SUSAN LAXTON

SURREALISM
AT PLAY

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Frontispiece: Joan Miró, *Collage, January 31, 1933*, 1933, detail.
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For Katherine and Jane,

festina lente.

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INTRODUCTION

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A MODERN CRITICAL LUDIC

If there is, in Surrealism, one form of activity whose

persistence has stirred the hostility of idiots, it is the

activity of play, which can be traced across the majority

of our publications of the last thirty-five years.

—André Breton

In philosophy, play is any pursuit undertaken for its own sake. Thus when Kant claimed play for aesthetics, attributing aesthetic pleasure to the "*free play* of the cognitive powers," it was on the basis of play's disinterest. Beauty, he maintained, whether in art or nature, was felt through form alone, without regard to meaning or context. Play was yoked to art in stark contrast to rational thought and action as a phenomenon free from practical concerns: it was neither conceptual nor sensuous; it had no stake in intellectual or material worlds; it didn't *matter*.[1]

How, then, to understand play as a mode of avant-garde engagement? How could disinterested, ineffectual actions, forms that are definitively bracketed from normal life, possibly be a vehicle for the exhortation to "change life" and "transform the world" that surrealism, as an avant-garde movement, claimed as its goal?[2] The answer lies in that phrase "normal life," and what it had become in the modern era: a form of experience dominated by aims and functions, and relieved only by the temporary respite of organized leisure. This was the quality of the everyday the surrealists sought to reshape, demanding that modern

culture acknowledge the limits, rather than the unchallenged benefits, of rational thought and useful action. Psychoanalysis, and the priority it gave to unconscious motivations, fueled their efforts. But it was play that gave them the ability to represent and disseminate their disdain for instrumental communication and action, for what the ludic offered was means without ends: gestures and actions and ways of relating that didn't know their aims and couldn't predict their outcomes. Much in the manner of the unconscious, surrealist play activated paradoxical modes of thought and action that, while utterly without specific goals, were nevertheless able to modify reality—*just not usefully*. Ludic ambivalence and equivocation offered the surrealists a suspended, threshold space for representation—a waking analogue to the liminal states of the unconscious: dreams and half sleep, the restless figuring of the subject in formation; the ephemeral, the unforeseeable, the as-yet-ungrasped.

Given that surrealism was bolstered by the nonconformist poetics of the unconscious, it is unsurprising that the movement, like other utopian avant-gardes of its time, militated against the disciplinary structures of industrial modernism. Freedom, understood as release from morals and conventions, was a first condition of surrealism.[3] What is startling is that the surrealists never fully rejected the *mechanisms* of industry—intriguingly, surrealism's critique of practical function was situated exactly at the unlikely intersection of chance and technology. Finding an increasingly pragmatic world taking shape around them, they played not merely against but with it, drawing mechanical systems into their ludic circle. Every instance of surrealist play—their aleatory rambles and odd parlor games; their double entendres and visual puns—is informed by industrial media (photography, newspaper clippings, mass-produced objects) and imbricated with technological motifs (seriality, repetition, reproduction, and automation). This, I would argue, is the way surrealist play strategies maintained contemporary relevance: rather than deny the quickening pace of machinic innovation, the surrealists harnessed and exaggerated it, constructing a series of mechanisms that guaranteed chance outcomes. In doing so, they parlayed the automatic, belief-independent dimensions of wordplay, chance, and authorial effacement into a series of ludic gestures that, in the words of Walter Benjamin, effectively freed things "from the drudgery of being useful."[4] *Surrealism at Play* explores the terms by which the surrealists reconceived these useless play practices as contraventions, exploiting the systems of modern technology to form armatures for the dynamic, collective, participatory, and chance-based processes that would eventually reshape not merely the internal structures of art practice, but

subjectivity itself, through a radical reorganization of experience away from the useful and productive—but still deeply engaged with the most pressing issues of modern life.

Focused on the years of surrealism's greatest influence, 1922–39, what follows is an attempt to identify and analyze surrealist play in its various and often contradictory guises: as regulated parlor games and aleatory gestures, as extreme artifice and primal impulse, as the destruction of stability and the utopian construction of a new order. At stake for the surrealists was the obliteration of the traditional concept of the arts themselves as idealist and autonomous play forms, but equally trenchant in an interwar context marked by technological functionalism and the increased presence of standardization and control was their ludic expansion of the sheer possibilities for representation, activated through new mechanisms of the techno-ludic. Those models have been key to art practices from their time to the present.

Naturally, the surrealists' dedication to play was not without its critics. As André Breton was aware, to open avant-garde practices to the ludic was to risk accusations of frivolity. From the moment modern art began to be reconceived as a bearer of meaning with the power to reconfigure social practice, play had been discredited as an unproductive, even threatening mode of artistic pursuit—a rejection of play's Kantian pedigree that was supported by the historical avant-garde itself in its aim to erode autonomy and restore art's relevance to lived experience. The position would be summarized by Theodor Adorno in his *Aesthetic Theory* (1970): "In the concept of art, play is the element by which art immediately raises itself above the immediacy of praxis and its purposes." In play, argued Adorno, art finds its "renunciation of functional rationality," but in doing so it risks a reactionary return to primitive impulses, one that turns its back on the possibility of "maturing" in its address of historically shifting conditions. Adorno admitted that all art, to some extent, "sublimates practical elements," but play amounts to a "neutralization of praxis" to the extent that it plays the trivial fool to art's earnest project of reshaping contemporary experience.[5]

Yet this position was challenged from within Adorno's own intellectual circle by Walter Benjamin, the very theorist of the historical avant-garde who, in turning away from idealist aesthetics (Hegel's "beautiful semblance" as well as Kantian disinterest) to embrace an active, politically engaged model for art practice, gathered surrealism into his project.[6] Benjamin must have had Adorno's opposition of play and praxis in mind when, in his late notes on Baudelaire, he graphed the range of "play forms" between labor and idleness within a matrix bounded by effort, rest, goals,

and purposelessness.[7] The graph makes a distinction between idleness and other forms of leisure complicit with the bourgeois economy:

```
                        bodily performance
                               |
           sport              |          work
                              |
purposelessness ——————————————+—————————————— purpose
                              |
          idleness           |       game (puzzle)
                              |
                        bodily rest
```

Certainly, in making the chart, Benjamin meant to sort out the unruly ludic field; the very existence of the diagram seems to express a deeply modernist faith in the idea that culture itself can be represented mechanically. But ironically, what this chart ultimately illustrates is the impossibility of containing the concept of play within an orderly system, and it points to Benjamin's own growing embrace of ludic insubordination: his sense that at some level irrationality—the play of meaning—was essential to social change. On one hand, the chart gives regulated ludic pursuits (games and puzzles) definite purpose—the players find a solution or win the game. It's easy to imagine that, in spite of the triviality of games and puzzles, Benjamin was trying to account for the idea of play as practice for life—a kind of goal-oriented training for modern labor. But that characterization of gaming-as-practice should include sport, which is usually engaged within the context of a game and, like puzzles, is rule bound, circumscribed by a definite beginning and end, and avidly motivated by the goal of winning. Yet Benjamin places sport on the side of actions without purpose, positioning it as the polar opposite to games and puzzles. This blur of categories and oppositions turns out to be the most compelling feature of the chart, and invades one of the most sacrosanct oppositions of the ludic: that between work and idleness. In his brief notes on the graph, Benjamin gives "study" a special position as the point where "*otium* and idleness tend to blend into one another."[8] That is to say, Benjamin understood his own intellectual project as a play form (not so much writing as pure research—for example, Benjamin's definitively unfinished *Arcades Proj-*

ect [1927–40]), rather than the kind of work we now like to call *knowledge production*. *Otium*, the classical concept of thought for its own sake, would be located alongside idleness, then, in the most fully ludic quadrant. And while Benjamin doesn't specify the position of art practices on the chart, elsewhere, in a section of his *Arcades Project* devoted entirely to idleness, he makes it clear that for him, art, too, emerges from the quadrant opposed to work: "Idleness is a precondition of artistic production," he notes, a retraction of purpose that "stamps that production with the traits that make its relation to the economic production process so drastic."[9] For Benjamin, then, it is precisely art's ludic dimension that gives it critical power, through a pronounced refusal of functionalism that, under the conditions of industrial capitalism, could only be perceived as a threat to the dominant social order. This sets art (and the idle condition of its making) apart from mere recreation, which, as dedicated free time, is still defined as a break from drudgery ultimately meant to increase productivity.[10] At the same time, though, this characterization recasts his own critical work as play and, in defiance of the prevailing cult of labor, draws both it and art practices away from purposeful production, including the production of change, generating a confusion of categories that collapses clear oppositions.[11] But this is the genius of the chart: resisting all attempts to systematize it, play erodes the tidy rational arrangement from within, performing the very ludic condition it represents.

This play of categories is central to Benjamin's critique of Kantian aesthetics. His own ambitions included reorienting art away from apprehensions of beauty and toward an active mode that would turn out objects and experiences that evaded commodification. Throwing the Enlightenment's aesthetic categories into disarray, he sought to recast art in terms of modernism's shifting economic patterns and technologies, making art relevant to the full complex of human relations in modern society—returning art to politics, in the broad sense. Play, no longer an end in itself, as Kant would have it, was recast here as a means (it has a role to play) without ends (it never reaches closure), and took on a new, critical role in constant, mobile defiance of the functionalist status quo.[12]

Benjamin's scheme embeds surrealism's own reinvention of play within a set of broader cultural reassessments concerning the rapid and extreme transformation of sensory experience in modernity, changes attributed to the effects of urban-industrial technology. Any schema that sought to isolate art from technology would, in Benjamin's estimation,

necessarily fail to retain its relevance—technology was the very under-pinning of the modern, spinning all other actions and relations around it. So it is unsurprising that this new ludic mode, expressed through open-ended and polyvalent art forms, had its greatest relevance for Benjamin when it embraced technical means and motifs. With photography and film in mind, and with one eye on surrealism, Benjamin developed his own play theory centered around the concept of *Spielraum*, a term alternately translated as "room-for-play" and "scope-for-action," or, in the words of Miriam Hansen, "an open-ended dynamics of exploration and transformation that enlists the viewer in its game, seeking to turn the acceptance of things as they are into mobility and agency."[13]

In her masterful reading of the concept, Hansen draws on Benjamin's critique of play in a number of its guises—as children's play, toys and games, acting, and gambling—citing from the full span of his writings. But the kernel of the concept and the elaboration of its ultimate significance for art practice in the modern context is in the second version of Benjamin's famous essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility" (1936), where, as Hansen demonstrates, Spielraum is the "lost" master term around which Benjamin constructed the better-known concepts of *aura* and the *optical unconscious*, drawing repetition, mimesis, semblance—and the surrealist movement—into its scope.[14] In an effort to theorize the relation between art and technology, thus restoring art's relevance to modern social relations, Benjamin privileged technologically based artworks as vehicles through which the subject could form a healthy, rather than alienated, relationship to mechanical forms. When art practices activated Spielraum, technology's effects on the human sensorium (repetition, shock, and the spectacularization of political life) turned toward developing new, critical modes of apperception. If technologically mediated art objects such as films and photographs fall short of the "beautiful semblance" required by Hegelian aesthetics, for Benjamin, "what is lost in the withering of semblance and the decay of the aura in works of art is matched by a huge gain in the scope for play [*Spiel-Raum*]."[15] Hansen argues that Spielraum describes the effect of an unprecedented form of modern aesthetics, conceived by Benjamin as an expanded space of action and imagination made available by a specifically ludic—that is, nonutilitarian—techno-logic, and only attainable "through a reconfiguration of boundaries that had traditionally divided—and hierarchized—subject and object, vision and body, individual and collective, human and mechanical."[16] In this space of experimentation, the modern subject tries out alternative adaptations of technology, effectively retraining perceptual-aesthetic modes of action

and apprehension for new forms of experience. Thus Spielraum "names an intermediary zone not yet fully determined in which things oscillate among different meanings, functions, and possible directions. As such it harbors an open-ended, dynamic temporality, an interval for chance, imagination, and agency."[17]

"This space for play," Benjamin claims, "is widest in film," where the apparatus determines the means of reception as well as creation.[18] But as Hansen has pointed out, when Spielraum's active elements are conceived broadly, the absolute boundary between film and other media, particularly photography, dissolves.[19] In fact, throughout the "Work of Art" essay, Benjamin gives equal attention to both cinema and photography as examples of what he calls *second technologies*: forms and processes developed not so much in order to "master nature" as to release humanity from labor through an interplay between nature (implicating chance, unpredictability, and mind independence) and technology (human will in its most aggressively dominating form). "The primary social function of art today," he concludes, "is to rehearse that interplay."[20]

This is an unprecedented frame for understanding the avant-garde's relation to technology as it surfaces, for example, in surrealism's recourse to repetition, an important hinge between psychoanalysis and mass production, or in their relationship to the automaton, which, along with Dada's mechanized body, became a heroic anti-ideal of modern subjectivity. Within Benjamin's framework, play is understood as at once mechanical and progressive, two terms that have been grasped in Dadaist and surrealist artworks as an uneasy machine ambivalence.[21] Considered as avatars of Spielraum, automatic imagery and systematic processes reveal a deeply considered commitment to rethinking the fundamental contradictions of modern life—not in order to resolve them, but to embrace their inconsistencies and paradoxes as bearers of unprecedented constellations of meaning, and redirect them toward a rehabituation of modern experience.

Certainly, we can see this commitment to erratic production in the variety and seriality of surrealism's modes of art making (photograms, overpaintings, fumage, frottage, photomontage, decalcomania, solarization, the game of exquisite corpse . . .), the "inexhaustible reservoir of experimenting procedures" by which Benjamin characterized second technologies. Likewise, Benjamin's writings relate to the ambivalence of juxtaposition, surrealism's central formal principle, as a strategy accessed through new technological structures—montage, for example, in cinema and photography.[22] The surrealists' exploration of the ways in which society is spatially constructed, and their attempts to rear-

ticulate movement through city space according to a ludic model, as expressed in Louis Aragon's *Paris Peasant* (1926) and Breton's *Nadja* (1928), had also impressed the critic: he identified them as revolutionary interventions in his article "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia."[23] In fact the aleatory relation to the cityscape that these surrealist texts describe seems to have already been reverberating in Benjamin's first thoughts on "room-for-play." In a short essay on the city of Naples (1925), cowritten with Asja Lācis, the term *Spielraum* is used to describe a deregulated urban space, radically open to possibility and flux: "Building and action interpenetrate in the courtyards, arcades and stairways. In everything, they preserve the scope [Spielraum] to become a theater of new, unforeseen constellations. The stamp of the definitive is avoided. No situation appears intended forever, no figure asserts it 'thus and not otherwise.'"[24] Benjamin's theory of play takes shape here as a valorization of spatial and experiential "porosity" in general, "the inexhaustible law of life in this city." And in the Spielraum of Naples's "interpenetration of day and night, noise and peace, outer light and inner darkness, street and home," it is impossible to avoid recognizing surrealism's own attitude toward antinomies, their desire to seek that point where "life and death, the real and the imagined, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, high and low, cease to be perceived as contradictions."[25]

Surrealism's reconfiguration of boundaries extended to the relation of subject and object, and it was in the movement's playful "interpenetration of body and image space"—which Benjamin understood as both commensurate with and enabled by photography's interpenetration of reality with the apparatus—that he recognized surrealism's revolutionary potential. The alignment of the movement with Spielraum depended on a phenomenon Benjamin called *innervation*, a mode of assimilating external and alien things into the mind and body:

> The collective is a body, too. And the *physis* that is being organized for it in technology can, through all its political and factual reality, be produced only in that image space to which profane illumination initiates us. Only when in technology body and image space so interpenetrates that all revolutionary tension becomes bodily collective innervation, and all the bodily innervations of the collective become revolutionary discharge, has reality transcended itself to the extent demanded by the *Communist Manifesto*. For the moment, only the Surrealists have understood its present commands. They exchange, to a man, the play of human features for the face of an alarm clock that in each minute rings for sixty seconds.[26]

What attracted Benjamin to the surrealists was their inclination to authorize play, to open a space of experimentation that enabled a "profane illumination": a new, technologically amenable aesthetic meant to displace idealist transcendence.[27] The image of the automaton–cum–alarm clock that concludes Benjamin's essay on surrealism invokes the movement's repeated return to systems and mechanisms as avatars of automatism, and the ambivalence of the word *automatic* for the group, a word that oscillates between its psychic and mechanical valences. The bistable image it conjures, a pun on the "face" of a clock, produces the very image of innervation, the human ability to mime the motifs and effects of technology in order to successfully reorganize perception in alignment with modern experience. In Benjamin's estimation, the surrealist reinvention of play, manifested in an imbrication of physiological and mechanical structures, constituted a new aesthetic equal to modern, collective experience, and a set of strategies that had the potential to deflect the destructive effects of technology as they had played out in the trauma of the First World War.[28]

Benjamin's understanding of *Spiel* as the mode through which the modern subject could imagine and rehearse untested strategies for coping with new experiences reconsiders two intertwined aspects of play as a signifier: autonomy and paradox. Kant used the term *play* to describe art's attractions for us because only a naturalized "play impulse" could explain the allure of objects and images that didn't satisfy biological needs and desires. By the time the modern era was in full swing, the autonomy this implied for art had been literalized as Art-for-Art's-sake and modernist self-referentiality: both art and play were understood as phenomena set apart from the pressures of ordinary life.[29] But perversely, it is just through this restriction that play comes by its connotation as freedom. For while play imagery and action can be inscrutable because they have no foothold in the material world, they are also free from the rational constraints of that world—play permits forbidden actions and contradictory assertions, relegating them, typically, to the status of representation. Play is riddled with paradox: it thrives on chance; indulges irrationality; flouts the codes of space, time, cause, and effect. Thus while most theorists who analyze play maintain ludic integrity on the basis of its removal from the concerns of practical life, it is unclear whether the circumscription of play in the modern context is conceived to protect the free play of creative imagination from instrumental reason, or whether its bracketing persists in order to preserve the norms and conventions of an increasingly institutionalized material field against their contamination by play.

In grasping play as a revolutionary form with the potential to dismantle prevailing norms Benjamin's Spielraum offers a third possibility, one

that insists on historicizing the ludic by placing it within a specifically modern context and redefining it in response to new social and material demands. Conceived as a counter-practice that turns its back on reason, Benjamin's ludic, with surrealism as its model, finds its relevance (and, by extension, the relevance of art at large) in the porous flexibility afforded by Spielraum; and in his conviction that the play element appears to be present, if latent or suppressed, in all cultural forms—it only needs to be acknowledged to activate its disruptive force. For Benjamin, as for the surrealists, rendering technology useless through play opened it to infinite and unforeseen possibilities—and to new, critically engaged paths for perception and consciousness. Refusing to be dismissed as mere "antic" or "whimsy," surrealism's ludic strategies not only provided a counter-narrative to modernization's increasingly pervasive means–ends rationality, they also militated against the very notion of stability as an ideal experience.

