part of the storm pioneer's persona that had been prefigured by the "predator philosophy" of proto-fascist Oswald Spengler.\(^{58}\) There was, nevertheless, one constant theme in these various aesthetic visions of the new man: whatever their theoretical structure and political mandate they were always juxtaposed against the perceived placidity and middle aged corpulence of the hated bourgeoisie. By contrast to this broad and static center, the aesthetic outlines of the new man were inevitably made visible through an emphasis on an active, productive and youthful virility.

The new man had to be ready to tackle "the hard and virile tasks" events were taking him towards.\(^{59}\) French fascist Drieu LaRochelle neatly summed up the principles of the new sought after look when he wrote of "the coalescing of European man around the idea of manly virtue."\(^{60}\)

In light of this emphasis on virility, and its contrasting reality found in the 'sterility' of declining population figures, one can see how the development of a new aesthetic ideal for men in France was being partially blocked in the thirties by a weak bourgeois democracy which was letting the currency and reproductive use-value of women slip. Indeed, such a response can be read out of some of France's most popular expressions of the period; in the sense that, as some feminist scholars have recently argued, the rage for all things primitive in the inter-war period - a fashion associated more specifically with an avant-garde Left than with any other group - can be linked in part to a desire to return to a time when women were specifically acknowledged as objects and as articles of exchange among men.\(^{61}\) Marianna Torgovnick in her recent book *Gone Primitive* (1990) has noted in her study of various ethnographic works, many from this period, that ultimately gender issues always find their place in western versions of the primitive, and that "sooner or later those familiar tropes for the primitive (such as, for instance, the instinctual, the oceanic, the out of control) become tropes conventionally used for women."\(^{62}\) She additionally points out - and this becomes directly associated with sexual politics - how western thinking frequently substitutes versions of the primitive for some of its own deepest sexual obsessions.
One finds such a schemata overtly visible in the work of Michel Leiris in the 1930's, seen particularly in his 1939 book *L'Âge d'homme*, the autobiographical context of which was publicized by the phrase that subtended the book's title: "A journey from childhood into the fierce order of virility". Much of the book focuses on the years in which Leiris became an ethnologist. But the writer also uses the 'autobiographical' context of his work to bring his own sexual and psychic obsessions with sex and blood, with disfigurement and pain as a source of pleasure, together with his intellectual obsession for primitive cultures. Ultimately revealed in this, and in many of Leiris's pre-war works written in what eventually became known as his autobiographical style of ethnography, is a longing for an uninhibited sexual freedom that 'blackness' and Africa represented for him: "In jazz", Leiris wrote in *L'Âge d'homme*, "came the first public appearances of Negroes, the manifestation and the myth of black Edens, which were to lead me to Africa and, beyond Africa, to ethnography." (author's emphasis)

Leiris's passion for finding a representation adequate to his desire for sexually taboo experiences was, of course, also shared by Breton and his group (and let me mention here briefly that Bataille - closely associated with Leiris at *Documents* and later during the formative stages of the *Collège* - while also obsessed with masculine sexuality and with a kind of primitive expression of it, represents these interests in ways significantly different from either Leiris or the Surrealists, as will be discussed in detail in Section II). But while the Surrealists were interested in the aesthetic value of primitive art and the idea of "exoticism" per se, as well as in black culture politically (taking, as will be discussed in Part C of this Section, a strongly stated anti-colonialist position), in looking for an image adequate to their desires for sexual freedom, they turned to various exotic figures contemporary to their own culture and period. Here I would like to interject and propose that this visible urge towards the free expression of the subject's sexual drives, which the Surrealist movement came to especially embody, can be seen as yet another variation on the theme of the 'new man' that appeared in that period: that of the sexually free man. But significant to this new ideal was the fact that the aesthetic bearers of the erotically liberated message were to be feminine and not masculine figures.
In a sense one could say that the various dramatic personae the Surrealist turned to in expressing their sexuality - the Sadian woman of sexual excess, the hysteric and madwomen in general - extended the trope of the prostitute as a sexually deviant and transgressive figure into new and potentially more expressive areas. This movement beyond the figure of the prostitute was hardly surprising, as it was inevitable that she would become a rather inept and clumsy metaphor for the movement's ideals of frenzied passion and of madly falling in love. But in a turn away from this figure there is ultimately also, I want to shortly argue, a turn away from the streets and from any direct connection to the marketplace out there that the prostitute, however distantly, had defined.

This is not to say that Surrealist representations of desire had no relationship to contemporary events. Their expressive personae were, as I have already stated, related to commonly acknowledged figures of the period. This was true even of the Sadian woman of sexual excess who, while constructed in honor of the (claimed as) sexual revolutionary, the "divine" Marquis himself, can also be seen as an exaggerated take on the more contemporary and fashionable 'flapper' of the twenties and early thirties, whose liberated attitudes and imagined sexual depravities were a hot topic of debate in many journals and newspapers of the period. One can see, for example, the movement's attraction to the media's projected image of 'La Garçonne' as a sexually provocative seductress in their 1933 pamphlet of poems and drawings dedicated to the young murderess, Violette Nozières. Violette had killed her father (and attempted to do the same to her mother) for his inheritance, and among the general public she quickly became identified as a symbol of everything that was wrong with overtly modern and independent young women. The press played directly into this conception of Violette as a "veritable flapper from hell"; the September, 1933 cover of Vu magazine printing a photograph of the infamous murderess under the dramatic boldface heading "Le Démon de la sexualité et la jeunesse détraquée"65 (fig. 62)

At her trial Violette defended her dissolute life spent in bars and cafes, along with her perverse sexual relationship with her lover (with whom she'd been planning to share her 'inheritance'), stating that she felt no remorse for her act and insisting that she had the right to
live her own life as she saw fit. She also attempted to justify her murderous act by claiming that her father had sexually molested her (a charge she later withdrew), and it was this last point the Surrealist quickly seized upon as an opportunity to condemn the hypocrisy of bourgeois family life in general. However, their references to Violette's violation in their pamphlet were, in the end, mostly poetic and veiled in opacity: Breton sees the father's intentions inscribed in the daughter's name, the first part of which is "viol" (which in French can mean 'rape'); while Eluard writes of how she "dreamed of undoing and then undid the dreadful serpents knot of blood ties." Ultimately Violette takes shape under the direction of the Surrealist's pen not so much as a political figure at the center and symptomatic of a much larger debate on the morality and emerging independence of women; but rather as a kind of perverse and fascinating idol: "You no longer resemble anyone living nor dead", Breton writes of her. Instead Violette was someone claimed by the Surrealist leader as "mythological to her fingertips."

This same sleight of hand - the détournement of a contemporary issue into a purely iconographical reading of an eruptive femininity, in which transgressive women are raised above the everyday (and the issues the everyday brings up) to become mythological creatures - can be found in the Surrealist approach to other female crimes and acts of desperation, as well as to women's association with various categories of madness. For instance, there was the celebrated case of the Papin sisters, two maids who unexpectedly exploded and killed their unreasonably demanding employers, and who afterwards made no attempt to hide or explain their crime. Surrealists Paul Eluard and Benjamin Peret had argued that the sister's crime was justified because they were victims of social oppression. Yet at the very same time that the two men open up a direct path into a contemporary social issue, they also describe the sisters as springing "fully armed" from the writings of Lautréamont, thus subsuming them under a Surrealist pantheon of heroic - but also dead - masculine literary figures. In the end, any further contextualizing of the social issues the Papin sisters' crime represented becomes caught in a vise between this urge, on the one hand, of the Surrealist to play to role of the social critic; and on the other, their constant drive towards the romanticizing and mythologizing of transgressive women,
who through their convulsive acts ultimately come to embody a mere fantasy of convulsive beauty.

David Macy has recently argued (*Lacan in Contexts*, 1988) that while the Surrealists refer to a pantheon of dead male criminals (Gilles de Rais, or the Marquis himself, for example) that "in the realm of living criminals it is the female killer who excites them most" (and the anarchist Germaine Berton must be included among this living pantheon; the assassin of *Action française* leader Maurice Plateau, a portrait of Berton appeared in the December, 1924 issue of *La Révolution surréaliste*, under which was written, "La femme est l'être qui projette la plus grande ombre ou la plus grande lumière dans nos rêves"; a phrase quoted from Baudelaire's *Paradis artificiels*). In the end, it is these women - Violette, Christine and Lea Papin, Germaine Berton - who are able to embody, as in the figure of the prostitute for Benjamin, the sexualized frisson of both terror and adventure that is so necessary to establishing the illusion and fantasy of convulsive identity.

But the problem goes even deeper than the Surrealist's superficial 'fictionalizing' of the eruptive female killer within a poetic litany of mythologized feminine figures who are desired above all, for their symbolic capacity to break through both the moral restraints and sexual taboos imposed by a hypocritical bourgeois society. At the end of the day this romanticizing gesture, however well intentioned, is precisely what defeats the movement, for it leads to their circumvention of the very issues they surely mean, in reality, to address; that is, the internal yet also concrete reality of the subject's alienation from the free expression of his desires.

To reach into the depths and shadows of the subject's alienation from his desire means to reach into the very structure of madness itself as the ultimate response to this division and separation within the self. In Part C of this section (*Scripting Light: The Documentation of 'Sacred Bodies'*) I want, in addition to probing the meaning and intentions that lie behind the Surrealist's photographic documentation of sexual excess that the Sadian woman presents, to also argue, through an examination of the documentation of madness that the Surrealist associates himself with, that these images directly twart any penetration and understanding of madness beyond the realm of its exterior and ornamental expressivity; an expressivity which is in turn
structured by the movement into a personal iconography of convulsive desire. The omission of any reading of madness beyond the erotic pleasure its ultimately fetishized body produces presents a puzzling lack and contrast to the fact that some of the important underlying structures of madness and their relation to repressed desires were being explored in remarkable depth by Jacques Lacan, himself a close associate of the movement. Such blindness is worth pursuing, I would argue, as in addition to Lacan’s penetrating observations on madness being published, in part, within one of the movement’s own publications (*Minotaure*), they were also researches directly related to widely debated contemporary issues.

Contemporary debates on madness in the thirties in France were complex and manifold; not only concerned with calling the structures and definitions of both ‘madness’ and ‘sanity’ into question; but also, as I want to argue, with ultimately calling into question the very structures of gender and its stereotyping through assumed social and sexual roles. In the case of this latter issue we shall, in Part C of this section, find Lacan, through his study of the female paranoiac and his focus on their latent homosexuality (studies published in *Minotaure*) opening the door onto the possible existence of an unstable - or at the very least, unconfirmed - gender identity that lies at the heart of madness and its alienation from the social world. While in the end, the instability of gender traits within the female paranoiac is never pursued by Lacan beyond its meaning within the systems of sexual development that are signified in, as he himself put it, "the enigma of the phallus and of feminine castration"; the Surrealist - or at least Breton as their leader - turns away, I will additionally argue, from the exploration of any possible deviancy in traditionally assigned gender roles in madness, as well as in any other form of socially transgressive behavior. Such a turn away means that any potential development of the idea of gender instability and its resulting mutations as the cause of the mad subject’s social alienation (either within or beyond the realm of sexuality that Lacan opens up) is, *in terms of the image madness puts forward*, left unexplored by the Surrealist; and by extension therefore, unrelated to the contemporary debates on madness taking place within French culture in the thirties.

Ultimately I shall be arguing that the Surrealist turned to the Sadian woman and madwoman as metaphors for a revolutionary excess that men on the critical Left were
desperately seeking out in the thirties, rather than also turning to them as figures deeply embroiled in contemporary debates and thus full of dialectical possibilities in terms of their very juxtaposition in relief against those debates. But even more damaging to the Surrealist's cause of social and sexual liberation, I want to further claim that while the Surrealist isolates and looks at transgressive feminine bodies, which represent the ideal of rupture so crucial to a revolutionary modernity; in the end these Convulsive Beauties become, once they are localized into representational form, mere travesties of their revolutionary ideal as aggressively mobile and eruptive bodies: that is, once they are physically documented in the photograph they become literally petrified (and thus emptied of any possibility of signifying revolutionary movement) into Surrealist icons of desire.

In relation to this cause of a revolutionary desire and its liberation, one must finally ask what body really could absorb - as the vessel and bearer of a revolutionary intoxication - the full brunt of the destructive task the revolutionary sets out for himself? Here one turns to counterrevolutionary culture; that is, to the fascist who, also seeing himself juxtaposed to a traditionally static bourgeois world, attempts to answer such a question through the image of a masculine body seamlessly welded to an explosive mechanistic apparatus. Once armored by the predatory and destructive machine, the fascist is able to imagine himself capable of deflecting the shocks to the body that any revolutionary convulsion brings on. But what is significant here, in relation to Surrealism and its investigations into sexuality, is that the language used by the fascist in developing this union between man and his machine is fully sexualized, at the same time that it also stays obsessively focused on the goal of its destructive task.

In fascism, the machine is constantly represented as a virile sexual force; only now the culminating explosive act of this phallic power - its 'orgasm' one could say - is signified by the spurt of blood that penetration by the weapon brings on: "It was as if I myself could feel", wrote Ernst von Salomon, "every jolt that shook the metal parts of the gun as a bullet slicing into warm living human bodies.....was I now perhaps one with the weapon? Was I not machine - cold metal?" Further, in this allegorical fusion of masculine sexuality with destruction and ultimately death, one finds that 'virility' itself is presented as a deathbound concept. Here one
can say that there was an awareness of the 'duty' of the virile man to be able to destroy without flinching within the French dissident Right. But it was an awareness that appeared in the form of a longing for a masculine power that France, unlike Germany, did not have. Looking with envy to his Teutonic neighbor to the North, Thierry Maulnier, editor of *Combat* and self-confessed admirer of "Nationalist-socialist or fascist neonationalism", wrote in a 1933 introduction to Arthur Moeller van den Bruck's celebrated *The Third Reich*, that "(f)rom 1918 to 1933, the German nationalist youth taught us a very great lesson. In these men one found generations virile enough not to shrink from murder or death."74

While it is clear that in the psyche of the warrior notions of virility are tied to an obsession with death, this ever constant push towards destruction should hardly be surprising, if one recalls that the specter of death appears for all men not only in allegorical renditions of war and its battles. For example, even in their sexual union with women, men also manage to fix their image of death; a move signified in its French context by the so called 'petite-mort' of ejaculation that is said to define the masculine experience of orgasm. Thus one finds men in their 'virility' (that is, their physical persona) surrounded everywhere by death; both by big deaths and little ones. On the dissident Left, it was Bataille who came unabashedly to the forefront in this deathbound tableau Frenchmen particularly found themselves trapped in throughout the thirties. He was, it seems, fully prepared to admit to this consuming passion for death and its relation to a virile identity. In his essay *The Practice of Joy before Death* (the title not without irony for today's reader, written as it was in 1939, on the very eve of France's fall to Germany), we read the emphatic statement that "no life co-joins with virile greatness."75 (emphasis mine)

One sees from the above how in the thirties in Europe, with the approach of war close at hand, 'virility' and life are placed at opposite poles of the symbolic axis for those men who see themselves as actively protesting the representation of the democratic ideal by a static and morally bankrupt bourgeois class. Here one should point out that the resurrection of Sade on the critical Left in France during this inter-war period must be seen within this pervasive cultural context, in which masculine sexual drives are ever more consistently being tied to ideals of
destruction and death. But such ideals were ultimately taken beyond Sade and into new limits by the fascist himself, who set up war and its destructive reality as emphatic political goals, which would lead not only to a virile renewal of men themselves; but to the renewal of the Nation State as well, the ultimate repository of patriarchal power.

While Sade's popularity in France on the new Left can be seen to anticipate, in part, a shift in ideals of desire and masculine sexuality - expressed through the Marquis' emphasis on the role of violence and even death in sexual exchanges between the subject and his desired object - there was also a connection made on the critical Left in the thirties between an ideal of 'love' and its shifting relationship to changes in the practice of war itself. As the last theoretical excursion that will precede my investigation into the documentation of sacred bodies in Surrealism and fascism, I would like to set out for the reader this relationship between love and war as it was understood by Collège de Sociologie member Denis de Rougemont, as well as by Benjamin himself. It is hoped that this final excerpt from the teeming profusion of intellectual debates and exchanges on the new Left in the thirties will help to throw into relief some of the forces at work in the passage from Surrealist 'mad love' to fascist 'mad machines' that I suggested at the beginning of this section, and that we will look at, in terms of its visual documentation, in the next and last part of this section.

It was at the Collège's session on 'Tragedy' in the spring of '38 that de Rougemont spoke on this connection between love and war. His lecture, taken from book V of his L'Amour et l'occident (published in 1939), was predicated on the thesis that, as he put it, "any change in military tactics can be considered as relating to a change in conceptions of love or vise-versa." To illustrate his thesis de Rougemont contrasted the medieval chivalrous model upon which both love and war had functioned - where rules of chivalrous restraint and pursuit were followed with the ultimate goal of obtaining the surrender and conquest of a known object - to an image of modern war, in which a "mechanical and unmanning violence" was seen to ultimately lead to the catastrophic annihilation of the sought after object.

The shift that de Rougemont articulated comes out of the development of modern technological warfare, where it is the machine itself which now performs the creative act of
submission and conquest that men had formerly done. But further, it is clearly the unthinking and unfeeling mechanics of the machine that have ultimately led not to old fashioned "conquest" per se of the object; but rather, to its blind destruction. And once direct contact between men and their opponents (be they the 'enemy' or the pursued and initially resisting lady love herself) has been severed; then, in de Rougemont's eyes, the soldier himself was - at best - plunged into a "generalized impotence"; and at worst, into "chronic onanism and homosexuality," 78

Benjamin, in his *Theories of German Fascism* (1930), had also noted how, within the capacity for annihilation that twentieth century technology represented, modern warfare had assumed "the countenance of record setting." 79 Further, he additionally saw how, in the face of this loss of 'man to man' combat, the fascist had responded by turning the impersonality of modern war into an aesthetic game, in which beautiful images of fiery exploding battle landscapes become the motivating factor (the scent of attraction that first piques the warrior's desire for battle) in men's drive towards conquest: "The most rabidly decadent origins of this new theory of war are emblazoned on their foreheads: it is nothing more than an uninhibited translation of the principles of l'art pour l'art to war itself." 80 What Benjamin has pointed out in his aesthetic assessment of modern war is that once the convulsions of war have been turned into aesthetically satisfying images, desire is awakened in men for a battle which is, *in reality*, as abstract and impersonal as contemporary relationships between people have become. 81 Here the role of 'beauty' in awakening the desire for conquest that both love and war signify is to create the image that will provoke the warrior's drive towards possession. In the end then, it is the preservation of the beautiful image itself (which Benjamin would undoubtedly have related back to the bourgeois 'cult of beauty', now re-transcribed intact into the fascist's vision of war), versus the alienating terror of technological reality, that awakens and directs desire towards it object.

In his *Surrealism* essay, Benjamin managed to articulate rather more directly the relationship between amour and war, along with remarking on his perception of Surrealism's particular position within this exchange. Upon noting Breton's attraction to the epoch of Louis VII and to the courts of love, Benjamin remarked on the similarity between Provencal love poetry and the writings of Surrealism; both of which turn "chastity too, into a transport." 82
such a world, where all poets "possess a mystical beloved", one is plunged into a realm, Benjamin writes, "that borders not only on tombs of the Sacred Heart or altars to the Virgin, but also, on the morning before a battle or after a victory." (emphasis mine) To my mind, the distance between the medieval courtly style of love Benjamin articulates, and the rather less purified peregrinations of Sade, captures perfectly this mixture of old and new style love the Surrealist's engaged in throughout the inter-war period. The Convulsive Beauties they sought out inevitably became, as we have seen, mythological figures placed on a pedestal. But they were also figures whose exterior bodies were riven with the destructive evidence of an internal sexual drive alienated from its social community. The destructive face of desire that the Surrealist found himself unconsciously drawn to ultimately became fully internalized by the fascist and associated with his own creative will to power. Such power was, in its turn, given external form through the image of the sleekly smooth and steellike warrior's body: the new and fully modernized organ of conquest and power in Europe. It remains only for us to examine the physiognomic form these two bodies - different, yet also the same in their shared impulse towards destruction and death - took in the document that the photograph represents.

PART C: SCRIPTING LIGHT: THE DOCUMENTATION OF 'SACRED BODIES'

Because of the complexity inherent to my examination of the documentation of 'Sacred Bodies', which moves between the two widely divergent aesthetic and political cultures that German fascism and French Surrealism represent, I have broken its trajectory up into two specific areas of investigation. The first will examine the concept of 'documentation' itself, as it was understood in both Germany and France; as well as looking at how Surrealism and fascism specifically intersected with this concept. As for the second area of investigation, I will be directly comparing and contrasting the aesthetic outlines and gender specificity of what will be argued as the 'Sacred Bodies' of Surrealism and fascism through their principally photographic reproductions of those bodies. In the case of this latter investigation, I have already presented some of the bodies that were ultimately accorded cult like status within their respective
movements: thus we will be looking at photographic representations of madness and the Sadian body in Surrealism; while in fascism, I'll be discussing representations that emphasized the godlike status of the Nation's leader, as well as those of the predatory soldier and heroic "worker" for the Nation, who both came to embody the mythological man/machine that proto-fascists like Ernst Junger developed.

As already stated, the concept of 'beauty' in all these representations will be central to the presentation of the body as a sacred vessel dominated by the desires of those who have created them. This is so, I will argue, even in the case of the leader himself, who is ultimately trapped and unable to act outside of the necessarily inviolable parameters of his own godlike status. In the end, I shall find that there is the hypostatization of 'beauty' itself into a metaphysical cult in both fascism and Surrealism; one that is described through gestures of convulsion and intoxication. Within such parameters beauty can, in the end, only mean death, if for no other reason than the fact that it is always functioning in a sphere outside of and beyond life itself; that is, beauty is an aesthetic form within Surrealism and fascism which makes it revolutionary rupture only within the sphere of the sacred or divine.

The inter-war period was an era when people were being drawn into fully imaginary identities, which were subsequently put forward as being both real and capable of being documented. The key to this institution of the imaginary within the real lay, as Kracauer had recognized, in the rapid development of the reproductive medias and in a popular culture which, by consequence of that development, had become dedicated to the visual surface of its world. Kracauer also saw how in this world of visual excess every kind of mechanical reproduction - whether film, photography, magazine reproduction, or advertising - was part of a contemporary trend towards the text or narration of history being replaced by its image. Thus fascism, whose growing prosperity ultimately came out of its successful institution of a totalitarian visual culture, entered into a world already composing itself into a brilliant forest of spatial configurations. But what is also significant to our purpose of investigating the meaning of 'documentation' itself is the fact that in this rapid growth and development of the medias, there
was also a specific shift within contemporary culture in its perception and understanding of the photograph as a document.

Before the first war, the photographic document was seen to principally function within the realm of archival material; that is, it served as a visual accessory to, for example, scholarly research or, in the field of art, to someone like the landscape painter who might need to refresh his memory on the details of a landscape once back in his studio. But in the twenties and thirties, with the rise of the illustrated press and the development of photojournalism as a recognized profession with its own 'masters' of technique and production, the meaning attached to the photographic document began to change. Now in addition to its archival context, it also began to be valued within popular culture at large as an "eyewitness" account of an event or exchange between two or more parties which, in its visual structure, was often of a brief and ephemeral nature. Here we can say that the photographs produced by the photojournalist did not always duplicate a more or less stationary or permanent aspect of reality - a particular landscape or building - so much as they often became acknowledged records of events which, after their moment in time, had ceased to exist.

It is significant to our particular project that within the rise of the illustrated press the bulk of events documented by the photojournalist were of a spectacular or traumatic nature. Parades, demonstrations, car accidents, fires; in short, any kind of eruptive event, whether man made (as in war), or natural (as in a flood or earthquake), became grist for the photojournalist's daily information mill. Thus in a very real sense, photojournalism came to mean a kind of visual reportage on the instantaneous or convulsive within everyday experience. Surrealism and fascism both picked up on this contemporary attraction within popular culture towards the explosive and its documentation, and incorporated these trends (however unconsciously) into their own evolving aesthetic identities, which they subsequently advertised as 'revolutionary' through their juxtaposition against the perceived static culture of the ruling class bourgeoisie. Thus we can say that it was upon the documentary field of 'convulsion' within the everyday that both Surrealism and fascism's primary exchanges with popular culture took place. However, it must also be said that, while both Surrealism and fascism incorporate into their own aesthetic
language popular culture's fascination with convulsive events, their appropriation of this everyday language of rupture is never turned back onto that culture in any dialectically illuminating way. In Fascism convulsion becomes, as you will shortly see, a deliberate smokescreen used to forestall the masses recognition of the real danger accumulating at their doorstep. By contrast, Surrealism's relationship with convulsion is much more equivocal. It functions - as it does in popular culture - as a diversion; an expressive aid used principally by the movement in the creation of its ornamentally seductive tableaux. This kind of diversionary response came directly out of Surrealism's ambivalent relationship to popular culture itself: as a movement, they were, as art historian Molly Nesbit in her discussion of their relationship with Atget descriptively put it, "not exactly inside popular culture (their clothes were a little too fine), and not quite outside of it either (they, like le peuple, relished the taste of movies, the fantastic ground of the Butte Chaumont, and a particularly seamy cafe in the Passage de l'Opéra)." In sum then, while convulsion becomes a particularly expressive trope that mass culture turned to in the inter-war years, it was an expression whose potential was never truly put to work in any kind of revolutionary context, inspite of its adoption by an avant-garde Left. Here one can say that it was not so much that its explosive and therefore, potentially revolutionary value was repressed, as it was an expression left eddying about on the mere surface of events.

i: The Document

"The script of light is a kind of statement which in our world is accorded the status of a document."

Ernst Junger, On Pain (1934)

The twenties in Germany saw the rise of two important trends in documentary photography that the fascists later seized upon and incorporated into their own developing visual culture. The first was found in a worker's amateur photography movement developed by the Left wing illustrated press in the mid-twenties; while the second related to that era's profound belief in technical progress as the solution to Germany's economic situation, and to how this
ideal of progress was both documented and exemplified by technological advances made in the field of perception. In the case of the former trend, the early impetus for an amateur photography movement within the working classes came from Willi Munzenberg, who founded in 1925 the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung (AIZ)*; a Left wing illustrated magazine most famous today for its collaboration with John Heartfield. Munzenberg was crucially aware of the propaganda value of photography; and thus felt it "imperative" to create an illustrated magazine aimed at working class interests. But he also perceived the essential documentary value of photographs taken by workers themselves. To this end, AIZ opened a center in 1926 for workers who were amateur photographers; as well as helping them to set up their own journal, *The Worker Photographer*.

The editors of AIZ made use of *The Worker Photographer* to communicate practical tips on photography, as well as to encourage workers to photograph anything of potential political interest that happened while at work. The goal for Munzenberg wasn't to turn workers into professional photographers as much as it was to obtain 'eyewitness' accounts of working conditions. Indeed, the very amateurish look of many of the photographs obtained was seen as their strength. It lent a sense of immediacy and credibility to the image, thus accruing to the 'eyewitness' account an important sense of concrete reality that the ideal of any document itself embodied. But as functional and pragmatic as Munzenberg's intentions were, the worker's movement never really took off; and by 1933 AIZ itself had been forced to immigrate to Prague. However, the practical genius embedded in the idea of using amateur photography for propaganda purposes was picked up and expanded upon by Germany's ambitious new 'Minister of Information', Joseph Goebbels.

While control of both cinema and radio is possible for any government with totalitarian aims; as Rolf Sachsse has pointed out in his photographic history of the Third Reich, controlling the output of amateur photography or the contents of the family album was another matter entirely. Yet despite the apparent impossibility of ever adequately controlling an entirely private and diffuse production, this was precisely what Goebbels set out to do. And in fact, his success in this area was great enough that until the late thirties, amateur photography was
considered the backbone of Germany's propaganda campaign. For our purposes, Goebbels's program, which had to be instituted as a widespread and multi-faceted grass roots program in order to succeed, is a persuasive indication of how assiduous the German fascists were in instituting their totalitarian outlook within everyday visual culture. But further, the way in which amateur photography was incorporated into the fascist's propaganda apparatus will also give the reader an idea of how much a specific ideal of 'beauty' directed the documentation of the physical terrain of both the country and its (particularly German) inhabitants.

Early on, Goebbels set up a photographic section within the Ministry of Propaganda under the 'Department of a Positive Conception of the World'. The focus of this section was twofold: the first goal being the straightforward production of propaganda; the second, to set out guidelines for the practice of amateur photography. In relation to the latter, the 'National Association of Amateur German Photographers' was set up; and it, in turn, laid out guidelines for the creation of a 'National Photography', which was presented as "an essential task for the German people as a whole."89 Falling into the realm of a 'National Photography' was the documentation of the "beauty" of the fatherland, as well as the job for the amateur photographer of putting together "a picture of men at work", which would subsequently be edited and incorporated into the Nazi program propagandizing "the worker's struggle."90

In relation to the documentation of the beauty of the fatherland itself, many companies launched competitions focused on re-producing the Nazi ideal of beauty. Such competitions served to underline the close association between State propaganda and the economic interests of business and industry. But the ideal of reproducing the beauty of the fatherland also became closely linked with the various leisure time activities of the 'Strength through Joy' program, which focused on mass tourist outings. Almost all the holidays provided by this program sent along a photographer, who would point out what scenic details to photograph, as well as 'recommending' the correct viewpoint to be taken. This ideal of reproducing the beauty of the fatherland was further extended to include the documentation of the 'strength and purity' of the Aryan race itself; a goal subsequently undertaken by the German Labor Front.
In 1936, the Labor Front instituted photography courses as "a National and stimulating
activity to compliment the leisure pursuits of German citizens." Amateur photography itself
was presented as "the patrimony of a whole people"; and it was felt that such an inheritance
"should perform a useful task." Ostensibly, the program's goal was to "provide each and every
citizen with the technical knowledge to enable them to persevere and to control their cameras." Absolute "control" of the machine itself was, in fact, the pivotal concept of the program. It
meant that amateur photographers could, as the Labor Front put it, "aspire to being one of the
major factors in the history of civilization." Of course, this translated for amateurs into
recording the history of *German* civilization. Or rather more precisely, what was really being
aimed at here was the documentation of the Aryan race "at work and at play"; a record which
would ultimately stand as a "legacy" for generations to follow. It was, therefore, within this
context of historic 'legacy' that all German citizens were encouraged to make family albums in
which the fair physiognomy of their race would be exemplified. (fig. 63, an advertisement for
Leica camera from the Nazi official 'art' magazine *Die Kunst im Dritten Reich* that embodies the
sought after look for photographs of leisure time activities, in which the 'beauty' of the
fatherland and its people appears in all its slick and over determined artifice).

The thrill of controlling the reproductive apparatus and, therefore, one's image was
ultimately extended to the point of literally introjecting the machine itself into one's psychic
conception of the body. The impetus for such a development can be attributed to the
mechanistic aesthetics of Ernst Junger and other literary agents of the proto-fascist conservative
right. But part of what made the work of Ernst Junger particularly compelling for the fascists
who followed him was his recognition of photography as a crucial weapon in the creation of an
image of destructive power: "We already pointed out in *Der Arbeiter (The Worker)* that
photography is a weapon which the new type of person makes use of. For him, seeing is an act
of aggression." (*On Pain*, 1934)

Analysis of Junger's inter-war works (which were, to say the least, prolific; he wrote five
books, one hundred essays, and edited three books presented as photo-essays during this period)
have all pointed to the influence of the 'fronterlebnis' (front experience) of World War I on his
developed ideal of "total mobilization" and on his man/machine aesthetic. And justifiably so. But before we review his post World War I work, in terms of its specific relationship to photography as an 'aggressive' form of perception particularly suited to the convulsive identity of modernity; one must also briefly note what photographic standards were specifically at work in Germany during this period. It was, after all, these standards which not only formed the cultural backdrop to Junger's work; but also, beyond his memories of the war, informed his developing technological vision of the world at large.

Central to the postwar era in the realm of one's vision and perceptions of the world was the rise and popularization of photojournalism; a development which, while taking place throughout Europe and America, found its earliest and strongest expression in Germany. One of the more important developments that took place within this popularization was the revolution of the page layout in printed material (that is of magazines, newspapers and books as well). The text, which had formerly been of prime importance, with photographic images only appearing in isolated instances, was now often overridden by series of interrelated photographic images which, with little more than brief captions, told a story in and of themselves. This perceptible shift from the text to the photograph took place with the coming of 35mm film and its 36 continuous exposures; a development which allowed the discontinuity of the single photographic plate to be overcome. Further, the layout designer of any magazine was less prone to cropping photographs from 35mm film since it was less finely grained film than the larger format photographic plates, and thus could be printed right to its edges. The ultimate result of this shift to a smaller format was more power given over to the vision of the photographer, whose framing of the image became more respected and less vulnerable to alteration. It was also this period that saw the rise of photographic agencies, which mediated between the various medias and the photographers themselves. The rise of a central depot that managed the output of the photographer also led to the birth of the 'star' reporter syndrome.

The shift towards the expanding role and importance of the photographer was particularly strong in Germany in great part because it took place in a cultural background in which the products of technology were being valorized as instruments of a newer and more
precise vision of the world. Such ideals were reflected, for example, in the Neue Sachlichkiet and Bauhaus movements of the twenties, which had both seized upon "the exactitude of photography as a technical means of expression." Within this developing ideal of a more visibly exact world, Junger appeared not just as a man who looked back to the already past experience of the war. He was also a man looking forward from the war and into a fully technified future that complimented the developing ethos of his period.

The story of Junger's fluctuations between the past and a radically technologized future will take a moment to unfold. The pause is, however, worth the effort, as two important factors the fascists later incorporate into their own documentary style of presentation will come to the surface. The first influential factor is found in Junger's discussion of war as a process of labor; a theory which he supported through the presentation of photographic documents of the Great War. These documents were seen by Junger to, in their sum (that is, in their cumulative details), both witness and clarify war as a creative work process; a dramatic re-definition of 'work' and the 'worker' that the Nazi's later seized upon. As for the second factor, the reader will discover in my discussion of Junger's works the already familiar model of the camera as the machine that documents the presence of 'shock' or 'rupture' in the everyday. But now this model is presented by Junger as an example of mechanical perception from which men can learn in the re-ceptualization of their own consciousness as it is re-worked and re-aligned to a technological world fraught with danger. This re-articulation of men's consciousness through the camera as a model for human perception is significant, in the sense that it can be seen as the first step in the mechanization of the masculine body in pre-fascist Germany.

Through his turn to the camera and photography, Junger found the means to turn the shocks and convulsions of the just past war (an event which brings the term 'shell shock' into the lexicon of the medical profession) into a cohesive visual experience, in which the explosive moments of battle, as seemingly chaotic and irretrievable experiences, were given specific form and focus. The idea that 'meaning' could be retrieved from the destructive parameters of the war was something Junger specifically addressed in his introductory essay to a book length photo-essay of the war titled The Face of the World War: Front Experiences of German Soldiers.
(1930): "Day in, day out, in addition to the barrels of rifles and guns, optical lenses were pointed at the battleground as instruments of technical awareness. They preserved the image of these devastated landscapes....For the attentive viewer, a collection of these visual documents offers a means of arriving at an evaluation of the war as a process of work and struggle."

One can see how in the book itself the layout and juxtaposition of the photographs function to create a kind of basic rhythm to war that the viewer can easily comprehend. The processes of 'work' found in reconnaissance of the battlefield, or in, for instance, the setting up of explosive devices (fig. 64, depicting French 'mine throwers') - that is, all the preliminary work that precedes the battle - is followed by its aftermath (fig. 65, cleaning up the debris that the explosions of battle create). In the end, the photographs work cumulatively to build up in the viewer's mind a visible image of war as, precisely, the process of labor and struggle that Junger refers to. This gift of the photograph for organizing meaning must have had powerful ideological resonances for men coming back from the war. The documents that Junger collected and presented of their experience retrieved for them a sense of lost identity that they were undergoing in post war Germany. Men returning from the war had come home to an economy that could neither support them nor give them work, and the vacuum that this loss of a former identity in work created was one Junger filled with the memory of the war. But significantly, Junger also ultimately developed an ideal of war as an ongoing process of labor, which drew in a younger generation of men coming to maturity in an era of economic insecurity. It was this extension of war into the field of labor, in which men became "worker-soldiers" for the Nation, that the Germany fascists picked up and, as you shall later see, developed through the photograph and documentary film into an ornamentally seductive image of power.

Part of what allowed Junger to extend the meaning of the war beyond its historical moment and into a sign of creative destruction still in process - an ongoing work project, in which a newly revolutionized world based on the machine and technology would ultimately be achieved - was his relocation of war's 'convulsive identity' within the very fabric of the city and everyday living. One finds evidence of this shift in, for example, his 1929 essay collection, *Adventurous Heart*, in which the city appears as a kind of dangerous and intoxicating
battleground; a modern war zone permeated by a "series of colorful explosions". In the
machine shop, for instance, one discovers "a cold fury that is never satiated....a very modern
feeling that anticipates the fascination of a more dangerous game." Even street noises
themselves evoked "a most threatening quality"; while a street cafe aroused "a devilish
impression", an alarm clock imminent "catastrophe". All these various aspects of city living
were "slices of a powerful devilish rebellion, whose spectacle fills the individual with raging lust
as well as crushing anxiety." And once again, it was in the photograph that Junger found the
perfect mechanism for capturing the intoxication of these assorted dangerous moments that
technology produces: What is the camera, he asked in his 1931 essay On Danger, but "a register
of the moment in which danger appears?"

Following the lead of the photojournalist, who captured all the trauma that appeared
within the everyday, Junger saw the camera as the instrument in which man's "new relation to
danger" was revealed. He attempted to illustrate his thesis through another book length
photo-essay titled The Dangerous Moment, to which the essay On Danger had served as an
introduction. The book was made up of photographs taken from various commercial agencies
like Dephot and Associated Press, depicting various man made and natural disasters. There were
images of planes crashing, cars colliding, men falling out of speedboats; of earthquakes and
volcanoes; revolutions and street demonstrations. They are photographs which have recently
been analyzed by several writers as working to ward off the potential trauma that the shocks of
modern living produce: through freeze framing violent acts at the level of conscious perception
the experience of shock itself is checked from its penetration into the deeper memory banks of
our unconscious minds. Such a blockage is significant, for it is at these deeper levels of the
mind that the subjective meaning of shock, versus the mere reified appearance of it, comes into
play and subsequently directs and informs our future responses to other shocks.

In the above analysis, one finds that 'convulsion' or 'shock' in the photograph is theorized
to, in effect, deflect the viewer's confrontation with danger - the real abyss of death, for instance
- by holding the concrete moment of it in abeyance. By superficially presenting the shocking
moment, the photograph produces a mere cipher of what danger really represents. Roland
Barthes made this same analysis himself in his essay *Shock-Photos* (1979), writing that a photograph of a shocking or traumatic experience "does not resound, does not disturb, our reception closes too soon over a pure sign; the perfect legibility of the scene, its formulation dispenses us from receiving the image in all its scandal; reduced to the state of pure language, the photograph does not disorganize us."\(^{107}\) However, despite later theories on the effects of 'shock' in the photograph, one finds that Ernst Junger himself was aware of the power of deflecting trauma in the photograph. But significantly, he saw this act of distancing that the traumatic photograph invites as something to embrace, for it meant achieving a kind of control over technology itself and by extension, control over the possibility of an incalculable explosion that its development represented: "The history of human inventions poses the increasingly pressing question", Junger wrote in his essay *On Danger*, "whether...the final hidden goal of technology may be a space of absolute danger."\(^{108}\)

In his essay *On Pain* (1934) Junger explored the kind of 'new man' who would be adequate to the aggressive pressure technology placed over the body. Such a man would be radically desensitized; a being from whom pain was immaterial. Further, it would be, precisely, this transformed relationship to pain that distinguished the twentieth century man from his nineteenth century bourgeois predecessor. For Junger, the nineteenth century had been defined by its sentimental outlook: it represented a world in which people sought, above all, security and comfort. By contrast, the twentieth century would be "heroic and cultic". It would be the century to overcome the fear that pain creates in men - the fear that makes them seek out the boredom of security, versus the intoxications of adventure - through developing in them "a second colder consciousness", which would allow the body to "stand outside the sphere of pain."\(^{109}\)

Through the weapon of technology, Junger believed that a space could be created "in which pain can be regarded as an illusion".\(^{110}\) However, the key to actually severing the body and its nerve endings from any response to the external stimuli that pain represented didn't come so much out of the machine itself, as it came out of men's developing capacity for miming the object status of their machines. It was through the cultivation of a "second colder
consciousness" that a man fostered "the ever more sharply developed ability to see oneself as an object." Here once again, Junger turned to the camera as the technical agent that revealed men's newly developing relationship with the machine. In his essay, he wrote of how the body had already become objectified through its "use of artificial organs of perception." For Junger it was the impersonal surface of the photograph as a document that mirrored back to men proof of their growing dissociation from any sensate experience: "The photograph stands outside the realm of sensibility. It has something of a telescopic quality. One can tell that the object photographed was seen by an insensitive and invulnerable eye. The eye registers just as well a bullet in midair or the moment in which a man is torn apart by an explosion. This is our characteristic way of seeing, and the photograph is nothing other than an instrument of this new propensity in human nature." (emphasis mine)

In Junger's eyes the 'new man' would become like an object; a man who impartially recorded what he saw as a part of his functional adaptation to the ever present fact of danger in the world. The camera, as an insensate organ of reproduction, worked to armor the subject's unconscious intake. It was part of what functioned as a virtual second skin over the body: "Technology", as Junger put it, "is our uniform." But one must also recall here that it was this presence of danger in the world, that Junger consistently advertised as omnipresent, that also worked to recover for men their identity and status in the world. That is, throughout Junger's various writings in the inter-war period, one finds the presentation of danger itself as a work in progress, which the new man in his guise of the modern mechanistic warrior would master.

Those who succeeded in mastering the new tasks that danger brought into being would become the new workers for the Nation; men who had functionally adapted themselves to the cruel demands of technology. In his enormously popular essay The Worker: Domination and Form (published in 1932, it became a best seller in early 1933) Junger wrote: "The relation to death has been changed. Its extreme nearness dispenses with every sentiment that might still be construed as solemn in character. The individual is overtaken by annihilation in splendid moments in which he is subject to the most strenuous physical and mental demands. His
fighting power is no longer an individual value but a functional value. One no longer falls, but simply goes out of commission.\textsuperscript{115}

It was this close relationship to danger, and what Junger saw as the necessary filtration of it through the "invulnerable eye" of the camera (the eye that desensitizes the painful sensations that danger normally brings to the human body), that the fascists further played with.\textsuperscript{116} By taking the sense of 'once-remove' that the reproduction of danger or trauma in the photograph produced, and combining it with their own theatrical presentation of war as an intoxicating adventure, a second screen or veil of remoteness was placed over the real explosion of war yet to come. In the spectacle of torchlight parades (fig. 66, \textit{L'Illustration}, March, 1936); or in the choreographed presentation of the military superunit as a series of interlocking decorative forms (see fig. 49), the fascists allegorically presented to the German masses their readiness for war without ever touching directly upon the destruction to the body that the reality of war brings on. In sum, what one reads in all these warlike dramas (where masses of bodies are organized into fluid mobile streams, or into phallic penetrating units) is a flight from the reality of war and into a spectacular re-enactment of it. It was a performance that the camera, in its capacity for overview, captured and dispensed to the public at large as an experience of aesthetic pleasure in which, as Kracauer recognized, the symbolic instrumentalization of the masses for the ultimate purposes of making war took place.

One of Benjamin's last remarks in the 'Epilogue' to \textit{The Artwork Essay} shows us how aware he was of the dangers embedded in the kind of impersonalization that Junger enunciated in the shifting development of the modern eye and the world it now saw. He wrote that mankind's "self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order."\textsuperscript{117} He also recognized whose 'eyes' were being shielded from the concrete reality of the destructive impulse by this movement of the reproductive machine's invulnerability into the very psyche of the subject himself: the final footnote to \textit{The Artwork Essay} states that "mass reproduction is aided especially by the reproduction of the masses."\textsuperscript{118} "In big parades and monster rallies, in sports events, and in war, all of which nowadays are captured by the camera and sound recording, the masses are brought", Benjamin
wrote, "face to face with themselves." He further stated in the same footnote that because the overview of the camera and the later enlargement of the negative were capable of presenting what the eye itself could not see, that "mass movements, including war, constitute a form of human behavior which particularly favors mechanical equipment." (emphasis mine)

Like Benjamin, Kracauer was also aware of the creation of a new subjectivity within the modern subject, which was influenced in its responses by the pervasive presence of the reproductive medias within everyday experience. It was why he spoke of photography in the late twenties as the "go-for-broke game of history." In Kracauer's eyes, the photograph was capable of revealing to its viewer a previously "unseen residuum of nature" which could in turn create "the precondition for an alternative relationship of consciousness to nature." Clearly Kracauer saw revolutionary possibility within mechanical reproduction, in terms of its potential introduction to the subject of a formerly invisible world. But he also saw as the modern era progressed how "photographic reality", rather than illuminating unseen parts of nature, had instead taken its place: the world had taken on a "photographic face", which veiled over the void between nature and "a consciousness gone off on its own."

Kracauer's statement of lost opportunity, found within the modern era's perversion of the reproductive apparatus, was in the end mirrored in Junger's "second colder consciousness", which became the mask that covered over and concealed mankind's lost sense of direction in the forest of mechanized modernity. The Surrealists, on the other hand, could be said to have turned to the camera with some of the spirit of Kracauer's goal in mind: their ambition was to present to the world at large the part of human nature that lay veiled within the recessed caverns of the subject's own unconscious self.

In France for much of the thirties there was a debate on the social and political meaning of the image that in Germany, once the fascists came to power, never took place. I'm referring here to the debate that came out of the Communist Party's cultural institution of their doctrine of 'Socialist Realism'. While the issue of Socialist Realism was a hot topic of debate between all French writers and artists on the Left, both before and after the 1934 institution of it within the Party as an official cultural doctrine; it wasn't until the spring of '36 that the debate appeared
within the parameters of a broadly based public forum. It was at that time that Aragon, under the auspices of the Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists (AEAR), organized a series of talks focused on the social and cultural value of "realism" within contemporary literature and art. The talks, which were fairly wide ranging in the sense that they included presentations by those only marginally associated with the PCF, were subsequently published in book form as *La Querelle du réalisme* (1936).

Aragon's own contribution to *La Querelle du réalisme* touched most directly upon the documentary status of photography, as well as upon its relationship to the arts generally. It was this text which had referred to the earlier mentioned 'classicism' of Man Ray's photography, along with remarking on its "eminently static character". But Aragon's text also took its own step backwards, returning photography to its old archival identity by positioning it as an, albeit "documentary", aid to the painter, who through using it as a reference could infuse his own works with an everyday contemporary reality. This debate on the social meaning of the image, and on photography's specific place within that debate, was however preceded by another kind of debate coalescing around the issue of the photograph as a document of the everyday. I'm referring here to a series of texts and articles published in the late twenties and early thirties which, while all appearing separately, formed together an interesting discussion on what precisely constituted the photograph as a documentation of everyday contemporary experience. A short review of these various texts will allow me to form for the reader a general picture of the status of photography in France during the inter-war years (outside of its strictly photojournalist context), as well as to create a contemporary background for Surrealism's own particular intersection with the photograph as a kind of legitimate documentation of everyday unconscious 'reality'.

First let me state that what comes to the surface in any reading of the various texts mentioned above is the presence of a kind of general agreement upon the superior value of the photograph as a documentation of contemporary life, versus its alliance to any pictorial tradition associated with the arts. But in addition, what also emerges from these texts is a clearly shared neo-romantic impulse among the writers, which they in turn associated with modern industrial
culture and which they saw as 'documented' by the instrument most sympathetic to that culture, the camera itself. There was, for example, the writing of Florent Fels, editor of *L'Art vivant* (a magazine which in the twenties explored the contemporary arts in terms of their inter-penetration with everyday life), who in his preface to photographer Germaine Krull's book *Métal* (1927) wrote that her photographs of the modern industrial landscape documented the presence of an emerging "modern sublime".125

Fels emphasis on photography's capacity for revealing the romance of technology was specifically constructed in opposition to any idea of the photograph as an "artistic" representation. Indeed, it was precisely the presence of what he saw as a regressive pictorial photographic movement, which had become the prevailing style on exhibit at the annual *Salon de la photographie*, that led him to organize in 1928 a new photographic salon (*Le Premier Salon indépendant de la photographie*). The committee who worked with Fels to organize the salon included Lucien Vogel, the editor of *Vu* magazine; filmmaker René Clair; journalist Jean Prévost; as well as Georges Charensol, an editor of *Les nouvelles littéraires*. The salon was held in May and June of '28 in what was referred to at the time as the 'Salon de l'Éscalier' of the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and Fels published an article on it in the June issue of *L'Art vivant*. In the article he presented the photographers exhibiting in the new salon (which included, among others, Man Ray, André Kertész, Bernice Abbott, Paul Outerbridge and Germaine Krull); along with re-iterating the exhibit's raison d'être: "Above all we wished to avoid 'artistic' photography inspired by painting, engraving, or drawing."126 Notable and in the same vein, the article ended with the emphatic statement that "(a) good photograph is, above all, a good document."127

In relation to the photographers themselves Fels remarked in his article (and I'm bringing this up as it stands in direct opposition to Aragon's later assessment of Man Ray's photographic style) that Man Ray had "rehabilitated amateur photography" through his use of "a modest portable camera like a standard Kodak."128 But more importantly, Fels also felt that Man Ray had brought to photography "the ability to give a plastic feel to inanimate things and to create dramatic portraits with faces entirely devoid of lyrical expression."129 In remarking on the lack of lyrical expression in Man Ray's portraits, Fels was no doubt referring to their difference from

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those done in the scorned 'pictorial tradition'. But the remark also expresses a standard ideal increasingly attached to the neo-romantic impulse, in which humans take on characteristics associated with machines (the face's loss of its natural mobility and expressivity under Man Ray's "judiciously employed lighting"); while the stasis of machines or inanimate objects are invested with a kind of animated and expressive drive (they become, as Fels says, "plastic").

Such an impulse is, for example, embodied in Junger's own aesthetic notions, as is seen in his essay *Fire and Blood* (1929) which states: "Yes, the machine is beautiful. It must be beautiful for him who loves life in all life's fullness and power. The machine must also be incorporated into what Nietzsche...meant when he attacked Darwinism. Nietzsche insisted that life is not only a merciless struggle for survival but also possesses a will to higher and deeper goals. The machine cannot only be a means of production......Rather, it ought to bestow on us higher and deeper satisfactions."  