It is important to acknowledge that Benjamin's—and surrealism's—desire to attribute revolutionary potential to ludic practices runs counter to nearly all theorizations of play. Even those thinkers who have argued for play's presence in apparently pragmatic and objective cultural forms (for example law and science) maintain its distinction from material necessity—the same distinction that first led Kant to align play with art. Johan Huizinga is only the best known of these; his famous 1938 study *Homo Ludens* offers this definition: "Play is a voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and the consciousness that it is 'different' from 'ordinary' life."[30]

Huizinga goes on to give a purpose to play: ludic disinterest serves as the civilizing element in culture, that which regulates necessity.[31] By assigning a role to disengagement itself, Huizinga can at once maintain play as an uncorrupted totality and argue for its material relevance, declaring "all play means something," an assertion that echoes Hegel's sole characterization of play as "the noblest and only true seriousness," and even nods toward the hidden motivations of the unconscious at work in Freud's characterization of play. Play in these post-Kantian discourses is a regulating agent as well as a useful gauge of cultural productivity, and is uniformly characterized as benign and constructive.[32]

Yet even a vernacular grasp of play gives the lie to these designations of totality and reliable productivity. Ludic activity bears connotations of caprice and waste exactly because of its disinterest: if play exists at a remove from a reality driven by practical necessities, its processes can

have no consequences in that reality. Accordingly, other oppositions commonly held against play—work, seriousness, ordinary life—are extrapolated from this master antinomy that sets play apart from reality, a notion that aligns the satisfaction of practical needs with biological naturalism and the stability and authenticity of empirically grounded truths. Through this frame play is perceived as unstable, as in the play of meaning; fragmented, as in the play of light; ephemeral, as in the play of music; artificial or inauthentic, as in mimesis, "make-believe," or illusion (a term derived directly from *in ludere*, in play).[33]

These attributes characterize play as eccentric specifically in its *lack* of limits, in direct contrast to the aesthetic grasp of play as a bounded activity. The designation sets play against the normative, the rational, and the ideal as well as, in its apparent unconcern with external conditions, against political entities. This characterization, too, persisted up to and through modernist discourse. Play at the threshold of the twentieth century, when the surrealists took it up as their counterproductive idiom, figures as internally riven. The contradictions inherent to the term are reflected in the very range of philosophical approaches that make use of ludic theories: play has been claimed as the underlying justification for such radically opposed concepts as Schiller's autonomous aesthetics and Nietzsche's Dionysian excesses. Historically, the ludic drives have been regarded as natural phenomena to be contained, harnessed, or released, their significance radically determined by context.[34] Even within the relatively limited discipline of art, play's variability rubs through, for example when musical diachrony, dynamic and ephemeral, is inertly framed as an abstract totality autonomous from material content.

In fact, the breadth and flexibility of play as a signifier threatens to dissolve even these meanings in a proliferation of references. To play is to engage, to put into play; yet to play is to *dis*engage, from consequence. Play is artificial, as in mimetic illusions, yet it is characterized as a natural, primal impulse. It is useless and it produces nothing, yet is understood psychologically as a form of practice, as trial action for life. It is constructive, as when the smooth play of machine parts keeps up production, and it is destructive, as when too much play in those parts can bring the whole to a catastrophic halt. Play claims to be free—it cannot be coerced—yet it is valued for the restrictions that keep it circumscribed from life. Its only guarantee is that, as an active form, it will be in constant flux: in spontaneous and unforeseeable relation to its context. In spite of Huizinga's insistence that play is bounded and regular, and circumscribes an ideal field, its overarching characteristic is *indeterminacy*.[35] Play as a signifier performs the very condition it describes: it is a term

that is definitively split and paradoxical, comprising a unified totality of destructive incoherence impossible to gather into a single positive term. Accordingly, play is consistently defined by what it is *not*—not work, not serious, not part of normal life, unreal, inauthentic. There is nothing at its center: what it signifies is the absence of essence. Play's conundrum, then, is also its power. As a signifier of excess beyond simple oppositions, play complicates the very terrain on which it is practiced, ultimately exposing the arbitrariness and contextuality of meaning at large.[36]

These paradoxical terms made play irresistible to the surrealists. Their willingness to risk meaning nothing was a radical departure from modernist paradigms for representation that sought stability and order through the immanent value of purified, abstract forms, or through extreme commitments to progressivism that pursued serial abstraction as a mode of honing spiritual perfection. Benjamin himself, with this sense of purpose in mind, would compare modernism with a "one-way street." But with one eye trained on surrealism, he would ultimately insist on looking back, calling on memory to reevaluate the material outcomes of Enlightenment rationality.[37] With a set of strategies that Benjamin called "passionate phonetic and graphic transformational games," surrealism began to shift the cultural terrain, posing a mode of constant critical testing against the modernist disciplining of space and time. Surrealism set the irrational labyrinth against the performative one-way street, aimless drifting against organized purpose, play against production.[38]

Yet as Benjamin recognized, surrealism sought to revolutionize more than art; the aim was to change experience itself, to explode art into life. Surrealist play gathered into its scope all of the group's revolutionary potential, its promise of "profane illumination": the valorization of obsolescence; the faith in the city street; the fascination with technology; the commitment to accessible and collective practices; the delivery of language, body, and action to the irrational vagaries of the unconscious.[39] Paradoxically, play became a vehicle for the surrealists' insistence on praxis. Their counterintuitive move—to wrest play from art and inhabit it like a new medium—foregrounded play's dynamic dimension, turning it out into material reality in the form of active experience. Put another way, in the hands of the avant-garde, play shifted in the discourse of modern art from its role as a signifier of passive contemplation to one of active, even destructive *process*. By exposing the multiplicity and indeterminacy at the root of the ludic, the surrealists compromised play's long-standing validity as the basis for understanding art as a closed and definable category. Art from their moment became wildly inclusive, embracing any form that had the potential to destabilize

the status quo. Surrealism's ludic practices are both the outgrowth and the implementation of this shift, with lasting consequences for the critical role of art in modern, postwar, and contemporary contexts.

The Freudian Ludic: From Sublimation to Unpleasure

Surrealism's ludic compromise of boundaries—between art and everyday experience and particularly between subject and object—is inconceivable without taking the group's commitment to psychoanalysis into account. If the surrealists alone seemed attuned to the potential for play to revolutionize modern experience by opening up, as Max Ernst would recall, the possibility for "a new and more vast realm of incomparable experience where the frontiers between the interior world, as it were, and the exterior world (according to the classical philosophical conception), efface themselves increasingly and apparently one day disappear completely," their insight was directly dependent on Sigmund Freud's characterization of unconscious processes in ludic terms.[40] Freud's ludic model essentially sketched an avant-garde agenda for play as it related to artistic forms reconceived as antiprogress and antipleasure. Surrealist play, constantly checking itself against the psychoanalytic model, would follow suit, wielding unpleasure as a critical device.

Nevertheless, Freud's first understanding of art-as-play is fairly conventional. His first attempt to implicate unconscious desire in artistic practice, in "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" (1907), characterized the ludic impulses at the root of creativity as constructive, idealizing, and firmly circumscribed from ordinary life: "The creative writer does the same as the child at play. He creates a world of fantasy which he takes very seriously—that is, which he invests with large amounts of emotion—while separating it sharply from reality."[41] Art, Freud asserted, is merely an acceptable, sublimated form of play for adults; a set of "wishful fantasies." Play in this model is unconditionally utopian, "a correction of unsatisfying reality" in which the child (and likewise the dreamer and the artist) is the master, and "rearranges the things of his world in a new way which pleases him."[42] Thus while play-as-art provides a space for acknowledging and defining imbalances in power relations, it cannot change those relations; it is powerless to "transform the world" according to the dictates of desire.

This conservative view of play is consistent with Freud's book-length study of language play, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), published two years prior to "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," where Freud is more specific about the exact cause of dissatisfaction that

prompts play: the child "uses games in order to withdraw from the pressure of critical reason," with critical reason described psychoanalytically as a disguised "reality principle."[43] The reference to play as a release from rationality and prohibitions is one of a number of provocative connections Freud makes to issues central to surrealism; unsurprisingly, the book on jokes also draws in dreams, eroticism, paradox, automatism, disinterest, and transgression. Ambivalence is a central motif: "multiple use," for Freud, is a sign for play.[44] Likewise, juxtaposition is essential to wit: laughter depends on the disruption of expectations, a violent collision of heterogeneous parts consistent with the discrete imagery of the psyche. "The joke," Freud writes, "is the contribution made to the comic from the realm of the unconscious."[45]

Moreover, wit is essentially ludic: "the pleasure in jokes exhibits a core of original pleasure in play and a casing of pleasure in lifting inhibitions."[46] Freud's structure of the joke echoes his model for the mind, where the id is sheathed in repressive prohibitions secured by the ego, invoking what Samuel Weber has identified as the "hierarchical opposition of play and inhibition," although in the case of jokes the corresponding spatial relation between surface and core is weirdly reversed, with the content of the joke—its "play with thoughts"—readily apparent, and the purposeless "play with words," or what Freud calls *form-play*, at its core. In a paradoxical instance of the "sense in nonsense" that characterizes both the logic of dreams and the chaotic imagery of the id, there is a "smearing of oppositions that are seemingly clear-cut."[47] At their core, jokes share the syntax of primary processes, "giving freeplay to modes of thought which are usual in the unconscious." They are structured by condensation and displacement, they indulge in "faulty reasoning" and "indirect representation," as well as "representation by nonsense and the opposite." Jokes depend on unauthorized connections between elements—they are involuntary and associative in their formation and emergence, indicating their origin from the unconscious.[48] And here Freud sets up another hierarchy: between play and the joke, with the joke as the mere tool by which consciousness can be averted in order to access "original" play. Laughter, the sign for pleasure that the joke elicits, "is in fact the product of an automatic process which is made possible by our conscious attention's being kept away from it." The "casing" provided by the joke is merely a ruse to distract consciousness from a release of unconscious thought.[49]

With his theorization of jokes, Freud allowed a language game into the range of automatic phenomena, a development that of course would be of the greatest appeal to surrealism. With every surrealist word game,

every inquiry or spontaneous revision of existing visual or linguistic form, came the possibility that the outcome, the response, or the perverted product would bear the marks of primary processes so long as play was the only motivation. Yet if surrealist play strategies followed Freud's model only up to this point, how far could the results be from the very conventions of *aesthetic* play that they were attempting to overthrow?

Because concerning disinterest, Freud seems conflicted. On one hand, he insists that in spite of their links to primary processes, jokes and dreams are "far remote" from each other with regard to their engagement with material life: dreams "retain their connection with the major interests in life; they seek to fulfill needs," while "a joke is developed play" that seeks to "gain a small yield of pleasure from the mere activity, untrammeled by needs, of our mental apparatus."[50] Jokes, that is, are purposeless; they do nothing and mean nothing. The pleasure in "innocent" or "abstract" jokes, Freud argues, is like the pleasure felt in beauty. Like an aesthetic form, whose "enjoyment lies only in itself, which has its aim only in itself and which fulfills none of the other aims in life," innocent joking is an "activity which aims at deriving pleasure from mental processes, whether intellectual or otherwise," for their own sake, outside of meaning.[51]

But "innocent jokes" are not the only category Freud describes in the book on wit. "Tendentious" or "purposeful" jokes, he claims, "have sources of pleasure at their disposal to which innocent jokes have no access"; that is, they direct themselves to the overcoming of an obstacle to libidinal satisfaction. Here, the "rebellion against authority," as Freud puts it, appears: "the object of the joke's attack may equally well be institutions, . . . dogmas of morality or religion," in effect, wherever anything commands "so much respect that objections to [it] can only be made under the mask of a joke."[52] To illustrate, Freud uses smutty jokes. To tell a "dirty joke," he contends, is to direct a sexual proposition toward a "second person" (who is actually only present in the joker's mind, as an anthropomorphization of an internalized prohibition) who always refuses. Amusingly, once the speaker encounters the obstacle and has redirected his libidinal energy into the acceptable form of a joke, neither "player" enjoys it. Like slips of the tongue, jokes are experienced by the teller, Freud claims, as a form of "self-betrayal," a temporary displacement of ego that is as unpleasant to the joker as the sexual advance is for its object. Freud argues that jokes are the most socially engaged form of language play, because they require yet a *third* person to complete the joke, a figure for whom the joke is pleasurable.[53] The sexual "purpose" of the joke is satisfied only then, through the displaced pleasure of a third party.

Freud's characterization of tendentious jokes as a useful way to channel and relieve the tensions produced by inhibitions seems to place them at odds with "innocent" jokes, which engage language play for its own sake.[54] Indeed, Freud give tendentious jokes a pointedly critical capacity, claiming they surface because of dissatisfactions with "selfish regulation laid down by the few who are rich and powerful." They address material needs, he argues, and sublimating dissatisfaction into language games benefits regulating agents by suppressing dissent.[55] This is an astoundingly Marxian assertion for Freud to have made in such a context (and a surprisingly direct revelation of his own political bias), one that is rendered even more startling in this ostensibly innocuous ludic context. Remarkably, his study of jokes brings together sexually suggestive play (as an expression of prohibited action), material needs, and language games into a representational critique of power relations that attacks, as he puts it, "the certainty of knowledge itself."[56]

This intervention against the status quo, however subconscious, is not necessarily confined to tendentious jokes, for under these terms even an "innocent" joke can be understood as a sign of resistance to instrumental language. As Samuel Weber has argued, the joke "arises out of the conflict between play and meaning," where the joke is a sign for play's "negation or inhibition, imposed by the demands of meaning and of the critical intellect."[57] Here the emphasis is not on the opposition between reality and utopian play, as in "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," but instead on the conflict between sense and nonsense, drawing Freudian play (which in its guise as "multiple use" is the basis of language games) even farther away from aesthetic harmony.[58] As Weber points out, this tension can only be understood in the context of the game that jokes play with the listener's desire for meaning, which is an outgrowth of the ego's effort "to unify, bind and synthesize" objects in the world—to better distinguish them from itself.[59] The joke dangles the expectation of meaning before the listener and then refuses to provide it, repeatedly denying the ego not just the satisfaction of internal unity, but also the gratifying distinction between subject and object by which that unity could be achieved. In other words, Freud describes language play as a breakdown between the self and the world comparable with the indeterminate expansion of Spielraum in reference to the artwork, and with "profane illumination" in reference to surrealism.

This ludic erosion of boundaries joins others that would become central to surrealism. While Freud treated the oppositions "reality and play" and "sense and nonsense" as homologous, based on their alignment with the categories "practical" and the "aesthetic" (substance and

form), there is plenty of evidence from within the Freudian corpus that the equation of nonsense and aesthetic disinterest cannot hold. Indeed, psychoanalytic theory concerns itself precisely with teasing meaning out of the apparent nonsense of dreams and irrational actions. That this meaning is inevitably sexual, and that erotic desire lies at the core of the joke—and the essence of Freudian play—puts a great deal of pressure on play's purported autonomy.

Jeffrey Mehlman is most convincing on this point when he argues for an intertextual reading of the *Joke* book with the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), on the grounds that Freud wrote them simultaneously. In the *Three Essays* Freud makes his famous assertion that all pleasure is deeply erotic, if narcissistic. This onanistic cycle, Mehlman points out, reappears in the *Joke* book as the system of repression that results in wordplay, where natural sexual desire is "*perverted* into the *signs* of 'sexual excitement.'" Mehlman emphasizes that "these are then not signs (symbolic) of the sexual, but a variety of signs which are constituted *as* the sexual per se." That is, it is the formal play of the words, the *sheer process* of signs circulating outside of meaning, that accounts for the sexual charge of the word games, as opposed to any titillating imagery at the level of content.[60] From this point of view, psychoanalytically inflected eroticism in surrealist games is located precisely *not* in what could be called an "iconography of desire"—not in the breasts or the buttocks of the exquisite corpse drawings, nor in the entwined part-objects limned in automatic script, nor even in the details of sexually explicit photographs. Rather, the erotic charge of surrealist games rises from the displaced libidinal satisfactions of their play with meaning, an excitement experienced through the unprecedented juxtapositions and untenable paradoxes they produce: the "convulsive beauty" of signs.

Sex made over into text through wordplay and visual puns is perhaps the most familiar motif of surrealist imagery, and its origin in psychoanalysis has been well accounted for.[61] *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* was not translated into French until 1929 (although the English edition was available in 1916), but the concordances between Freudian jokes and surrealist wordplay were made explicit in surrealist practice as early as 1922. Breton's own account of the erotic power of words and images liberated into play, the essay "Words without Wrinkles" (1922) opens with an exhortation to "turn the word away from its duty to signify," and ends by aligning erotic pleasure with "words that work against the idea they are claiming to express": "And let it be understood that when we say 'word games,' it is our surest reasons for living that are being put into play. Words, furthermore, have finished playing games. Words are making love."[62]

We could, of course, leave the matter of surrealist play here, and conclude (as Georges Bataille might have) that through psychoanalytically inflected play, the surrealists under Breton's influence affirmed the freedoms of eros, but within limits that kept aesthetic activity constructive, keeping it clear from messier realities: the low, or the destructive. But Freud's examination of the ludic impulse (and the surrealists' own) didn't end with the *Joke* book's relatively uncomplicated theorization of play as a manifestation of psychic pleasure. By 1920, as the first signs of surrealism emerged from within a Dadaist milieu, Freud had shifted his ludic model away from idealist aesthetics with the groundbreaking book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.[63] Here, Freud reconceived play as mastery acquired through *suppressed* action; that is, the ludic impulse was no longer advanced as an avatar of primeval pleasure in freedom, but as a tool of civilization, power, and control. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud revised and expanded the notion of pleasure itself to account for self-destructive behaviors; and a model for play as *unpleasure* found its place at the center of surrealism's ludic program.

Freud's break with idealism in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* arrives through play's alliance with repetition. Drawing on play's mimetic aspect, Freud characterizes the disagreeable *fort-da* game, in which a child repeatedly throws his toy out of his crib as a masochistic reenactment of his mother's departure. For Freud, the satisfactions of self-torture emerge through the repetitive and mimetic dimensions of the action, uncoupling the game from the cult of originality associated with "free play" since Kant. Novelty, Freud insists, "the condition of enjoyment," is nowhere present in this new formulation of pleasure in pain; rather, the hermetic cycle of play beyond the pleasure principle produces *sameness*, "the death of novelty," in marked contrast to the neoteric demands of modern economic self-perpetuation.[64]

Play in this scenario is regressive not because it signals a return to infantile behavior—in fact the mastery achieved through this destructive play, Freud informs us, is a sign of dawning maturity—but because of its mechanical redundancy, its dogged determination to reenact past unpleasantness.[65] Freud traces the game to a counter-erotic instinct, one so opposed to the "life drive" that it is locked in a struggle with eros to determine behavior. To account for this paradoxical pleasure taken in unpleasure, Freud formulates a second paradox, that of life as "a task of ceasing to live."[66] The "death drive" that play mediates in this new counter-humanism is regressive in that it is "*an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things*."[67]

The return to a former, precivilized state is familiar within the canons of modernism as a primitivist impulse running parallel to modernism's rhetoric of progress. Because the surrealist movement has long been identified with both psychoanalysis and primitivism, it is particularly surprising that Freudian play as it appears here, as an avatar of the death drive, has not been more closely examined as a motivating force behind the surrealist games. But then, Freud himself appears to have repressed the implications for a world in which humanity pursues self-annihilation. The sheer wastefulness implied by his own theory goes unremarked, but it is a form of counterproductivity typical of play, and one that would rise repeatedly across surrealism's ludic practices, whether enacted under the supervision of Breton or the dissident surrealist Bataille.