Historian Jeffrey Herf wrote of Junger's "poetry of steel" that it "reconciles beauty to the world of precision technology and military power"; but that it was also a poetic recitation careful to distinguish this "particularly masculine aesthetic" (that the man/machine represented) from what Junger viewed as the bourgeoisie's loathsome "feminine pacifist sensibility". What emerges, however, in France within the new romantic impulse and its industrial ideal is not an exclusively virile aesthetic ideal, in terms of its attachment to an aggressive will to power, which can only find satisfaction in war. Instead, one finds a romantic ideal that in many instances reveals it attachment to the anxieties of the age: anxieties which turned not only to the machine and its 'abstract' power; but also, to the feminine body as conduits for their expression. This can be seen in the critical writings on photography in the late twenties by novelist, journalist, poet and essayist, Pierre Mac Orlan, who clearly shared Fels neo-romantic outlook on photography, as well as his preference for what he defined as a "documentary", versus "artistic", photography.

In 1928 Mac Orlan published his essay *L'Art littéraire d'imagination et la photographie* in the September issue of *Les nouvelles littéraires*, in which he explored photography as a documentary expression of what he later named the "social fantastic". It was the rupture that the speed and penetrating power of technology caused, as it cut into the fabric of an older and more
slowly moving traditional world, that had created, in Mac Orlan's eyes, the image of the "social fantastic". Such an image could not be captured by any artistic outlook in photography. Rather, it could only become visible through "documentary photography" which was, however and paradoxically, "unconsciously artistic" in the sense that it captured the subtle details of a quickly changing modern world that the eye itself overlooked.133

Mac Orlan's emphasis on a documentary style of photography was not limited to a strictly photojournalistic context. There were other photographers working in Paris that he saw as extending the strictly documentary tradition in photography into a more adept reproduction of modernity as an increasingly turbulent and mechanized world. Here he referred to the work of Man Ray, who "searches for the abstract lines of a fantastic plasticity"; and to André Kertész, whose works revealed "the fantastic restlessness of the streets."134 Taken together, Mac Orlan considered the work of these photographers (and he included here the work of Bernice Abbott) as "capable of realizing the fantastic and all that is curiously inhuman in the atmosphere that surrounds us, and even in man's very personality." (emphasis mine)135

Clearly Mac Orlan, in his reference to a newly developing documentary style, is pinpointing the same group of photographers that Fels associated with the photographic reproduction of the "modern sublime". But where Fels seemed focused on a romantic vision of the sublime, in which any negative details were absent (or at least unremarked upon); Mac Orlan clearly recognized the dark side of the modern neo-romantic impulse. In summing up the work of Man Ray and Kertész, for instance, he wrote that, "(i)n the most beautiful compositions by these artists one finds traces of the sentimental activity of speed, light, and woman, which are the three most appropriate elements to express our anxiety over the end of Europe, and perhaps the world."136 In an essay written some six months later (March, 1929), published in *Le Crapouillot* and titled *Éléments de fantastique social*, Mac Orlan returned to the dark side of the modern romantic expression, writing of the difficulty in capturing the "imprecision" of the age's anxiety: "Anxiety is not so much a disposition of the temper of some individuals as an almost always indefinable embellishment of the atmosphere and of the picturesque elements that act upon us as a barometer."137 To make his point he illustrated his essay with two images of murder scenes;
that of Daumier's lithograph *La Rue Transnonain*, along with an anonymous police photo of a blood soaked bedroom. It was the latter of these two images that reflected most clearly for Mac Orlan what he saw as "utterly mysterious for man"; that is, death itself.138

The anonymous police photograph in Mac Orlan's article did not hold documentary value for him because of its capacity to identify who the perpetuator of the murderous crime had been - the actors in the drama the crime represented were, after all, gone from the scene. Instead, it was the capacity of the anonymous photograph to leave the scene's "emotive value intact" that attracted him.139 This was because the photographic lens functioned for him as the instrument most able to "bear witness" to the "social fantastic" of its time.140 The job of the photographer himself in relation to these times was to be "the perfectly organized eyewitness"; that is, to train the "light" within the lens upon "the specters" that ran ever so lightly and often invisibly through the modern world.141

There were other essays that touched upon both the romance of modernity, as well as the capacity of the camera to document it. In 1930, the caricaturist, novelist and editor Carlo Rim published *De l'instantané* in *L'Art vivant*, in which he stated that "(p)hotography alone, at once objective and typical, will express for the tender-hearted mechanics we are the neo-romanticism of our day"; while Philippe Soupault, associate of Breton and Aragon in the early days of *Littérature* and now ex-communicated from the Surrealist group, wrote in his essay *État de la photographie* (1931) on how the photograph was "above all a document", at the same time that he also observed the "passionately interesting adventure" that lay ahead for the photographer himself.142 But it was Mac Orlan's essays that best articulated the same sense of 'danger' within a developing technological modernity that Junger had also expressed.

In Junger's concept of mechanical reproduction, we saw how he associated the lens of the camera with a form of non-sentient vision. Yet at the same time the machine itself was also connected to a kind of human expressivity, in the sense that Junger saw it as the path into 'higher and deeper satisfactions'. Clearly the author was expressing in this remark the attachment of the machine to internal human drives and a potentially expressive will to power that he ultimately saw as Germany's destiny. In this association of technology with a higher internal power (the
source of its 'beauty'), any anxieties of the age were overcome through the machine itself, which became the device capable of rendering the seeming chaos of modernity not only intelligible, but also functional.

By contrast, you have seen how the neo-romantic impulse in France was not defined, as in Germany, by the machine's relation to an all powerful internal drive that was, in turn, directly connected to a controlling and aggressively virile masculine subject. It was rather, as Mac Orlan recognized, an impulse shaded with nuances and uneasy textures, in which the machine (emblematized in the abstractions of speed and light), as well as woman herself, were projected as the "sentimental" - that is, feeling - registers not only of modernity per se; but also of an as yet unmeasured anxiety fixated on a future potentially bearing within it a catastrophic end. I'll be returning later to this curious elision of women and machines as the 'objects' that are, paradoxical to their object status, capable of expressing the anxieties and pressures of the period. But for now I want to underscore that while the subjective content of the neo-romantic impulse that was loaded onto the machine itself varied between France and Germany, the writers in both countries nevertheless agreed upon the documentary veracity of the photograph as the vehicle that did indeed "bear witness" to the essential and rupturing signs of the modern technological world. This agreement between writers from Nations each posed to parry an attack from the other should, if nothing else, signal to the historian of this period the overall veracity and cultural authority attached to the idea of the photograph as a "document" in the inter-war years.

It was this high esteem and sense of certainty accorded to the documentary photograph that the Surrealist played with in the reproduction of their own magazines; at the same time that they also reinforced and paid homage to it, in terms of its developing ideological ascendancy over the text itself. In all their journals - La Révolution surréaliste, LSASDLR and Minotaure - 'documentary' photographs were often reproduced. But they were also documents placed within a context that would ultimately lead to the release of previously repressed elements within the image. Such a move was most commonly achieved through the placement of photographed images within the context of a text, that through its refraction against the photograph (that is, its obvious resistance to what the photograph itself was clearly projecting), brought out the
existence of, for instance, the erotic within the everyday. An example of this strategy is seen in a photographic layout reproduced in *Minotaure* of everyday objects - a loaf of bread, a bus ticket, a fragment of soap - under the heading "Sculptures involontaires" (fig. 67, *Minotaure* 3-4, 1933). The photographs making up "Sculptures involontaires" were presented as anonymously produced (attributed in the table of contents to "XXX"). But they were also clearly set-up by someone to emphasize the erotic and suggestive outlines of the various objects, which the short captions below each photograph appear to blithely ignore. The whole construction achieves out of the most banal of objects a witty, ironic (particularly in the juxtaposition of the caption to the photograph) and elegantly erotic statement, in which the viewer is made to recognize how unconsciously desire and its erotic imprint circulates in and through our everyday objects and habits of usage.

Rather than simply reduplicating what was already there and visible to the human eye, the Surrealist turned their inner eye upon an invisible human 'nature' and attempted to document the traces of its unconscious work upon the objects of everyday use. Eroticism became under their hands not only visible; but also, accessible in its everydayness; no longer just a privileged game for a fashionable and bored leisured class. It was this capacity for recognizing and bringing out formerly invisible signs within the world (here, erotic signs) that Benjamin had recognized as the power of Surrealist photography. In his essay *A Short History of Photography*, he wrote on how a straightforward photograph of the exterior of a factory revealed nothing of its place within the reification of human relations. In the face of this blankness, Benjamin remarked on how "something has to be constructed, something artificial set-up", in order to bring out the connections between the factory's economic organization and the pervasive human experience of reification that the commodity fetish itself represented. And it was, Benjamin went on the say, "the achievement of the Surrealists to have trained the pioneers of such photographic construction."

It was this capacity for the re-arrangement of reality (whether through 'smooth' montage, or through a simple re-adjustment of the documentary image against its narrative, as was seen in 'Sculptures involontaires'), in which the invisible real also became visible, that the Surrealists did
indeed achieve the presentation of a truly revolutionary aesthetic. But all too often there was, in contrast to their making the unconscious experiences of the everyday so accessible, the turn towards a kind of avant-garde promiscuity, where meaning in the image became inaccessible to anyone outside of the movement itself. The presence of obscure references (as is seen, for example, in Breton's *L'Oeuf de l'église*), along with their ultimate inability to relinquish a sense of personal control over the 'object' itself (and here I'm thinking particularly of the woman-object) led them into subverting the kind democratic impulse displayed within the all inclusive eroticism of 'Sculptures involontaires' (all inclusive in terms of gender, as well as in the use of non-precious objects). Here is where we shall turn then to the examination of the movement's particularly 'Sacred Bodies'; and to the Surrealists' fall into the destructive anxieties of their age, now projected through their ultimate need to appear as the controlling 'masters' of their own uniquely invisible and desiring rhetoric.

**ii. Sacred Bodies**

In France, there developed after the Great War the feeling of a physiognomic lack in the body, in the sense that its surface was perceived as becoming unreadable. As the evidence and reports assembled in Carolyn Dean's recent book *The Self and its Pleasures* (1992) reveals, the nineteenth century system of identifying the body - its madness, its criminality, even its sexual deviance - through its superficial appearance was no longer adequate to the complexities of a post-war modernity. It became increasingly clear to those in legal and medical fields, as well as to those within the French psychoanalytic community itself, that in order to understand, and therefore control deviant behavior, it would be necessary to find a means of penetrating beyond the mere anatomical surface of the body; that is, to develop a kind of psychological 'pathology' that was independent of the physical aspects of the body itself.147

This sense of physiognomic uncertainty and the multiple discourses that developed around it in the inter-war period also extended into the realm of gender, where it was felt that the differences between the sexes (what was a masculine attribute, what was specifically feminine)
were becoming unraveled. The cause of this disintegration of difference between the sexes was laid principally at the feet of the newly modernized woman, who in her stylistic post-war presentation had cut her hair short like a man's and wore clothes that suppressed her more feminine curves. This turn away from traditional appearances was further exacerbated by the growing suspicion within culture at large that women were becoming sexually independent and even aggressive (that is, masculine) in satisfying their sexual appetites. The French psychoanalytic community responded to the dangers of a perceived sexual "sameness" between men and women by pointing to the development of a "gender pathology" in modern times, in which there was "an absence of virility (in men) and femininity (in women)." The problem was considered serious, for it was felt that through this developing pathology the functional goals of reproduction were being subverted. The goal therefore was to find the means to restore difference between the sexes, and the remedy proposed in both medical and psychoanalytic circles was the institution of a kind of "sex education" in which young girls would be more effectively directed towards fulfilling their "natural social roles" and in so doing, some kind of "male and female complimentarity" would be restored.

In what follows I want to argue that, while Surrealism clearly challenges what ultimately has to be seen as the functionalist reproductive goals of a conservative status-quo, at the same time they also maintain this similar need for an explicit expression of gender difference. Further, while their expression of female difference was, as you will shortly see, rooted in an image of woman within her feared as sexually excessive and promiscuous pose; it was also based on a return not only to a kind of nineteenth century physiognomic certainty, in which bodies are identified through their superficial appearance; but also, on an image of women in visible submission to men's aggressive sexual drives, now expressed symbolically through the movement's phalloscopic control of the erotic feminine body. Here we can say that the independent and feared as promiscuous woman, once she loses her mobility (the mobility that leaves her loose on the streets; or, as one commentator of the period put it, "loitering in dance halls" and driving fast cars) and enters into a phalloscopically controlled field of vision, also
loses her capacity for releasing any potentially threatening aggressive drives that her promiscuous persona would, in fact, seem to embody.\textsuperscript{150}

This is not to say that through the bodies of the hysterical and Sadian woman, the Surrealists failed to produce a new and dramatically expressive sexual economy. But at the same time that they offered a radical vision of a sexual culture defined outside the boundaries of a traditional and conservative world, they never managed to release the woman herself from her object-like status, so that she too could participate as a subject (as a "je") in this new creativity; or even better, so that she could take credit for creating the situation in which its possibility could even be contemplated. What should be added here, in light of the medical and psychoanalytic communities educational response to sexual deviance, is that the radical sexual economy the Surrealist proposed was dependent, in part, upon females of a particular age and circumstance; that is, upon adolescent females on the brink of womanhood (the 'femme-enfant' as it were), who were to be indoctrinated into Surrealism's own particular school of sexual education.

The Surrealists confirm, through their own aesthetic production, the object-like status of women within the realm of desire and its satisfaction; and in this sense they are no different from the other men of their period. However, I will also be arguing that while the Surrealists never go beyond the limits of their period in terms of the fantasy images they produce of women, in terms of their polemic production (the various tracts and manifestoes they write in response to the political events of their day) they do, in certain particular instances, acknowledge how an image based on a kind of deviant sexuality and its submission (that is, an image with both racial and erotic overtones) could play into a viewer's unconscious fantasies for the conquest and domination of an exotic other. What they failed to see, by extension, was how appropriate that insight was to their own desiring production. Thus while the Surrealists consistently took a politically revolutionary stance - one that they supported (and, it has to be said, with a lot more energy than many other so-called revolutionaries on the critical Left) with various declarative texts and writings; it was a stance consistently undermined by their own resolutely independent
aesthetic stance which, in the end, fed right into the very politics of domination they were, on a polemic and critical level, attempting to resist.

"We who love nothing so much as these young hysterics....": the statement, from the short text by Louis Aragon and André Breton, published in the March 1928 issue of La Révolution surréaliste and celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of hysteria, refers to the lavish layout of photographs accompanying the text; photographs of the "delicious X.L. (Augustine)" who, as the Surrealists note, entered "into the service of Dr. Charcot" in 1875 at the tender age of 151/2 years. While ostensibly celebrating hysteria's anniversary in terms of its 'discovery' as a pathological disease of the mind, the text also reveals Surrealism's familiarity with the long history of this maladie: from ancient Greece and its appearance as "hystera" (the Greek word for uterus, it nomenclature becomes its destiny; whether classified as physiological or, much later, as psychological, it is a feminine maladie), to the School of Nancy, where Freud learns and later applies to hysteria the technique of hypnotic suggestion. But I'm getting ahead of myself here, for the Surrealist's celebration of hysteria ultimately depends on a return to its most noteworthy French origins; that is, to the hospital La Salpêtrière; to the observational talents of Dr. Charcot; and, more specifically, to the photographs produced there of the hysteric in her third and hallucinatory phase, described as "Les Attitudes Passionnelles".

Freud spent a year studying hysteria and hypnosis under Dr. Charcot, and he later remarked on how Charcot had described himself as "un visuel". There's no doubt that everything at Salpêtrière under Dr. Charcot's influence had been oriented towards recording the neurotic patient's visual history. The famous leçons du Mardi, in which Charcot expounded on his female patients (present and already induced through hypnosis into the dramatic hallucinatory phase) before an all male audience are a case in point. One would have only been able to speculate on the effects of seeing the female hysteric in the eruptive throes of her attack, if it hadn't been for the marvelous intervention of technology during Charcot's tenure at Salpêtrière; the installation of a photographic studio and a darkroom in 1876 leading to the yearly publication of the institute's Iconographie photographique.
The movement from Charcot to Freud in the lineage of hysteria has been aptly summarized as one which goes from 'seeing' (from surveillance and physical description) to that of 'listening', and by consequence to the birth of the psychoanalytic movement as it is principally known today. But despite this, at the time, radical break with nineteenth century traditions of visual observation and description, the Surrealists, in their return to Charcot and through their obvious fascination with Salpêtrière's documentary archives, reject the revolutionary possibility of allowing the neurotic body to 'speak' as it were, and we have to ask why? Certainly Breton would have been familiar with Freud's work, beginning with his wartime stint at the Neuropsychological center of the Hôpital du Collège in Saint-Dizer where, under the direction and tutelage of Dr. Leroy, he read E. Régis's *Précis de psychiatrie* (1914), as well as A. Hesnard's *La Psychoanalyse* (1914); both of which offered introductory overviews to Freud's work. In fact, one can't help wondering if the French translation of Freud's *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, published in 1928, hadn't perhaps inspired Breton's and Aragon's celebration of hysteria that same year.

One of the clues to why the Surrealists turn away from psychoanalysis and its 'listening' pose lies in the sardonic question they rhetorically pose to Freud in their celebratory text (a remark which constitutes their only direct mention of him): "Does Freud, who owes so much to Charcot, recall the times when, according to the testimony of survivors, the Salpêtrière interns combined their professional duty and their taste for love, when at nightfall the patient's joined them outside or received them in their bed?" The remark and its mocking tone is not without cause, for in going from 'looking' to 'listening' the entanglement of desires between the patient and analyst (or intern, as the case may be) that the Surrealists articulate doesn't disappear. As Breton would have been aware, the analyst as scientist could hardly resist his desire to introduce a certain logic and cohesion to the fragmentary dreams and reveries of the hysterics. But more importantly, he would further have known that what the analyst really 'hears' from the hysterics was always unconsciously informed by his own desires.

It was Lacan who later acknowledged how the process of transference - from what the patient inarticulately expresses, to what the analyst later organizes into the logic of dominant
themes - was an inextricable weaving of two desires: "Transference is a phenomenon", he wrote, "in which the subject and analyst are included together." And to deny that (or to cross reference it with 'counter-transference') "is never anything but eluding what is involved."158 But what, precisely, is involved here we might ask? "(A) need for mutual seduction", reply the Surrealists in their text, implying not only that the analyst introduces (through hypnosis) the hysteric's hallucinatory phase out of his own desire for seduction; but also, that the hysteric goes along with the game precisely because she too wants to be seduced.159

Since Breton and Aragon saw no need to provide any text by the hysteric herself - however fragmented or irrational (the very characteristics that one would assume the Surrealists to value), we can take the photographs of the hysteric's erotically eloquent poses as the documentary evidence of her desire. But whom exactly does she desire? Deductive logic implies that her seductive posture is for the benefit of her male audience: the disciples of Charcot; the Surrealists themselves. But then, the hysteric isn't known for her logic. And if we listen to Freud, and to Lacan who later followed him on this particular issue, we'll find in the hysteric a superficially seductive mask composed as a cover to an almost certain latent homosexuality. It was in his Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria that Freud wrote of how often in adolescence there is "an affection for people of their own sex", and of how this homosexual current in adolescence is all the more distinct in neurotics.160 Lacan likewise took up this theme of an unresolved sexuality within the neurotic and psychotic patient with his diagnosis of a latent homosexuality in the Papin sisters and in the paranoiac Aimée, upon whom he based his doctoral thesis. In light of the above, one might say that, at the very least, some kind of gender crisis or identity crisis lies at the heart of madness: for Freud, the maladie is the result of an unresolved oedipus complex; for Lacan, who sees sexual identity as socially instituted, a failure of the ego to conform, resulting in repressions, guilt, and madness as their symbolic expression. But entangled in this also - if we return to the Surrealist and his historical period - are signs of a developing masculine hysteria, caused by constant 'professional' (for example, medical or educational) and journalistic declarations of a creeping homosexuality in
men, and of progressively devirilized young boys being subjected to mothers with awakened aggressive drives.\textsuperscript{161}

The Surrealist was held in thrall by the drama and spectacle of the exotic madwoman. But by turning solely to her superficial expression of madness, their admiration circumvented any kind of entanglement with the psychological motivation or depth that created her drama to begin with. Hardly surprising however, for why would the Surrealist want to unravel any of the madwoman's potentially deviant desires, when they might represent too obviously the anxieties of his own age. Far better to see the hysteric's theatrical drama, captured so readily in the photograph, as a blank screen onto which the Surrealist could project his own desires. After all, the pleasure of the voyeur is only insured through his separation and distance from whatever inner anxieties propel his prey. Further, if there's any \textit{listening} to be done in Surrealism, let it fall to the femme-enfant herself, who demurely sits, poised and ready to be indoctrinated into the Surrealist's theatre of phallic jouissance: whatever text she reproduces, you can be certain that it comes out of the Surrealist's poetic narration of his own desire. (fig. 69, front cover to \textit{La Révolution surréaliste} 9-10, 1927)

The femme-enfant was an attentive listener; une écolière appliquée, who by day has "no need of your advice"; but who by night, alone in her dreams - disconcerted but nonetheless curious - can be drawn into the web of mystery and desire Surrealism spins. (fig. 70, photographic accompaniment to Paul Eluard's poem, \textit{Appliquée}, \textit{Minotaure} 7, spring, 1935)\textsuperscript{162} She re-appears in her hysteric's guise a decade after Surrealism's celebration of hysteria, once again in her boudoir - or rather, the one the Surrealists design for her in their 1938 exposition. A space surrounded by a 'swamp' with aquatic vegetation, it was a room designed "to set emancipated young women from the provinces dreaming...".\textsuperscript{163}

After the war, Breton remarked that their object of interest in \textit{Le Cinquantenaire de l'hysterie} was not hysteria itself, but rather the iconography of 'Les Attitudes Passionnelles'.\textsuperscript{164} As an art form then, the hysteric produced an aesthetic yet also 'real' vision of feminine seduction; the potent affirmation of a youthful and willing to please femininity, which contrasted to the historical text of the inter-war years in which women were so often depicted as the
unwilling or resistant participants in a strictly masculine sexual economy. But in addition, the presence of the femme-enfant within the Surrealist canon as the love object (it is these "femmes-enfants, femmes-fleurs, femmes-étoiles, femmes-flammes" who constitute the "raison-d'être of man", wrote Paul Eluard in Minotaure 3-4, 1933) presents the viewer with a kind of disturbing sexual tableau, whose real purpose is never confronted directly.¹⁶⁵ Part of our sense of unease comes from the assumed masculine voyeur whose presence haunts the image (constructed out of the implications of physical availability and youthful innocence), and constitutes a kind of phallic threat or dominance. Man Ray's photograph Aurore des objets, which depicts a young girl's head laying across a kind of radiating wheel of heavy timber spokes and juxtaposed to a pyramidal form in concrete, explicitly expresses how schematic and abstract - yet also heavy and dangerous (as in the phallic form of the concrete block with its sharp edges) - this invisible threat is. (fig. 71, Minotaure 10, 1937)

While the threat of the voyeur construes itself out of absence, abstractions and symbolic gestures, once he steps into the scene, as he does in Maurice Tabard's photograph (fig. 72, published March, 1930 in Bifur, the short lived avant-garde review in which Bataille's essay "The old Mole and the Prefix Sur..." was to have appeared), the components of both his power and his weakness can be deconstructed and analyzed. In Tabard's photograph, the absorbed intensity of the masculine gaze is emphasized through the angle of the camera that plays down onto the scene and mimes the posture of the men bent over the figure of a woman, who is laying stretched out on her back and gazing up into the eye of the camera. The woman appears as a figure figée - motionless and seemingly unaware of the men who watch her - and in her indifference to the energy that surrounds her a kind of ironic and comedic element steals into the scene. We become aware of how little the one being watched gives back to the voyeur, despite the intensity of his preoccupation with her; that is, her posture of passive indifference suddenly becomes the source of her power once it is refracted back off of the absorbed and wistful attention that surrounds her. The central point here is that once we see the voyeur, the real sense of dis-connectedness that exists between viewer and viewed rises to the surface; and along with that comes our recognition of the impossibility of any exchange - of any form of "mutual
seduction" - between these two opposing camps. This loss of mutuality - that the Surrealist fantasizes as present in his text, but fails to ever incorporate into his own aesthetic production - is important, for the lack of any exchange with the desired object ultimately leads to a representation of desire that is underwritten by a kind of sadistic pleasure and violence.

Of course, it is hardly news to note the centrality of Sade himself within the Surrealist pantheon of literary figures. But what is important here is to discover the differences between Surrealism's textual presentation of Sade, versus their photographic production constructed in his honor. In the case of the former, one finds that while Sade is presented as a tragic victim of a morally hypocritical society, as well as a visionary prophet of the modern spirit; the physical content of sadism itself is scarcely noted beyond a kind of benign admiration for his liberation of, as Paul Eluard put it, "the amatory imagination." As for the latter case, violence is both implicit (and thus, to a degree complicit with the text), as well as explicit. Overall, what emerges in Surrealism's visual reproduction of the sadian fantasy is, as you will see, the eternal return of the same - of silence, of capture and the immobilization of the convulsive sign - which is, I would argue, precisely its raison d'être: for it is this "reign of the series" referred to in my opening chapter that creates its own authoritative presence in Surrealism; one ultimately complimentary to the masses and their ceaseless reproduction as 'mass' in fascism. In the end, what emerges in both movements is a visual politics that instrumentalizes the body, at the same time that it tyrannically dictates its theatrical, yet mute, performance as "empty reason".

Surrealism's turn to Sade wasn't unique to their period, for it intersected with a literary revival of the Marquis' works and scientific curiosity about him generally (particularly in psychoanalytic circles who, in light of their interest in exploring the structure and meaning of sexual deviance, saw in Sade an opportunity to explore the complexities of the sexual imagination). Sadian scholar and Surrealist fellow traveler Maurice Heine was not only instrumental in lifting the nineteenth century ban on Sade's oeuvre (it was through his Société du Roman philosophique that many of Sade's still clandestine works were published and distributed); but also, in re-structuring the established biographical presentation of Sade, which had tended to conflate his life with his literary works.
life from his literary output was the disparagement of his actual acts of sadism, and the presentation of the Marquis as a victim of injustice, whose sadism was "more virtual than real". Complimentary to this dispersal of any physical collaboration with erotic violence was Heine's further contention that Sade's sadistic fantasies were the "result" rather than the "cause" of his punishment; and that they functioned to liberate him from the loneliness and isolation of his cell.\textsuperscript{169} In sum, Sade's works became an emblem of the erotic imagination's affirmative force and capacity to overcome the imprisonment of the physical self.

The Surrealists followed Heine in their elevation of Sade as a defender of poetic liberty, as well as claiming that there was nothing realistic about his novels: in his first \textit{Manifesto of Surrealism} Breton claimed that "Sade was a Surrealist in sadism"; while his later \textit{Anthology of Black Humor} (1939) stated that Sade's "obvious overstatement allows the reader to relax and think that the author is no dupe."\textsuperscript{170} Apparently the Surrealist leader never noticed the contradiction between his protestations that Sade's works were no more than imaginative fantasies, and the movements own presentation of unconscious desires as not only real; but also, as essential motivating factors in the subject's everyday actions and experience. Bataille however noticed the contradiction, and was indiscrete enough to point out, to begin with, that sadism existed long before Sade came along to describe his own practice of it.\textsuperscript{171} In Bataille's eyes, the Surrealists' affirmation of Sade's erotic effluence only in relation to his literary output worked to displace "the brilliance and suffocation that the Marquis de Sade tried so indecently to provoke."\textsuperscript{172} Far from being a poetic ideal of sexual excess, Sade represented for Bataille the violent eruption of excremental forces into public view.\textsuperscript{173} But instead of taking Sade's desires as real - as real violence and excess - the Surrealists turned his works into a heroic negation of bourgeois morality. By turning their hero into a "sacred" ideal, they not only effaced the materiality of his works and denied him a subjectivity that made his desires real; they also masked the sadism visible but unacknowledged in everyday life.\textsuperscript{174} The use-value of Sade, Bataille claimed by contrast, was to give this material and human condition a text.

One notes here that it was Bataille's excremental turn that so bothered Breton in his \textit{Second Surrealist Manifesto}, and that the axis upon which their disagreement turned was, in the
end, embodied in a painting by Dali, titled *The Lugubrious Game*. Dali had included an excremental smear on the buttocks of the figure in the painting's lower right hand corner; a detail that captivated Bataille to the same degree that it repelled Breton. Such apostasy within the movement (the transfiguration of Surrealism's play with 'eruption' from beauty into shit, and Dali's hasty claim that it was "only fake excrement") gave Bataille his opportunity to compose a riposte to Breton's vilification of him; one that appeared in *Documents* under the same title as that of Dali's controversial painting. The essay included a schematic outline of Dali's painting (under pressure from Breton, Dali had refused Bataille permission to reproduce it), which was clearly presented as 'evidence' of how Breton (referred to in the essay as "the man who will clearly take this article as a provocation") repressed within his own movement any expression of the low as an explosionary force.

In the face of this repression, Bataille proposed to 'psychoanalyze' the various figures and elements of Dali's painting, ultimately claiming the excremental smear as the primary "cause" of the punishment the painting documents - that of emasculation - at the same time that it was also the subject's reward, "since a new and real virility is re-discovered by this person in horror and ignominy of themselves." Within the sphere of his theory of 'base materialism' Bataille saw that while human's admitted to appropriation and consumption, they covered over the excretions that came after as inferior vulgar reality. It followed therefore, that any mission to eliminate immediately fell into the negative, the very spaces in which any eruptive revolutionary movement should be brewing. The Surrealists immobilization of these necessarily base but eruptive forces contributed, in Bataille's eyes, to the continued maintenance of the status quo. And it was precisely because of Surrealism's denial of what was essentially Sade's "coprolagnic aberration" that Bataille moved to embrace it, and to claim it as the source of new and terrible virility.

For our purposes, it is the tension between the high and the low that dialectically establishes Breton's and Bataille's positions in terms of their symbolic meaning; and which sets up for us now a comparison of the anus itself as a site of 'exit' and revolutionary excess for Bataille, versus Surrealism's own embrace of this orifice in honor of Sade, and as the site of
'entry' to erotic pleasure without functional return. I'm referring here to Man Ray's photograph *Monument à D.A.F. de Sade*, published in *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution*, 1933, which salutes the Marquis through his lady, who appears in the sadist's favored position, ready for intercourse with her viewer. (fig. 73) The abstraction of the phallus in culture as the power and the law makes its appearance in the photograph as the schematic cruxiform shape which surrounds and contains the visible portion of the swelling feminine buttocks. It is also the schematic pattern that establishes "the keyhole perspective" of the voyeur onto the body; a perspective that Gertrud Koch has described as being built right into the structure of pornographic films.179

When looking at the erotically revealed body in the photograph 'seeing' becomes a form of penetration; but only as a superficial caress and digestion of the body's smooth surface which, despite its appropriation and consumption, maintains the stability of its form. 'Real', but only as a duplicate the photograph reproduces, the erotic body remains ever inert in the face of its viewer's desire. But there is more here in this photograph of Man Ray's than the tease of a desire never directly satisfied. And that more has to do with the violence and even hatred of Sade's desire. While force is fundamental to Sade's conception of desire, repetition is also a part of the game; a repetition that comes out of boredom and brings on the need to escalate the violence into mutilation and even murder so that coitus can finally be achieved. The Surrealist in his text glosses over this aspect of Sade, at the same time that he confirms it in his visual production. For instance, Man Ray's other *Hommage à D.A.F. de Sade*, published in the second issue of *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* (1930, fig. 74), serves up the feminine head as the main course; hardly appetizing, but perhaps amusing: if it weren't for a) the strained and suffocating facial expression of the woman herself and, b) the repetition of this scene which, in one form or another (see figs. 21 & 22), permeates Surrealism's visual syntax.

Where does this tautological prescription for silence and ultimately boredom come from, and how is it that 'more' - in Sade, in Surrealism - always ends up as less? The poetic blason has a long tradition, extending back to Petrarch and his followers. But it is a literary tradition that has its roots in a specific kind of looking; a kind of looking that breaks up the feminine body
into parts in order to fetishize each one. The accumulation of the feminine body as a series of
discrete and descriptive parts (the blason becomes a parlor game in the Renaissance) guarantees
that it will never coalesce into a 'body of knowledge'. It also guarantees the need for more
looking, more plundering, more voyages that never reach a destination: for ultimately the
fragmented body remains mute in the face of the obsessions it produces. (fig. 75)

Often in feminist theory, there is the idea that the feminine body is held under siege by
the desiring needs of men who demand an absolute proprietorship over her body. But what
needs to be emphasized here is that men have their greatest successes with women in terms of
the entirely imaginary scenes of seduction they construct in and around her body. In the
Surrealist's documentation of his fantasies, feminine body parts are accumulated as seductions,
as conquests and possessions. In their serializing production - the recurrence of silence and
fragmentation, their derivative echoes from the past (an already old madness that both the
hysteric and Sade represent) - a measure or standard is created to which the dreaming subject
aspires. But as dreams, they are also expressions of what is lacking and insufficient in reality.
Here we have to remember that in dreams while meaning is present, it also appears in displaced
form: turned into jokes, witticisms, convoluted citations and exotic tableaux.

The Surrealist understood the concept of displacement in dreams and knowingly played
with it through their reversals of culture's sacrosanct icons. Their play with 'beauty' itself is
exemplary here, as it traditionally implied a perfection in form that was stable and known, not
ruptured, fragmented, convulsed. But convolution and rupture had other meanings too; ones that
embodied the anxieties of the age and that the Surrealist perhaps less knowingly displaced onto
the beautiful body: for example, in the historical moment that the coming war represented, the
possibility of violence, sacrifice and death were held in abeyance through their fantasized
displacement onto other bodies, whose fragmented figures formed a shield against the potential
dissolution of the subject's own body. In this chapter I have pointed out how in France there
were various representations and discourses that expressed the signs of a masculine virility in a
state of retreat, the most essential of which was the sense of a loss of control over the
'complimentary' feminine gender. Regaining control of the feminine body for the purposes of
reproduction was seen as essential during the inter-war period; but virility can also make a convincing display of its presence through the sheer exhibition of control and dominance over other bodies.

The politics of colonialism intersected with this need to display evidence of ownership; particularly in the face of other nation's masterful displays of an advancing power and control. But in addition, the colonies were increasingly viewed, by the Right and later by the Left during the period of the Popular Front, as a military resource; a place in which, as one colonial minister put it, "healthy recruits" for the army could be found. I'm bringing the colonial issue up at this point in order to show how, while issues of proprietorship over the body in Surrealism's own aesthetic productions were never confronted directly, in a different context these same issues were subjected by the Surrealists to a critical analysis which pointed to a clear understanding of how a sense of mastery and ownership is structured into an image which is, in reality, based on a fantasy.

Along with Paul Eluard and Georges Sadoul, André Breton produced a short polemic text in 1931 titled Ne Visitez pas L'Exposition coloniale. The text was written as a form of protest against France's Colonial Exposition at Vincennes that same year, and in it one finds described the political reasons why the "image" of the colonies was being transported and displayed in France itself: one finds there is, at Vincennes, "the complicity of the entire bourgeoisie in the birth of a new and particularly intolerable concept: 'La Grande France'. It is in order to implant this swindling concept that they have built the pavilions at Vincennes. It is a question of giving an owner/proprietor consciousness to the citizens of the metropolis." A propos such an image, the three Surrealist men go on in their manifesto to say that "(o)ne has not forgotten the beautiful recruitment poster of the colonial army: an easy life, the negress with big tits, the very elegant non-commissioned officer in his full uniform, promenades in a rickshaw, pulled by a native - the adventures, the advancement!"

What is, of course, so disagreeable about the image these three Surrealist men re-create in their text is the interaction of the colonial body with the male conquistador himself. The ugly frisson between the served and the serving (the negress with big tits, or the slave who endures...
humiliating physical labor) brings into focus the fully exploitive aspects that the colonial body is marked by. However, this verbal re-creation of the colonizer's abuse contradicted the image of a colonial pornographic/photographic body circulating in France up until the war; as seen in popular postcards, which normally either presented a colonial feminine body in isolated splendor - such as in the postcard labeled *Femme arabe avec le yachmak* (fig. 76) - or, as viewed by another male colonial body, who was himself seen to exemplify a pathologically perverted sexual appetite which the viewer could vicariously enjoy without compromising his own bourgeois morality.¹⁸³ (fig. 77)

But in examining this colonial image are we not now obliged to also observe how remarkably well it compares to the image Convulsive Beauty projects? Such a conclusion can be illustrated in a bluntly straightforward manner by comparing, for example, an illustration by Dali, which became part of a photographic collage advertising "Surrealisme autour du monde" in the 1937 winter issue of *Minotaure* (fig. 78), to the formerly introduced *Femme arabe avec le yachmak*: both displaying full frontal views; faces partially veiled or defaced; all viewer focus trained upon the feminine eroticized body parts that so pleasurably service male desire. But why do we find this mixture of blindness and insight in Surrealism? Breton's own focus in *Ne Visitez pas L'Exposition coloniale* on what the image could do - how it could dupe the citizens of France into believing they had the rights of the conquistador - means that he himself did not deny the political efficacy of the image in creating a 'facade' behind which abuse could take place.

No doubt Breton's blindness in relation to Surrealism's own aesthetic productions came out of his practice of separating aesthetics and politics in order to preserve the individual artist's creative independence from any repressive revolutionary discipline; a superior and separate position already noted in my earlier discussion of his manifesto *Pour un art révolutionnaire indépendant* (1938). Through the separation of the world of desirable bodies from the world of politics Surrealism roped off intoxication, separating it from any form of collective social experience. Instead of intoxication functioning as a form of revolutionary contagion (the context Benjamin saw for it), it was transformed into discrete and diversionary excursions into the world of desire, that had all the surface signs of rupture - of madness, violence, and sexual excess -
without any of their historical depth and social impact. Thus in the end, an aesthetics of intoxication in Surrealism functioned as an escape out of, rather than into, revolutionary social change.

I would like at this point to take a short detour into the aesthetics of fascism; that is, to make a perusal of its seductive surfaces in relation to intoxication and the production of desire as revolutionary excess. But while I will be looking at the reproduction of intoxication through the body's capacity for theatrical gesture and drama, as well as through the reproduction of a kind of deviant sexual economy, I want to additionally point out how the crowd, like the feminine body, was open to forms of domination through aesthetic practice. In Surrealism, I have argued, that despite the intention of provoking "the mental windows" of the mind to open wide onto the world at large, what develops is the presence of individual artist-poets who become addicted to the playing out of a revolutionary game that never leaves the site of the imaginary. In fascism, this world of illusion remains intact. But the dream image, through its construction on the basis of mass, becomes a collective dream embodied in the Nation itself. Here the job of the 'stand-in' that the imaginary object plays changes from one that assuages psychic breaks within the individual ego, into one that, through a whole series of dazzling images constructed on the principle of the mass, works to 'suture over' the damaged psyche of an entire nation.

I have already remarked on how both Ernst Bloch and Wilhelm Reich saw in fascism a combination of religion and sexuality; but in addition, it was Reich who noted how "fascism countenances a religiosity that stems from sexual perversion"; one that "transforms the masochistic character of the old patriarchal religion of suffering into a sadistic religion."184 We have seen how the sadistic ideal finds a home within Surrealism, not only functioning in the text as an ideal of desire freed from all the stifling sexual repressions of the middle class; but also, within the image itself as a space in which a violent destructive drive could be released. Desire also functions as a violent force in fascism, but now it becomes the brutal demand that "blood must flow": "desire", As Klaus Theweleit put it, "in its most profound distortion."185 The shift that marks out that distortion is seen in the move off of the feminine body as the vessel into which a destructive drive is emptied, and onto the predatory soldier and his transgressive
machine, which ruptures, explodes and ultimately kills. Here we can say that the totality of fascism's world view is such that both the subject and the world he inhabits are seen as explosive, and that intoxication in this context is merely the internal expression of what is already seen as a new external reality.

In fascism 'seeing' is privileged over listening, over intellectual response, over the text itself. Indeed, the singular act that symbolized the devaluation of the text over the image is seen in the fascist's public book burning in May, 1933. Both Bloch and Kracauer recognized this submersion of the text into the world of the visual; but they also saw how fascism functioned as a kind of original political dramaturgy in which the body was the site of expression. Within the fascists' development of politics as dramatic theatre, it was the body of the Fuhrer himself who played the star role. As both the leader and 'father' of the nation, Hitler's genius lay in his capacity for delivering dramatic performances, in which meaning was expressed through the gestures of the body itself, versus through any speech or narration of a text. How explicitly important his gestural mode of delivery was to his public appearances can be seen in still shots of the Fuhrer in front of a mirror practicing, under the guidance of opera singer Paul Devrient, the facial expressions and body language he would employ in his performances. (fig. 79, photographs from Heinrich Hoffmann's Munich studio) In these photographs, along with others of him in the process of delivering a speech (fig. 80), one finds the same kind of excessive distortion of facial features and the body that we saw earlier in the photographic reproduction of the hysteric's 'Attitudes Passionnelles'. Through the melodrama of these physical contortions, there is the projection of a kind of psychic energy which allows the body and the instrument of textual delivery to become fully interactive, at the same time that the content of the speech itself is overwhelmed by the force behind that delivery. (fig. 81, Burning up, Philip Zec, Daily Mirror, 1940)

While the exaggerated presence of 'passion' as a force that plays over and molds the external physiognomy of the body lends itself, as seen above, to the distortions and reduced simplicity of the caricature, one has to keep in mind that such overblown gestures were developed in response to the period itself. As Joachim Fest, whose 1974 biography of Hitler is
considered a classic, wrote, there was in Germany in the early thirties "a quest for leaders in whom the opaqueness of modern power processes would be made visible; and the demand for some interpretation of the present misery (the reference here is to the depression years) that would give heroic status to those who were suffering it." If we follow the facial expressions of Hitler seen in figure 81, from the top left hand corner across and then down the right hand side, we see a transparent expression of this suffering dramatically played out to its final resolution through an inner triumph of the will. Power itself was made visible as a tangible force through the presentation of the leader as an all powerful god and father of the Nation, who has deferred to a contemporary secular mind that demanded the documentation of his material presence. Thus while the photograph could be analyzed by Benjamin as a pure and aura-less space, one capable of documenting the material conditions of reality; through the talents of the photographer and montage artist that space was filled with the 'aura-full' presence of the leader himself. (fig. 82) When Hitler said to the crowd that just as 'they are in him' so too 'he is in them', it was the montaged photograph that organized the visual parameters of that statement. (fig. 83, 1936 poster which states, "Youth serves the Fuhrer, all ten year olds into the Hitler Youth)

In the fascist's film production the presentation of intoxication relied not only on the reproduction of stunning explosive experiences, but also on a sense of immediacy that comes from a world almost entirely visual. The goal here was to elude any interference from a contextual textual dialogue that would slow down the stream of images and allow people the time to reflect more on what they were being drawn into. Such effects were ones Kracauer saw duplicated in Nazi propaganda tracts which "supersede rational argumentation by pictures and symbols." But while the fascist gained its ideological control over both the streets and the viewer in the movie house through a constant barrage of images (a French reporter from L'Illustration, covering Hitler's electoral campaign in 1936, wrote of how propaganda posters in Germany were left on display no longer than 48 hours, after which they were replaced by newer and "even more gaudy and imperious ones"), Kracauer also saw how at crucial moments the flow of images within a film were frozen into dramatic close-up shots of either the Fuhrer
himself, or of figurative symbols such as the swastika or eagle which symbolically represented the new Reich in the making.

The insertion of the still shot within the film functioned as moments of rest that re-focused the viewer and created a kind of religious moment of contemplation for him. Such shots were composed to emphasize this response through the careful placement of the Fuhrer against the sort of backdrop which would define his power in an 'other worldly' way. In his analysis of Nazi newsreels, Kracauer described various head shots of Hitler that illustrated this practice: seen, for instance, in the placement of Hitler's head in front of a cathedral "in such a way as to give the impression that Hitler too, is a towering event in German history"; or of his head with his arm raised against a cloudy sky which "served to elevate him above all mortals". The frequent appearance of Hitler in German newsreels as "the lord of hosts" established in the viewer moments of iconic reverence; but they also, Kracauer wrote, functioned "exactly like the images in Nazi speeches, as pictures within pictures. Instead of enlarging the spectator's knowledge they aim at arresting his mind and shaping it through figurative meanings."

The complexities of the visual personna Hitler developed ran the gauntlet from his appearance as a static and transcendant all seeing, all knowing leader of the Nation, through to a figure whose passion marked and distorted his body as if it were mad. In his rhetorical poses, it was as if the hysteria of the crowd had been electrically transmitted into his body. However the hysteria of the crowd itself, metaphorically described by Hitler as "feminine" and therefore weak, represented a paradoxical challenge to the fascist, for alongside his need to mobilze the crowd was his simultaneous contempt for their disorganized amorphous appearance. The problem therefore lay in finding the means to represent the masses, at the same time that the real and heterogenous masses (the dirty, messy, often unaligned and contradictory masses) were, in their visual deformities, excluded from that representation. Their answer to the problem can be read through Kracauer's concept of the mass ornament. That is, the interlocking decorative forms of the military superunit were, in their superficial appearance, nothing more than the multiplication of the chorus girl line on the grandiose scale that the fascist favored precisely because it reflected the weight of the mass back to the masses, who now saw themselves through
an enthralling and hypnotic mirror of military power. (fig. 84, from *L'Illustration*, April 1935, article titled "Une Cathedral du Spectacle à New York"; and Fig. 85 of the Nuremberg Rally from that same magazine's September issue, 1935)\(^{192}\)

The spectacles mounted at Nuremburg each year were gigantic extravaganza's in which nothing was left to improvisation. They were spectacles into which, as Kracauer wrote, "the psychic energies" of hundreds of thousands of people were channeled.\(^{193}\) The rigid, penetrating and ultimately phallic forms of the military units thus overcame the psychic castration experienced in World War I through allowing Germans to express a revitalized virility in symbolic form. But further, intoxication was also pursued in fascist festivals for its orgasmic qualities, seen in torchlight parades, burning pyres and various ritualistic performances in which there was the development of a kind of psychic economy which placed intoxication and sexuality in the service of destruction.

The formlessness of democracy was surmounted through the decorative genius of the fascists. But their creative energies were also directed towards the re-creation of German men within the beautiful dream of an ancient and noble Teutonic race. Here one finds Hitler, speaking at the Nazi degenerate art exhibition of '38, claiming that "humanity had never been closer to antiquity in appearance and in its feelings than it is today"; and that "a radiantly beautiful human type.....is the type of the new age."\(^{194}\) In fascism's look back to a primitive noble class as the basis for a new and warlike image, there was a renaissance of 'manly' activities and the re-evocation of the nineteenth century Mannerbund; the beautiful all male order from which, as Hans Meyer in a lecture at the *Collège de Sociologie* put it, "women were excluded, even despised."\(^{195}\) But in addition, old style warriors were combined with new style machines - indeed the relationship between the two was "consummated"; the machine itself becoming a vehicle for the re-birth of the virile man.\(^{196}\)

The other essential figure to develope out of fascist politics was that of 'the worker'. In *Hertiage of Our Times*, Bloch wrote of how in Nazi politics the use of the word "proletariat" was dropped in favor of the word "worker", which ultimately came to describe everyone.\(^{197}\) In such a scenario (which developed principally out of the writings of Ernst Junger, who had written of
the arrival of the "work-era", and of how the art of political leadership consisted in elevating work "from an economic task to the rank of State duty"), Hitler became the leader of a Nazi "work-front". This image was further supported by the Bureau for the Beauty of Labour, headed up by Albert Speer, which worked towards the presentation of Germany as an ornamentally labouring utopia. Hitler himself paid homage to such a vision when he spoke in the film *Triumph of the Will* to 52,000 "labour-servicemen", shown in regimental order and all carrying spades in place of rifles, saying that "work will no longer be devisive, but will bind us together"; and that "manual work will no longer be inferior to any other work (for) Germany proudly sees its sons in your image."

Through the fascist's representation of German men as twentieth century Teutonic warriors, and by the extension of that image into the realms of technology, industry and its workers - who were represented as 'heroic' workers organized into 'combat battalions' in the factory - the physiognomic lack that was perceived as endemic to Germany's chaotic post-war bourgeois democracy was overcome. Crucial to this re-construction of the masculine figure was a revolutionized concept of beauty, which combined classical ideals of beauty (Greek ideals of a unity in form which was fixed, proportionate, and in which all visible signs of fragmentation were erased, were further integrated into the Roman monumental ideal) with the nineteenth century Romantic ideal in terms of its revival of German myths and symbols. It was the synthesis of these elements, and their injection into a twentieth century technological ideal, that ultimately came to embody Goebbels' 'Steellike Romanticism'. The further aesthetization of violence itself - which, in its own way, recalled the nineteenth century Mannerbund's 'active' ideal that promoted "a voluptuous pleasure in destruction" - was what activated and produced the penetrating and fluid mobility of the Steellike Romantic ideal.

Through their parades and monumental spectacles German fascism translated internal drives into massive external ornaments as a "canalization system" into which large numbers of people flowed. Klaus Theweleit has analyzed the fascist parade as a public staging of forbidden flowing desire: "(t)he scenario of the parade abolished the contradiction between the desiring production of the individual and the demands of social power that normally supress
those desires." In the parade the fascist was able to represent "both his own liberated desires and the principle that suppressed them."

The Surrealist, by contrast, used the fluidity and malleability of women (which was perceived as both 'natural' and non-directional; that is, not yet socially defined in the patriarchal linear and unified sense and therefore, in closer proximity to the unconscious) to encode their own desires, their own utopias and their own yearning to be free of boundaries. The fact that the Surrealist's representation of convulsive desire never arose in relation to actual - and whole - women was a sign of their search for a desire unclaimed by others and therefore, free. Their desire was to circumvent those who drew boundaries and set limits, as they were perceived as the enemy. However, at the same time that the Surrealist sought to be free - and one notes here that the utopia of fascism was also based on a desire for an edenic freedom from the static constraints of a world of reason, of intellect and of moral constraints - that freedom was based on the unfreedom of the desired body itself, which was still maintained and constrained by the abstractions of phallically imposed limits.

In both Surrealism and fascism the expression of an explosive - convulsive - desire that runs over and floods the barriers of a static bourgeois democracy were based on theatrical and intoxicating gestures that never got beyond representation; that is, beyond the illusion of production. The fact that these two movements coincided at certain points came out of the fascist's de-politicization of the public sphere through the introduction of aesthetics as a principle of social dictatorship, and Surrealism's complimentary refusal to see the political implications embedded within their own aesthetic production, which worked to institute its own form of dictatorship over desire and the erotic body it claims as its own work of art. It was the camera with its unconscious optical reserves that, in the end, documented the parameters of both their illusions and collusions in desiring production.
II. CONCLUSION: UNVEILING DESIRE

"It appears plausible to admit, given the extraordinary difficulty represented by the vertical posture that the early equilibrium of movements would have been precarious if it had not developed - in other words, if it had not progressively led to the total equilibrium of forms to which we are habituated: phallic erection and regular beauty"

Georges Bataille, The Jesuve, 1930

In his 1939 essay The Sacred, published in Cahier d'art, Bataille made a veiled allusion to the Surrealist's aesthetic of Convulsive Beauty when he ironically remarked that the "modern Spirit" was certainly not obsessed with a "grail" as easily accessible as the "beautiful". Indeed, Bataille went on to state unequivocally that there were no movements of passion "raging within the narrow domain of artistic invention." And as for those who submitted themselves to the pursuit of beauty; in truth, they merely followed in the footsteps of their nineteenth century Romantic predecessors in extending "the domain of myths and, in general, given poetic themes." In Bataille's mind the Romantic's error, and that of the Surrealist who came after, was to assume that the holy grail pursued could ever have "a substantial reality"; for on the contrary, it appeared only as a "privileged instant" which could never be successfully fixed by art.