Likewise, the mechanical redundancy of a game intent on reducing the subject to an inanimate state, and that scenario's resemblance to the paradigmatic scene of modernist production—the assembly line and its dehumanizing automation—seems to have escaped Freud's notice.[68] But the surrealists appear to have seized on the improbable possibility Freud held out: the means by which to graft play onto the technological apparatus in order to mobilize a critique of that apparatus. For psychoanalysis's automatic game is the machine that produces nothing—not mastery, not even meaning. And in the same spirit, surrealist play consumes itself unproductively, leaving behind at most an ephemeral by-product: "residue" in the form of a folded drawing or a depleted scrap of nonsense, not unlike a joke that has lost its verve in the retelling.[69]

Surrealist games then, from a psychoanalytic perspective, can be understood as a critique of the rhetoric of progress and production commensurate with Bataille's "nonproductive expenditure."[70] The sheer wastefulness of surrealist play, the absurdity of its pursuit which, as Breton recalled with delight, "never failed to incite the hostility of idiots," places its players in what Bataille would call the ranks of social dejecta: committed poets and artists. The rivalries that would rise among the surrealist players, each struggling to best the other; the overbearing intensity of the so-called sexual investigations; the tensions of excommunication hanging on the "wrong" response during an interrogation—all evoke an agonistic atmosphere that, in spite of Breton's insistence on the games as benign diversion, redoubles the sacrificial dimension of surrealist games.[71] This became particularly compelling when surrealism's ludic strategies were directed toward art practice, for as in psychoanalytic play, the games ultimately rupture the field of representation. Along with the rhetoric of progress, the tropes of freedom, agency, and originality—terms that

had provided the link between play and aesthetics—are contested in this destructive model of play. In the cycle of repetition compulsion, the subject is *played*, manipulated in a scenario that requires a hapless "master" caught up in play action beyond his control. By linking artistic production with this kind of distressing game, the surrealists acknowledged an art of unpleasure, turning away from beauty as an aesthetic quality and opening art onto the disturbing, the perturbed, and the provocatively ugly.

Through their games and experimental techniques—the exquisite corpse game, Max Ernst's frottage technique, Wolfgang Paalen's fumage, Óscar Domínguez's decalcomania, the "telephone" drawing game, or the appropriation of ambiguous images that Salvador Dalí claimed by way of the paranoid-critical method—surrealism threw off images that, formally speaking, veer away from unity and static predictability toward the chaotic incoherence associated with the id.[72] But it is the systematic and repetitive aspect of these alternative methods, and the structural sameness and interchangeability of the images they produced, that tie them specifically to psychoanalytic play. That link is made by the two dark, antimodernist realizations at the heart of the formulation of the death drive: the inability to begin freshly rather than repeat, and the inevitability of regulation. Every round of surrealist play can be seen, therefore, as a painful and regressive gesture (as opposed to an instance of erotic renewal) in its attempt to return to some point prior to form— an erotic desire that is never fulfilled.

War on Work

The rise of psychoanalysis, Walter Benjamin's theorization of technologically assisted Spielraum, and the emergence of surrealist play strategies would be unimaginable outside the historical context of modernism's disciplining of space-time and its reconfiguration of subjectivity in terms of work. Frederick Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management* had been translated into French by 1914 and his systems had found purchase in Europe during World War I for munitions production and reconstruction.[73] By the mid-1920s France had become one of the most advanced countries in Europe in its application of the methods of "scientific" organization and management.[74] Rationalization as a mode of thought became synonymous with efficiency, labor discipline, standardization, and optimal production, as French proponents of the new economy of means declared that Taylor was simply extending the work of Descartes.[75] Chance was denigrated in this functionalist model in favor of

determinism, a philosophy that maintained that the world operated according to discoverable (and exploitable) laws. Eliminating conflict became an administrative priority, ensuring that centralized direction would replace collaborative decision-making as a strategy for managing complex systems: "A body with two heads," wrote Henri Fayol, the main theorist of industrial administration in France, "is, in the social world, as in the animal world, a monster."[76] Thus the rising ideology of rationalized labor extended to the human body and in turn to social change, as both were reconceived in machinic terms that measured their value by way of efficiency and capacity for work.[77]

The surrealists' resistance to mounting pressure to define their objects and actions in terms of useful productivity is legendary, summarized by Breton in his autobiographical novel *Nadja*: "There is no use being alive if one must work. The event from which each of us is entitled to expect the revelation of his own life's meaning—that event which I may not yet have found, but on whose path I seek myself—is not earned by work."[78]

Certainly their cry, "War on Work," printed on a 1925 cover of *La Révolution surréaliste*, placed them at ideological odds with the French Communist Party (PCF), with whom they struggled to make an alliance in the years of fascism's rise.[79] In spite of Breton's insistence that theirs was a popular movement intended to open poetry to everyday experience, the surrealists' stance against what Breton deemed the "quasi-religious" ideology of work would provide the ultimate justification for their expulsion from official communist circles.[80] The "Surrealism in 1929" issue of the Belgian journal *Variétés*, jointly edited by Breton and Aragon (the most ardent supporter of communism among the surrealists), opened with Freud's essay "Humor" (1927) which posited humor as an expression of the subject's "refusal to suffer" in spite of the hardships of reality, and, indeed, of opportunity to "gain pleasure" from "the traumas of the external world."[81] The surrealists' defense of humor as a repudiation of material hardship in service of an illusion alone would have been sufficient to raise the ire of the PCF, but the group compounded the transgression by following the essay with pages of word games and a full round of collective exquisite corpse drawings, in addition to the usual mix of inscrutable essays, poems, and dream transcriptions interspersed with enigmatic paintings, drawings, and objects. The penultimate essay was André Thirion's diatribe, "A bas le travail!" (Down with Work!), in which the poet disparaged paid labor as a reactionary tool of capitalism in service to bourgeois ideals—a form of "moral oppression" tantamount to slavery: "Human idleness is continuously trampled by the necessity to work with the sole end of maintaining its own existence."[82] The surrealists' final

break with the PCF came six years later, precipitated by a statement by surrealist Ferdinand Alquié denigrating communist propaganda that promoted work as life's only worthwhile goal, after which the surrealists were excluded from the first International Congress of Writers, convened in Paris by the Communist International to condemn fascism and solidify support for socialist realism.[83] The rationale for the rejection was cast by writer Ilya Ehrenburg: "These young revolutionaries will have nothing to do with work. They go in for Hegel and Marx and the Revolution, but work is something to which they are not adapted."[84]

Thus despite the surrealists' repeated denunciation of bourgeois conventions (including the tradition of individual authorship, which the group routinely compromised through the anonymity, deskilling, and collaboration required for surrealist games), their "revolution of the mind," an insurrection based on the belief that the realm of thought was a reality as vivid as the material world, would prove irreconcilable with communist standards. Standing out most starkly against communist praxis was the refusal of polemic clarity in favor of the multiple meanings that characterized surrealist expression. Communication and identity—the *work* of pictorial language—was routinely sacrificed in surrealism in favor of a ludic freedom the surrealists espoused as the precondition for liberating the proletariat.[85] "We will maintain," insisted Breton, "over and above everything in the twentieth century in France, that irreducible independence of thought which implies the greatest revolutionary determination."[86]

Again, it was Benjamin who recognized in surrealism's ludic strategies the potential for developing critical cultural forms that would remain relevant to an increasingly technologically determined society. Reasoning from his conviction that art emerged not from work but from idleness, he expressed doubts about the modern cult of productivity and heroic exhaustion, concluding: "There must be a human element in things which is not brought about by labor."[87] It was perhaps the focused attention demanded by the assembly-line ethos that prompted him to valorize ludic distraction (for example in gambling) as a mode of apprehension, drawing a grim line between the "before" of early industrialization (when Baudelairean idleness was still a possibility) and the projection of an industrially induced future in which human apprehension was reshaped according to a working mode so focused and disciplined that laboring subjects would fail to discern the larger political programs driving their efforts.[88] It was through this frame that Benjamin read surrealism's anti-instrumental principles: "My loveliest mistress is idleness"; "A gold medal for the greatest boredom"—these

are the surrealist aphorisms Benjamin cites in his 1927 "gloss on surrealism" ("Dream Kitsch"), along with admiration for the way the surrealists grasped the importance of ambiguous "picture puzzles" and, most intriguingly, "dialogic misunderstanding," the mode by which, in Benjamin's words, "the only true reality forces its way into conversation."[89]

Conflict is indispensable to social relations in this model, and if Benjamin appears to have overvalued incoherent play in its contrast with useful work, it was almost certainly in the interest of cultivating a form of experience that might help to critically negotiate techno-industrial capitalism, rather than be abused by it. The room-for-play that he saw surrealists clearing from within their automatic, ephemeral, and mechanically structured systems would resist the commodification that seemed to accompany autonomous works of art, yet would avoid the agitprop instrumentality that was becoming the hallmark of totalitarian regimes on the right and the left. In place of the immutable timelessness of the traditional work of art, avant-garde play forms promised constant flux, the ability to be critically responsive to rapidly shifting historical and material contexts in service to a populace in need of ways to progressively engage with the lived outcomes of their technologically determined world. In welcoming chance into artistic practice, the surrealists shaped a kind of techno-ecology in which human beings could be placed in a symbiotic rather than dominant relation to their world.[90]

The case studies of surrealism at play that I've analyzed here give form to this intersection of chance and technology. The chapters of this book were not conceived as a global summary, but were directed by my desire to recover mechanisms of the surrealist techno-ludic hidden in the creases of history. Specifically, with Spielraum as my guide, I sought out instances of surrealist play that drew equally on mechanism and abandon. You will not see René Magritte's or Dalí's bistable paintings here; ludic as they are, their mode of facture veered too far from the structures of technological mediation that Benjamin so admired. Likewise, my account may seem to brush too lightly against certain surrealist techniques that exploit chance—decalcomania, fumage, and frottage, for example. These techniques, too, struck me as too far removed from Spielraum, and deserve their own full and separate analysis. Each of the examples I have chosen focuses attention on a different modality of surrealist play: "Blur," on photographic indeterminacy; "Drift," on the extension of the automatic into lived space; "System," on the role of regulation in surrealist games; and "Pun," on ambiguity and proliferating meanings among the dissident surrealists. The chapters are arranged in loose chronological order, as each affirms a signal shift in the movement's attitude toward

automatic technologies and the relative freedoms they afforded. It is important to understand automatism's promise of ludic flux as it was first practiced by the group, in order to fully comprehend what was at stake when the surrealists gave it up, sublimating automatic play in the form of games; and it is essential to know how wordplay functioned in the early days of the surrealist movement before fully grasping the frustrations of the dissident surrealists in the 1930s. In this way, I have provided a scaffold for an alternative history of surrealism, one that acknowledges the centrality of play not only to the movement and its legacy, but to the formation of a modern critical ludic.

The blur between repetition and unforeseeability—or discipline and disruption—is the focus of chapter 1 of *Surrealism at Play*, which examines indeterminacy as an avatar of the avant-garde's critical ludic during the so-called *époque floue*, the threshold moment between Dada and surrealism. Man Ray's rayographs, images that blur the boundary between photographic realism and modernist abstraction, are emblematic of this moment, and were embraced by the group in this transitional phase as repositories of found memory and trenchant reappraisals of technological rationality. Understood serially, as records of unforeseeable assemblages, the rayographs' carnivalesque inversions of perceived reality provided "room-for-play" through a perspective on what Breton called the "never seen," a visual conundrum that would became a recurrent motif in surrealism, a sign of the ludic element in latent psychic processes.

The threshold state explored pictorially in the rayographs and affirmed in the early wordplay of the époque floue expanded to phenomenological scope in the fledgling years of the surrealist movement proper. Chapter 2, "Drift," examines the surrealists' efforts to confront head-on the problem of daily experience in a city being reshaped by functionalist aspirations. This initial turn to praxis was expressed through their penchant for *errance*, aimless wandering in the streets of Paris that turned play out into the rationalized grid of the city.[91] The surrealists' effort to restructure the cityscape itself according to Freud's dualistic model of the mind—the manifest and the latent—is traced in Man Ray's album of documentary photographs by Eugène Atget. This text, on par with André Breton's *Nadja* and Louis Aragon's *Paris Peasant*, renders the urban landscape through a surrealist frame, reaching beyond the well-documented importance of "found" surrealism, to suggest that Atget's utilitarian studio archive itself served as a photographic synecdoche of the city available to the surrealist at play.

In spite of the surrealists' early insistence on experience over representation in the form of automatism and errance, Man Ray's Atget album was

ultimately an attempt to render textual the game board that the surrealists superimposed on Paris. The album heralds a return to representation in the wake of disillusionments with a full break from the reality principle that separated inner and outer landscapes. When a number of automatist sessions resulted in life-threatening incidents, the group, brought up short by the consequences of unleashing destructive ludic forces into material reality, called for a qualified reassessment of surrealist notions of freedom and liberation.[92] The shift turned the group toward more regulated forms of play, and a mechanized concept of "the automatic."

Chapter 3, "System," examines the tensions between discipline and indeterminacy shaping surrealist games of the 1920s and 1930s, and measures their effectiveness as avant-garde strategies aimed at disrupting the conventions of representation, communication, and subjectivity. The chapter revolves around the pictorial version of the paradigmatic exquisite corpse game, which has been repeatedly characterized as a productive collective experience that functioned to solidify the surrealists as a group. But coupling the surrealists' critique of technological rationalization with their fresh understanding of the destructive dimension of play exposes the game as an intersubjectively disorienting exploration of incoherence with fatal implications for meaning and communication. Analysis of the play itself, traced back from the folds in the drawings, reveals the game as an avatar of Freudian "unpleasure," manifested through seriality, repetition, fragmentation, and the amelioration of agency through a self-subjection to chance. If this characterization sounds manipulative, a case of the surrealists being "played" by their games rather than mastering them, it is because the surrealists tested the ludic in its full range of signification, not merely as a medium for what they imagined as the free flow of eros, but in its systematic capacity for activating disorientation and disintegration. The surrealist ludic proceeds from play's dynamic indeterminacy between the pleasure and pain of liberation and destruction.[93]

Historically, this pleasure–pain dyad has been associated with the renegade surrealists under the influence of Georges Bataille, who staked a great part of his intellectual project on the revaluation of violence and unreason. One of my aims here is to recover surrealism's early pleasure in volatility, exposing a through-line from early Dadaist punning all the way to the circle of Bataille's influence. Chapter 4, "Pun," maps the range of surrealist wordplay and visual puns from the perspective of the surrealists of the so-called Rue Blomet group whose members drew on the works of experimental writer Raymond Roussel to probe the fluidity of meaning. Drawn together by ethnographer Michel Leiris, Alberto

Giacometti and Joan Miró experienced their encounter with Roussel's ludic strategies as a moment of aberration: Giacometti set aside discrete, sculptural form to make dysfunctional machines that produced nothing and opened sculptural space to the infinite flux Benjamin identified with architectural Spielraum; while Miró made his series of "antipaintings" based on appropriated mass-media materials, identifying their absurdist potential and turning it into a degenerative force through a concatenation of distortions and transpositions common to visual language itself. The chapter is at once climactic and recursive, in that it probes the ludic at its most extreme in avant-garde practice (for example as a shapeless and meaningless avatar of Bataille's *informe* [formless]), yet returns to the strategies of indeterminacy—punning and wordplay—that initiated surrealism's reinvention of play.

Surrealism at Play concludes by identifying the legacy of surrealism's modern critical ludic in postwar art practices, and assessing the ultimate effect of surrealism's experimental strategies in order to begin sorting out the crowded contemporary ludic field. Initial evidence of this accelerating interest in play paradigms in the second half of the twentieth century appeared as early as the 1950s, with an extraordinary exchange between the play theories of four figures: the historian Johan Huizinga, the structural linguist Émile Benveniste, surrealist André Breton, and ex-surrealist Roger Caillois. The conceptual grid formed by the crisscrossing perspectives of these four very different thinkers places the surrealist reinvention of play at the stepping-off point of the postmodern, when the explosion of cross-disciplinary texts on, about, and engaging play points to a new dominance of the ludic as an overarching postmodern interpretive frame. Play has persisted in art production, in the form of chance operations, the valorization of indeterminacy, and the displacement of authorship, and also in appropriation, participation, and the contemporary critique of artistic labor. Thus while this book offers a historical rubric through which surrealism might be grasped, it also traces the ludic prehistory of the poststructuralist revision of meaning, marking the inexhaustible heterodoxy of postwar artistic strategies as the heritors of surrealist play.

Surrealism itself was in place too long and dispersed too widely for any single paradigm or defining system to summarize it. Likewise, play has been theorized extensively across numerous disciplines, with varying degrees of pertinence to art practices. *Surrealism at Play* cuts several paths through this tangled field, and while the book places the shaping of a modern critical ludic firmly in the hands of the interwar avant-gardes, emphasis has been laid on those theories and practices that have

proven formative of advanced art in the postwar years. Indeterminacy and unforeseeability will figure prominently, along with the displacement of authority they enact. Chance results will issue from within exceptionally rigid systems. Fugitive forms and polyvalent configurations will dominate—Benjamin's "dialectics at a standstill"—tracing surrealism's extrarational ways of navigating the world.[94] In reinventing play, the surrealists reconfigured existence itself into a constant questioning of experience, and placed ludic strategies at the center of future arts seeking to reorient us critically in relation to our world.

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Introduction. A Modern Critical Ludic

Epigraph: André Breton, "L'un dans l'autre," in *Perspective cavalière*, ed. Marguerite Bonner (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1970), 50.

1   Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), §9, 62. I have made a more detailed account of Kantian play and its role in the development of the idea of modernist autonomy (including the extensive poststructuralist critique of that concept) in Susan Laxton, "From Judgment to Process," in *From Diversion to Subversion: Games, Play, and Twentieth-Century Art*, ed. David J. Getsy (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 3–24.

2   "'Transform the world,' Marx said, 'change life,' Rimbaud said. These two watchwords are one for us." André Breton, "Speech to the Congress of Writers," in *Manifestoes of Surrealism,* trans. Richard Seaver and Helen Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), 241.

3   See André Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924," in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, 4.

4   Walter Benjamin, "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," in *Selected Writings*, *Vol. 3*, *1935–1938*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Howard Eiland, et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 39. The concept was singled out for admiration by Theodor Adorno; see Adorno, "Exchange with Theodor Adorno on 'Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century,'" in *Aesthetics and Politics*, ed. Fredric Jameson (London: NLB, 1977), 54.

5   Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 317. See also the argument against the alignment of play and art on the basis of disinterest summarized by M. C. Nahm, "Some Aspects of the Play-Theory of Art," *Journal of Philosophy* 39, no. 6 (1942): 148–60.

6 For play as Benjamin's "aesthetic alternative" to semblance, see Miriam Hansen, "Room-for-Play: Benjamin's Gamble with Cinema," *October* 109 (summer 2004): 14.

7 Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, *Vol. 1*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Herman Schweppenhaüser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972–89), 1177.

8 Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 1177.

9 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), 806.

10 While idleness has a "use," Benjamin writes, it "seeks to avoid any sort of tie to the idler's line of work, and ultimately to the labor process in general. That distinguishes it from leisure." Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 803.

11 For Benjamin's assessment of the role of artists and intellectuals in worker-oriented society, see Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," in *Selected Writings*, *Vol. 2*, *Part 2*, *1931–1934*, ed. Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, trans. Rodney Livingstone et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 768–82.

12 This is how Giorgio Agamben, one contemporary theorist of the ludic, characterizes human gesture—as an action that "makes means visible," communicating the human capacity for politics. Giorgio Agamben, "Notes on Gesture," in *Means without End*, trans. Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 48–59.

13 Hansen, *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 200. My understanding of the term in relation to Benjamin's overall attitude toward play is indebted to Hansen's account.