By the end of the decade, when the essay on The Sacred appeared, Bataille was less interested in the 'object' an intoxicating or ecstatic encounter could precipitate than in the subjective meaning of the passionate eruption itself, and in the ways it could provoke a sacred experience shared within the community. That is, he was looking for a convulsive moment which would erupt only to dissolve, and the final image he constructed was that of a fleeting and dangerous moment in which an act of violent sacrifice was witnessed by the community. Here one has to point out that Bataille did not concern himself with healing ruptures to the social order; rather, he was looking for the means to find a visible and recognized place for violent eruptions within that order. A community's repressed urge to violence was not to be subsumed under the headings of war and national rights, nor to be locked away as crime or madness.
Rather, violence was to periodically be made shockingly visible as a symbolic representation of what Bataille saw as an innate condition of man's inner psyche.

Of course, what we have to recall here, with our privilege of hindsight, was that by 1939 what Bataille was looking for was a "convulsive communication" that was up to representing the standards of his period; that is, up to representing tragedy. However, embedded in this also - and this will take us back to the beginning of the decade, to the deviant body of the monster, and to the start of Bataille's journey into both the psychological and anthropological origins of man - is Bataille's desire to recover the physical meaning of the body itself. Death was one way to recover what had been lost to the abstractions of science and the law, for in facing death man lost his reason, his logic (and therefore, his self-identity as it was construed in enlightenment terms), and the body, no longer closed in by such abstractions, became open, permeable, and without boundaries as the self disintegrated into the horizon of its approaching dissolution.

In contrast to this irrevocable moment, I would like in this last section to return to a moment when the body appears within all its nude and monstrous totality to communicate in a way that encompasses not only death (signified through rupture and a 'fall' to the ground); but also, life and the larger circle of relationships that exist on that plane. Theoretically, the monstrous body first appeared in Bataille's essay *The Deviations of Nature*, published in *Documents* (1930), where, quoting Pierre Boaistriau's *Histoires prodigieuses* (1561) in his opening passage of the essay, Bataille claims for the monster the sensual capacity to "ravish, horrify and provoke terror in all men." In drawing out the presence of the monster Bataille turned to a modern day technological experiment by a pioneer in eugenics, Sir Francis Galton, who had, through successive exposures of analogous but different faces on the same piece of photographic film, achieved the production of one geometrically regular face. In such a composite image one had the constitution of a perfect 'type', which was seen by Bataille to give "a kind of reality to the necessarily beautiful Platonic idea." However, the common measure that the Platonic ideal gives to form is one which each individual escapes in reality. Thus Bataille could state that each one of us "is, to a certain degree, a monster." And thus it stands
also that each time we see a monster, we feel a convulsive shock of recognition as if we are suddenly seeing a formerly invisible part of ourselves. Further, while one can create an average (or an ideal) out of a conglomeration of monsters, a monster is never created out of a combination of many average forms. The monster then is the base, the singularly irreducible form that we have.

In the essay *The Big Toe* Bataille distilled the idea of 'irreducible form' that the monster represented for him down into the one irreducible element within the body of man himself, seeing *The Big Toe* as the most human part of the body in the sense that "no other element of this body is as differentiated from the corresponding element in the anthropoid ape." Indeed, *The Big Toe* functioned as a part of the apparatus that had given, in difference to the tree dwelling ape, "a firm foundation to the erection of which man is so proud." In speaking of the "erection" of man, Bataille was referring not only to the central characteristic of man's upright posture, which essentially differentiated him physically from his animal ancestor, but also to the sign of man's power in patriarchal society: the erect phallus itself. Indeed, in response to the power of erection that *The Big Toe* symbolized in man, much of Bataille's essay is devoted to evoking its vigorously seductive value. There is, for example, a lengthy sexual anecdote describing an aristocratic Count who, frustrated by his desire for the elevated and isolated body of his sovereign the Queen, seizes one day the opportunity to fondle her momentarily revealed foot. In stooping to such a low gesture the Count was, Bataille stated, forced into a seduction "radically opposed to that caused by ideal light and beauty." Such a move must have been, he went on to assert, "human to the point of laceration to touch what was in fact not very different from the stinking foot of a thug."

In this unfortunate movement of the Count from high to low lies the concept of confusion for a lover of ideal form, for it is the very nature of desire itself to move from the ethereal and celestial light of love (an imagined state) to the horizontally low and bestial position that making love itself ultimately requires. It is within this low and base condition of desire's reality that the image of *The Big Toe* asserts its presence, pushing itself forward into the viewer's space with impudence; all of its shocking characteristics - the rough and badly manicured
toenail, the skin cracked and of a reptilian thickness, the ugly black hairs sprouting from the joint - appear as if magnified through a microscopic lens. (fig. 86) The very insouciance of such a toe comes out of this condition of seeing such a base and low object magnified and displayed as if it were a rare and precious jewel. Under these microscopic conditions The Big Toe is both frightening and familiar; and Boiffard, a radiologist by profession, is scientifically correct in his presentation of this biological specimen, at the same time that he also emphasizes, through its isolation, The Big Toe's deformations and ignominy.

But The Big Toe, besides being formulated on the condition of a monstrous reality (in visual terms, we have the 'crime' this imperfect form commits against our sensibilities), could also be humorous in its ability to burlesque the sexual. It could be portrayed as a muscular virile member, a veritable parody of the phallic organ itself. (see fig. 9) Here sexuality in the male was deflected from the place it normally invisibly lay peacefully in repose to be mimed by the lowly member that The Big Toe was. And Boiffard had his joke here once again on the viewer, for the most phallic toe of the three photographs published with Bataille's essay is captioned underneath as that of "a twenty-four year old female."220 Thus the normally stabilized physical characteristics of sexuality are given, through the ingenuousness of the photographer who isolates body parts at the same time that he obscures gender identity, the sign of ambiguity and confusion. Through photographic techniques of isolation and enlargement it becomes possible for the condition of man's 'erectness' (the sign of his power both socially and sexually) to be possessed and proudly displayed by more than one 'member' of society.

Bataille's work on The Big Toe and its essential relation to men's erect posture in the world responds, to my mind, to the rigid and unyeilding need in men to maintain an erect position in the world; a postion which has ultimately been transformed into a powerful and implacably persecuting myth of virility that dominates the structure of all social and sexual relations.221 The Big Toe is universal - we all have a big toe; but it also fills in an empty space in representation. One could say that its surface reveals what has been removed from the light of the ornamental surface world. But in addition to that, it also points to a space left open in desire, but seldom recognized. For instance, it is undoubtedly true for all humans that desire never
successfully defines itself in and through one object, for that object is always vanishing into the stomach of desire so to speak. It is this always constant need in desire that breeds the cycles of repetition in its representation that I have already spoken about; a repetition that speaks of a self identity which is never stabilized and complete. But in the representational expression of desire there is still always the possibility of recognition and of a moment of reciprocity between viewer and viewed. It is in the photograph of The Big Toe, where there is the substitution of the stand-in as Other for the stand-in as a mirror image of the erect and desiring subject himself, that Boiffard has, I would argue, transformed the ruler/ruled drama in desire's representation into the drama of awakening and recognition that implicitly existed in the body of the monster as Bataille theorized it. It is in the face of this moment of awakening that the viewer momentarily stops thematizing his own desire to become involved in the act of reproducing the totality of relations in the world that constitute his own identity and those of others. That is, in this moment the viewer is involved with the labour of desire and of negativity itself, in the sense that he has stopped for a moment consuming the object of his desire.

For Bataille, the negative wasn't just simply a void; a space that one, if lucky, climbed out of and into the sunlight. Rather, it was a space of knowledge and of expression - important, even sublime expression that had to be recovered. Brought out into the light? Well yes, in the sense that it would have its day; its own platform so to speak and in order to speak. Photography could have its place in that recovery; but only if one knew how to read the negative spaces embedded within the very idea of mechanical reproduction itself. In the second chapter I wrote of the sense of the past that clung to the surface of all of France's political representations. France was the emblematic home of the nineteenth century: it embodied that period and it was that very sense of nostalgia that drew Benjamin to France, and especially to Paris as the center for his own work on the nineteenth century. Bataile had also noticed this corruption of nostalgia in representations of the past; but it was a corruption that he uncovered within photography itself as an archival record of the past. I'm referring to the essay Human Face, published in Documents in 1929, where Bataille unearthed, within the faded photographs of a bygone era, the phantom presence of a past that worked to subvert revolutionary will in the present.
Bataille spoke in this essay of the early modern era as "the period of the first mechanical reproductions"; a time in which "we can capture a memory of our ancestors and the truth of all their physiognomic reality." However, as Bataille went on to say, "(u)nlike our primitive ancestors, whose souls of their dead pursued them and assumed directly after their death the visage of wretched 'decomposing corpses', we maintain, despite our own decomposing corpses, the image (here, in the preserved photograph) of a 'human face'". It appears that science has, through its technological inventions, trapped our ancestors within an abstract system which puts forward their 'reality' as the part it has been able to capture and preserve. Such a point is illustrated by Bataille through the photographic reproduction of a wedding party (ca. 1905), in which one views a group of small town bourgeoisie politely lined up and facing the camera; the men all in pressed black suits, the women in 'wasp-waisted' corsets and white dresses. Essentially, this photograph revealed to Bataille how the techniques of preservation in technology have lied and deceived us. This is because science has, Bataille notes, a tendency to over emphasize the positive thesis leading, as in the photograph stored in the family album, to the absence of our ancestors' decomposing corpses; corpses which should represent to us the sum of our historical negativity returning to the unseeable void. Thus while the positivist insists on the logic of science and technology as the extent of our knowledge of the world, what we really have in these mechanically reproduced images from our past is a monstrosity; for in truth, these images represent a decline in reality due to the part of reality they leave out: the spectral decomposing half of reality that our ancestors' corpses represent.

In such a deceiving move, Bataille finds evidence of a stalled dialectic, for it is this repressed part of our past which should inspire in us the inner will and determination to move forward into a newly resolved future. But once the burden of our historically negative face has been hidden from us, we lose the eruptive impulse towards revolutionary resolution that negativity inspires in us: we have remained depressingly trapped within our always the same 'human faces'. How then can we, in the face of the positivist's eternally optimistic determination, find the antithesis - the negative face of humanity - in the photograph so artificially composed? Such a move is still possible Bataille maintains, if we acknowledge "the presence of an acute
perturbation in .....the state of the human mind represented by the sort of provincial wedding photographed twenty-five years ago." That is, if we regard this group "as representing the very principle of mental activity at its most civilized and most violent, and the bridal pair as, lets say, the *symbolic* parents of a wild and apocalyptic rebellion, then a juxtaposition of monsters breeding incompatibles would replace the supposed continuity of our nature."224 (emphasis mine)

If we are to escape this failure of the 'age of mechanical reproduction' that the photograph and the physiognomic 'reality' it records represents for Bataille, we must return to the negativity that the monster represents *in relation to its symbolic meaning*. Here, if one focuses on the symbolic meaning of monstrosity to be found in *The Big Toe*, one discovers a human form growing out of the darkness (see fig. 2) that photography, as it was seen by Bataille, imposed on representation, into the light of day to reveal a haunting baseness present in all men. One can say that *The Big Toe* represents all the negativity that science represses; but, as it was photographed by Boiffard, negativity suddenly seen as an animate and visually protruding form. Such a forceful animation of base matter is important in its revolutionary contrast to the passivity of negative desire - desire as ruin - that the Surrealist's broken mannequin forms always represented. In this context *The Big Toe* can be seen as moment we lost, when negativity finally took a materially animate and even menacing form. In its dirt and callousness it symbolically represented all the repression and being without that negativity signifies. Yet at the same time that the material baseness of *The Big Toe* repulses us, it also represents a universally recognizable form; just as the physiognomy of the monster itself does. In this reciprocal moment of recognition between viewer and viewed the normal conditions of possession and suppression that desire always demand of an other are momentarily overcome. There is no veiling over (as is often the case in representations of Convulsive Beauty); nor any fragmentation or displacement of the symbolic meaning of desire in *The Big Toe*.

The idea of a monstrous body representative of the normally repressed excesses in desire disappeared with the removal of Georges Bataille from the editorship of *Documents*. Indeed, one Bataille scholar points to Boiffard's photographs of *The Big Toe* as a "privileged beacon" in
the failure of Bataille's editorship; citing them as going too far in offending the sensibilities of bourgeois "amateurs", to whom the journal's publisher ultimately hoped to appeal.\textsuperscript{225} In the end then, this base and basic, yet also deviant (and thus 'magical'), body left no trace on the field of events transpiring around that period's other sacred bodies. The loss is important, for this burial of negativity in its documented and eruptively animated form is with us today; communication between humans remains falsified and the negativity that their desires produce continues to be swept under the dazzling and artful rug that the beautiful ideal represents.
fig. 1 André Breton, 'L'Oeuf de l'église', Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution, no. 6, 1933, p.60
fig. 2 J.A. Boiffard, 'Le Gros Orteil, Sujet Masculin, 30 Ans', Documents 6, 1929, p.298
fig. 3 Man Ray, detail from the front cover of La Révolution surréaliste, no. 1, December, 1924
fig. 4 'Trust No Fox and No Jew', page from the National Socialist children's book (Source: P. Adams, Art of the Third Reich, p.12)
Ein Volk steht und fällt mit dem Wert oder Umwert seiner blutgebundenen rasslichen Substanz.

fig. 5 Nazi Calendar, 1939, "A Nation stands or falls according to the greater or lesser worth of its blood-bound racial substance", (Source: M Burleigh, The Racial State, p.67)
WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR

fig. 6 'The World as Hitler would Make It', Picture Post, July 12, 1940, p.11
fig. 7 'The World as Hitler would Make It', Picture Post, July 12, 1940, p. 12
fig. 8 The First International Dada Fair, June 30, 1920
(Source: Berlin Between the Wars, p.139)
fig. 9  J.A. Boiffard, 'Gros Orteil', Sujet Feminin, 24 Ans, Documents 6, 1929, p.301
LE SALUT INNOMBRABLE - SUR LA WILHELMPLATZ. AU RETOUR DU FUHRER A BERLIN, LE 16 MARS

fig. 11 'Le Salut Innombrable', front cover L'Illustration, March 26, 1938
fig. 12 'Queue de Cheval (Equisetum Hiemale), Pousse Hivernale', K. Blossfeldt, Documents 3, 1929, p.166
fig. 13 Eugène Atget, 'Kiosque à journaux', 1912 (Source: M. Nesbit, Atget's Seven Albums, p.367)
fig. 14 J. A. Boiffard, 'Untitled', 1929 (for Nadja), p. 94
fig. 15 Man Ray, 'Je ne vois pas la...... cachée dans la forêt', La Révolution surréaliste, no. 12, December 15, 1929, p. 73
fig. 17 'Untitled', E. Fuld, Verve, no. 2, Spring, 1937, p.90
fig. 18 'Untitled', E. Fuld, Verve, no. 2, Spring, 1937, p.91
fig. 19  Man Ray, 'Untitled', La Révolution surréaliste, no. 2, January 15, 1925, p.26
fig. 20 Raoul Ubac, Le Triomphe de la stérilité, Minotaure 10, 1937, pp.38-39
fig. 21 Cover by Rene Magritte for André Breton's Qu'est-ce-que le surréalisme?, 1934 (Source: Terry Anne R. Neff, In the Mind's Eye: Dada and Surrealism, p.231)
fig. 22 Raoul Ubac, 'Mannequin', 1937 (Source: R. Krauss, L'Amour fou, p.76)
fig. 23 Nadar, 'Untitled', illustrations to Man Ray's essay 'L'Age de la lumière' in Minotaure 3-4, 1933, p.5
"We are transforming Deauville according to the aesthetics of the masses."

fig. 24 The Conges payes in 1936, Gringoire, 1936
(Source: J. Jackson, The Popular Front in France, n.p.)
fig. 25 A Normandy beach in 1938, anonymous photograph
(Source: D. Johnson, The Age of Illusion, p.67)
fig. 26 Man Ray, 'Primat de la matière sur la pensée', Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution, no. 3, 1931, p.43
fig. 27 'Ainsi va le Monde - Le dernier naturaliste', Variétés, June, 1929, n.p.
fig. 28 'Les Plus belles cartes postales', Paul Eluard, Minotaure 3-4, 1933, p.93
fig. 29 Andre Bréton, 'L'Écriture Automatique, 1938
(Source: R. Krauss, L'Amour fou, p.8)
fig. 30 Man Ray, 'La Plage', illustration for Les Mains Libre, 1937 (poems by Paul Eluard), n.p.
Pourquoi la Révolution Surréaliste avait cessé de paraître

SECOND MANIFESTE DU SURREALISME

En dépit des démarches particulières à chacun de ceux qui s’en sont réclamés ou s’en réclament, on finira bien par accorder que le surréalisme ne tendit à rien tant qu’à provoquer, au point de vue intellectuel et moral, une crise de conscience de l’espèce la plus générale et la plus grave et que l’obtention ou la non-obtention de ce résultat peut seule décider de sa réussite ou de son échec historique.

Au point de vue intellectuel il s’agissait, il s’agit encore d’éprouver par tous les moyens et de faire reconnaître à tout prix le caractère factice des vieilles antinomies destinées hypothèquement à prévenir toute agitation insolite de la part de l’homme, ne serait-ce qu’en lui donnant une idée indigente de ses moyens, qu’en le défiant d’échapper dans une mesure valable à la contrainte universelle. L’épouvantail de la mort, les cafés-chantants de l’au-delà, le naufrage de l’innombrable raison dans le sommeil, l’écrasant rideau de l’avenir, les tours de Babel, les miroirs d’inconsistance, l’infranchissable mur d’argent éclaboussé de cervelle, ces images trop saisissantes de la catastrophe humaine ne sont peut-être que des images. Tout porte à croire qu’il existe un certain point de l’esprit d’où la vie et la mort, le reel et l’imaginaire, le passé et le futur, le communicable et l’incommunicable, le haut et le bas cessent d’être perçus contradictoirement. Or, c’est en vain qu’on chercherait à l’activité surréaliste un autre mobile que l’espoir de détermination de ce point. On voit assez par là combien il serait absurde de lui prêter un sens uniquement destructeur, ou constructeur : le point dont il est question est a fortiori celui où la construction et la destruction cessent de pouvoir être brandies l’une contre l’autre. Il est clair, aussi, que le surréalisme n’est pas intéressé à tenir grand compte de ce qui se produit à côté de lui sous prétexte d’art, voire d’anti-art, de philosophie ou d’anti-philosophie, en un mot de tout ce qui n’a pas pour fin l’anéantissement de l’être en un brillant, intérieur et aveugle, qui ne soit pas plus l’âme de la glace que celle du feu. Que pourraient bien attendre de l’expérience surréaliste ceux qui gardent quelque souci de la place qu’ils occuperont dans le monde? En ce lieu mental d’où l’on ne peut plus entreprendre que pour soi-même une périlleuse mais, pensons-nous, une suprême reconnaissance, il ne saurait être question non plus d’attacher la moindre importance aux pas de ceux qui arrivent ou aux pas de ceux qui sortent, ces pas se produisant dans

fig. 32 'Second Manifeste du surréalisme', La Révolution surréaliste, no. 12, 1929, p.1
PAUL ELUARD

Ce qu'il y a de frappant dans cette main, c'est l'écartement des doigts Jupiter et Saturne qui révèle une mentalité révolutionnaire. L'originalité de la pensée de caractère polemique et critique est signalee par un ilot dans la ligne de tête de la main gauche. Le sens de l'harmonie et du rythme est representé par les doigts bien axes, et le sens des paradis artificiels par une ligne transversale profonde sur le mont de la Lune. Un érotisme sublime est transposé sur le plan poetique est indique par l'amene de Venus (voyez la main gauche).

MARCEL DUCHAMP

Duchamp ne peut s'appliquer exclusivement a un seul talent, car il en a un trop grand nombre. Nous ne considérerons que ceux de l'écrivain et du stratège né. Son intuition et son sens d'orientation l'emportent encore sur son intelligence deja considerable. Voyez la ligne d'intuition fortement marquee. Son besoin de liberté dans les formes de pensee et de vie est d'ordre primordial. Voyez le grand espace entre Jupiter et Saturne et entre Apollon et Mercure. Mains d'un stratège de grand style : voyez le petit triangle sur le mont de Jupiter.

fig. 33 'Palm Prints', Minotaure 6, Winter, 1935, p.42
ANDRÉ DERAIN

Simplicité frappante des lignes : triangle créateur des lignes d’intuition, de destinée et de tête (voyez le main droite). Esprit d’organisateur, qui est marqué par le Mont de Jupiter bien développé. Tendance imperturbable au travail, procédant de la tradition. (Voyez la ligne de destinée parallèle à la ligne de vie.) La faculté créatrice se passionne pour l’objet, la matière, les forces intellectuelles se combinent avec l’intuition. Sens tactile fortement développé : mains d’artisan.

ANDRÉ BRETON

Même simplicité de lignes que chez Derain. La faculté créatrice admirablement constituée, prend sa source chez Breton dans la fantaisie intuitive et dans un sentiment collectif qui sert de critérium à sa production. Voyez le grand triangle que forment les lignes d’intuition et de destinée qui se dirigent vers les doigts de Mercure et de Saturne, doigt de l’objectivité. Breton aspire à une loi objective. Ses sentiments mêmes participent à l’élaboration esthétique. (Une partie de la ligne de cœur est contenue dans le triangle.) Mains de créateur et de révélateur.

fig. 34 'Palm Prints', Minotaure 6, Winter, 1935, p.44
fig. 35 Maurice Tabard, 'Littérature', Bifur 4, December, 1929, p.72
fig. 36 Man Ray, 'L'Enregistrement d'un rêve', 1933 (Source: Aperature 125, Fall, 1991, p.16)
fig. 37 Man Ray, 'Nusch Eluard', 1935 (Source: T. Baum, Man Ray's Paris Portraits, p.60)
fig. 39 'Les Plus belles cartes postales', Paul Eluard, Minotaure 3-4, 1933, p.90
fig. 40 Man Ray, 'Self-Portrait', n.d. (Source: Aperature 125, Fall, 1991, p.17)
fig. 41 'Voir ou Entendre?', Variétés, no. 8, December 15, 1929, n.p.
fig. 42  (Eugène Atget, 'Boulevard de Strasbourg Corsets', 1912, uncredited), La Révolution surréaliste, no. 7, June 15, 1926, p.6
fig. 43 Man Ray, 'Untitled', illustration to essay 'Sur le réalisme photographique', Cahier d'art, vol. 10, 1935, p.120
fig. 44 Man Ray, 'Untitled', photographs illustrating 'L'Âge de la lumière, Minotaure 3-4, 1933, p.4
fig. 45 Man Ray, 'Untitled', 1936 (Source: R. Krauss, L'Amour fou, p.146)
fig. 46  Mur des Fédérés demonstration, May 24, 1936
(Source: J. Jackson, The Popular Front in France, n.p.)
fig. 47 Communist demonstrators in historic costumes from the revolutionary period, July 14th parade, 1936 (Source: J. Jackson, The Popular Front in France, n.p.)
fig. 48 Centerfold Montage of 'Triumph of the Will', special issue, Illustrierier Film Kurier, Autumn, 1936 (Source: 'Montage and Modern Life: 1919-1942, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, p.9)
Fig. 49 Still Shot from Jean Renoir's 'La Marseillaise', 1936 (Source: G. Guillaume-Grimaud, Le Cinéma du Front Populaire, n.p.)
À L'ÉPREUVE EN AFRIQUE

C'est en Afrique que Mobiloil a permis de réaliser quelques-unes des plus belles performances mécaniques. C'est Mobiloil qui a réalisé :

- Les courses d'enlèvement qui ont accompli la première traversée du Sahara.
- L'avion du Commandant Dagnaux qui a réalisé la première liaison par avion France-Madagascar.
- La voiture Chrysler qui a effectué le raid du Cap au Caire sans un seul accident.
- L'avion de l'Adjudant Goëlette qui a effectué la première liaison aérienne Paris-Dakar Reunion.

Les 4 Peugeot de la mission Proust-Peugeot ont effectué leur raid de 16 000 Kms en 12 jours, etc... etc.

Ces performances et tant d'autres prouvent bien la haute qualité de Mobiloil. Sans cesse améliorée et perfectionnée, elle comporte une large marge de sécurité qui en fait un lubrifiant inégalable.

Mobiloil

Recommandée en France par 174 constructeurs
fig. 51 Anonymous lithograph, 19th century, Paris
(Source: Montreal Gazette, May, 1968, p. 31)
fig. 52 Georges Hugnet, 'Untitled' 1936
(Source: R. Krauss, L'Amour fou, p.213)
fig. 53 Still Shot from Jean Virgo's film A Propos de Nice, 1930 (Source: D. Johnson, The Age of Illusion: Art and Politics in France, p.71)
fig. 54 Cartoon, Paris-Midi, November 4, 1937 (Source: Exposition Internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne: Paris 1937 Cinquantenaire, p.480)
APPEL AUX FRANÇAISES

Les Françaises ne gardons pas le silence devant ce cri d’alarme :

Plus de morts que de naissances

indifférentes ou lâches devant l’émotion qui étreint notre pays pour l’avenir.

êtes la France s’anéantir et disparaitre par notre faute.

nent à notre France. Et pour lui en trouver un acte d’expier leur jeunesse pour le Pays. Nous-mêmes, en cas de guerre, s’orir et sauver les blessées, mais avant de lutter contre la triste mort ou

gue mission de vie.

Femmes, doit vivre et grandir le pays !

à la force et la paix par le nombre.

vanité, luxe ou égoïsme, le vrai bonheur est au prix.

otre devoir et la Nation fera le sien : elle aidera les mères et robustes.

jour aux Grandes Familles par qui vivra la France française volontairement stérile, comme au sold.

Une Femme et Mère France

par les mains de cette affaire. Pétroles de tous les cultes. Mères, Instituteurs, qu’elle apparaissent par toute entière. Aidez-la : MOTIF, RUE SOCIÉTÉS SAVANTES, 28, RUE BOUDIER.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. Ernst Bloch writes in *Heritage of Our Times* of how the period of intoxication in Germany, which goes from 1929 onwards, is elicited through a 'non-contemporaneous' look back into a mythical past in which ideals of the community, the soul, the leader, and of 'destiny' are drummed up. But, as Bloch notes, "(t)he dust which the explosion of the non-contemporaneous whirls up is more dialectical than that of diversion"; indeed, it is crucial as it is "itself explosible." See p.180. In relation to the 'non-contemporaneous', Bloch writes of how " non-contemporaneous wildness and demonic mythicizing also exist and possibly have a dialectical hook, (and) are at least in strange 'contradiction' to capital and the spirit of capital; this contradiction must be helped along." See p.63. The periods of diversion and then intoxication, along with Surrealism's intersection with those periods, will be discussed in this chapter, while the details of intoxication as a revolutionary form of energy will partially emerge in this chapter, as well as forming the introduction to the second chapter.


3. André Breton was critiqued by the Communist Party for being the "chef d'école" who prefaces all his remarks with "We, André Breton..."; see Louise Perier, "Livres", *Commune* XI (December, 1934), pp.359-360. Cited in Helena Lewis, *The Politics of Surrealism* (1988), p.129. Along the same lines, Breton is described in the pamphlet *Un Cadavre*, issued by dissident Surrealists which included Bataille and Boiffard, as behaving like "a bishop or the Pope in Avignon"; or, paradoxically, as "a cop and a priest". The pamphlet itself shows a head portrait of Breton (taken from Man Ray's montage of the Surrealist group in his *Je ne vois pas la.....cachée dans la forêt*, 1929) onto which is montaged a crown of thorns. See *Tracts surréalistes et déclarations collectives*, Tome I, pp.133-135. After the war, Bataille remarked that "l'autorité de Breton avait en effet quelque chose de la surdité paternelle"; while Aragon, in describing his own break with Surrealism, wrote "et dire que j'ai rompu avec ma famille pour en arriver là!" Michel Leiris described Bataille as the "chef de file" of Surrealism's break away group in his article *De Bataille l'impossible à l'impossible "Documents"*. See *Critique* 195/196, Summer, 1963, p.688. See Julian Jackson *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy 1934-1938* (1988) for a description of the myth and symbols pervasive to the politics during this period, pp.113-148.

4. See Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *Lacan: The Absolute Master*, p.1. Borch-Jacobsen describes Lacan as "a prodigious assimilator" who was influenced in the inter-war period by the Surrealists, as well as by philosopher André Kojève's reading of Hegel. Lacan wrote "(f)or a psychoanalyst, an approach to the question of plagiarism does not exist. There is no such thing as symbolic private property"; cited p.2. Lacan's final discussions on the 'Symbolic' took place in the period of 1960-1980, along with his organization of the 'Imaginary' and the 'Real'; these three registers or orders correspond (very) loosely to the Freudian Superego (the Symbolic), the ego (the Imaginary) and the id (the Real). The Symbolic register includes the Hegelian ideal passed through Kojève of recognition: it is a relation between subject and Other as a 'dialectic of recognition', although it changes later (in the
4. (continued) Structuralist period) into an autonomous structure, where instead of recognition there is a lack that is represented in language. One notes that although the Imaginary and Symbolic are distinct and opposed, the Symbolic organizes and gives the Imaginary direction; it is the law and the name-of-the-father, and is ultimately socially instituted. For a recent overview of Lacan's principles see Madan Sarup, Jacques Lacan (1992). For Lacan's relationship to the Surrealists see David Macy Lacan in Contexts (1988); Elisabeth Roudinesco, Jacques Lacan & Co.: A History of Psychoanalysis in France, 1925-1985 (translated 1990); as well as Carolyn Dean's The Self and its Pleasures (1992), which includes a close look at the historical details of the inter-war period in which the French Psychoanalytic Movement became established. See Alain Grosrichard's essay Dr. Lacan, "Minotaure", Surrealist Encounters in the 1987 catalogue Focus on Minotaure (Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva) for the details of Lacan's relationship with the Surrealists at Minotaure.

5. Cited in Paul Smith's Discerning the Subject, p.72. Smith adds here that, "(i)f anything comes out as an injunction from the work done on the 'subject' in the Freudian/Lacanian mode, it is the necessity of taking into account the way in which human action, however defined or to whatever social determinants it is said to be submitted, is never not mediated by the unconscious", p.73. Lacan's works published in english include Écrits: A Selection (1977); The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis (1977); Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne (1982); and The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book III, The Psychoses, 1955-1956 (1993). His essays on paranoia published in Minotaure (not translated into english) will be discussed in chapter three.

6. The important essays in this context are Walter Benjamin's The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction (1935) and Theories of German Fascism: On the Collection of Essays War and Warrior, edited by Ernst Junger (1930); Seigfried Kracauer's essay The Mass Ornament (1927), and its later appearance in his analysis of Leni Riefenstahl's 1934 film Triumph of the Will in From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film; as well as his 1943 essay The Conquest of Europe on the Screen: The Nazi Newsreel, 1939-1940. Ernst Bloch's 1935 book Heritage of Our Times, besides analyzing fascism's use of the irrational, discusses montage in Part III of his book, "Upper Middle Classes, Objectivity and Montage".

7. The title of this journal was Le Surrealisme au service de la révolution, appearing between 1930 and 1933. The title is often abbreviated to LSASDLR.

8. Note that Breton's collage appears in Rosalind Krauss' and Jane Livingston's catalogue L'Amour fou: Photography and Surrealism under the title Le Serpent and is dated there as c.1936.
9. André Breton, *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* (1929). Breton refers in this manifesto to Bataille's passion for adjectives like "befouled, senile, rank, sordid, lewd, doddering..."; and in relation to this passion, Breton footnotes how in his *Différence de la philosophie de la nature chez Democrite et Epicure* Marx had written of "the hair-philosophers, fingernail-philosophers, toenail-philosophers, excrement-philosophers, etc." common to every age. The fact that Breton italicizes the latter two philosophical categories makes it clear where he situates the work of Bataille. See André Breton: *Manifestos of Surrealism* (1969), pp.184-185. Bataille's relation to 'excrement' and Breton's reaction to it form part of my discussion in chapter three under the section 'Sacred Bodies'.

10. Lukács' essay was first published in *Internationale Litteratur*, no. 1, 1934; and is translated into english in *Essays on Realism: Georg Lukács* (1980).

11. Bloch's essays on Expressionism are assembled in his book *Heritage of Our Times* as 'Expressionism seen now' (1937); 'Discussions of Expressionism' (1938); and 'The Problem of Expressionism Once Again' (1940).

12. Ibid, p.235. In Bloch's eyes, while the Nazis suppress Expressionism, they in turn take from it by reifying its 'expression' into a hollow scream: "The Nazis have profited by its remnants, admittedly only by those that have become stale and halved. By the dark without dawn, by the archaic without utopia, by the fraudulent or confused scream without human content." See p.238.

13. Georg Lukács, ibid, p.83 and p.91: "The passionate struggle of the expressionists against the war was objectively only a mock battle"; they only direct themselves against "violence in general and not against the concrete counter-revolutionary violence of the bourgeoisie." Bloch, for his part, feels that Lukács has unfairly mocked the pacifist content of Expressionism, for while their stance was possibly counter-revolutionary in the post-war era, such a stance before and during the war "was thoroughly revolutionary, even objectively revolutionary one, that was also understood as such by the politicians determined to hold out." See p.244, *Heritage of Our Times*.

14. The phrase "nothing in them but the emptiness of content" is Bloch's, ibid, p.246. Lukács' remark is that the "process of impoverishment of context (in Impressionism) continues in expressionism.....only at a greater pace." There is in Expressionism "a deliberate impoverishment in the content of realism portrayed"; and they thus "increase the emptiness and lack of content." Ibid, p.107. See also p.113 of Lukács' essay: "since they shared uncritically and without resistance in the ideological decay of the imperialist bourgeoisie, even being sometimes it pioneers, their creative method needed no distortion to be pressed into the service of fascist demagogy, of the unity of decadence and regression." Note that the english reprint of Lukács' essay contains at its end an appended note of 1953 in which the writer states that the fact the Nazis condemned Expressionism "in no way affects the historical correctness of the above analysis." See p.113.

15. Bloch, ibid, p.245.
16. Ibid, p.246. Bloch here accuses Lukács of admiring the uninterrupted 'totality' which has flourished best in idealist systems, and thus also in those of classic German philosophy. In Lukács search for realism, he ignores the fact that reality is fragment, and he equates the experiment of chopping into "pieces" with decline.


19. Ibid. Bloch sees that the Expressionists belong to a period of transition in which strange objects rise to the surface and are "glued together into new forms", p.246; and that a transition period fertilizes and then reproduces "late-early birth-allegories", p.252.

20. See the Los Angles Museum of Art's recent catalogue "Degenerate Art": The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany (1991) for the details of this exhibition.

21. Walter Benjamin's Moscow Diary (english publication, 1987) covers his two moths stay in Moscow from December 6, 1926 to the end of January, 1927. In the afterward to the diary editor Gary Smith notes that Benjamin was in Moscow during "what was arguably the final winter of literary independence, Stalin was winning the struggle against Trotsky for succession to Lenin's place, and cultural policy was hardening." In the diary Benjamin, writing on his discussion with his companion in Russia, Bernard Reich, of the intellectual's situation, remarks on how "Leftist movements which had proved useful during the period of wartime Communism are now being completely discarded" (p.11); and of how all technological efforts are now being directed towards "electrification, canal construction, creation of factories" (p.82). It is because of this return to order and restoration and the complimentary suppression of any avant-garde experimentation with technology that Benjamin ultimately turns to the idea of a developing alternative Left, in which culture and technology would continue to be integrated, and where revolutionary effort would not be completely superseded by a purely 'technological effort'. His comment on playing the role of an "outrider" to the Communist Left appears on p.73.

22. Bloch, ibid, p.4.


24. It is this same film and revue culture that underwrites Siegfried Kracauer's essays The Mass Ornament (1927); Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Picture Palaces (1926); and The Little Shopgirls go to the Movies (1927).

25. Bloch, ibid, p.185.


27. Ibid, p.53.


30. Oswald Spengler's book *Prussian Virtues and Socialism* (1919) was central to the fascist's concept of "socialism". The book was dedicated to "liberating German socialism from Marx"; and for Spengler 'German' virtues - loyalty, discipline, sacrifice - were 'socialist' virtues in that they placed the good of the national Gemeinschaft over that of individuals. The shift Spengler made was, as Jeffrey Herf in his book *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (1984) describes it, from the proletariat as the historical subjects of the revolution to the State, which is seen to embody Prussian socialist ideals. See his chapter three on Spengler, pp.49-69. Herf further states that sociologist Werner Sombart, who with Max Weber edited one of the major journals of German social science, can be credited with identifying the Jews with "market rationality and commercial greed" versus the Germans with productive labor and technology. Ibid. p.45. He also writes of how the medieval merchant and his incarnation in the modern international banker (who was seen as a Jew) lacks "the power of form creation (Gestaltungskraft) displayed by the peasant, factory worker, engineer, soldier and artist. These latter perform the labor of creative destruction and production thereby placing new Gestalten into the world." See p.63.

31. Bloch, ibid, p.363. "Haptic" is that which concerns the sense of touch.

32. Bloch describes how the racially interpreted nation is coincident with the self-esteem of the individual who is externally represented by the "beautiful blond body". The brilliance of the Nazi is in synthesizing the body of the Nation - the fatherland - with those who are to occupy and direct the Nation. Further, as Bloch points out, the Teuton satisfied with his blood is less likely to crave any ownership in the other riches of the Nation. Thus the Nation is both filled with and described by the Teutonic body which overrides any economic or social class distinctions. See p.44, *Heritage of Our Times*.


34. Ibid, p.178.

35. Ibid, p.178.


37. See Denis Hollier's introduction to his *The College of Sociology (1937-39)*, p.ix.

38. Bloch, ibid, p.222.


41. Ibid, pp.181-182.

42. Ibid, p.182.
43. The two other movements or phases of 'Convulsive Beauty' are 'érotique-voilée' (when one thing imitates another, or appears only partially seen); and 'explosante-fixe' which is related to the sudden expiration of movement. 'Magique-circonstancielle' can consist of a found object, or of an imagined verbal fragment which coincides with the discovery of an object, the best known example of which is the phrase "cendriller-Cendrillon" (the Cinderella ashtray) which coincided with the discovery by Breton at the Marché aux puces of a wooden spoon with a little shoe joined to the underside of its handle. The spoon evoked a fantasy that Breton described in *L'Amour fou*; in short, it functioned as an "oneiric or para-oneiric" object which became both a cipher and precipitate of Breton's desire (see pp.33-37).

44. In his *Konvolut N*, the theoretical heart of his massive 'Arcades Project' (translated into english in *The Philosophical Forum* XV, nos 1-2, 1983-84, and seen by Rolf Tiedemann, who assembled and published the fragments of this project, as a starting point for readers of Benjamin's various essays and other works), Benjamin wrote "as things lose their value, they are hollowed out in their alienation and, as ciphers, draw meanings in. Subjectivity takes control of them, by loading them with intentions of wish and anxiety.....In the context of these reflections, one must keep in mind that, in the nineteenth century, the number of 'hollowed out' things increases at a pace previously unknown, because technical progress is continually putting more utensils out of circulation." (N5,2), p.10.

45. Ibid, p.5.

46. Ibid, p.5.


49. See Georges Bataille, *Popular Front in the Street*, translated in *Visions of Excess: Selected writings, 1927-1939*, (1985, editor Allan Stoekl) p.162. This essay was first presented in the only *Cahiers de Contre-Attaque* (May, 1936) to be published, and was a reprint of a speech given by Bataille at the *Contre-Attaque* meeting of November 24, 1935.


51. Ibid, p.181. Stoekl notes that some of Bataille's "most important early pieces, such as *The Psychological Structure of Fascism* (1933, which Souvarine himself first published) are among the very first writings by anyone to consider, from a neo-Marxist perspective, the impact and effectiveness of the fascist appeal in the light of recent psychological, anthropological, and sociological work.....- thereby providing a much richer analysis of fascism than that provided by a Marxist critique alone."
52. The events of February, 1934 started with revelations of corruption within the ruling Radical Party (the 'Stavisky affair') which gave right-wing paramilitary organizations (like the Croix de Feu) the opportunity for protest they were looking for. While their rioting in Paris of February 6-7 did not result in a coup d'état, it did cause the fall of the Radical Party's government. The response of the Left was immediate: a general strike against fascism - but not the government itself - was called for February 12th, which in turn opened the way for an anti-fascist alliance of the Communist and non-Communist Left, and finally resulted in the Popular Front coming to power in the June, 1936 elections.


54. Stoekl, ibid, p.182.

55. For a detailed discussion and excellent analysis of the Communist's cultural program of 'Socialist Realism' see Regine Robin's *Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic* (1992).

56. Bloch's work, like Benjamin's, takes its departure from nineteenth century German Romantics like Schelling and Fichte. But one notes here that it was also work which came out of a contemporary and developing neo-romantic impulse at work in the inter-war period, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter three. The book *Heritage of Our Times* that discusses the traditional Left's turn away from irrational and intoxicating expression was, upon its publication, subjected to official criticism by the Communists.

57. See Zeev Sternhall's *Neither Right nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France* (english translation, 1986) for an excellent discussion on the shared political and social/cultural goals between the far Right and dissident Left in France, as well as the political defections that went back and forth between these two poles.

58. Cited Paul Smith, ibid, p.75.

59. Ibid, p.75.

60. Ibid, p.76.

61. Ibid, p.76.

62. See Judith Butler's *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth Century France* (1978) for an excellent discussion of the ontology of desire both in its Hegelian expression, as well as in its historicization by Kojève, who influenced both Lacan and Bataille in the 1930's.

63. Cited Denis Hollier, *College of Sociology*, p.191. Paulhan's article in *NRF* was titled 'Retour sur 1914'.

64. Benjamin saw in Surrealism an opportunity to overcome "religious illumination" through the movement's own "profane Illumination(s)". However, as he remarked in his Surrealist essay, "(t)his profane illumination did not always find the Surrealists equal to it, or to themselves...", p.179.
65. See Sartre, *Qu’est-ce qu’un collaborateur?* in *Situations*, volume 3, p.58. French writer Robert Brasillach, who was condemned to death in January of ’45 for his collaborationist activities during the war, confirmed Sartre’s suspicion of the sexual lure of German fascism for the French fascist when he wrote (and this was a much quoted statement during his trial) that, "(l)ike it or not, we have lived together; French(men) of some reflection during these few years will have more or less slept with Germany, and the memory of it will remain sweet to them." Cited in Alice Kaplan's *Reproductions of Banality: Fascism, Literature, and French Intellectual Life* (1986), p.16. Kaplan, under the influence of Klaus Theweleit's work on the psychological basis of fascism, analyzes Sartre's text as one which "has trouble explaining its (fascism's) utopian, oceanic element", p.13.

66. Bloch, ibid, p.57.

67. Russell Berman, in his forward to Kaplan’s book, points out how fascism and barbarism are equated; and how both are seen as "outside of culture", a position that ultimately denies the possibility of "investigating the intellectual lineages" of fascism. It is this position that Sartre adheres to, seeing French fascists as "outsiders" to the French intellectual tradition. See pp.xii-xiv. Benjamin himself was surely aware of this split and of the veiling of origins that obscure the contents of barbarity in culture when he wrote in his *Konvolut N* that "(b)arbarism inheres in the very concept of culture: taken as the concept of a hoard of values which is independent, not of the production process from which those values emerged, but of the process in which they survive. In this way, they serve the apotheosis of the latter, no matter how barbaric it may be." (N5a, 7); p.14 *The Philosophical Forum.* In a different context and with a post-war perspective, Adorno saw how in a textual lineage of history that glosses over the social and economic details of a period, a kind of barbarity is embedded in an enlightenment ideal of progress. In his *Negative Dialectics* (1966) he wrote that "no universal history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one which leads for the slingshot to the megaton bomb"; p.320.

68. See Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933); a book which was written during the German crisis years of 1930-1933 and banned by the fascists in 1935. But it was also, as Reich writes in his 1942 preface to the book's third edition, subject to attack by the Communist Party, who denounced it as counter-revolutionary. Indeed, Reich was warned that as soon as the Communists came to power he would be shot. See pp.xvii-xxi. Reich wrote in his preface that it "is generally clear today that fascism is not the act of a Hitler or a Mussolini, but that it is the expression of the irrational structure of mass man."

69. Ibid, p.5.

70. See Sartre's essay *Paul Nizan* in *Situations, A Selection* (translated by Benita Eisler), p.137.

71. A 'Declaration' of the movement's purpose was issued from the 'Centre des Recherches surrealistes' on January, 1925, which contained 27 signatures; and which promulgated Surrealism's expansive worldview in relation to its experiments with the unconscious through the statements (which contrast to the limits of its image) that it was "a means of total liberation of the mind and all that resembles it", and that "we are determined to make a revolution." See *Tracts surrealistes*, ibid, p.34.

73. Ibid, p.56.

74. Ibid, p.56.

75. Two books which discuss the visual and aesthetic production of the Third Reich, and which contain a wide variety of images and visual documents from that period are Berthold Heinz's *Art in the Third Reich* (1979), and Peter Adam's recent *Art of the Third Reich* (1992).


77. Ibid, p.21.

78. Ibid, p.22.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid.

82. In *Heritage of Our Times* Bloch writes of how the German's focus on bloodlines makes him think he "can breed himself, like dogs or horses. The first place to be German in this way is thus the pure bred." (p.88) In this way the "average man, often injured, finds himself in a strong Nation again. The second place to be German in this way is thus the Aryanized fatherland. (p.89) In the end, State racial theory leads not only to "the pathos of heredity and selective breeding, but above all the national pathos of blood." And thus also, the Nation "becomes, in medical terms as well, a unity filled with blood, purely organic river basin, from whom past humanity stems, into whose....'future' children go." (p.90)

83. Historian George Mosse has written extensively on the German masses and their nationalization; see, for example, *The Nationalization of the Masses* (1975); *Masses and Man: Nationalist and Fascist Perceptions* (1987); and *Nationalism and Sexuality* (1985). For a look at an analysis of racial theory by German political scientist Eric Voegelin, whose works were supressed during the Nazi era, see Thomas W. Heilke's *Voegelin on the Idea of Race* (1990).


85. This issue will be dealt with at length in the section 'Sacred Bodies', chapter three.


87. Ibid, p.63.
88. The word "wish-image" belongs to Benjamin and it refers to the surface glitter of both the Arcades and its objects as the dreams and wish-images of the social collective. Susan Buck-Morss in her book *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (1990) describes how Benjamin saw the surface ornamentation of commodities as collective 'wish-images' which made visible the potential of the new technologies and how - as surface - it embodied the social meaning technology's magical reproductive processes should have for the community. See p.110 and p.117.


91. Ibid, p.69.


94. See Luce Irigaray, *This Sex which is not One* (1977), p.202. I'll be examining this idea of repetition and its relation to the portrayal of Convulsive Beauty at more length in the section 'Sacred Bodies', chapter three.

95. Bloch writes in *Heritage of Our Times* of how the "employees have increased fivefold in the same time in which the workers have only doubled their numbers"; but that, by contrast, "their consciousness has not increased fivefold", for "despite miserable pay, conveyor belt, extreme insecurity of existence, fear of old age, debarment from the 'higher' strata, in short proletarianization de facto, they still feel they are at the bourgeois center." It is their "tedious work that makes them more dull than rebellious", (p.24); but in addition, psychologically the "petit bourgeois is frightened by the proletarian condition to which he sees himself close, which he regards as an absolutely eternal one, like everything else in his world." Such a reaction is encouraged by the upper class who "promotes all reflexes of mythology which shrink back from the abyss - as if it is one." (.364) I'll note here that it is this same idea of the 'abyss', but transferred onto the feminine body that both fascinates and frightens the petit-bourgeois intellectual; a fear which critical theorists like Benjamin and the Surrealists themselves were, to a degree, absorbed by, as will be discussed in the section 'Under the Shadows of Romance: Critical Theory and the Instability of Gender', chapter three.


97. See Alice Kaplan, ibid, p.36.


100. Bloch, ibid, p.67.


102. The police closed down the 'First International Dada Fair' in response to the army officer hanging in effigy from the ceiling whose placard around its neck read "killed by the revolution".


104. Susan Suleiman's book *Subversive Intent: Gender, Politics and the Avant-Garde* (1990) devotes a chapter (4) to Bataille's pornographic writings and to the various critical responses they provoke. In her own analysis she notes how in Bataille's pornography the male protagonist is often "split between an active and passive role" leading to a constant sexual ambiguity in the subject in relation to his desire; p.85. It is this ambiguity in desire that constantly throws Bataille back into the traumatized field that desire creates in the body, causing it to literally fall and dissolve; losing its own stability and form and finally, its self identity. Nowhere is this more clearly stated than in his early essay *The Solar Anus*, published in 1931 with drypoint etchings by André Masson, in which Bataille writes: "A man who finds himself among others is irritated because he does not know why he is not one of the others. In bed next to a girl he loves, he forgets that he does not know why he is himself instead of the body he touches. Without knowing it, he suffers from the obscurity of intelligence that keeps him from screaming that he himself is the girl who forgets his presence while shuddering in his arms......They can very well try to find each other; they will never find anything but parodic images, and they will fall asleep as empty as mirrors." See p.6, *Visions of Excess*.

106. The cultural associations of the mind with masculinity and the body with femininity are well documented within the fields of psychoanalysis, philosophy and feminist discourse itself. It was Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* that first discussed this division critically by arguing that the feminine body was "marked within masculinist discourse", while the masculine body, in its abstraction and symbolization through the phallic sign, remained universal and therefore, "unmarked". Luce Irigaray, whose book *This Sex which is not One* has been influential to my own conceptualization of how masculine and feminine identities and sexuality are formed and regulated, has, by contrast, maintained that both the "marker and marked" are controlled by a masculine mode of signification in which the feminine body is "marked off" from the domain of the signifiable. Thus Irigaray reverses Beauvoir's claim that woman is 'sex' into "she is not the sex she is designated to be", but rather "the masculine sex encore (and en corps) parading in the mode of otherness." In sum, where Beauvoir sees, in her binary model of sexuality, "the failed reciprocity of an asymmetrical dialectic", Irigaray sees the dialectic itself as a "monologic elaboration of a masculinist signifying economy." Irigaray's monologic theoroizations have been seen as totalizing and essentialist in themselves in the sense that instead of offering a different set of terms for feminist theory to function from, she, through identifying the 'enemy' as singular in form, has simply created a "reverse-discourse" that mimes the strategy of the oppressor. (see Judith Butler's recent *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 1990, whose terms of presentation in marking out the differences between theoretical models I have, to a degree, followed. See pp.11-12, and pp.29-30 for the remarks in quotations.) What needs to be emphasized here, and where Irigaray's work
106. (continued) is of value I feel, is that subjects *represent* their desires (and fears) through exclusionary operations that do, in their fantasies, re-construct the Other in the image of their own self-gratifying and self-amplifying desire. It is this fiction that the subject creates that has to be butted up against a local and historical time frame, which reveals that these fantasies of desire were created for specific reasons. Within the historical framework of the inter-war period one finds then representations of desire that came out of a destabilized and shifting masculine and feminine subjectivity caught in a social and cultural crisis which was sustained and indeed, intensified, by the clear progression into another era of violence that World War II would bring about. My job here is to show how masculine desire and fantasy, while still functioning in a phallocentric economy, was nevertheless, in terms of its own identity (particularly in terms of its identity as 'virile'), implicated and marked by that crisis, and that these pressures on desire and identity in turn dictated the structure of their representations of women as, particularly, 'convulsive' desire. The articulation of this process, while present throughout the thesis, receives its fullest and most explicit treatment in chapter 3.