14 Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility (Second Version)," in *Selected Writings, Vol. 3, 1935–1938*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Howard Eiland, et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 127n22. Benjamin's play concept was lost in both translation and transposition: *Spielraum* is elaborated in the second or (at least in Hansen's estimation) "Ur" version of the "Work of Art" essay, but Benjamin cut it from the third version after Adorno's critique of the essay, and it was this third version that was subsequently translated into French and English. See Hansen, *Cinema and Experience*, 83. When the term does surface it has been translated variously, as "scope or field of action," "running room," "leeway," "margin," "room to move or maneuver," "scope for play," and "space for play." Hansen weighs Adorno's objections to the invocation of play in the essay against the possibility that Benjamin himself had lost faith in the capacity of Spielraum to establish equilibrium between human beings and technology in time to avert the impending disaster of World War II. See Hansen, *Cinema and Experience*, 162.

15 Benjamin, "Work of Art," 127n22.

16 Hansen, *Cinema and Experience*, 93.

17 Hansen *Cinema and Experience*, 192.

18 "In film, the element of semblance has been entirely displaced by the element of play." Benjamin, "Work of Art," 127n22.

19 Hansen, *Cinema and Experience*, 112.

20 Benjamin, "Work of Art," 107–8. Second technology itself emerges from the ludic. Benjamin writes: "Its origin is to be sought at the point where, by an unconscious ruse, human beings first began to distance themselves from nature. It lies, in other words, in play" (107).

21 See, for example, Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), particularly chapter 5, "Exquisite Corpses," 125–56. Foster reads the surrealists' uncanny "mechanical-commodified" imagery as a form of parody rather than rehabituation.

22 Benjamin, "Work of Art," 127.

23 Benjamin claimed that these two texts "most powerfully" expressed the idea of *profane illumination,* Benjamin's term for surrealism's revolutionary expansion of apprehension. See Benjamin, "Surrealism," in *Selected Writings, Vol. 2, Part 1, 1927–1930*, ed. Howard Eiland, Michael Jennings, and Gary Smith, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 209.

24 Walter Benjamin and Asja Lācis, "Naples," in Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Vol. 1, 1919–1926*, ed. Michael Jennings and Marcus Bullock, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 414–21.

25 Breton, "Second Manifesto of Surrealism," in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, 122.

26 Benjamin, "Surrealism," 217–18. Miriam Hansen expands on innervation's mediation between "internal and external, psychic and motoric, human and machine registers," linking innervation directly to surrealist revolution. She also points out that innervation appears in Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) when Freud compares the "psychical apparatus" with a "composite instrument" like the various systems of lenses used in optical devices. Hansen, *Cinema and Experience*, 133, 145, 136.

27 Benjamin, "Surrealism," 209.

28 Hansen, *Cinema and Experience*, 182; Hansen, "Room-for-Play," 24.

29 For a full account of the role of play in theorizing art from Romanticism through the Art-for-Art's-sake movement to modernist self-referentiality, see Laxton, "From Judgment to Process," 3–24.

30 Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 28.

31 Huizinga's ultimate rejection of play's purposelessness may indicate the growing influence of sociology and anthropology on history and philosophy in the first half of the twentieth century: in the sciences play always serves a purpose. For a Darwinian theory that maintains that animal as well as human play is "preparatory practice" for life and therefore explicitly "interested," a perspective that actually keys with the Aristotelian assessment of play as learning, see Karl Groos, *The Play of Man*, trans. Elizabeth L. Baldwin (London: William Heinemann, 1901). Prominent among those who have formulated an "applied" play are the clinical psychologists following Jean Piaget. For an overview, see Susanna Millar, *The Psychology of Play* (New York: Jason Aronson, 1974), and Eric Erikson, *Toys and Reasons: Stages in the Ritualization of Experience* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977). Of these psychologists only D. W. Winnicott has approached the surrealists' own position, by theorizing play and art as elements of a threshold category bridging psychic and social worlds.

See D. W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (London: Tavistock, 1971). These are all theorists who accept play's purpose as *given*, rather than imposed; compare with Roland Barthes, who understands play's "usefulness" as ideologically imposed, especially in Roland Barthes, "Toys," in *Mythologies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 53–55.

32 Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 1.

33 See also Roger Caillois: "Illusion . . . means nothing less than beginning a game: *in-lusio.*" Roger Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, trans. Meyer Barash (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), 19.

34 For a structuralist genealogy of play theories in science and philosophy, see Mihai Spariosu, *Dionysus Reborn: Play and the Aesthetic Dimension in Modern Philosophical and Scientific Discourse* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).

35 Jacques Henriot accepts this incompossible range as the general condition of meaning and reality, asserting that "play is above all the thought of play": the ludic only exists when we have designated it as such. Jacques Henriot, *Sous couleur de jouer: La métaphor ludique* (Paris: José Corti, 1989), 12.

36 Play as a signifier of excess beyond binary opposition would make it a central reference point for poststructural thought. The initiating text was Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 278–93, which was subsequently elaborated upon in his *Of Grammatology* (1967). Derrida puts the question (How can art be at once bounded and "without ends"?) directly to Kant in *The Truth in Painting* (1987). Contrast this approach with that of the phenomenologists of play following Heidegger, namely Eugen Fink, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and James Hans, who seek a stable ontology for play as the basis of all human activity and experience. See Kostas Axelos, "Planetary Interlude," in *Game, Play, Literature*, ed. Jacques Ehrmann (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 6–18; Eugen Fink, "The Oasis of Happiness," in Ehrmann, *Game, Play, Literature*, 19–30; Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1989); James Hans, *The Play of the World* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981). For Jean-Paul Sartre's grasp of play, yet another alternative to that of Dada and surrealism, see Ralph Netzky, "Playful Freedom: Sartre's Ontology Re-Appraised," *Philosophy Today* (summer 1974): 125–36.

37 Benjamin, "One-Way Street," in *Selected Writings, Vol. 1*, 444–88.

38 Benjamin, "Surrealism," 212.

39 Benjamin, "Surrealism," 209–10.

40 Max Ernst, "Qu'est-ce que le surréalisme?," in *Écritures de Max Ernst* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1970), 228. As late as the 1950s, Breton was still invoking play as a means to seek "the true functioning of thought." Breton, "L'un dans l'autre," in *Perspective cavalière*, ed. Marguerite Bonner (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1970), 50–79.

41 Sigmund Freud, "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 9*, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1959), 144. In 1932 Breton would complain of the strict boundaries Freud evoked here and elsewhere,

particularly in his insistence on separating "psychic reality" and "material reality." See Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, trans. Mary Ann Caws and Geoffrey T. Harris (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 13.

42 Freud, "Creative Writers," 143–44.

43 Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, Penguin Freud Library, Vol. 6 (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 126. Freud meant *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* to be "the first example of an application of the analytic mode of thought to the problems of aesthetics." Freud, *The History of the Psychoanalytic Movement*, Penguin Freud Library, Vol. 15 (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 63–127; cited in Richard Wollheim, "Freud and the Understanding of Art," in *Modern Critical Views: Sigmund Freud*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1985), 92.

44 Freud, *Jokes*, 36.

45 Freud, *Jokes*, 208. The French translation of *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten* (1905) came out in 1930, one year after Freud's essay on humor was included in the special issue of *Variétés*, "Le surréalisme en 1929." The two are said to have been the inspiration for Breton's *Anthologie de l'humour noir* (Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1966).

46 Freud, *Jokes*, 138n1.

47 Samuel Weber, *The Legend of Freud* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 112, 106.

48 Freud, *Jokes*, 253, 94, 197, 225.

49 Freud, *Jokes*, 188. In the economic scheme Freud lays out for the joke, laughter is a sign of repression—the saving up of libidinal energy. That is, we laugh as a replacement for the sexual discharge we actually desire. Play as expenditure makes a first appearance here in the modern context, anticipating Caillois's attribution (by way of Georges Bataille) of play to sheer excess. But with characteristic perversity, Freud maintains that jokes are ultimately instances of *saving*, not spending, as they economize on the energy that would have otherwise been used for inhibition. This permits him to primly describe jokes as efficient and not transgressive. Laughter, for Freud, is a paradoxical sign of repression (of energy) and release (from conscious reason); a sign for the primary processes at their roots, but also the sign for a fundamentally unsatisfied desire.

50 Freud, *Jokes*, 179.

51 Freud, *Jokes*, 113.

52 Freud, *Jokes*, 108–9.

53 Freud, *Jokes*, 96–102, 106n1. Freud's system accounts for the "multiple uses" of wordplay itself, "multiple use" in Freud being a sign for play. See Freud, *Jokes*, 70. Freud devotes an entire chapter of *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* to their social aspect (140–58), which, as Samuel Weber points out, depends on the hinge between meaning and expectation: "It is this expectation of a meaning that thus becomes one of the negative preconditions of the joke," establishing jokes as "socially determined, involving generally held 'inhibitions' or taboos as opposed to purely individual ones." The joke is a "collective if temporary transgression of shared prohibitions." Furthermore, through the inclusion of a "third

term" (the third person), Weber argues, Freud has posited jokes as homologous to the illogic of the unconscious, as the dialectical rules of logic always exclude a third term. Weber, *Legend of Freud*, 110, 103.

54 Freud fashions the wish fulfillment of innocent jokes as radically different from the material needs met by transgressive jokes: "Unconscious sexuality is generated not in continuity with biological nature (instinct, function) but in opposition to it: the Freudian wish is far removed from natural need." Jean Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), 122.

55 Freud, *Jokes*, 110.

56 Freud, *Jokes*, 138.

57 Weber, *Legend of Freud*, 93.

58 Freud, *Jokes*, 35–36.

59 Weber, *Legend of Freud*, 113–14.

60 Jeffrey Mehlman, "How to Read Freud on Jokes: The Critic as Schadchen," *New Literary History* 6, no. 2 (winter 1975): 443, 447, 446.

61 Mehlman, "How to Read Freud on Jokes," 453.

62 Breton, "Words without Wrinkles," *The Lost Steps*, trans. Mark Polizzotti (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 100–102.

63 *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* has been relatively neglected in Freudian studies, a dismissal justified by the fact that Freud himself seemed to have lost interest in the topic, making virtually no revisions to the essay. If the book is approached from the point of view of play and representation, however, it becomes clear that Freud did extend and reformulate the economy of ludic pleasure set out in the *Joke* book: that revision is *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

64 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 18*, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), 14–17, 35.

65 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 15–16.

66 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 57.

67 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 106. The emphasis is Freud's.

68 See Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, 124–54.

69 *Residue* is Bataille's term for poetry at its best, that is to say, its most wasteful. Georges Bataille, "The Notion of Expenditure," in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings*, ed. Alan Stoekl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 116–29.

70 Bataille, "Notion of Expenditure," 117.

71 Breton, "L'un dans l'autre," in *Perspective cavalière*, 51. Here, in the midst of his characterization of the games as "above all . . . diversion," Breton symptomatically cites two exceptions: the early séances, which ended in a spectacular display of violence just short of death, and the "truth game," which Claude Lévi-Strauss is said to have likened to an "initiation rite." See Phillippe Audoin, "Surréalistes," in *Dictionnaire des jeux: Réalités de l'imaginaire*, ed. René Alleau (Paris: Tchou, 1966), 481. For the deterioration of the séances, see Mark

Polizzotti, *Revolution of the Mind: The Life of André Breton* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995), 183–88. Importantly, Breton gathers automatist experiments as well as surrealism's investigations and alternative visual practices under the rubric "play." His desire to characterize surrealist games as uncomplicated pleasure is belied in his letters from the 1920s; from the very start there were instances of *errance* gone sour and accounts of the tedium and "indifference" of "countless games." Polizzotti, *Revolution of the Mind*, 201–2, 282, 297.

72 For the psychoanalytically inflected potential of Max Ernst's frottage, see Rosalind Krauss, "The Master's Bedroom," *Representations* 28 (fall 1989): 67–70. David Lomas has examined the Lacanian resonances in Dalí's paranoid-critical method, although not as they relate to the illusion-images I am referring to here, which were published in *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* 3 (December 1931). See David Lomas, *The Haunted Self: Surrealism, Psychoanalysis, Subjectivity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000). Paalen's fumage images remain unexplored in this context, as do the telephone drawings of the late 1930s; many of them are reproduced in Pietro Bellasi, Alberto Fiz, and Tulliola Sparagni, *L'arte del Gioco: De Klee a Boetti* (Milan: Mazzotta, 2002).

73 Mary McLeod, "'Architecture or Revolution': Taylorism, Technocracy and Social Change," *Art Journal* 43, no. 2 (summer 1983): 133–34. By 1925 Taylorism was joined by Fordism and Fayolisme, the French equivalent in efficient management and administration.

74 Jackie Clarke, *France in the Age of Organization: Factory, Home and Nation from the 1920s to Vichy* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 21.

75 Henri Le Chatelier, *Le Taylorisme* (Paris: Dunod, 1928), 7; cited in Clarke, *France in the Age of Organization,* 21.

76 Clarke, *France in the Age of Organization*, 41. For Henri Le Chatelier the starting point for any science was a belief in determinism: "Chance does not exist," he claimed. Rather, the world was governed by laws that could be ascertained through observation and experimentation.

77 Mary McLeod has pointed out that this new ideology of industrial rationalization linked technology and social change in a number of positive ways, for example in Le Corbusier's program for social renewal. McLeod, "'Architecture or Revolution,'" 132–47.

78 Breton, *Nadja* (New York: Grove Press, 1960), 60. Breton excoriated those surrealists who "succumbed" to the seduction of professional careers. See Jack J. Spector, *Surrealist Art and Writing: The Gold of Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 75.

79 *La Révolution surréaliste* 4 (1925) was the first issue under Breton's editorship. For the full story of surrealism's testy relation with the PCF, see Helena Lewis, *The Politics of Surrealism* (New York: Paragon House, 1988), 55–139.

80 Breton, "La Dernière Grève," *La Révolution surréaliste* 2 (January 15, 1924): 1. Breton recounts his experience trying to explain surrealism to PCF officials in Breton, *Conversations: The Autobiography of Surrealism*, trans. Mark Polizzotti (New York: Paragon House, 1993), 126–27.

81   Freud, "Humor," in "Le surréalisme en 1929," ed. André Breton and Louis Aragon, special issue, *Variétés* (June 1929): 3–6. For the English translation, see Freud, "Humor," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 21*, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), 159–72.

82   André Thirion, "A bas le travail!," *Variétés*, special issue (June 1929), 45, 46.

83   Ferdinand Alquié, "À André Breton," *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* 5 (May 1933): 43.

84   Ilya Ehrenburg, "The Surrealists," *Partisan Review* 2, no. 9 (October–November 1935): 11–13; cited in Lewis, *Politics of Surrealism*, 122. Breton cites Ehrenburg directly in his response to the exclusion from the International Congress of Writers. See Breton, "On the Time When the Surrealists Were Right," in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, 244.

85   Breton, "What Is Surrealism?," in *What Is Surrealism?*, ed. Franklin Rosemont (New York: Pathfinder, 1978), 115.

86   Breton, "La force d'attendre," *Clarté* 79 (December 1925): 380–81; cited in Lewis, *Politics of Surrealism*, 51. The article was written in response to early accusations that the surrealists were insufficiently committed to the ideals of the Communist Party.

87   Benjamin, letter to Theodor Adorno, May 7, 1940; cited in Gyorgy Markus, "Walter Benjamin, or The Commodity as Phantasmagoria," *New German Critique* 83 (spring–summer 2001): 33. Benjamin literally read Paul Lafargue through Breton, citing the surrealist citing the Marxist critic (and author of *The Right to Be Lazy* [1880]): "I cannot insist too strongly on the fact that, for an enlightened materialist like Lafargue, economic determinism is not the 'absolutely perfect instrument' which 'can provide the key to all the problems of history.'" Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 468.

88   Benjamin, "Work of Art," 119–20.

89   Benjamin, "Dream Kitsch," in *Selected Writings, Vol. 2, Part 1*, 4.

90   Margaret Cohen has pinpointed this intersection between industry and liberation as the surrealist notion of "perpetual unchaining" (*désenchaînement*)—a play on the polysemy of *chaîne,* which in French swivels between its meanings as "series," "chain," and "assembly line," evoking at once exploitation and Marx's classic exhortations to liberation, even as it rhymes with (claiming both affinity and deviation from) disenchantment. See Margaret Cohen, *Profane Illumination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 108.

91   I've borrowed the term *errance* from Michael Sheringham, who defines it as "access to the occult pathways of experience . . . propitiated by an attitude of openness and availability." Michael Sheringham, "City Space, Mental Space, Poetic Space," in *Parisian Fields*, ed. Michael Sheringham (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), 92–93.

92   See Polizzotti, *Revolution of the Mind*, 182–88.

93   See also Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron, "Mentalité surréaliste et attitude ludique," in *Jeu surréaliste et humor noir*, ed. Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron and Marie-Claire Dumas (Paris: Lachenal and Ritter, 1993), 311–29.

94   Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 10.

Chapter 1. Blur

Epigraph: Marcel Duchamp, in Man Ray, *Self Portrait* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1963), title page.

1   Jean Vidal, "En photographiant les photographes: Kertesz, Man Ray," in Emmanuelle de l'Ecotais, *Man Ray: Rayographies* (Paris: Editions Léo Scheer, 2002), 187–88.

2   Jean Cocteau, "Lettre ouverte à Man Ray, photographe américain," *Les feuilles libres* (April–May 1922): 134–35. Georges Ribemont-Dessaigne had also described the rayographs as painterly: his book *Man Ray* was part of the "Modern Painters" series published by the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. While the slim volume contained images of paintings as well as rayographs, objects, and film strips, Ribemont-Dessaigne's essay (dated 1924) and the six press clippings included with the images addressed only the rayographs and their abstract qualities, and aligned them, as "non-objective work," with painting; whereas photography was addressed as "mechanical copying." Georges Ribemont-Dessaigne, *Man Ray* (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1930), 3–15.

3   André Breton, *Surrealism and Painting*, trans. Simon Watson Taylor (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2002), 32–33. Following Breton's attribution, the rayographs were characterized as a form of surrealist painting in the 1936 Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) exhibition *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*, where a rayograph appeared on the catalogue cover. Only Louis Aragon would understand the rayographs as an unpredictable form of collage that, answering Duchamp's long-standing appeal, displaced both painting and photography. See Louis Aragon, "The Challenge to Painting," in *The Surrealists Look at Art*, ed. Pontus Hulten (Venice, CA: Lapis Press, 1990), 67.

4   Ray, *Self Portrait*, 109.

5   Most recently Emmanuelle de l'Ecotais has characterized the rayographs as paintings-cum-photographs, and states, "At the time, Man Ray earned his living as a portrait photographer. But the discovery of the rayograph would change his status: once a photographer, he became an artist." The implication, startling in the contemporary context, is that only painterly qualities can "elevate" the status of photographs to art. See de l'Ecotais, *Man Ray*, 15. We disagree on this point, but as a catalog of more than three hundred reproductions of rayographs and a thorough compilation of documents and essays relating to them, her monograph has been an invaluable resource, as evidenced by its frequent citation here.

6   Ray, *Self Portrait*, 26, 54. It is worth considering that the photographic distortions characteristic of rayographs violated the code for photographic excellence on which Man Ray had cut his teeth back in New York at Stieglitz's *291*, where, at least in the years 1910–15 when Man Ray frequented the gallery, photographs stood for descriptive "truth," stable and straightforward, while abstract paintings presented modernist ideals and expression. See Sarah Greenough and Juan Hamilton, eds., *Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs and Writings* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1983), 11–32. Indeed, the rayographs earned Man Ray the charge of fraudulence from Stieglitz's mouthpiece Marius de Zayas, as they failed to "represent the object without the interference of man." See Marius de Zayas, letter to Stieglitz,

August 3, 1922, in *How, When and Why Modern Art Came to New York*, ed. Francis Naumann (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 208.

7 All three statements are translated and reprinted in Jean-Hubert Martin, *Man Ray* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1982), 30–33, 34, 36.

8 Ferdinand Howald, letter to Man Ray, May 16, 1922; cited in Elizabeth Hutton Turner, "Transatlantic," in *Perpetual Motif: The Art of Man Ray*, ed. Merry Foresta (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1988), 148. Howald was paraphrasing Man Ray's own characterization of the process as relayed in a letter of April 1922, in which Man Ray describes leaving behind painting's physical support, but not its conventions: "In my new work I feel I have reached the climax of the things [for which] I have been searching [for] the last 10 years,—I have never worked as I did this winter—you may regret to hear it, but I have finally freed myself from the sticky medium of paint, and I am working directly with light itself. I have found a way of recording it. The subjects were never so near to life itself as in my new work, and never so completely translated to the medium." Ferdinand Howald archive, Ohio State University; cited in Francis Naumann, *Conversion to Modernism: The Early Work of Man Ray* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 213–15.

9 The two most recent iterations of this chestnut are in Naumann, *Conversion to Modernism,* 191, 199; and de l'Ecotais, *Man Ray*, 18.

10 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility (Second Version)," in *Selected Writings, Vol. 3, 1935–1938*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Howard Eiland, et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 127n22. For the full implications for "aura" at the hands of technologically enabled "room-for-play," see Miriam Hansen, *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 104–31.

11 Georges Ribemont-Dessaigne, "Dada Painting, or the 'Oil-Eye,'" *Little Review* (autumn–winter 1923–24): 10.

12 The links between photography and Charles Sanders Peirce's indexical sign are slippery, and a point of ongoing debate, constantly shifting along with the horizon of digital photographic practices. The best summary to date is Kris Paulsen, "The Index and the Interface," *Representations* 22 (spring 2013): 83–109.

13 Aragon, *Le libertinage* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 25; cited in Dawn Ades, "Between Dada and Surrealism," in *In the Mind's Eye: Dada and Surrealism*, ed. Terry Neff (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1985), 24. The period has subsequently been called the époque floue and *époque des sommeils*, indicating the characteristic interest in quasi-hypnotic trances. The indeterminacy of the period is further reflected in the scholarship, with historians variously subordinating the influence of the Dadaists to the surrealists or vice versa. For a historiography up to 1985, see Ades, "Between Dada and Surrealism," 24. For the most recent affirmation of this instability, see Leah Dickerman, ed., *Dada: Zurich, Berlin, Hannover, Cologne, New York, Paris* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2005), where Dickerman's introduction to the catalog emphasizes the radical differences between the two movements, while in a separate essay on Paris Dada in the same catalog, Janine Mileaf and Matthew

Witkovsky emphasize the continuities between the two. Janine Mileaf and Matthew S. Witkovsky, "Paris," in Dickerman, ed., *Dada*, 347–72.

14   For the full range of publications in which the rayographs almost immediately began to appear, see de l'Ecotais, *Man Ray*, 165–90, 200–75.

15   Roman Jakobsen, "Dada," in *Language in Literature*, ed. Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1987), 39, 36.

16   Aragon, "Max Ernst, peintre des illusions," in *Les collages* (Paris: Hermann, 1965), 26.

17   Jean Laplanche, *Essays on Otherness* (London: Routledge, 1999), 88.

18   See Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 11–15.

19   Maurice Blanchot, "Tomorrow at Stake," in *The Infinite Conversation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 414–15. The essay was drafted in memoriam to André Breton, and places the *rencontre*, or "chance encounter," at the center of surrealist practice.

20   See Hans Richter, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1970), 51; and Richard Huelsenbeck, *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer* (New York: Viking Press, 1974), 98.

21   See George Baker, *The Artwork Caught by the Tail: Francis Picabia and Dada in Paris* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 30–93. Here I have confined my account to Dada strategies that bear most directly on surrealist play, but Dada is soaked through with play in the form of parody, farce, nonsense, wordplay, illusion, and the exploitation of chance, and deserves a book of its own. Until that is written, see Nike Bätzner et al., *Faites vos jeux! Kunst und Spiel zeit Dada* (Lichtenstein, Germany: Museum Lichtenstein, 2005); Mary Ann Caws, ed., "The Poetics of Chance," special issue, *Dada/Surrealism* 7 (1977); Décimo, "Jeu," in *Dada*, ed. Laurent Le Bon (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 2005), 548–49; Hal Foster, "Dada Mime," *October* 105 (summer 2003): 166–76; André Gervais, *La raie alitée d'effets: Apropos of Marcel Duchamp* (Ville La Salle, Québec: Editions Hurtubise, 1984); David J. Getsy, *From Diversion to Subversion: Games, Play, and Twentieth-Century Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011); Bernhard Holeczek and Lida von Mengten, eds., *Zufall als Prinzip: Spielwelt, Methode und System in der Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg: Edition Braus, 1992); Christian Janecke, *Kunst und Zufall: Analyse und Bedeutung* (Nürnberg: Verlag für moderne Kunst Nürnberg, 1995); Martin, "Funny Guys," in *Duchamp, Man Ray, Picabia*, ed. Jennifer Mundy (London: Tate, 2008), 116–23; Herbert Molderings, *Duchamp and the Aesthetics of Chance: Art as Experiment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010); Naumann, Bradley Bailey, and Jennifer Shahade, *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess* (New York: Readymade Press, 2009); Marjorie Perloff, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1983); and Harriet Watts, *Chance: A Perspective on Dada* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1980).

22   Artist's files, Department of Painting and Sculpture, Museum of Modern Art, New York; cited in Naumann, *The Mary and William Sisler Collection* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1984), 170–71.

23 Artist's files, Department of Painting and Sculpture, Museum of Modern Art, New York; cited in Naumann, *Mary and William Sisler Collection*, 170–71.

24 Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, trans. Ron Padgett (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), 46–47.

25 For a related analysis of Duchamp's *Monte Carlo Bond* as a critique of identity under capitalism, see David Joselit, *Infinite Regress: Marcel Duchamp, 1910–1941* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 99–106.

26 Benjamin is citing Alain Émile-Auguste Chartier, *Les idées et les ages, Vol. 1* (Paris: Gallimard, 1927), 183–84. See Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), 512. The ellipses are Benjamin's own.

27 Hansen, "Room-for-Play: Benjamin's Gamble with Cinema," *October* 109 (summer 2004): 3–45. By the end of the 1930s, Hansen argues, Benjamin's attitude toward gambling will descend into pessimism under the imminent threat of fascism, and he will align gambling with the decline of *Erfahrung*, or sustained and sustaining experience, describing it as a straightforward example of *Erlebnis*, or perception governed by shock. See Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," *Selected Writings, Vol. 4, 1938–1940*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Howard Eiland, et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 313–32; cited in Hansen, "Room-for-Play," 8. Benjamin uses the term *Spielraum* in a footnote of the second version of his famous "Work of Art" essay; see Benjamin, "Work of Art," 124n10.

28 Hansen, "Room-for-Play," 9–10.

29 Hansen, "Room-for-Play," 8.

30 Hansen, "Room-for-Play," 10.

31 Hansen, "Room-for-Play," 24.

32 Benjamin, "Work of Art," 108.

33 See especially Jean Clair, *Duchamp et la photographie: Essai d'analyse d'un primat technique sur le développement d'une œuvre* (Paris: Chêne, 1977). Duchamp was particularly interested in stereo and anaglyphic images, which, like film, depend on an apparatus for both production and viewing.

34 See Margaret Sundell, "From Fine Art to Fashion: Man Ray's Ambivalent Avant-Garde" (unpublished diss., Columbia University, 2009), 42. Sundell finds in the gambling analogy Man Ray's consistent desire to redeem rather than repudiate the etiolated forms of experience under modern capitalism. Her point is well argued, given Man Ray's professional trajectory into commercial photography, but following Hansen, I would argue for a more complex understanding of the role of play in rayograph production and reception, one that would take into account Benjamin's insistence, in his formulation of the concept of Spielraum with which his notes on gambling are aligned, that critical play in the work of art must always be in dialectic with aura (beautiful semblance), or risk strengthening it through polarization. See Hansen, "Room-for-Play," 5, 36.

35 Tristan Tzara, "Photography Upside Down," in *Photography in the Modern Era*, ed. Christopher Phillips (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art/Aperture, 1989), 5, translation altered. The essay was the preface to Man Ray's first catalog of rayographs, *Les champs délicieux* (1922), reprinted in de l'Ecotais,

Man Ray*, 166–68. Tzara's analogy is apt: Man Ray had already experimented with chance-based modes of production in his Dada paintings (for example, *The Rope Dancer Accompanies Herself with Her Shadows* [1916], a painting derived from paper cutouts tossed on the floor) and had provided portraits of Duchamp in several variations for the *Monte Carlo Bond*.

36 Certainly Michel de Certeau has regarded it as such. See de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 106.

37 See Bradley Bailey, "Passionate Pastimes," in *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess*, ed. Francis Naumann, Bradley Bailey, and Jennifer Shahade (New York: Ready-made Press, 2009), 52, 64.

38 Tzara, "Photography Upside Down," 6.

39 Tzara, "Die Photographie von der Kehrseite," trans. Walter Benjamin, *G: Zeitschrift für elementare Gestaltung* 3 (1924): 39–40.

40 Duchamp, "Precision Play: An Aspect of the Beauty of Precision," in *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp*, ed. Arturo Schwartz (New York: Harry Abrams, 1969), 73; cited in Larry List, "Chess as Art," in *Duchamp, Man Ray, Picabia*, ed. Jennifer Mundy (London: Tate, 2008), 134.

41 See Gavin Grindon, "Surrealism, Dada, and the Refusal of Work: Autonomy, Activism, and Social Participation in the Radical Avant-Garde," *Oxford Art Journal* 34:1 (2011): 90, 82–83. For an analysis of Schiller's position on play and art in the modern context, see my essay, "From Judgment to Process," in *From Diversion to Subversion: Games, Play, and Twentieth-Century Art*, ed. David J. Getsy (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 6–10.

42 Hansen, "Room-for-Play," 8.

43 For the implications of Dada parody in Zurich and Cologne, see Foster, "Dada Mime," 166–76.

44 Jacques Vaché, letter to André Breton, April 29, 1917, in Franklin Rosemont, *Jacques Vaché and the Roots of Surrealism* (Chicago: Charles Kerr, 2008), 343. Accounts of Paris Dada that acknowledge Vaché's importance to Breton point to "umour" as a proto-Dada gesture of negation, yet the similarities between Breton's characterizations of Vaché and Duchamp as champions of ludic instability have gone unremarked. Note as well the proximity of "umour" to "amour." See Rosemont, *Jacques Vaché*, 222–31; Mark Polizzoti, *Revolution of the Mind: The Life of André Breton* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995), 39; and Michel Sanouillet, *Dada in Paris*, trans. Sharmila Ganguy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 61.

45 Breton, *Anthology of Black Humor*, trans. Mark Polizzoti (San Francisco: City Lights, 1997), 293–94.

46 Breton, "As in a Wood," in *Free Rein*, trans. Michel Parmentier and Jacqueline d'Amboise (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 236.

47 Duchamp, interview with Katharine Kuh; cited in Gervais, *La raie alitée d'effets*, 6. Gervais's extraordinary book, itself a forest of puns, performs Duchamp's commitment to multiple meanings even as it analyzes it. See also Molly Nesbit, *Their Common Sense* (London: Black Dog, 2000), especially 188–219, where she links Duchamp's wordplay to Raymond Roussel, Jean-Pierre Brisset, and French pedagogical exercises. Michel Sanouillet also addresses Duchamp's wordplay in "Marcel Duchamp and the French Intellectual Tradition," in *Marcel Duchamp*,

ed. Anne d'Harnancourt and Kynaston McShine (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1973), 48–55; see also in the same catalog David Antin, "Duchamp and Language," 100–115.

48 Breton, "Marcel Duchamp," *Littérature nouvelle série* 5 (1922): 10. For the pleasure surrealism would take in incommunicability, see Denis Hollier, "Surrealist Precipitates: Shadows Don't Cast Shadows," *October* 69 (1994): 113. In her essay "Dada's Solipsism," *Documents* 19 (fall 2000): 16–19, Leah Dickerman calls this blockage a crisis in the public sphere. I would take the next step and attribute the crisis to an open refusal of work—and *to* work.

49 Duchamp, "Untitled," *Littérature nouvelle série* 5 (1922): 1; for translation see Mark Polizzotti, *Revolution of the Mind: The Life of André Breton* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995), 165.

50 Duchamp, "Untitled," *Littérature nouvelle série* 5 (1922): 7.

51 Breton, "Marcel Duchamp," *Littérature nouvelle série* 5 (1922): 7–11. George Baker links this pun to Picabia's own riff on *saint*, *sein*, and *dessin* in Baker, *Artwork Caught by the Tail*, 32.

52 See Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, 88.

53 See Joselit, *Infinite Regress*.

54 For more on the carnal register of Duchamp's work, see Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 135–42; and Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss, *Formless: A User's Guide* (New York: Zone Books, 1997), 32. The most extensive treatment of Duchamp's puns is found in Gervais, *La raie alitée d'effets*; see especially 129–300, a catalog of Rrose Sélavy's aphorisms. Molly Nesbit treats Duchamp and language extensively, and has argued convincingly for links between Duchamp's erotic wordplay and the ideas of the nineteenth-century French grammarian Jean-Pierre Brisset, who, intriguingly, deployed the word *dada* to describe the relationship between the French language and animal sounds. See Nesbit, *Their Common Sense*, 51–102, 188–219.

55 Breton, "Les mots sans rides," in *The Lost Steps*, trans. Mark Polizzotti (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 100–102.

56 Breton, "Les mots sans rides," 102.

57 Gervais, *La raie alitée d'effets*, 173.

58 Duchamp, *Salt Seller: The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 108–19.

59 Among the texts on French wit published prior to Freud's translation are J. Micoud, *Traité élémentaire des jeux d'espirit* (Aurillac: Imprimerie moderne, 1914); L. Harquevaux and L. Pelletier, *Récréations intellectuels: Jeux d'espirit à la portée de tous, théorie et application* (Paris: Hennuyer, 1901); and the extraordinary work of Jean-Pierre Brisset, who, in insisting that the French language originated from the mating calls of frogs, was grounded in a particularly carnal eroticism. See Brisset, *Oeuvres completes* (Dijon: Presses du réel, 2001).

60 Sigmund Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1960), 301. In addition, to qualify as a parapraxis the action or utterance had to be explained by "inattentiveness" or "chance."

61 Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, 103. Freud describes the complete joke as a fusion "uttered with fervor and under the pressure of a host of secret

impulses: 'Yes, a woman must be pretty if she is to please men. A man is much better off; as long as he has his *five* straight [*fünf gerade*] limbs he needs nothing more!'" He goes on to make the obvious reference to jokes: "The connection between jokes and slips of the tongue is also shown in the fact that in many cases a slip of the tongue is nothing other than an abbreviation" (105).

62 Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, 78.

63 Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, 81.

64 Breton cites poet Pierre Reverdy in the first surrealist manifesto: "The image is a pure creation of the mind. It cannot be born from a comparison but from a juxtaposition of two more or less distant realities. The more the relationship between the two juxtaposed realities is distant and true, the stronger the image will be—the greater its emotional power and poetic reality." Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), 20. This is remarkably close to Freud's assertion that the most striking of parapraxes "mean their opposite." Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, 135.

65 Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, 79.

66 The automatist "sleep sessions" of the époque floue began in September 1922. Louis Aragon's manifesto of 1924, *Une vague de rêves*, which gathers Dada play, automatism, the sleep sessions, and the rayographs into its "dreamscope," provides the best primary account of the hypnagogic trances and their transitional position between Dada and surrealism. For a synthetic history of the sessions, see Ades, "Between Dada and Surrealism," 23–41.

67 Breton, "Entrée des médiums," *Littérature, nouvelle série* 6 (November 1, 1922): 1–16. This account has invited dismissal of surrealist automatism because of the group's apparent willingness to include spiritism in its range of practices, but Breton's ingenuous attitude can be explained by Pierre Janet's position on the phenomenon: his *L'automatisme psychologique* contained an entire chapter rationalizing spiritism as a form of dissociation. Pierre Janet, *L'automatisme psychologique* (Paris: Éditions Odile Jacob, 1998), 409–89. Further interest in the links between automatic or involuntary speech and action would have been stirred in 1922 by the appearance of Nobel Prize–winning physiologist Charles Richet's *Traité de métapsychique*, with its focus on the somatic origins of spiritism.

    Katharine Conley describes Desnos's attraction to the trance state in terms of blurred identity in *Robert Desnos, Surrealism and the Marvelous in Everyday Life* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 16–23. Breton's disparagement of Dada indifference is in Breton, *Conversations: The Autobiography of Surrealism,* trans. Mark Polizzotti (New York: Paragon House, 1993), 53.

68 Robert Desnos, "Rrose Sélavy," *Littérature nouvelle série* 7 (December 1922): 14–22. The long list directly followed Breton's essay "Les mots sans rides" in the same issue. The first of these utterances was apparently prompted by Picabia's demand, while Desnos was in a trance state, that he should make a "Rrose Sélavy-type poem." See Conley, *Robert Desnos*, 31. Many were subsequently reproduced in Desnos's book *Corps et biens* (where the number of aphorisms swells to 150), whose original title, *Désordre formal*, was itself a pun evoking

both "clear disorder" and "formal disorder." The shift from the anarchy of Dadaist language to a more orderly form of wordplay is affirmed in Aragon, *Chronique de la luie et du beau temps: Précédé de chroniques du bel canto* (Paris: Français réunis, 1979), 170.

69 Conley, *Robert Desnos*, 34. Mary Ann Caws has characterized this symmetry as "horizontal mirror-imaging," in Caws, *The Surrealist Voice of Robert Desnos* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977), 58. The image suggests, even at this early stage, the surrealist strategy of doubling as described by Rosalind Krauss in "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," *October* 19 (winter 1981): 26–29. But Conley's claim is that they evoke a quintessentially surrealist "in-between" state in which meaning and incoherence touch, a description that describes very well the suspended state of the époque floue. I am much indebted to Conley's interpretations and translations of Desnos's work, as it was through her analyses that I began to recognize the structural similarities to the rayographs' pictorial form.

70 Desnos, "Rrose Sélavy," 18; translations in Conley, *Robert Desnos*, 32. The phrase *mathematical precision* is Breton's, from "Les mots sans rides," in *Lost Steps*, 101. This may well be a reference to Jean-Pierre Brisset, a magister-ludus of language whose *Grammaire logique* (1970) proposed mathematical solutions to difficult grammatical problems. See Nesbit, *Their Common Sense*, 213–15.

71 See Laplanche, *Essays on Otherness*, 87.

72 Desnos, "Rrose Sélavy," 21, 18, 22; translations in, respectively, Conley, *Robert Desnos*, 32; and Caws, *Surrealist Voice of Robert Desnos*, 148.

73 Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, 251; Breton, "Words without Wrinkles," in *Lost Steps*, 102.

74 Pierre Janet's dynamic psychiatry is so-named because it was the first psychiatric model to describe the unconscious in terms of forces with the potential for conflict. See Jennifer Gibson, "Surrealism before Freud: Dynamic Psychiatry's 'Simple Recording Instrument,'" *Art Journal* (1987): 56–60. The classic text (and the one Breton would have been familiar with from his own psychiatric studies) is Janet's *L'automatisme psychologique*. For a history of the emergence of dynamic psychiatry, see Henri Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970). For more on the importance of Janet's theories for Breton as they pertain to the early texts of the époque floue, see Balakian, *André Breton, Magus of Surrealism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 27–44; Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 220–22; and Gibson, "Surrealism's Early Maps of the Unconscious" (unpublished diss., University of Virginia, 1985).