107. As Bloch points out, purification rites that crystallize and heal ruptured identities (in Germany seen in the 'castration' of World War I) depend upon ideals of discipline, service and sacrifice, which were subsequently given poetic resonance by German writers and dramatists. Here intoxication in service to the State was evoked; but it was, as Bloch wrote, intoxication as "pathos": transmitted through "songs of remotness" and adventure; through escape into campfires at night and into archtypal heros appropriate to the sacred and "shinning appearance of blood." See *Heritage of Our Times*, p.181.

108. See Heide Schlupmann's *Phenomenology of Film: On Seigfried Kracauer's Writings of the 1920's*, and Thomas Elsaesser's *Cinema - The Irresponsible Signifier or "The Gamble with History": Film Theory or Cinema Theory*; both in *New German Critique* 40, Winter 1987, for a detailed exposition on Kracauer's film theory and its relationship to his writings on photography in the 1920's.

109. See Thomas Elsaesser, ibid, p.71.

110. Ibid.

111. Bloch, ibid, p.363.

CHAPTER TWO


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

5. Ibid, p.125. Bloch here is particularly speaking of the medieval prophecies of abbot Joachim of Fiore, who proclaimed a third testament towards the end of the twelfth century. He states that while it was true that the revolutionary intoxication induced by Joachim was only abstract and mythological, and that it set in motion only the subjective will to change the world versus the concrete methods for this change, that the dream of the Third Reich remained "ardent and stimulating right down to the Hussite movement (which Bloch claims "marks the first heroic age of a...communist-spirited revolution"), right down to the Peasant Wars (of the 16th century, under the ideological leadership of utopian theologian Thomas Müntzer)." See p.123. In Joachim's doctrine of the third status, the third kingdom is the world in which the early Christian community "descends from heaven to earth where a Communist brotherhood and realm of peace begins." This versus the church militant where "heaven only comes after the this life on earth." See p.125. In returning to the early meaning of the Third Reich, Bloch is underscoring the fact that this term not only has a long history, but also "a genuinely revolutionary one." That is, besides the political dynastic sense familiar to the Nazi designation of the Third Reich, the term also has mystical connotations of 'Kingdom' and 'realm'. Further, the thousand year Reich Hitler spoke of was also "semantically the traditional 'millenium' prophesied for Christ's reign on earth in Revelations by St. John the Divine, and anticipated by the utopian and spiritual leaders of the Middle Ages. The Nazi was "creative" only in "the embezzlement at all prices with which he employed his revolutionary slogans to the opposite effect. With which......he used the dark lustre of old phrases and patinated the revolution which he claimed to be making...". In relation to this, Bloch states that while the "contents of modern socialism......are no longer theological ones", that it should still "pay respect to the dreams of its youth, it sheds their illusion, but it fulfills their promises." This is, indeed, crucial for "Germany still heeds, as has been shown, the old dreams of savoir and Reich, even when they are advanced by deceivers, and heeded by them all the more seducibly when socialist propaganda was in many ways cold, schoolmasterish and merely economistic." See pp.117-118.


7. Ibid, p.128. Bloch remarks here how "Nazism has uniquely mobilized for itself both economic ignorance and the still active image of hope, chiliastic image in earlier revolutions." Chiliasm itself, Bloch claims, represented in the Middle Ages "the science of revolution so to speak, namely its objectivity and inevitability; the times were experienced as not just subjectively but also objectively ripe for revolution, the revolutuion stood 'at the hearing', the heavenly court-clock seemed to be striking its hour." This meaning embedded in revolutionary action remained "up to the French Revolution, if not longer, chiliasm - in rationalized form - incited broad masses not to put up with their current 'fate', and to commit revolutionary acts for the 'breakthrough of the kingdom'." See p.131.
13. Ibid. Bloch feels that even if all National Socialists moved over to Communism, that
unless they acknowledged the need for an 'irratio' as a part of social existence there "would
still remain......a storm corner of possible reaction here, namely a danger zone of the
'remnant' which had not yet been represented in Marxist terms." See p.62.


15. Ibid.

16. Ibid, p.219. Benjamin adds here that since "the eye perceives more quickly than the hand
can draw, the process of pictorial reproduction was accelerated so enormously that it could
keep pace with speech." Here he is thinking of film; but he also sees that just "as
lithography virtually implied the illustrated newspaper, so did photography forshadow the
sound film." It is this sense of the one being in debt to the other that animates Benjamin's
meshing of all the reproductive apparatuses into the same social tendencies, in terms of
their cultural reception.

17. Ibid, p.220. In remarking on the authenticity of the object and its aura, Benjamin is
referring to art works which in reproduction are no longer the unique and singular object
they exist as in reality. The photograph collapses our sense of distance from the authentic
object - that is, it comes into our space, rather than us having to go to it in its original
location - but 'distance' also refers to the aura of nature and its 'objects'. Here Benjamin
states that aura is "the unique phenomenon of distance, however close it may be"; as in, for
example, you following "with your eyes a mountain range on the horizon or a branch
which casts its shadow over you, you experience the aura of those mountains, of that
branch." Thus decay of the aura through mechanical reproduction was, as Benjamin
described it, not merely a matter of the increasing proximity of the object itself; but also, it
was a specific measure of the loss of a stable distance between the eye and its object in all
eras of human experience. See pp.222-223.


21. Ibid. Here Benjamin is thinking of how the newsreel "offers everyone the opportunity to
rise from paserby to movie extra." (p.231) But in pointing to the Russian example, and of
how, as in Constructivist Dziga Vertov's films, "any man might even find himself part of a
work of art." (p.231); Benjamin is overlooking the reality of Soviet filmmaking by 1935.
As Hal Foster, in his essay *Some uses and Abuses of Russian Constructivism* (1990, in the
catalogue *Art into Life: Russian Constructivism, 1914-1932*), has pointed out, while there
was a rapid development of the Soviet cinema in the 1920's; there was also a "striking" gap
between the avant-gard's program and political reality; as an example Foster notes that
famous films like *The Battleship Potemkin* (1926) and Vertov's *The Man with a Movie
Camera* (1929) "were not received enthusiastically by the Soviet authorities and received
limited exposure in the Societ Union." Indeed, Vertov was fired by the government film
company Goskino in Moscow in 1927. Vertov was part of the Constructivist movement
which sought to overcome "private property in all its cultural forms." This included not
just the idea of collectivizing the production of art and defetishizing its reception; but also
21. (continued) the institution of the model of the artist as producer and the "viewer as collaborator." Thus in the cinematic superimpositions of Vertov, the artist/filmmaker sought to "transform subject-object relations." See p.227 and p.251.


24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.


27. Ibid, pp.7-8.


29. Benjamin, *One-Way Street* (1928) in *Reflections: Walter Benjamin*, p.93. Here Benjamin relates this shift away from the unconscious and its desires as a collective expression, to the "flowering of astronomy" which begins "the exclusive emphasis on an optical connection to the universe." Such an emphasis leads to the development of technology solely in terms of a scientific ideal of progress, in which men lose their connection to the cosmos as a larger whole (that is, a cosmos which is more than we can see). It also by-passes the fact that Kepler and Copernicus were not driven "by scientific impulses alone."


32. Ibid.

33. Benjamin, *Thesis on the Philosophy of History* in *Illuminations*, p.259: "Fourier's fantasies, which have often been ridiculed, prove to be surprizingly sound." This was so in the sense that his creations "far from exploiting nature" deliver those creations which already "lie dormant in her womb as potentials." Some of these creations are, for instance, Fourier's desire to "see the people who are not useful for anything.....who only go about trying to catch up on the news and spread it further, circulate at the dinner tables of the harmonists in order to spare people the time of reading journals: a divination of radio that is derived from studying the human character." (The Arcades Project notes, V, p.793, cited Buck-Morss, p.469) Benjamin also claimed that Fourier imagined an "optical telegraph", even "television", "satellites" and "space travel" (V, p.793, 786, 776; cited Buck-Morss, p.469 and p.304). Bloch's ideas on Fourier were somewhat different from Benjamin's. In *Heritage of Our Times*, he claims Fourier as an example of "late chiliasm"; in the sense that his works were created "in times for which economic consciousness had become possible" - 1789 being the landmark in the possibility of revolutionary consciousness, followed by Marx's theoretical organization of its meaning some eleven years after Fourier's death, who lived from 1772 to 1837. But despite this possibility, Fourier is said by Bloch to treat the present and near future as "blank aeras or undiscovered tracts of land" upon which he could sketch "exuberant palm leaves or other abstractions of mere wishful thinking." See p.131.
34. While Bloch feels the over abundance of fantasy in Fourier works in the end to obscure the power and explosive force of early revolutionary chiliasm, Benjamin took the reified commodity fetish as the perverted capitalist production of Fourier's early industrial dream and insisted that, like Bloch and his theological chiliasm, the kernal of a technological utopian truth still existed at the very core of the fetish. The surface lustre of fetishes were "wishful fantasies, and in them the collective seeks to both preserve and to transfigure the inchoateness of the social product and the deficiencies in the social system of production." See p.148, *Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century.*

35. Benjamin, ibid, p.154.


38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid, p.20. See also p.226, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* for the remark that Atget's works provided evidence of "crimes" and were politically significant documents.


42. Ibid, p.21.

43. Benjamin's 'Arcades Project' (also called *The Passagen-Werk*) began in 1927 and was worked on for the next 13 years until his death. It had originally been planned as a fifty page essay, but grew into an assemblage of material that, when published for the first time in 1982, numbered over a thousand pages. These pages consisted of fragments of historical data gathered primarily from Berlin's Staatsbibliothek and Paris' Bibliothèque Nationale, which were organized into 36 files or *Konvoluts.* As Susan Buck-Morss writes in her *Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project,* *The Passagen-Werk* "is a double text. Ostensibly a social and cultural history of Paris in the nineteenth century, it is in fact intended to provide a political education for Benjamin's own generation. It is an 'ur-history', a history of *origins* of that present historical moment which, while remaining largely invisible, is the determining motivation for Benjamin's interest in the past." See p.47. And that history of *origins* revolved around, as Benjamin himself wrote in a letter to his friend Gershom Scholem in 1935, the concept of "the fetish character of commodities" which stood "at the center" of his project.


47. Breton *Nadja* (Editions Gallimard, 1990), p.190.


50. Ibid.

51. Ibid. See *Tracts surréalistes*, Tome I, pp.54-56 for a reprint of this manifesto, which was published simultaneously in *La Révolution surréaliste*, no. 5, October, 1925 and in *Clarté* no. 77. Note that *Clarté* was known for its Trotskyist affinities, but by 1927, now under the editorship of Pierre Naville, its name became *La Lutte des classes* and it re-entered the Communist fold.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid, p.34.


55. Bataille, ibid, p.34.


60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid, p.47.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.


66. Ibid.

67. Ibid, p.11.


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70. Ibid.

71. Léon Jouhaux became Secretary of the CGT in 1909 and maintained his post there until the war. By 1936 he had become an "institution" in the organization, known as its "General" or as the "Pope". Jouhaux was the man most responsible for moving the organization away from its doctrine of revolutionary syndicalism - which believed in the absolute autonomy of labour and its separation from any political party - and towards its reformist stance of the 1930's. Such a stance called for a "politique de presence in the affairs of the Nation", in which representatives of the workers would be present in every "public arena" that involved working class interests. This shift meant that the organization would now be willing to negotiate with both governments and employers in order to advance the interests of its members. See pp.73-81 in Julian Jackson's *The Popular Front in France* for a detailed discussion of Jouhaux's role in the CGT. The AEAR was founded at the beginning of 1932 with the aim of gathering together, under the loosely defined aegis of the PCF, all French intellectuals opposed to fascism. The French Communists during this period presented themselves as defenders of *French* culture (which was also defined as an "indivisible" culture, as Aragon put it, versus a strictly revolutionary proletarian culture) in order to stress the Frenchness of the Communists themselves; that is, their "rootedness" in the French tradition. See my next section 'Looking at the Nineteenth Century 'Nature' of the Ideal' for a further discussion of the PCF's cultural policy during the period of the Popular Front.

72. The demand for a two week holiday had been put forward by the CGT since 1925; but it gained little support from the workers "for whom the idea seemed an impossible dream." Its emergence out of the spring strikes of '36 was seen as one of the most remarkable achievements of the Popular Front government. However, the 'image' of the congés payés that the Popular Front, in it 'politique des loisirs', put forward contrasted visibly to the reality that the photograph of the Normandy beach in '38 revealed: an article in *Vendredi* summarizes this image, stating "if we had to give a face to the Popular Front...it would be that of a young man, bronzed by the sun, muscular, used to walking and to the open air, his soul innocent and yet not naive, singing 'allons au devant de la vie'." Cited in Jackson, ibid, p.135.

73. Bataille's ideas of expenditure in relation to revolutionary eruption are first expressed in an organized way in his article *The Notion of Expenditure* (1933), first published in Boris Souvarine's anti-Stalinist Marxist review *La Critique Sociale*. Although Bataille only hints in *The Notion of Expenditure* at a social "need for limitless loss" (that is, expenditure as a permanent need which the revolution itself can never totally satisfy), it was not until his organization of Acéphale, a secret society which nevertheless had a 'public' face through its review Acéphale published four times between June 1936 and June, 1939, that ideas of 'expenditure' as a permanent form of social expression in society were laid out.


75. Ibid.


77. Ibid, p.11.

79. See Phillipe Ivornel, *Paris, Capital of the Popular Front or the Posthumous Life of the 19th Century* in *New German Critique* 39, Fall, 1986, p.79.


83. See pp.160-161, *Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century*, where Benjamin remarks that "the Commune puts an end to the phantasmagoria that dominates the freedom of the proletariat. It dispells the illusion that the task of the proletarian revolution is to complete the work of 1789 hand in hand with the bourgeoisie. The illusion prevailed for 1831 to 1871, from the Lyons uprising to the Commune. The bourgeoisie never shared this error." Although Benjamin adds to this that "the Commune for a time won over the best elements of the bourgeoisie, but in the end led them to succumb to their worst."

84. Breton (and Leon Trotsky) *Pour un art révolutionnaire indépendant* in *Tracts surréalistes*, Tome I, p.337.

85. See p.x, introduction to *Communicating Vessels*, translated by Mary Anne Caws, 1990.


87. In 1919 a woman's suffrage bill passed the Chamber of Deputies, however the Senate voted it down three years later and successfully resisted any further attempts to secure the vote until after World War II. See Steven Hause's *Women's Suffrage and Social Politics in the French Third Republic* (1984) for details on the women's suffrage movement.

88. See ftm. 97.

89. See Jenijoy La Belle, *Herself Beheld: The Literature of the Looking Glass* (1988) for an interesting discussion on the confrontation that takes place between a woman and her reflection in the mirror, in terms of self-identity (as internal 'intrinsic' identity) and the 'Other', as the subject's external appearance created in response to the prevailing dictates of desirability and fashion.

90. *La Révolution surréaliste* published in total four photographs by Atget: one on the cover of no. 7 (which Atget had titled - in relation to the event - *L'Eclipse* - Avril, 1912, and which the Surrealists re-named *Les Dernières conversions*); two others untitled and with no credits in the same issue on p.6 (*The Boulevard de Strasbourg, Corsets*) and p.28; the last in the no. 8 issue, December, 1926, p.20. See Molly Nesbit's *Atget's Seven Albums* which discusses at some length the Surrealists' relations with Atget, pp.1-11.

91. Man Ray, *Sur le réalisme photographique* in *Cahier d'art*, V. 10, 1935, p.120.

92. Ibid.


95. Ibid.


97. Ibid, p.111.

98. Ibid, p.126.

99. Ibid.

100. Ibid.


103. Cited Roland Penrose, *Man Ray* (1975), p.121. Breton's comment is taken from Man Ray's album *The Age of Light*, p.42, published in 1934 (Man Ray's essay *L'Age de la lumière* was first published in *Minotaure* in '33). Penrose notes, in relation to this album, that Breton's remarks introduce the section of the book titled 'The Visages of Women' and that all the photographs, except the last of Gertrude Stein, are presented anonymously; and that by contrast, in the following section of a series of male portraits, all the sitters are named with the exception of the last one which is 'Babette', the music hall female impersonator.

104. Julian Jackson, ibid, p.114.


107. Ibid.

108. Ibid.

109. Ibid.

110. Ibid.

111. Ibid.


113. Ibid.

114. Breton, *Nadja*, p.16.


117. Ibid.

118. Breton *Crise de l'objet* in *Cahiers d'art*, vol. 11, 1936, p.22.


120. Breton, *Nadja*, p.26. Here Breton is juxtaposing what he wants from his dreams, as opposed to how psychoanalysis deals with "the problem of dreams", wondering if this method "n'occasionne pas simplement de nouveaux manquements d'actes à partir de son explication des actes manques."

121. Breton, *Manifesto of Surrealism*, ibid, p.17.


123. Benjamin, *Konvolut N*, ibid, p.3.


126. Ibid, p.64, p.66.

127. Cited Phillipe Ivornel, ibid, p.79. "This is clearly", Ivornel notes, "the gesture of the priest offering the tabernacle for adoration."


129. Ibid, p.79.


131. Ibid.

132. Ibid, p.77. Susan Buck-Morss also notes in her essay *Benjamin's Passagen-Werk: Redeeming Mass Culture for the Revolution* that by the late nineteenth century "it was politically significant that the bourgeois dream of democracy underwent this form of censorship: Benjamin spoke of the 'phantasmagoria' of "egalité" (PW 1209), wherein the political concept of equality was displaced onto the realm of things, the citizen replaced the consumer, and the promise of commodity abundance became a substitute for social revolution. "La Révolution", Benjamin noted, "came to mean 'clearance sale' in the 19th century." See *New German Critique* 29, Spring/Summer, 1983, p.231.

133. Cited Julian Jackson, ibid, p.177.
134. Ibid, p.117.


137. See Benjamin's *The Author as Producer* (1936) in *Reflections: Walter Benjamin*. In the essay, Benjamin notes the fracture between art and science that the modern age of specialization has brought on: "In our writing....opposites that in happier periods fertilized one another have become insoluble antinomies. Thus science and belles-lettres, criticism and production, education and politics fall apart in disorder." See p.224. In relation to this separation, Benjamin further notes that "technical progress is for the author as producer the foundation of his political progress. In other words, only by transcending the specialization in the process of production that, in the bourgeois view, constitutes its order can one make this production politically useful; and the barriers imposed by specialization must be breached jointly by the productive forces that they were set up to divide." See p.230. As an exemplar of the above, Benjamin writes of Brecht's epic theatre, which takes the "procedure of montage" (a procedure "familiar to you in recent years from film and radio, press and photography"). Through the interruption of action (interruption is intrinsic to montage) Brecht "constantly counteracts an illusion in the audience": "Epic theatre....does not reproduce situations; rather, it discovers them (by means of interrupting sequences)." "It arrests the action in its course, and thereby compells the listener to adopt an attitude vis-a-vis the process, the actor vis-a-vis his role." See pp.234-235.

138. Luce Irigaray, *This Sex which is not One*, p.177.


141. Cited Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, Vol. 2, p.177. The writer is Ernst von Salomon, a reactionary conservative who was imprisoned for his part in the assassination of the liberal Jewish politician and financier Walter Rathenau in 1922.


143. Ibid, p.80.
CHAPTER THREE


3. J.P. Stern describes the idea of "total mobilization" as "Junger's most distinct intellectual achievement." In his *Ernst Junger: A Writer of Our Time* (1953) he summarizes this creation as follows: "It describes a self-moved activity, bearing its aim and its purpose within itself, and there is in his (Junger's) view no other. What nature ment to earlier ages, machines mean to ours. Technical perfection is not progress but an elementary fact. Any scale of values which disregards it, or fails to account for it positively, is as decadent and false as any earlier system would have been had it rejected nature." See pp.43-44.

4. Goebbel's speech is cited from J. Herf's *Reactionary Modernism* (1986), p.196. In this speech he also remarked that it was the era of 'stahlernde Romantik' that had "made German life worth living again." Ibid, p.195.

5. Ibid, p.196; taken from a June 5th, 1943 speech given at the Berlin Sportpalast.

6. Ibid, p.196; taken from a July 7th, 1943 speech at the Heidelberg Stadthalle.


8. Benjamin did his doctoral thesis (*Der Begriff der deutschen Romantik*, accepted in the fall of 1919 at Muri University, located near Bern) on the German Romantic's concept of art criticism, stating that the "modern concept of criticism has derived from the Romantic one, but for the Romantics 'criticism' was a quite esoteric concept, with mystical premises in its relation to knowledge and, in aesthetic questions, synthesizing the best insights of contemporary and later writers into a new concept of art, which is in many respects our own."; *Briefe*, p.203, cited Bernd Witte, ibid, p.45. See Witte's chapter three, 'Art Criticism in the Spirit of Romanticism', pp.39-67 for a discussion of Benjamin's work with the nineteenth century German Romantics.

9. Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectis of Seeing*, p.255. Buck-Morss's study of Benjamin's 'Arcades Project' is scrupulously comprehensive, at the same time that it is intellectually engaging and insightful. Bernd Witte's biography on Benjamin also devotes an excellent chapter (8) on this project. See also Rolf Tiedemann's essay in Gary Smith's *On Walter Benjamin*, pp.260-291; it was Tiedemann, a student of Adorno's, who first assembled and published the fragments of this project.
10. Benjamin, V:1207; cited Buck-Morss, ibid, p.256. How powerfully affected Benjamin was by Aragon's book is revealed in a letter to Adorno in May of 1935, in which he wrote "evenings in bed I could not read more than a few words of it before my heartbeat got so strong I had to put the book down....And in fact the first notes of the *Passagen* come from this time." Cited Buck-Morss, ibid, p.33.


15. Ibid, p.129.

16. Ibid.


20. Benajmi, V:1256; cited Tiedemann, ibid, p.277. Tiedemann remarks that Benjamin's "interest in culture was less for its ideological content....whose depth is unearthed in ideology critique, than in its surface or exterior, which is both promising and deceptive." That is, the 'surface lustre' of the commodity world represented the wish symbols or ideals, by which the collective tried "both to transfigure and sublate the unfinished nature of the social product and the defects in the social order of production"; V:46f. Buck-Morss writes of how all these objects - these wish images - "were 'natural' phenomena in the sense of concrete matter, they gave the illusion of being the realization of those wishes rather than merely their reified symbolic expression"; see *Benjamin's Passagen-Werk: Redeeming Mass Culture for the Revolution*, p.213. She also writes of how the 'surface' world of capitalist culture "was mobile, all its signs were transitory"; it was a place where things were less petrified and where the rigidity of entrenched traditions were absent, leading to the possibility for something new and promising to develope. It was this expressive potential of the surface that had to be grasped and re-directed. See *Dialectics of Seeing*, chapter 8, 'Dream World of Mass Culture'.

22. Adorno critiqued Benjamin's 'collective dream theory' as lacking the essential Marxist base of class consciousness, and saw it as being indistinguishable from Jung's theory of a collective unconscious, which manifested itself in archetypal symbols. Buck-Morss however, has argued that the collective dream theory has a Marxist base that Benjamin incorporated into 'The Arcades Project', pointing to the well known quotation from Marx that Benjamin wrote into his Konvolut N: "It will then become clear that the world has long possessed a dream of something which it only has to possess with consciousness in order to possess it in reality." It was for this reason that Benjamin constantly stressed the need for awakening and recognition, the part of the dialectic that Surrealism turned away from. See Susan Buck-Morss, The Dialectics of Seeing, p.281.

23. Ernst Bloch, Geist der Utopie, p.9; cited Witte, ibid, p.44.

24. Ibid.

25. See Note on the Foundation of a College of Sociology (July, 1937), point 3, which states: "The precise object of the contemplated activity can take the name of Sacred Sociology, implying the study of all manifestations of social existence where the active presence of the sacred is clear. It intends to establish in this way the points of coincidence between the fundamental obsessive tendencies of individual psychology and the principle structures that govern social organization and are in command of its revolutions." The 'Note' appeared first in the July, 1937 issue of Acéphale; and then one year later, in the 'Introduction' to the collection entitled "For a College of Sociology" in the NRF of July, 1938. See The College of Sociology 1937-39, (1988, editor Denis Hollier), p.5.

26. Caillois' book review was of Ph. de Felice's Poissons sacrés, ivresses divines, cited College of Sociology, p.401 f.7. Caillois also used the word in his lecture 'Winter Wind' at the College on March 7, 1937, while speaking of the formation of 'closed communities' opposed to society as it existed, and determined to combat the social order. Such groups were "more solid, more condensed" and would establish themselves like a "cancer at the heart of a more unstable, weaker, though incomparably more voluminous structure." This kind of grouping (of men only) was a form of "sursocialization". But one also recalls here the start of the predicate 'sur's' journey through the 30's in Bataille's essay The 'Old Mole' and the prefix 'sur'.... In 1936 Bachelard introduced the word 'surrationalisme', and of course, Breton used the word 'surfasciste' in relation to Bataille upon his rupture with Contre-Attaque. Clearly it was an era of 'sur-sensations'.