75 André Breton and Philippe Soupault, "Les champs magnétiques," *Littérature* 8 (October 1919): 4–10. For transcripts of automatic sessions, see Breton, "Entrée des médiums," 1–16. The question-and-answer format of the transcripts exactly matches Pierre Janet's favored technique of eliciting automatic responses. See Janet, *The Mental State of Hystericals: A Study of Mental Stigmata and Mental Accidents*, trans. Caroline Rollin Corson (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1901), 42–43.

76 Francis Picabia and Tristan Tzara, "Untitled (Automatic Text)," *391* 8 (February 1919): 5. Tzara's contribution was published upside down to point back to the scene of inscription: two facing subjects, opposed as in a game. For evidence for this text as the model for "Les champs magnétiques," see Sanouillet, *Francis Picabia et "391," Vol. 2* (Paris: Le terrain vague, 1966), 90. Breton's and Tzara's letters of 1919, with references to Jung, Tzara's poetry, and the drafting of "Les champs magnétiques," are in Sanouillet, *Dada à Paris, édition nouvelle* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2005), 402–11. Marcel Janco corroborated the Dada precedent in retrospect: "At first they invited me [to join Dada Paris] but then I had a fight with the surrealists because they wanted to take the ideas that Dada had developed—automatism, the subconscious, etc—and put them in their pockets like so much surrealism. That's what caused their brawl with us. They couldn't understand that the orientation of art could come from someone that wasn't French." Marc Dachy, *Archives dada: Chronique* (Paris: Hazan, 2005), 36.

  Sanouillet has stated that Picabia engaged in automatic writing during a stay in New York as part of an "unconscious psychoanalytic self-treatment" for depression, but it's unclear whether anything beyond the poems' structural similarity to automatic writing indicates that the process was actually deployed. In passing, Sanouillet also remarks that the poem "Partie d'échecs entre Picabia et Roché" by Conrad Arensberg shares that structure as well, placing automatic writing in New York Dada circles at least as early as 1917—an intriguing but undocumented assertion. Sanouillet, *Dada à Paris*, 105, 105n6.

77 Arp describes the cycle of automatic poems in "Dadaland," *Arp on Arp*, 234. *Arp et Val Serner dans le crocodarium royal de Londres* was the single Schadograph Tzara published in *Dadaphone* (March 1920).

78 Janet, *Les obsessions et la psychasthenie, Vol. 1* (Paris: Alcan, 1903), 431–39. For secondary accounts of automatic phenomena, see Ellenberger, *Discovery of the Unconscious*, 331–417, 835–37; and Wilma Koutstaal, "Skirting the Abyss: A History of Experimental Explorations of Automatic Writing in Psychology," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 28 (January 1992): 5–27. Janet himself recounts a history of automatisms that reaches back to cures derived from "magnetism"—yet another link to Breton's version of automatism—in his *Principles of Psychotherapy*, trans. H. M. and E. R. Guthrie (New York: Macmillan, 1924), 3–91.

79 The proximity of the theory of "partial automatisms" to Freud's explication of parapraxes is striking, a major difference being that Freud stopped short of claiming that parapraxes could be elicited under special circumstances, although he did concede that parapraxes (like automatic responses) tended to appear at moments when "attention is to some extent diverted." See Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, 109.

80 Société anonyme pour l'exploitation du vocabulaire dadaiste (Arp, Tzara, and Serner), "Hyperbola of the Crocodile Hairdresser and the Walking Stick," in *The Dada Reader: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Dawn Ades (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 53.

81 Michael Riffaterre, "Semantic Incompatibilities in Automatic Writing," in *About French Poetry from Dada to "Tel Quel": Text and Theory*, ed. Mary Ann Caws

(Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1974), 223–41. Riffaterre means this piggybacking literally, and demonstrates it by directly linking the automatic text "Poisson soluble" to Victor Hugo's supremely realist novel *Les misérables.* Janet affirms the amnesiac quality associated with automatic practices in *L'automatisme psychologique*, 109–20. For texts by "Alexandre Partens" and the "Société anonyme pour l'exploitation du vocabulaire dadaiste" (Arp, Tzara, and Serner), see Huelsenbeck, *Dada almanach* (Hamburg: Édition Nautilus, 1987), 91–96.

82 Breton, "Words without Wrinkles," 100–102.

83 *Désagrégation* is the name Janet gave to the psychological state of a subject controlled by automatisms, a state characterized by perceptual fragmentation so extreme that the synthesis of inner thoughts and sensory input that is necessary to perceive reality never occurs. See Janet, *L'automatisme psychologique*, 347–56.

84 Marguerite Bonnet, *André Breton: Naissance de l'aventure surréaliste* (Paris: Corti, 1975), 107; cited in Ades, "Between Dada and Surrealism," 36. Roland Barthes concurs: "Automatism . . . is not rooted at all in the 'spontaneous,' the 'savage,' the 'pure,' the 'profound,' the 'subversive,' but originates on the contrary from the 'strictly coded': what is mechanical can only make the Other speak, and the Other is always consistent. If we were to imagine that the Good Fairy Automatism were to touch the speaking or writing subject with her wand, the toads and vipers that would spring from his mouth would just be stereotypes." Roland Barthes, "The Surrealists Overlooked the Body," in *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962–1980*, trans. Linda Coverdale (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 244.

85 Arp, *Arp on Arp,* 234–35. For a description of the *poème-recension,* which Arp claimed would later come to be called *automatic poetry* by the surrealists, see Dachy, *Archives dada,* 50.

86 Arp, *Arp on Arp*, 246, emphasis added.

87 Arp's first collages, dated 1915, are of course earliest, but the decorative quality of the papers he used plus the precise rationalization of the colors and forms into unified and balanced compositions brings to mind the polished exactitude of modernist design rather than the deliberate incorporation of detritus. Schwitters first used trash in 1918, making his and Schad's work exactly contemporary. My thanks to Leah Dickerman for pointing out Schad's initiative; and thanks to Rachel Churner for her assistance with dating the Schwitters.

88 It is as though the photograms attempt to distill Siegfried Kracauer's "garbage"—those parts of the photograph that get in by chance—from the medium itself, throwing out intended effects and the coherences they impose on the image. See Siegfried Kracauer, "Photography," in *The Mass Ornament*, trans. and ed. Thomas Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 51.

89 L. Fitz Gruber, introduction to *Schadographien: Die Kraft des Lichts*, ed. Nikolaus Schad and Anna Auer (Passau: Dietmar Klinger Verlag, 1999), 7. It was Serner who interested Schad in the Dada movement and, in Schad's own words, "It was Serner who recognized at once the interest and novelty of the photographic images and who begged me not to take them lightly." In a 1978 interview with Irmeline Lebeer, Schad recalled his predilection for "little aban-

doned objects" he found on the street; he was "fascinated by their patina and by the useless charm that emanated from them." In casting them, "en jeu," onto sensitive paper, he claimed to have made them "print themselves directly under the influence of daylight, thus making an altogether new reality." See Dachy, *Archives dada*, 75.

90 Man Ray, *Self Portrait*, 106–7. Most recent scholarship on the rayographs concedes that Man Ray must have seen the Schadographs Tzara was holding in Paris. See de l'Ecotais, *Man Ray,* 16.

91 Tzara, "Photography Upside Down," 5–6, translation altered. The original reads: "La peinture à queue, à cheveux frisés, dans des cadres dorés. Voilà leur marbre, voilà notre pissat de femme de chambre. . . . La deformation mécanique, precise, unique et correcte est fixée, lisse et filtrée comme une chevelure à travers un peigne de lumière. . . . Comme la glace rejette l'image sans effort, et l'echo la voix sans nous demander pourquoi, la beauté de la matière n'appartient à personne, car elle est désormais un produit physico-chimique." Tzara, "La photographie à l'envers," *Champs délicieux* 11–12 (1975): n.p.

92 "Je connais un monsieur qui fait d'excellents portraits. Le monsieur est un appareil photographique." Tzara, "La photographie à l'envers," n.p.

93 Tzara, "Die Photographie von der Kehrseite," 39–40. For the "*G* group" characterization, see Michael Jennings, "Walter Benjamin and the European Avant-Garde," in *Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*, ed. David Ferris (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 18–34. Jennings characterizes *G* as a vehicle for an emerging avant-garde inspired specifically by American technological modernism, a predilection that would have made the editors (among them Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Hans Richter) particularly open to Man Ray's streamlined photograms. It is through this frame, rather than that of Dada or surrealism, that Lázsló Moholy-Nagy would receive the rayographs and embark on his own investigations of the photogram, and this is also the context, as Jennings points out, in which Walter Benjamin would begin to focus on photography as a cultural form, placing rayographs well within the arena of Benjamin's theorization of the destruction of "aura" in the work of art—and further distancing them from their characterization as "painting with light." See Jennings, "Walter Benjamin and the European Avant-Garde," 21–23.

94 Tzara, "Die Photographie von der Kehrseite," 39. Tzara was not alone in this characterization; on first seeing the rayographs El Lissitzky noted the "perversity" (from the Latin *pervertere*, "to overturn") of their space. See El Lissitzky, letter to Sophie Küppers, September 15, 1925, in El Lissitzky and Sophie Lissitzky-Küppers, *El Lissitzky: Life, Letters, Texts* (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1968), 66.

95 Tzara, "Photography Upside Down," 4, 6.

96 The image, the original of which is now lost, appeared in *The Little Review: Quarterly Journal for Arts and Letters* 9 (autumn 1922): 60.

97 Duchamp, letter to Alfred Stieglitz, May 17, 1922, in Francis Naumann and Hector Obalk, eds., *Affectionately, Marcel: The Selected Correspondence of Marcel Duchamp* (Ghent, Belgium: Ludion Press, 2000), 109.

98 Ribemont-Dessaigne, "Dada Painting," 11, emphasis added.

99 Dickerman, *Dada*, 39.

100 Man Ray, letter to Katherine Dreier, February 20, 1921, in Katherine Dreier correspondence, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT. The letter is dated before Man Ray's arrival in Paris.

101 For Rosalind Krauss, "all of Man Ray's photographs bear on the condition of the readymade" in that, like them, photographs are objects of "pure exchange-value." But she argues that Man Ray's consistent preoccupation with shadows—at work most intensively in the rayographs—has the effect of anchoring these readymades in time and place as the "residue of an event," mitigating the critical impact of deracination. See Krauss, "The Object Caught by the Heel," in *Making Mischief: Dada Invades New York*, ed. Francis Naumann (New York: Whitney Museum of Art, 1996), 249.

102 For an account of Dada mimicry as a form of adaptation in critical dialectic with modern modes of production and consumption, one that tails with Benjamin's understanding of the role of "mimesis" in critical play, see Foster, "Dada Mime," 166–76. In the context of surrealism, Foster has related linked play to the assembly line, again as a form of parodic mimesis offered by the process by which the "exquisite corpse" drawings were produced. See Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, 152.

103 See Krauss, "The Object Caught by the Heel," 249. For an assessment of Man Ray's assemblages that relates them to the ludic through wordplay and simulacrum, particularly when, as in the rayographs, all that remains of the original is a photographic copy, see Krauss, "Objets de réflexion critique," in Jean-Hubert Martin, *Man Ray: Objets de mon affection* (Paris: Phillippe Sers, 1983), 10–13.

104 Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, 21.

105 Tzara, "Die Photographie von der Kehrseite," 39–40.

106 Breton, "Max Ernst," in *Lost Steps,* 60; cited in Krauss, "Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 103. Krauss goes on to relate the surrealist attribution of an expanded photographic vision to a broader European endorsement of the camera as a prosthetic to vision. For an account of automatism as partaking in a contemporary machine utopianism and the recording machine as vehicle for the freeing of language, see Lawrence Rainey, "Taking Dictation: Collage Poetics, Pathology and Politics," MODERNISM/ *modernity* 5, no. 2 (1998): 123–53. "La courbe blanche sur fond noir que nous appelons pensée" is from Breton's automatic poem "Tournesol" [Sunflower], a title more evocative in French than in its English translation, expressing the sunflower's automatic movement in search of light. Breton, *Clair de terre* (Paris: Presses du Montparnasse, 1923), 85–86.

107 Breton, "Words without Wrinkles," 102.

Epigraph: Walter Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," in *Selected Writings, Vol. 2, Part 2, 1931–1934*, ed. Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, trans. Rodney Livingstone et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 519.

1 For a history of Atget's twentieth-century reception and an analysis of the links between Atget, Benjamin, and the surrealists that differs somewhat from mine, see Dana MacFarlane, "Photography at the Threshold: Atget, Benjamin and Surrealism," *History of Photography* 34, no. 1 (2010): 17–28.

2 While Man Ray's Atget album enclosed the images, it seems they were never fixed inside—they came to George Eastman House only interleaved in the album pages, with no evidence of having been fastened down. Organizing photographs into albums for ease of purchase was a common practice for "on spec" photographers like Atget, but Man Ray worked exclusively on commission when he made commercial work, and never catalogued his own prints in this way. His Atget album, in its reiteration of the practice, seems to refer at once to Atget's commercial status as well as to Man Ray's memory of the way they were selected.

My characterization of Man Ray's Atget album in the following pages as a ludic text open to expansion, contraction, and rearrangement echoes in the historical indeterminacy surrounding the purchase of the images. There is no record of precisely when Man Ray bought the photographs, whether they were acquired separately over time or in one visit, or even of the number originally included in the album itself. Casual estimates of the number of Atgets originally in the album have ranged as high as fifty, but at the time of the album's sale to George Eastman House in 1976, the number of images was recorded at forty-seven (one image, *Uniformes aux halles/Boutique aux halles* (1925–26), is currently missing from Eastman's inventory). *Avenue des Gobelins, magasin de vêtements pour hommes; Quais de la Seine, matin brumeaux;* and *La Rotonde, tout près de la rue Campagne-Première* have all been attributed to the collection, but Eastman House could not verify that they had been part of the album, so they have been excluded from my account. See Michael Thomas Gunther, "Man Ray and Co.—La fabrication d'un buste," *Photographies: Colloque Atget* (1986): 71, 73. My thanks to Joe Struble, head archivist at the George Eastman Museum, for the history of the acquisition. One last note: Four of the Atgets from the album have faded badly over time, and in the interest of presenting the collection to the viewer much as Man Ray would have seen it, those four photographs have been replaced here by more legible versions from other museum collections. They are figures 2.12, 2.32, 2.35, and 2.42.

3 The categories into which Atget organized his images form the four volumes of John Szarkowski and Maria Morris Hambourg, *The Work of Atget, Vols. 1–4* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1981–82).

4 See Paul Hill and Thomas Cooper, *Dialogue with Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979), 18. The collection is housed at George Eastman Museum, in Rochester, NY, where archivist Joe Struble has determined that the album into which the photographs were bound is American made, from the

1940s. For an analysis of the album that argues for stylistic affinities between Man Ray and Atget, rather than the differences I emphasize, see John Fuller, "Atget and Man Ray in the Context of Surrealism," *Art Journal* (1976): 130–38.

5 See Molly Nesbit, *Atget's Seven Albums* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 2–9; and Ian Walker, *City Gorged with Dreams* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002). It was through Man Ray's intervention that Atget's work appeared, uncredited—that is to say, as documents rather than authored images—in the June and December 1926 issues of the journal *La Révolution surréaliste.* As Man Ray recalled years later, when Atget discovered that the photographs were to be published in *La Révolution surréaliste*, he said, "Don't put my name on it. These are simply documents I make." Hill and Cooper, *Dialogue with Photography*, 18. The photographs that appeared in *La Révolution surréaliste* 7 (June 15, 1926) were: *L'eclipse, avril 1912*, on the cover; *Boulevard de Strasbourg* (1912), page 6; *Versailles* (1921), page 28. An Atget image of a staircase, *81 rue Turenne*, that appeared on page 20 of *La Révolution surréaliste* 8 (December 1, 1926), is not in the Eastman Museum inventory of Man Ray's collection, but it is likely to have also belonged to him. See John Szarkowski, *Atget* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2000), 205.

6 See Rosalind Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 131–50; and Nesbit, *Atget's Seven Albums*.

7 Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), 9, 207; and Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library," in *Selected Writings, Vol. 2, Part 2, 1931–1934*, ed. Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, trans. Rodney Livingstone et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 486–93.

8 Adorno, letter to Benjamin, August 2, 1935, in Fredric Jameson, ed., *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: NLB, 1977), 110.

9 Michel Beaujour, "Qu'est-ce que 'Nadja'?," *La nouvelle revue française* 172 (April 1967): 783. Man Ray finished filming *Emak Bakia* in the same year that the album was assembled, 1926.

10 Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," 108–9.

11 Miriam Hansen, "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience: 'The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology,'" *New German Critique* 40 (1987): 211.

12 See Margaret Cohen, *Profane Illumination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 98n46.

13 Hill and Cooper, *Dialogue with Photography*, 17–18. Man Ray mistakenly thought that the Atgets were washed with saltwater and therefore fugitive.

14 Benjamin, "Surrealism," *Selected Writings, Vol. 2, Part 1, 1927–1930*, ed. Howard Eiland, Michael Jennings, and Gary Smith, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 210.

15 Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 236n43, emphasis added.

16 The classic text of le hasard objectif is André Breton's *Mad Love* (1937).

17   Breton, *Mad Love*, trans. Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 25–38. The objects in question were photographed by Man Ray and appear on pages 29 and 31. In chapter 4 Breton describes a predestined itinerary of movement through a number of occult urban spaces on the night that he was to meet his future wife, Jacqueline Lamba. The chapter is illustrated with photographs of market displays by Brassaï that bear a startling resemblance to the compositional conventions and subject matter in Man Ray's Atgets.

18   Denis Hollier, "Surrealist Precipitates: Shadows Don't Cast Shadows," *October* 69 (1994): 114.

19   Breton, "Words without Wrinkles," in *The Lost Steps*, trans. Mark Polizzotti (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 100.

20   Michael Sheringham, "City Space, Mental Space, Poetic Space," in *Parisian Fields*, ed. Michael Sheringham (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), 85–114.

21   Breton, "The Mediums Enter," in *Lost Steps*, 90.

22   Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924," in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), 26.

23   Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924," 29–30.

24   Cited in Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan and Co.: A History of Psychoanalysis in France, 1925–1985*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 12; the text was originally published as *Les champs magnétiques.* From the point of view of psychoanalytic practice, with regard to the very possibility of directly accessing the unconscious, J. B. Pontalis has objected to the notion of "un inconscient déjà figurable et déjà mis en mots" in his essay "Les vases non-communicants," *La nouvelle revue française* 302 (March 1, 1978): 32. Foster's account of surrealism as imbricated with the uncanny, on the other hand, follows from his premise that the surrealists succeeded "all too well" in tapping the unconscious, and attributes the group's abandonment of automatism by 1930 to the fact that the unconscious was found to be terrifyingly inchoate. See Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, 4–5. See also Polizzotti, *Revolution of the Mind: The Life of André Breton* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995), 184, for an account of an evening of hypnagogic experiments that nearly ended in death, after which Breton called off automatist séances.

25   André Breton, Paul Éluard, and Philippe Soupault, *The Automatic Message*, trans. David Gascoyne, Antony Melville, and Jon Graham (London: Atlas Press, 1997), 32, 30. Rosalind Krauss has characterized this porosity in terms of the Freudian uncanny in "Corpus Delicti," in *L'amour fou: Photography and Surrealism* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1985), 85.

26   Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924," 26.

27   Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924," 6.

28   Breton, Éluard, and Soupault, *Automatic Message*, 28.

29   Benjamin, "Surrealism," 211.

30   Extending the structures of automatism to encompass surrealist manifestations of the uncanny, Rosalind Krauss has characterized this effect of "cleavage" as a "double that stands at the border between life and death not as a barrier, marker

of difference, but as the most porous of membranes, allowing the one side to contaminate the other." Among her examples are robots and dolls, figures that appear repeatedly in the hybrid form of the mannequin in Man Ray's Atgets. Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 171.

31 Georg Simmel, "Sociability," 127–40; "The Adventurer," 143–49; and "The Stranger," 187–98, in *Georg Simmel: On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald N. Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

32 Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *Georg Simmel*, 325.

33 Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," 326, 330.

34 Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," 330, 332.

35 For an extended analysis of Simmel's play forms, see Laxton, "From Judgment to Process," in *From Diversion to Subversion: Games, Play, and Twentieth-Century Art*, ed. David J. Getsy (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 19–24. The threat posed by "the stranger" to modernist order and classification has been analyzed by Zygmunt Bauman in *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); see especially 53–102.

36 For a synthetic reading of Benjamin's notion of Spielraum and its relation to gambling, among other forms of play across Benjamin's writings, see Hansen, "Room-for-Play: Benjamin's Gamble with Cinema," *October* 109 (summer 2004): 3–45.

37 Beaujour, "Afterword," in *About French Poetry from Dada to "Tel Quel": Text and Theory*, ed. Mary Ann Caws (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1974), n.p.

38 Benjamin, "Surrealism," 216.

39 Rosalind Krauss, in her essay "Nightwalkers," *Art Journal* (spring 1981): 33–38, initiated the exploration of the relation between the topography of Paris, the surrealist practice of objective chance, and surrealist photography as evidenced in the work of Brassaï. What follows builds on her intertextual analysis, extending and recasting these practices as automatist play. For another examination of Paris as a "field of desire," see Sheringham, "City Space," 85–114.

40 Breton, *Conversations: The Autobiography of Surrealism*, trans. Mark Polizzotti (New York: Paragon House, 1993), 59–60. The excursion was initiated during a period marked by a resurgence of automatic writing, just prior to the publication of the first manifesto in 1924.

41 In most accounts of the surrealist movement, errance is either collapsed into or eclipsed by objective chance. I make a distinction between them, following Michel Beaujour, in order to stress the early surrealist emphasis on experience, performance, and manifestations as opposed to later preoccupations with objects and representations. See Beaujour, "From Text to Performance," in *A New History of French Literature*, ed. Denis Hollier (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 866–71.

42 Breton, *Conversations*, 106.

43 Man Ray, *Self Portrait* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1963), 230. Man Ray had also taken photographs of the sites explored in *Nadja*, but they were rejected as insufficiently banal. See Dawn Ades, "Photography and the Surrealist Text,"

in *L'amour fou: Photography and Surrealism*, ed. Rosalind Krauss and Jane Livingston (New York: Abbeville Press, 1985), 189n11. This raises the question of whether Man Ray's Atgets were selected as illustrations for *Nadja*, offering a more dispassionate perspective than Man Ray's own. The timing is right, and the number (approximately forty-seven) is close to the number of photographs finally included in the text (forty-four).

44 Tom Conley uses the term *geographical unconscious* in "'Le cinéaste de la vie moderne': Paris as Map in Film, 1924–34," in Sheringham, *Parisian Fields*, 83.

45 Roger Caillois, "Paris, a Modern Myth," in *The Edge of Surrealism: A Roger Caillois Reader*, ed. Claudine Frank (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003)*,* 180.

46 Breton's first book of essays, entitled *Les pas perdus* (*The Lost Steps*; 1924) as if to underscore the emergence of surrealism from errance, is the book he hands to Nadja herself in the eponymous text. I use the term *apparatus* advisedly here, to indicate the receiving point of mental activity—its point of engagement with the sensory world. In "The Interpretation of Dreams" (1900), Freud compares the psychic apparatus with "optical apparatuses," a further reference point for the surrealist characterization of photography as automatic in the psychoanalytical sense. See Jean Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), 358–59.

47 Breton, *Conversations*, 106.

48 Hollier, "Surrealist Precipitates," 129.

49 For an overview of the scholarship on the photographic illustrations in *Nadja*, see Walker, *City Gorged with Dreams*, 48–67.

50 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space,* trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1991), 36. Lefebvre's alliance with the surrealists is contemporary with the assembling of Man Ray's Atget album, dating to his codrafting of the 1925 manifesto *La Révolution d'abord et toujours*. See Michel Trebitsch, preface to Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life, Vol. 1*, trans. John Moore (London: Verso, 1991), xx. Lefebvre is also the hinge figure between surrealist errance and the situationist *dérive* of the 1950s and 1960s. See Lefebvre, "Definitions," *Internationale situationniste* 1 (June 1958): 13. For Lefebvre the "inadmissable" is present in the everyday: the banal is theorized as the "unconscious" of the monumental city, and is revealed only on the occasion of festival, that is, through play.

51 Beaujour, "Qu'est-ce que 'Nadja'?," 796. Breton's comment on hypnagogic traversal of Paris is in *Communicating Vessels*, trans. Mary Ann Caws and Geoffrey T. Harris (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 102–3.

52 Sheringham, "City Space," 89. See also Margaret Cohen's account of *Nadja*, which focuses on the operations of places "haunted" by Breton, in Cohen, *Profane Illumination*, 77–119. Years later Breton would return to the theme: "No doubt a highly significant map should be drawn *for each individual* which would indicate in white the places he is prone to haunt, and in black those he avoids, the rest being divided into shades of grey according to the greater or lesser degree of attraction or repulsion exerted." Breton, *La clé des champs* (Paris: Éditions du Sagittaire, 1953), 283.

53 Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," in *Selected Writings, Vol. 2, Part 2*, 527. If the crime Atget traced was the death of bourgeois ideals, then his images are avatars of a politicized uncanny in their presentation of the lifeless detritus left in the wake of capital. This evidence of the death of the bourgeoisie would certainly be something the surrealists would want to annex to their own project, and would account for Benjamin's substantive identification of Atget with surrealism, beyond merely seeing his photographs in *La Révolution surréaliste*. Benjamin pursues the materialization of history in the urban matrix in "convolute P" of *The Arcades Project*, 516–26, where he "reads" the past of the city through the significance of its street names. His comments on the incongruity of the joined names at corners and on streets named for functions and residents no longer in place are of particular interest for their similarity to the imagery of condensation and displacement; for juxtaposition as the site of historical memory and obsolescent "play forms" as its vehicle; and for the argument that the marginal, overlooked "everyday" delivers symptoms of the city's geographical unconscious.

54 Louis Aragon, *Paris Peasant*, trans. Simon Watson Taylor (Boston: Exact Change, 1996), 25.

55 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 91–110.

56 De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 97–98.

57 De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 102. This would also serve as an accurate description of the quasi-autobiographical texts *Nadja* and *Paris Peasant.*

58 De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 102.

59 De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 104.

60 De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 106. As I pointed out in chapter 1 of this volume, Man Ray is intimate with the operations of the game board, particularly the checkerboarded game of chess, in which play proceeds within a system of relations so tightly contingent that the entire game changes with every move. In 1933, Roger Caillois directly related the play of chess to "automatic thinking" by describing it as an "associative chain": "No element remains that could not be related to [*sic*] multipolar ways to all of the others. . . . Not only does it maintain, with each element, the episodic and contingent relation used in the series of associations, but hidden links bind it to the secondary themes." Caillois, *The Necessity of the Mind*, trans. Michael Syrotinski (Venice, CA: Lapis Press, 1990), 26, 42. From the vantage point of errance Man Ray himself can be understood as a ludic figure, specifically, Simmel's "stranger," a figure with special access to commerce and who is able to "piggyback" onto commercial systems of circulation, which they ride into a variety of contexts "strange" to them. The characterization is particularly apt in the case of Man Ray, an expatriate who was at once part of and apart from the French surrealists, and who simultaneously engaged in a wide variety of commercial and avant-garde practices. See Simmel, "The Stranger," 187–98.

61 Aragon makes special note of this in *Paris Peasant*, 25.

62 Aragon reviewed the *Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes*, which opened in Paris on April 28, 1925, for *La Révolution surréali-*

ste. See Aragon, "Au bout du quay, les arts décoratifs," *La Révolution surréaliste* 5 (October 15, 1925): 633–35. The article, which appeared just after the publication of part 2 of *Paris Peasant*, considers the perverse possibilities of decoration as a fine art and, conversely, the utility of decorative objects. While Aragon doesn't mention the *Plan Voisin* specifically, he does reveal his "distaste for functionalist orientation" and the "pragmatic and minimal attitude of utilitarian design." His lamentation of the destruction of the Paris arcades by "cutting the map of Paris into straight lines" is in *Paris Peasant*, 21.

63 Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme* (Paris: Éditions G. Crès, 1924), 3.

64 Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme*, 93, 12.

65 David Pinder, *Visions of the City: Utopianism, Power, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Urbanism* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 103. Le Corbusier's disparagement of gypsies is in *Urbanisme*, 25, 95.

66 Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme*, xxi.

67 Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme*, 283.

68 On the "return to order," see Kenneth E. Silver, *Esprit de Corps* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); Romy Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia: French Art and Politics between the Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995); and Anthony Vidler, "Bodies in Space/Subjects in the City: Psychopathologies of Modern Urbanism," in "The City," special issue, *Differences* 5, no. 3 (fall 1993): 31–51.

69 Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, 3, 4, 7–9.

70 Breton, "The Crisis of the Object," in *Surrealism and Painting*, trans. Simon Watson Taylor (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2002); cited in Vidler, "Fantasy, the Uncanny and Surrealist Theories of Architecture," *Papers of Surrealism* 1 (winter 2003): 3, 4, accessed January 7, 2013, www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk /papersofSurrealism/journal1/acrobat_files/Vidler.pdf.

71 Breton, "The Surrealist Situation of the Object," in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, 261–62.

72 Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme*, 254.

73 Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, trans. Frederick Etchells (New York: Praeger, 1970), 268–69.

74 Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 495.

75 De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 93.

76 De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 95.

77 Kristen Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 3.

78 Benjamin, *Arcades Project*. The surrealists' influence on Benjamin is widely acknowledged, as are the points at which he departed from them. The best concise account of the genesis of *The Arcades Project* in surrealism is in Rolf Tiedemann, "Dialectics at a Standstill," in Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 932–35. See also Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), especially chapter 8; and Cohen, *Profane Illumination*.

79 Buck-Morss, *Dialectics of Seeing*, 33, 5.

80 Benjamin, letter to Adorno, May 31, 1935, cited in Buck-Morss, *Dialectics of Seeing*, 388n48. The Passage de l'Opéra was the site of the Café Certà, the meeting

place for the surrealist group at the time that Man Ray arrived in Paris. It was demolished shortly after the publication of *Paris Peasant* to make way for the boulevard Haussmann.

81 Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 403; Benjamin, "Surrealism," 210.

82 Benjamin, "Surrealism," 209–10.

83 Charles Baudelaire, "Du vin et du hashisch," *Oeuvres complètes, Vol. 1* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), 249–50; cited in Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 349.

84 Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 373; see Hermann Lotze, *Mikrokosmos, Vol. 3* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel Verlag, 1864), 272–73.

85 Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 211.

86 Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 205.

87 Atget himself named the ragpickers *Zoniers* in an album devoted entirely to them. See Nesbit, *Atget's Seven Albums*, 397–412.

88 See Nesbit, *Atget's Seven Albums*, 165–75.

89 Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 10.

90 Breton, *Nadja* (New York: Grove Press, 1960), 69. I am citing the French edition here, which reads "Je suis l'âme errante," rather than the Grove edition of 1960, where Richard Howard translates the sentence: "I am the lost soul."

91 Breton, *Nadja*, 113.

92 Breton, *Nadja*, 143.

93 Breton, *Nadja*, 74.

94 Breton, *Nadja*, 113. Susan Suleiman has called attention to Breton's uncritical objectification of Nadja in *Subversive Intent: Gender, Politics and the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 109.

95 Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 361. Hal Foster has assigned this multiple role to the ragpicker as well as the prostitute: "two related ciphers of the mechanical-commodified, which, decoded by Benjamin in the milieu of Surrealism, are still active in its imaginary (particularly in texts and images concerning urban *dérives* and derelict spaces)." Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, 134.

96 Simmel, "Prostitution," in *Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 121. As a neo-Kantian, Simmel's analyses tended toward the abstract; for today's reader, his attention to form as opposed to social justice can read as fey, if not, as in this case, misogynist.

97 Simmel, "Prostitution," 122, 124.

98 Simmel, "Prostitution," 122.

99 Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 512.

100 Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 498.

101 Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 519; Breton, *Conversations*, 107.

102 Buck-Morss, *Dialectics of Seeing*, 184.

103 Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 346, 348, 361.

104 These images were part of a commissioned series of nudes, brothels, and prostitutes made for artist André Dignimont. See Nesbit, *Atget's Seven Albums*, 28–29. Of these three copied nudes, one is pornographic but the other two are posed classically, as models for painting or sculpture. All bear Atget's studio stamp on the reverse, but none bears Atget's negative numbers, which were typically scratched into the surface of the negative to appear in the lower corners of the prints.

105 Man Ray was equivocal about Atget and his subsequent canonization: "I discovered him!" he exclaimed to an interviewer, "But I don't consider that to my credit." Hill and Cooper, *Dialogue with Photography*, 17. In fact Man Ray lived down the street from Atget and so probably "stumbled" on him; rue Campagne Première was the site of a number of photographic studios.

106 Man Ray would also make at least one graphically pornographic suite: his "Four Seasons" (1929). See Arturo Schwartz, *Man Ray: The Rigour of the Imagination* (New York: Rizzoli, 1977), 260.

107 Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 360.

108 Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 494. See also Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 209–10, where the threshold is identified (along with the window, the door, and the mirror) as a space that in its function as a "transitional object," or "nonobject," is particularly conducive to a rewriting of subject and object relations. Simmel too gives special significance to threshold spaces as unique sites of experience. See Simmel, "Bridge and Door," *Theory, Culture, Society* 11 (February 1994): 5–10.

109 Ray, *Self Portrait*, 93.

110 Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, trans. Meyer Barash (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), 133.

111 Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 133, 24. Hal Foster has explicitly located the death drive in the surrealist fascination with machines: "Often in surrealism the mechanizing/commodifying of body and psyche are expressed in terms of each other" as "the unconscious as autonomous machine, the sexual as mechanistic act, the commodification of sexuality as the sexualization of the commodity, the difference between male and female as the difference between the human and the mechanical, an ambivalence concerning women as an ambivalence regarding the mechanical commodified, and so on." Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, 136. The body in its carnal state would only be fully explored by the renegade surrealists around Georges Bataille. See, for example, Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss, *Formless: A User's Guide* (New York: Zone Books, 1997). For the death drive as unpleasure, see Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 18*, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), 314, 334n1.

112 Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 133.

113 Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Verso, 1983), 133.

114 Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 208.

115 See Hollier, *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 14–56.

116 Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," 519.

117 Krauss, *Optical Unconscious*, 172.

118 For a description of the exhibition and reproductions of the mannequins see Gérard Durozoi, *History of the Surrealist Movement*, trans. Alison Anderson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 341–45. Man Ray returned to the mannequin motif repeatedly throughout his career, from *Coat Stand* (1920) to the 1945 images of "Mr. and Mrs. Woodman," small wooden artist's

dummies manipulated into a variety of pornographic poses. Contemporary with his engagement with the Atget photographs, he also regularly photographed dressmaker's mannequins for the fashion house of Poiret, one of which appeared on the cover of *La Révolution surréaliste* 4 (July 15, 1925).

119   Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, 125–56.

120   Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 63.

121   Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 391.

122   Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 125, 69.

123   Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 834.

124   Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 420, 540, 867.

125   Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Penguin Freud Library, Vol. 4 (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 277.

126   Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 540.

127   Aragon, *Paris Peasant*, 22. The hairdresser's shop, which is represented three times in Man Ray's album, also figures memorably in *Paris Peasant* as a site of sensual, if dangerous pleasure ("the pure lazy coils of a python of blondness") that provokes a variety of associations ("electric storms, breath on metal"). Aragon, *Paris Peasant*, 52–53, 57–58.

128   Aragon, *Paris Peasant*, 23.

129   Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 537. Henri Lefebvre identifies windows and mirrors as "non-object[s]" that serve as transitory spaces in the visual field, constantly referring elsewhere. In this they make apparent the "splits," inconstancy, and "play" in space that are normally suppressed in the ideologies that structure the built environment. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 209–10.

130   Walter Benjamin and Asja Lācis, "Naples," in Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Vol. 1, 1919–1926*, ed. Michael Jennings and Marcus Bullock, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 414–21.

131   Breton, *Exposition Dada Max Ernst* (Paris: Au sans pareil, 1921); cited in Krauss, "Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," 103. Krauss goes on to relate the surrealist faith in expanded photographic perception to a broader European endorsement of the camera as a prosthetic to vision. For an account of automatism as partaking in a contemporary machine utopianism and the recording machine as vehicle for the freeing of language, see Lawrence Rainey, "Taking Dictation: Collage Poetics, Pathology and Politics," MODERNISM/ modernity 5, no. 2 (1998): 123–53.

132   Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, (Second Version)," in *Selected Writings, Vol. 3, 1935–1938*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Howard Eiland, et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 117. Benjamin draws on historical precedent for the concept in the form of an unattributed citation on photography: "Humanity has also invented, in its evening peregrinations— that is to say, in the nineteenth century—the symbol of memory; it has invented what had seemed impossible; it has invented a mirror that remembers. It has invented photography." Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 688.

133   Salvador Dalí, "Psychologie non-euclidienne d'une photographie," *Minotaure* 7 (1935): 302.

134 For analysis of the links between these terms, see Margaret Iversen, *Beyond Pleasure: Freud, Lacan, Barthes* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 113–29.

135 Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," 519.

136 Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924," 26.

137 Man Ray, letter to Katherine Dreier, February 20, 1921, in Katherine Dreier Archives, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

138 Historically, this has been particularly true for Atget's images. See Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces," in *Originality of the Avant-Garde*, 131–50; and Nesbit, *Atget's Seven Albums*.

139 Beaujour, "Afterword," in *About French Poetry from Dada to "Tel Quel": Text and Theory*, ed. Mary Ann Caws (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1974), n.p. He continues, "This denial of the productive process, although it was inseparable from a rejection of the dominant ideology, which they rightly diagnosed as mainly geared to production and social exploitation, was an idealist illusion: it had deplorable ideological consequences since it opened the door to occultism and mysticism." Beaujour contends that the surrealists would finally fail to separate automatism from "medianimic possession and magic trance . . . a crude form of neoplatonic poetics."

140 Beaujour, "Afterword," n.p.

141 The year 1926 is also when Georges Bataille published *Histoire de l'oeil*, a novel that has been described as "a structure set up to generate 'mis-play,' or 'systematic transgression' enacted through a succession of metaphors and metonymy around an object, in this case, the eye, a chain which ultimately has no signified." See Krauss, *Optical Unconscious*, 167–68.

Chapter 3. System

Epigraph: André Breton, cited in Jacques Baron, *L'an un du surréalisme: Suivi de l'an dernier* (Paris: Éditions Denoël, 1969), 12.