28. Cited College of Sociology, p.126. Blum, who had resigned in June, 1937, had published the collection of texts he had written and delivered as President of the Council of the Popular Front under the title L'Exercice du pouvoir. Caillois in his article remarked that "(i)t is clear that for Blum, legality is the basis of power. It is to be feared, rather, that it is power that is the basis of legality."
29. Again, we have here the unavoidable fact that both the breakaway Left and fascist Right shared certain goals and ideals, the most central of which were ideals of activism and of breaking through an inert and despised bourgeois center and its reign of 'established disorder'. It was this common goal that could lead those with affiliations on the critical Left to, at times, admire the 'energy' of the fascists, as was the case for the editor of *L'Esprit*, Emmanuel Mounier, who, while he understood the dangerous and totalitarian character of fascism, could not help, along with many others, admiring "the constructive vigor of fascism" as well as their devotion, willingness to sacrifice and "virile friendship", at the same time as deploiring its racism, brutality and police State mentality. Zeev Sternhall in his *Neither Right nor Left* deals with these issues at length. For his analysis of Mounier in particular see pp.215-221 and pp.273-282.

30. Sartre is reviewing Denis de Rougement's book *L'Amour et l'Occident*, which will be referred to in the next section. Cited in *College of Sociology*, p.162.

31. Monnerot published an inquiry on "directeurs de conscience" in *Volontés* in February, 1939 where he asked whether the spiritual had "an organic function" in society; or if society had, in fact, attained a kind of "adulthood that permits us to do without directors." Further, he wondered if religion had dissappeared, or whether it simply "survived in new forms." The replies to his questions were published five months later in *Volontés* June, 1939 issue, to which he added his own comment. Several members of the *College of Sociology* responded: René Guastalla replied that "we say....Marxism when speaking of the Russian myth, and Hilterism...in speaking of the German myth; while Jean Wahl remarked that the term 'spiritual advisor' implied a religious concept, but that he was "stopped by the fact that Marcel Prévost and some woman editor or other in magazines like Marie-Claire are spiritual adivisers." The *College* itself sent in a group reply that stated "On this occasion it can only recall that it considers its sole task to be providing an answer to the questions your inquiry poses and that its ambition is to be to the extent that it is able, the answer." For Monnerot's comments see *The College of Sociology*, p.68; for Guastalla's, p.59; Wahl's, p.67; and the *College's*, p.65.

32. See Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, p.239. Lacan here recalls his visit to the Olympiad and the late Ernt Kris's response "Ça ne se fait pas!"

33. The Messianic impulse sends the researcher into the past to sift through the ruins looking for traces of the utopian past before the fall - the key to this era is mysteriously inscribed in a past which still maintains a connection, however faint, with the present. The purpose of the Messianic ideal is the restoration of lost meanings and suppressed connections, but whereas the prophetic tradition is based on public testimony, the Messianic tradition involves an esoteric or secret form of knowledge. One can see here then the logic of Benjamin's attraction to the unconscious and its suppressed desires; but one also sees how in his concept of a collective unconscious there is the hope for a restoration of meaning on a communal level that overcomes the esoterism of secret meanings. See Richard Wollin's *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption* (1982), chapter four 'From Messianism to Materialism', pp.107-138.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid. Kracauer adds here that this display of pure externality - its "disclosure in distraction" - is "therefore of moral significance."

37. Patrice Petro, *Joyless Street: Women and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar Germany* (1989), p.70. Petro points out here how German law prohibited women from attending public meetings or joining political organizations until 1908, and that even after women were granted the right to assemble, "the very act of a woman attending a public gathering was considered scandalous, even immoral"; pp.69-70. It was only the promoters of mass cultural entertainments who ignored the cultural sanctions against public gatherings of women, who indeed gave women a privileged position as consumers over men.

38. Ibid, p.76.


40. Aragon, *Paris Peasant*, p.54. One notes here that the Arcades themselves are, for Aragon, permeated with the liquid sensuality of the feminine: in them one finds a "(c)harming multiplicity of appearances and provocations"; and even though some of the women there "may even bring a very gentle smile to my lips because of the sheer disproportion that reigns between their indifferent or frankly ludicrous physiques" what binds them together is "their infinite desire to please." As for the men who roam the Arcades, they are "sentimental adventurers, dreamy crooks, or at the very least, conjurers of reveries, they come here to acquire the ingredients for their innate sense of illusion." Further, their adventures in the Arcades become their 'companions' when they sink "gently into an equivocal old age filled with predatory memories." See p.48 and p.59.

41. Ibid, p.55.

42. See *Dictionary of Modern Colloquial French*, Rene James Herail, Edwin A. Lovatt, eds., p.205. Auguste Le Breton claimed that this meaning is owed to Emile Zola.


44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Benjamin, *Central Park* in *New German Critque 34*, Winter, 1985, p.53. Benjamin also wrote in this essay, which was formed out of the remaining and unused fragments of his book on Baudelaire, that for "Baudelaire, prostitution is the yeast which allows the metropolitan masses to rise in his fantasy"; a remark which reflects this connection between the bodies of women and mass culture that I suggested in my opening chapter. See p.41.
48. Benjamin, "Beauty has become petrified", PW411; cited Christine Buci-Glucksman, *Catastrophic Utopia: The Feminine as Allegory of the Modern* in *Representations 14*, Spring, 1986, p.25. Buci-Glucksman is writing on how woman "becomes one of the privileged sites for a mythological correspondence in which (quoting Benjamin here, PW617) 'the modern world of technology and the archaic world of symbol' will be in play"; but in play in the form of tragedy, as read in the death of a utopian femininity, symbolized through the body of the prostitute.

49. Jane Gallop in her *Thinking Through the Body* (1988) points out how when Irigaray speaks of "the sex which is one" (the masculine sex versus the feminine sex which 'is not one'), "she is not speaking of the male genital anatomy but rather of an already phallicomorphic concept of male genitals, that actually has only a selective relation to male anatomy." That is, "(m)ale genital anatomy does not determine phallicomorphic logic, but rather phallicomorphic logic determines a certain unitary perception of male genitalia." See p.94.


51. Bertrand Tavernier's 1989 film *La Vie et Rien d'autre*, which deals with the problem of statistically accounting for all the dead after the Great War, also touches upon incidences of men returning from the war to lay claim to their old jobs, which in turn often led to women summarily losing their positions; and to a subsequently developing antagonism between the sexes.


53. Ibid.


55. Ibid.

56. The 'Declaration' by the *College*, appearing simultaneously in the November 1938 issues of three reviews - the *NRF*, *Esprit* and *Volontés* - stated: "The *College of Sociology* regards the general absence of intense reaction in the face of war as a sign of man's *devirilization*." It also stated that the *College saw itself as being a potential "center of energy" and it urged "those, for whom the only solution anguish disclosed is the creation of a vital bond between men, to join with it with no other determining factor than the awareness of the absolute lie of current political forms and the necessity for reconstructing on this assumption a collective mode of existence that takes no geographical or social limitation into account and that allows one to behave oneself when death threatens." It was signed by Bataille, Roger Caillois and Michel Leiris. See *College of Sociology*, pp.45-46.

57. Benjamin, *Central Park*, ibid, p.52.
58. As Ernst Bloch in his 'Appendix: Spengler's Predators and Relative Cultural Gardens' in *Heritage of Our Times* wrote: "The sheep are now separated from the goats once and for all, the 'noble ethics of sight' of the predator now prevails over the 'cowardly ethics of smell' of the prey. Now 'the actual human soul is everyone's enemy' for 'it knows the intoxicating feeling when the knife cuts into the enemy's body, when the smell of blood and groaning penetrate the triumphant senses'. Now, in barely credible hysteria, all atrocity propaganda about Germany is confirmed; and zoological nonsense of all kinds comes just at the right time to ideologize in advance the 'night of the long knives' which the Nazis proclaimed." See pp.291-292. See also J. Herf's chapter three on Spengler, pp.49-69, *Reactionary Modernism*.


60. Drieu La Rochelle, *Socialisme fasciste*, p.179; ibid, p.261. A review of books from the period reveals this fascination with the development of a new man; for example, *La Crise est dans l'homme*, Thiery Maulnier; *L'Homme et le sacré* and *Le Mythe et l'homme* by Roger Caillois; *L'Age d'homme* by Leiris; and finally, one notes the opening also of *La Musée de l'homme*.

61. It was in the 30's that Lévi-Strauss established the 'exchange of women' as the basis of primitive society; and his work co-incides with the rage for all things primitive amongst the Parisian intellectual community. Luce Irigaray writes that the "passage into the social order, into the symbolic order, into order as such, is assured by the fact that men, or groups of men, circulate women among themselves, according to a rule known as the incest taboo." Irigaray asks, in relation to the revelations of Lévi-Strauss, "Why exchange women?" Because they are (Lévi-Strauss claims) "scarce (commodites).....essential to the life of the group." Again, Irigaray wonders why, given the equilibrium between male and female births, this characterization of scarcity? And again, Lévi-Strauss 'explains' that "the deep polygamous tenancy, which exists among all men, always makes the number of available women seem insufficient." See *This Sex which is not One*, pp.170. In light of the above, it is no wonder then that part of France's fascination with the colonial 'Other' arises in the face of the eastern 'Harem', which is viewed with both fear and fascination by the white European male.

62. Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives* (1990), p.17. Torgovnick also notes here that when "the conventional substitutions of females for primitives is avoided, other, often class, substitutions may occur instead. Frequently, the working class or other subordinated segments of a population become associated or identified with primitives. These Others are processed, like primitives, through a variety of tropes which see them as a threatening hoard, a faceless mass, promiscuous, breeding, inferior - at the farthest edge, exterminatable." See p.18.
63. Leiris, L'Âge d’homme (Éditions Gallimard, 1946), p.175. Leiris wrote this book following a year of psychoanalysis, and one could say that its self-revealing tone carries on the psychoanalysis in another - autobiographical - framework. The incident that brought on the need for psychoanalysis - its violent origins, which bring into one constellation Leiris' fascination with blackness, sex, pain and disfigurement - related to an "all-night debauchery following which, having failed to reach my goal with a small American negro dancer, I landed up at a friend's house towards 5 a.m. and asked for his razor with the intension, more or less feigned, of castrating myself." See p.214.

64. Pierre Naville, a former Surrealist himself, had critiqued the "counterrevolutionary" aspects of Surrealism in his 1926 pamphlet La Révolution et les intellectuels: Que peuvent faire les surréalistes?, stating that they must abandon their "Orient myth" and that their desire "to see Mongols camping in our squares, rather than the bourgeoisie, means nothing; it only indicates a sentimental vision of the Revolution." Breton responded in his pamphlet Légitime defense, printed in the December, 1926 issue of La Révolution surréaliste, by defending his use of certain "buffer words" ("mots-tampons") like "Orient" as words which corresponded to the "particular anxiety" of the period. See p.35. See Helena Lewis, ibid, p.59 for Naville's remarks. The double issue of Variétés in 1929 on French Surrealism contained on article on "Surrealist Geography" in which there was no France, only Paris; and the islands of Polynesia and other exotic places were larger than the rest of Europe. Thus the exotic offers up to Surrealism the possibility of a geographical time and place outside the spatial restrictions of an overly conventional, repressed and tradition bound European world.

65. On August 21, 1933 the 18 year old Violette murdered her father and attempted to do the same with her mother, who turned State's evidence against her only child at the trial, begun October, 1934. She was accused of poisoning her father to get at his savings - 165,000 francs - and give them to her lover Jean Dabin, and was condemned to death via the guillotine, a sentence later committed to life. She was eventually pardoned, married a clerk of the court and died in 1966. Feelings ran high during her trial; indeed, an angry mob tried to lynch her on her way to the courtroom. For the details of her trial and the newspaper reports on it see Tracts surréalistes, Tome I, 'Commentaires', pp.483-486.

66. See 'Commentaires', ibid, p.484, which remarks that the Surrealists "evidently had at their disposal no other source of information than the newspapers." Breton wrote a note on his memories of Violette's trial in 1953, commenting on how she counted "only them among her friends" in the end; and of how, upon the announcement of her verdict, they sent her, via her lawyer, "a spray of red roses." See p.486.

67. See Tracts surréalistes, ibid, p.247 for Breton's poetic contribution to their pamphlet; and Eluard's on pp.251-252.

68. Ibid, p.247.

69. See LSASDLR 5, p.28 for Eluard's and Péret's remarks, and the last page of that issue which reproduces pictures of the sisters 'before' and 'after' their crime.

70. See La Révolution surréaliste, no. 1, December 1924, p.17, for Man Ray's photomontage.

72. See Jacques Lacan, *Motifs du crime paranoïaque: Le Crime des soeurs Papin* in *Minotaure* 3-4, 1933, p.28 for his comment. See also Lacan's *Le Problème du style et la conception psychiatrique et les formes paranoïaques de l'expérience* in *Minotaure* 1, 1933, pp.68-68. The recently published *Investigating Sex: Surrealist Discussions, 1928-1932* (1992), which reproduces discussions on sex through twelve sessions - the first seven in the early months of 1928, the last five sporadically between 1930 and 1932 - reveals particularly Breton's resistance to any form of 'deviant' sexual practice. One finds, for example, the extent of Breton's homophobia in the first session when he remarks "I accuse homosexuals of confronting human tolerance with a mental and moral deficiency which tends to turn itself into a system and to paralyze every enterprise I respect." (he adds here, however, that he makes an exception for "the unparalled case of Sade", to whom "everything is permitted....for whom freedom of morals was a matter of life and death.") See pp.5-6.


74. Cited Zeev Sternhall, ibid, p.233.


76. Denis de Rougemont, *Tragedy* in *College of Sociology*, p.216.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

79. Benjamin, *Theories of German Fascism* in *New German Critique* 17, p.121.


81. Here again, one comes up against the gap between the forces of technology and the lack of imagination to control its expanding power. As Benjamin wrote: "without approaching the surface of the significance of the economic causes of war, one may say that the harshest most disastrous aspects of imperialist war are in part the result of the gaping discrepancy between the gigantic power of technology and the miniscule moral illumination it affords." Ibid, p.120.


83. Ibid.

84. One notes here that to find violence and death associated with sexuality (as they are in Sade) is not unusual if we can show that it is, precisely, the ability to be violent that proves virility.
85. Bloch, echoing Benjamin, writes in *Heritage of Our Times* how "'(i)f the eye were not like the sun, how could it perceive the sun' sang Goethe and knew nothing as yet of 'the ethics of sight' of the final German or the l'art pour l'art of murder." See p.292.

86. Molly Nesbit's *Atget's Seven Albums* deals with this aspect of photography in relation to Atget's own work, along with showing his resistance to the avant-garde's perception of photography as a 'documentary' process.

87. Ibid, p.5.


89. Ibid, p.150.

90. Ibid.


92. Ibid.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid.

95. Ibid.


98. Ibid, p.142.


101. Ibid.

102. Ibid.

103. Ibid.


105. Ibid.


113. *Ibid*.

114. *Ibid*.


119. *Ibid*.

120. *Ibid*.


122. *Ibid*.

123. *Ibid*.


125. Florent Fels, preface in Germain Krull's *Métal* (1927); *ibid*, p.13.


129. *Ibid*.

130. *Ibid*.
131. Herf, ibid, p.79.

132. Ibid, p.78.


134. Ibid, p.29.

135. Ibid.

136. Ibid.


138. Ibid, p.32.

139. Ibid.

140. Ibid, p.33.

141. Ibid.


143. The photographs were, in fact, ones taken by Brassai.

144. See also in *Minotaure 3-4* Man Ray's photographs of men's and ladies' hats in Tristan Tzara's *D'un certain Automatisme du Goût*, in which the erotic appears in the stylized form of wearing apparel; pp.81-84.


146. Ibid.

147. Elisabeth Roudenesco in her *Jacques Lacan & Co.* also notes this collapse of the "antiquated notion" of visible congenital defects in madness; but that also, the antipathological movement of the 20's within the psychoanalytical movement retained residues of "the hereditarian configuration" by re-channeling such ideas into "the genre of psychobiography"; p.6.


149. Ibid, p.80.

150. The writer here was Léon Bizard in his 1934 book on prostitutes, *La Vie des Filles*, p.45; cited Dean, ibid, p.70.

152. In the space of a few lines, Breton and Aragon traverse hysteria's history from Galen, Plato, Hippocrates, Bernheim, the possessed of Loudun and the flagellants of Pluers; ibid, p.21.

153. Many commentators on Surrealism have noted Breton's affinity for Charcot. Jean Starobinski in his *Freud, Breton, Myers, La Résistance Critique* (1970) argues for Breton's attachment to Charcot versus Freud, as does Susan Suleiman in *Subversive Intent*, and Roudinesco in *Jacques Lacan & Co.*


156. See Roudinesco's chapter 'Surrealism in the Service of Psychoanalysis' for Breton's medical background.

157. Breton, Aragon, ibid, p.20.


159. Breton, Aragon, ibid, p.22.

160. Cited Suleiman, ibid, p.96.

161. One notes here that Lacan had translated Freud's *De quelques méconnaissances nérotiques dans la jalousie, la paranoie et l'homosexualité* in the *Revue de psychanalyse*, 1932, n.3, pp.391-401. Further, in his *Motifs du crime paranoïaque* in *Minotaure* 3-4, 1933, Lacan, after noting Christine's remark that she believed that "in another life I had been the husband of my sister", goes on to argue that Freud, in the above translated article, gave us "the key" to the homosexual tendency in the paranoiac and his/her fantasies. See p.27 for Christine's remark and p.28 for Lacan's discussion of Freud's location of homosexuality in neurotics in general, and paranoiacs in particular. See Carolyn Dean's chapter two in *The Self and its Pleasures* for numerous citations from the period on the fear of a developing homosexuality in men.


163. In a footnote to his *Second Surrealist Manifesto* one finds another reference to hysteria, where Breton wrote, "Praise be to hysteria, Aragon and I have said, and to its train of young naked women sliding along the roofs." Such women are a reminder to the Surrealist that he must have faith "not only in the Revolution but also in love", ibid, pp.179-180.


172. Ibid, p.93.

173. For Bataille the 'use-value' of de Sade was his definition of a self-sufficient excremental (or heterogeneous) economy, embedded in the remark he quotes from Sade: "Verneuil makes someone shit, he eats the turd, and then he demands that someone eat his. The one who eats his shit vomits; he devours her puke"; p.95.

174. Bataille remarks that the "behavior of Sade's admirers resembles that of primitive subjects in relation to their king, whom they both adore and loath, and whom they cover with honors and narrowly confine. In the most favorable cases the author of *Justine* is in fact thus treated as any given foreign body; in other words, he is only an object of transports, of exhaustion to the extent that these transports facilitate his excretion (his peremptory expulsion)"; p.92.


177. Ibid.

178. The phrase is Gilbert Lely's, Sade's biographer; cited in Hollier, ibid, p.105.


180. The remark was that of the Popular Front's colonial minister to Indochina, Marius Moutet, whose explicit purpose was to develop the colony as a market for a badly depressed French economy. On the agenda as well were military considerations: "Our army", Moutet wrote, "will only find healthy recruits from a reinvigorated indigenous peasantry....We will not be able to find reliable troops from a sickly peasantry." Cited in Julian Jackson's *The Popular Front in France*, p.155.


182. Ibid.


186. Hitler uses Devrient's services between April and November of 1932 during his election touring.


190. Kracauer, ibid; *The Conquest of Europe on the Screen*, ibid, p.342.

191. Kracauer, in *The Conquest of Europe on the Screen*, notes how in shooting images of the masses surrounding Hitler that the "close shots prefer the faces of women and children to those of men"; and that this predilection is explained by the fact that women and children are particularly susceptible to the influences of mass excitement; Hitler himself sees the crowd feminine." See p.355. See also Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 2, chapter one, 'The Mass and its Counterparts', 'Women to the Fore', which describes the soldier's fear and loathing of the crowd as both feminine and as 'Medusa' like (as in "the devouring vagina"); pp.27-35.

192. The article in *L'Illustration* on the revue spectacle in America notes how "Americans often seem beyond the 'human scale', and examples their skyscrapers, bridges, the "fabrication statistics of Ford or General Motors". Not surprisingly, the article notes, their taste for entertainment "reflects this penchant for big beyond belief", as in their construction of Radio City Music Hall with 62,000 seats and "endowed with all the latest technology." See *L'Illustration*, no. 5014, April 8, 1939, pp.440-441. Not surprisingly also, was the fact that Hitler's penchant for 'big' juxtaposed itself deliberately against America's capacity for mass; for example, in Albert Speer's memoirs *Inside the Third Reich* (1970), the author recalls how in his design for the stadium at Nuremberg, the platform in the middle of the stands for guests was crowned by a sculpture of a woman, which was 46 feet higher than the Statue of Liberty in New York. Indeed, Speer remarks that he found "Hitler's excitement rising whenever I could show him that at least in size we had 'beaten' the other great buildings of history." The fuhrer's focus on bridges, buildings, pavillions, all bigger than St. Peter's in Rome, than the Golden Gate bridge, etc., led him, Speer writes, into designs for Germany which were "a collage of other monuments in the world." See p.67, p.69 and p.82.


194. Cited Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times*, pp.75-76. In this speech Hitler speaks about building a 'temple of art' which Bloch refers to as "the 'temple' of unspeakable banality"; p.76.

195. Hans Meyer, *The Rituals of Political Associations in Germany of the Romantic Period* (April, 1939) in *College of Sociology*, p.269. Meyer notes also that there is "a sort of eroticism that binds these rebellious adolescents"; p.275.

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196. The idea of a 'consummation' between man and his machine can be seen in Ernst Junger's description of the fighter pilot: "When they fly at heights from which the front lines are visible to them as no more than a thin network, and the fighters in the trenches as a mere string of points - then, in this venture of theirs, the fiery union of the spirit of ancient Knighthood and the cold austerity of technology is consummated." From Junger's Das Waldchen 125 (1925), p.368; cited Gerhard Loose, Ernst Junger (1974), p.25.

197. Ernst Bloch, Heritage of Our Times, p.65. Bloch writes how "the word proletarian is not adopted by the Nazi", of how the "workforce'...becomes an extraordinary cordial mush", and of the salute made, for example, in the newspapers on the death of S.A. leader Horst Wessel, where he is claimed as "a worker in the truest sense of the word"; ibid.

198. See Werneburg, ibid, p.48. The word 'work-era' ('arbeitszeitalter') comes from Junger's Die totale Mobilmachung (1934), p.128. The idea of work as a 'State duty' appears in the section 'Economy' of Junger's photographic book The Transformed World, 1933, ibid, p.61. In Heritage of Our Times Bloch writes of how "in the fraudulent Nazi world from the Thyssens to the lowest donkey-worker there is only a single classless 'workfront', and the 'Reich Peasants' Day in Goslar likewise recognizes no differences any longer between the big landowner and little peasant, apart from the insignificant ones which are denoted by are (sic) and hectare." See p.66.

199. Robert Ley, head of the German Labor Front first got the idea for creating the 'Bureau for the Beauty of Labor' from a 1933 tour of the Dutch province of Limburg, where he saw a number of mines conspicuous for their neatness and cleanliness and surrounded by beautifully tended gardens. See Anson G. Rabinbach's The Aesthetics of Production in the Third Reich in International Fascism: Twentieth Century, Vol 3, (1973) ed. George Mosse, pp.189-222 for a description of the institution and function of the Bureau.

200. The film Triumph of the Will is now available in video with english sub-titles, and is a highly recommended (if eerie) viewing experience for anyone interested in this era of German history.

201. Junger in his Our Battle Position (1927) writes of how "labor has within it a value directed outward that is at the same time of a warlike nature. Every hand gripped on a machine suggests a shot will be fired, every completed work day is a marching day of an individual in an army unit." See Herf, ibid, p.90.

202. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, Germans began to conflate the classical ideal of beauty (the Greek ideal) with the Roman monumental ideal. Further, through the work of Moeller van den Bruck, the 'Prussian style' developed, which was a combination of classicism and monumentality. In Bruck's eyes it was the monumental ideal that allowed for the expression of "domination and manliness". The Nazis, for their part, claimed that the term 'monumental' derived from the word 'momentum' and that it thus embodied "activism". See George Mosse's chapter six, 'War, Youth and Beauty' in his book Nationalism and Sexuality (1985) pp.114-132 for a developmental history of the Nazi's ideal of beauty.


204. See Klaus Theweleit, Male Fantasies, Vol. 1, p.431.
205. Ibid, p.430.

206. Ibid.


208. Ibid.

209. Ibid.


214. Ibid.

215. Bataille notes that "the common character of personal incongruity and the monster" is one which "manifests itself to a certain degree in the presence of any given human individual"; it is this elementary incongruity in which we recognize ourselves; ibid.


217. Ibid.

218. Ibid, p.23.

219. Ibid.

220. See *Documents 6*, November, 1929, p.301 for Boiffard's photograph of the feminine toe.

221. Men insist on the repetitious presence of the feminine body because through this womanly form, they stay in touch with each other and affirm each others virility. This receptacle/body of woman then is not so much about activating any specific desire in anxiety ridden men as it is about repetitiously re-confirming the power of their own invisible and tenderly vulnerable reproductive organ. The symbolic phallus - always rigid, erect, invading and unyeilding - must act for men as a constant reminder of their own material insufficiency in the face of such a mythologically powerful organ.


223. Ibid.


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