1 The description of Motherwell's weekly exquisite corpse sessions with Baziotes, Krasner, and Pollock is in Dickran Tashjian, *A Boatload of Madmen* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 317, 325. Jean-Jacques Lebel reports the production of *cadavres exquis* among members of *Le grand jeu* (Roger Gilbert-Lecompte, René Daumal, and Roger Vailland) in *Juegos surrealistas: 100 cadaveros exquisitos* (Madrid: Fundación Colección Thyssen-Bornemisza, 1996), 25; examples by the Dadaists also appear in this text on pages 19, 26, and 27. The reference to Beuys and Richter is in Ingrid Schaffner, "In Advance of the Return of the Cadavre Exquis," in *The Return of the Cadavre Exquis*, ed. Ingrid Schaffner (New York: Drawing Center, 1993), 21. See this volume also for numerous examples of specially commissioned "corpses" from the 1990s. Among the surrealists who are known to have played are: Louis Aragon, Hans Bellmer, Victor Brauner, André Breton, Salvador Dalí, Robert Desnos, Óscar Domínguez, Gala Éluard Dalí, Paul Éluard, Max Ernst, Jacques Hérold,

Georges Hugnet, Marcel Jean, Wifredo Lam, Jacqueline Lamba, Dora Maar, René Magritte, André Masson, Frédéric Mégret, Joan Miró, Max Morise, Pierre Naville, Marcel Noll, Paul Nougé, Meret Oppenheim, Benjamin Péret, Jacques Prévert, Man Ray, Georges Sadoul, Yves Tanguy, Tristan Tzara, Raoul Ubac, and Pierre Unik. This is by no means an exhaustive list of the players; sympathizers, spouses, and one-night stands were as likely as poets and artists to play at a surrealist gathering. Michel Leiris's participation has been referred to in Gérard Durozoi, *History of the Surrealist Movement*, trans. Alison Anderson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 122; and Lévi-Strauss's participation while the surrealists were "exiled" in the United States is alluded to in Philippe Audoin, "Surréalistes," in *Dictionnaire des jeux: Realités de l'imaginaire*, ed. René Alleau (Paris: Tchou, 1966), 481. Additional postwar and contemporary examples of the game are examined in Kanta Kocchar-Lindgren, Davis Schneiderman, and Tom Denlinger, eds., *The Exquisite Corpse: Chance and Collaboration in Surrealism's Parlor Game* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009). A quick search of the internet confirms continuous interest in the game, executed at all levels of artistic skill.

2 Lebel, "La erupción de la vida," in *Juegos surréalistas*, 38.

3 For example, André Breton recounted: "It was perhaps in these games that our receptivity was constantly regenerated; at least they sustained the happy feeling of dependence we had on each other. You'd have to look back as far as the Saint-Simonians to find the equivalent." Breton, *Conversations: The Autobiography of Surrealism*, trans. Mark Polizzotti (New York: Paragon House, 1993), 57.

4 Mary Ann Caws, *The Surrealist Look: An Erotics of Encounter* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 239, 223, 231.

5 Caws, *Surrealist Look*, 239, 231. See also Anne M. Kern, "From One Exquisite Corpse (in)to Another," in Kocchar-Lindgren, Schneiderman, and Denlinger, eds., *Exquisite Corpse*, 3–28.

6 For the dark model of surrealism introduced by Hal Foster, where the game is linked through its mechanical aspects to the automaton and takes on a political dimension through its critique of social mechanization, see Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 125–54.

7 Breton himself called the figures *monsters.* Breton, "Le cadavre exquis, son exaltation," in *Le cadavre exquis, son exaltation*, ed. Arturo Schwarz (Milan: Galleria Schwarz, 1975), 8.

8 The crisis in drawing mobilized by modernism has been examined from the perspective of its consequences for postwar art and architectural practices, respectively, in Benjamin Buchloh, "Raymond Pettibon: Return to Disorder and Disfiguration," *October* 92 (spring 2000): 37–51; and Mark Wigley, "Paper, Scissors, Blur," in *The Activist Drawing: Retracing Situationist Architectures from Constant's New Babylon to Beyond*, ed. Catherine de Zegher and Mark Wigley (New York: Drawing Center, 2001), 27–56.

9 It has become commonplace in the literature on surrealism to maintain that the movement rose out of dissatisfaction with the bourgeois values that brought on World War I's violence, death, and destruction. But in his interviews with Andre Parinaud, Breton has qualified this to indicate that it was

not violence specifically that generated surrealism's ethos of negation, but the postwar extension of obedience—a kind of internalized martial law—among the populace, which Breton found abhorrent. Breton, *Conversations*, 38.

10 Breton, "Max Ernst," in *The Lost Steps*, trans. Mark Polizzotti (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 60. In 1925 Breton would adjust this interdiction against abstraction somewhat in order to embrace Picasso.

11 Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924," in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), 26. Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron has culled the many surrealist statements on automatism between 1919 and 1933 as they pertain to automatic writing (although she does not address drawing) in Chénieux-Gendron, *Surrealism*, trans. Vivian Folkenflik (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 47–60.

12 Breton, "Words without Wrinkles," in *Lost Steps*, 102. In a note to the first manifesto Breton refers the reader to issue 36 of *Feuilles libres* for several examples of the drawings. See Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924," 21.

13 Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924," 21. *La Révolution surréaliste* 4 (July 1925) includes the first installment of Breton's "Surrealism and Painting"; the fourth and final installment appeared in *La Révolution surréaliste* 9–10 (October 1927), along with five reproductions of exquisite corpse drawings and a number of examples of the written version. Surrealism discredited painting in its early years, in the third issue of *La Révolution surréaliste* (and later redeemed it, with its main detractor, Pierre Naville, as the casualty). See Pierre Naville, "Beaux-Arts," *La Révolution surréaliste* 3 (1925): 27.

14 Max Morise, "Les yeux enchantées," *La Révolution surréaliste* 1 (1924): 26. His target is Giorgio de Chirico's painting, recently acclaimed by Breton.

15 Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924," 23.

16 Morise, "Les yeux enchantées," 26; emphasis added. Aragon as well shows a striking prescience with regard to the linguistic model for the mind: "as for the mental material I was talking about, it seemed to us to be the vocabulary itself: *there is no thought outside words.*" Louis Aragon, *Une vague de reves* (Paris: Éditions Seghers, 1990), 15.

17 André Masson, *Le rebelle du surréalisme: Écrits* (Paris: Hermann, 1994), 37; cited in David Lomas, *The Haunted Self: Surrealism, Psychoanalysis, Subjectivity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 33. Lomas treats Masson's work extensively in chapter 1, "Traces of the Unconscious," 9–52, where he also addresses automatic drawings by Miró. My understanding of automatism as it applies to the visual arts is indebted to him.

18 Samuel Weber cites Freud on the nature of the "picture puzzle" presented by the unconscious, asserting that the interpretation of the manifest image proceeds away from iconographic meaning and toward the semiotic *system*: "If we attempted to read these characters according to their pictorial value instead of according to their semiotic relations, we should clearly be led into error." Weber, *The Legend of Freud* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 28.

19 See Max Ernst, "Beyond Painting," in *Beyond Painting and Other Writings by the Artist and His Friends*, ed. Robert Motherwell (New York: Wittenborn,

Schultz, 1948), 7. Breton has confirmed that surrealist automatic writing had always sustained a measure of editing not admitted by Masson and Ernst. See Breton, *Conversations*, 65. As early as 1922 Breton had admitted that in the conversion of mental utterances to writing, the images were vulnerable to "incursions of conscious elements," which he attributed to the constant pressure of the ego to dominate. See Breton, "The Mediums Enter," in *Lost Steps*, 91–92; and "Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924," 24. For an overview of automatic writing and the development of the sessions, see André Breton, Paul Éluard, and Philippe Soupault, *The Automatic Message*, trans. David Gascoyne, Antony Melville, and Jon Graham (London: Atlas Press, 1997), 39–54.

20 Breton, "Max Ernst," 60.

21 Breton, "Max Ernst," 60. Denis Hollier has affirmed this impulse to the indexical as a kind of unmediated representation: "Breton's conception of automatic writing as a precipitate . . . gives it the same properties of a cast shadow: automatic writing is to invisible objects what photography is to visible ones." Hollier, "Surrealist Precipitates: Shadows Don't Cast Shadows," *October* 69 (1994): 124.

22 Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924," 21.

23 Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924," 21. The emblematic automatic text *Les champs magnétiques* was nearly named *Les précipités*, pointing to the texts as concentrated deposits of mental activity. See David Gascoyne, introduction to Breton, Éluard, and Soupault, *Automatic Message*, 42; and Hollier, "Surrealist Precipitates," 111–32.

24 Breton, "Francis Picabia," in *Lost Steps*, 97; Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism 1924," 28; Breton, "Introduction to the Discourse on the Paucity of Reality," in *What Is Surrealism?*, ed. Franklin Rosemont (New York: Pathfinder, 1978), 133; Péret, "Au paradis des fantômes," *Minotaure* 3 (October 1933): 38–44; and Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, 125–54.

25 Breton, "Max Ernst," 60.

26 Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 53.

27 For David Lomas, automatism presented a purely oppositional practice to the Taylorization apparent in purist works of Ozenfant and Le Corbusier, and therefore to the mechanical. Lomas, *Haunted Self*, 28–30.

28 Morise, "Les yeux enchantées," 27; emphasis added.

29 Naville, "Beaux-Arts," 27.

30 Breton, "Surrealism and Painting," 26–30.

31 Laurent Jenny, "The Adventures of Automatism," *October* 51 (1989): 105–14. The problem, as Jenny describes it, is that this "pure expression" that resists "all tradition, all heritage, . . . all language" must be expressed in received forms of language: "The words of automatism are therefore called upon to account for an aspect of the mind that denies them." Jenny cites the juxtaposition of two distant realities as one of these methods the surrealists settle on to represent the unrepresentable. See Jenny, "Adventures of Automatism," 107. David Lomas also marks 1927 as the "turning point" away from automatism. Lomas, *Haunted Self*, 10.

32 Ernst, "Visions de demi-soleil," *La Révolution surréaliste* 9–10 (1927): 7; Aragon, "Traité du style," *La Révolution surréaliste* 11 (1928): 3–6. For Louis

Aragon's full address of collage and juxtaposition, see Aragon, *La peinture au défi* (Paris: Librairie J. Corti, 1930).

33 Caillois, "Divergences et complicités," in "André Breton et le movement surréaliste," special issue, *La nouvelle revue française* 172 (April 1967): 692–93.

34 For automatism's dead end and the rise of the paranoid-critical method, see Jenny, "Adventures of Automatism," 105–14.

35 Ernst, "Qu'est-ce que le surréalisme?" [1934], *Écritures: Max Ernst* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1970), 138. See also Ernst's earlier statement: "In the hope of increasing the fortuitous character of elements utilizable in the composing of a drawing and so increasing their abruptness of association, surrealists have resorted to the process called 'the exquisite corpse.'" Ernst, "Inspiration to Order," in *Beyond Painting*, 22–23.

36 Morise, "Les yeux enchantées," 27.

37 Breton, "Le cadavre exquis," 12.

38 The rules of the game are set out in a number of documents and recollections; the most often cited is from the abridged dictionary of surrealism: "Game of pleated paper that consists of a number of players composing a phrase or drawing, without any of them able to render the whole collaboration or to know the nature of the preceding collaborative contributions. The classic example, which gives the game its name, is 'The—exquisite—corpse—will—drink—the—new—wine.'" Aragon, ed., *Dictionnaire abrégé du surréalisme* (Paris: Galerie des Beaux Arts, 1938), 6. Tristan Tzara's more specific "recipes" for the game, separate versions for the written and the drawn forms, can be found in Breton, "Le cadavre exquis," 18, 24. Philippe Audoin makes the comment about viability and judgment in "Surréalistes," 484. The iconography I have described in this passage was drawn from a number of exquisite corpse drawings executed in the years 1925–28, the period that frames the theorization of the surrealist image.

39 Breton, "Le cadavre exquis," 12.

40 Tzara, "Recipe for the Drawn Exquisite Corpse," in Schwarz, *Le cadavre exquis*, 24.

41 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility (Second Version)," in *Selected Writings, Vol. 3, 1935–1938*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Howard Eiland, et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 106.

42 Benjamin, "Work of Art," 107.

43 John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 33.

44 This is the binary that characterizes structuralist accounts of play, grounded in the classical opposition between Apollo and Dionysus. See Mihai Spariosu, *Dionysus Reborn: Play and the Aesthetic Dimension in Modern Philosophical and Scientific Discourse* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989). Freud, too, uses the oppositions heuristically, to characterize his binary model of the mind: "The ego represents what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the id, which contains the passions." Freud, "The Ego and the Id," in *On Metapsychology*, Penguin Freud Library, Vol. 11 (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 364.

45 Searle, *Speech Acts*, 35.

46 Searle, *Speech Acts*, 35–36.

47 Simone Collinet, "Les cadavres exquis," in Schwarz, *Le cadavre exquis*, 30.

48 André Breton and Louis Aragon, eds., "Le surréalisme en 1929," special issue, *Variétés* (June 1929): 36, 37.

49 Michael Riffaterre, "Semantic Incompatibilities in Automatic Writing," in *About French Poetry from Dada to "Tel Quel": Text and Theory*, ed. Mary Ann Caws (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1974), 224.

50 Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, 152.

51 Collinet, "Les cadavres exquis," 65.

52 Roland Barthes, "The Surrealists Overlooked the Body," in *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962–1980*, trans. Linda Coverdale (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 244.

53 Much of this can be deduced from the drawings themselves and is corroborated by notes on their backs, some confirmed in the hand of André Breton, who at one time owned all four of the images. Although consistency in the order of the artists' contributions, size and type of paper, and the materials used confirms that these four exquisite corpse images represent a complete "round" of the game, there is some confusion in the dating of the images. The two Paris drawings—figure 3.1, at Musée national d'art moderne; and figure 3.2, from the Pouderoux collection—are dated c. 1927. Figure 3.3, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, is dated "1926 ou 1927" on its back. The fourth drawing, figure 3.4, is at the Art Institute of Chicago, where it has been dated on the back "1928." The early exquisite corpse images have been particularly vulnerable to lapses in memory, as most were dated and attributed only when they were slated for exhibition, long after they were made.

54 André Masson had retrospectively dated some images to 1925, identifying his and Tanguy's contributions on the faces of the drawings (see figures 3.6 and 3.7), although he could not recall the other players. This commitment to anonymity would change, if gradually; the four exquisite corpse images that appeared in *Variétés* identified their authors—Morise, Tanguy, Miró, and Man Ray—but did not pin the names to separate sections of the figures. This would only be accomplished as the drawings entered institutional circulation, that is, as they effectively gave up their ephemerality and became valuable works of art.

55 There is, however, one way in which the exquisite corpse fills the role of drawing as classically conceived: as a preparatory sketch. This is not to say that those painters who participated in the game then literally turned the images into paintings, but that the aleatory sketches were instrumental in Breton's codification of surrealist painting—the most intense period of exquisite corpse production coincides with the period in which Breton prepared "Surrealism and Painting" (1928) for publication. However, this directive for painting would be a mandate purely at the level of style, and not compositional process; surrealist painting delivers an "aleatory effect" of juxtaposition from within the traditional frame of painting, foregoing the indexicality, mechanical facture, and composite authorship distinctive of the exquisite corpse. Nevertheless,

after the invention of the game, drawings began to emerge that simulated their effect—Victor Brauner's figure sketches would be an example.

56 Ernst, *Beyond Painting*, 8. In the next sentence he includes Dalí's "critical paranoia" method under the automatist rubric. Later, Breton will link decalcomania to another game, *l'un dans l'autre*, which as a "chain game" is in turn linked to the exquisite corpse. See Kern, "From One Exquisite Corpse (in)to Another," 21–23.

57 For examples of these techniques, see Leslie Jones, *Drawing Surrealism*, exhibition catalogue, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Munich: Prestel, 2012).

58 Lebel, *Juegos surrealistas*, 22, 18. Lebel's Deleuzean account preserves plurality, but his characterization of the game as a fluid sharing of a collective unconscious misses the jarring sense of difference and transgression within the images that orients them historically within the modern perceptual modes of shock and fragmentation. Whole dimensions of the game are lost: its displacement of drawing as a medium, the complexity of its psychoanalytic dimension, its forced encounter with the Other, the possibility of trauma. Lebel's collective is a utopia based in intersubjective affinity rather than the ambivalent, regimented dystopia of surrealism's most autocratic moments.

59 Surrealism's borrowed maxim is from Lautréamont's *Chants de Maldorer* (1868–69) and is cited by Masson in his recollection of the exquisite corpse. See Masson, "D'ou viens-tu, cadavre exquis?," in Schwarz, *Le cadavre exquis*, 28. See Breton, *Conversations*, 91–100, for Breton's recollection of the period, including his encounter with Henri Lefebvre and their coauthorship of the tract "Revolution Now and Forever" (1925), and Breton's defense of his break with the Communist Party. See also André Thirion, *Revolutionaries without Revolution*, trans. J. Neugroschel (New York: Macmillan, 1975).

60 Breton, "Le cadavre exquis," 5.

61 Breton, *Conversations*, 112; Breton, "L'un dans l'autre," in *Perspective cavalière*, ed. Marguerite Bonner (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1970), 50.

62 Paul Éluard, "Prémieres vues anciennes," in *Donner à voir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1935); cited in Lebel*, Juegos surrealistas*, 75.

63 Ernst, "Inspiration to Order," 22.

64 Breton, "Second Manifesto of Surrealism," in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, 178–79. Jacques Hérold also confirms what he understood as "a telepathic aspect in the game, and therefore a rapport with the other." Hérold, "Un entretien avec Jacques Hérold: Les jeux surrealists," *XXeme siecle* 42 (1974): 152.

65 In spite of all the talk about collaboration and telepathy, not a single surrealist has offered a concrete example in the visual work. Among art historians, only Dawn Ades has strained to find an "inexplicable symmetry" in several *cadavres exquis*. See Ades, *Surrealist Art: The Lindy and Edwin Bergman Collection at the Art Institute of Chicago* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1997), 21.

66 Caillois, "Divergences et complicités," 690.

67 Thirion, *Revolutionaries without Revolution*, 91. The "truth game," in which players were asked sensitive questions, was the one most objected to: Lévi-Strauss is said to have likened it to an "initiation rite." Audoin, "Surréalistes," 481. Even Breton admitted that the truth game took a toll on its players. Breton, "L'un dans l'autre," in *Perspective cavalière*, 50n1.

68   Collinet, "Les cadavres exquis," 30.

69   Breton, "Le cadavre exquis," 12.

70   Audoin, "Surréalistes," 484. For an account that absorbs the game into the broader category of collage, see Adamowicz, *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image: Dissecting the Exquisite Corpse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

71   Dalí, "The Object Revealed in Surrealist Experiment," 199; emphasis added.

72   Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924," 24.

73   Breton, "Max Ernst," 60.

74   Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924," 21.

75   Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924," 22.

76   The differences between individual contributions are much less pronounced in the collage versions produced by the game (see figure 3.5). As Catherine Vasseur has pointed out, signature style is already effaced somewhat in the impersonality of the monochromatic clippings that make up the figures. It could be counter-argued, however, that since these clippings were already depersonalized, the game was redundant: the same juxtaposition effect would have been achieved regardless of whether it was made by an individual or a group. In fact the earliest collaged versions resist attribution: Vasseur has attributed this exquisite corpse of 1928 to Ernst alone, but Mary Ann Caws attributes it to Breton and Yves Tanguy, while the Museum of Modern Art claims it was made by no fewer than seven surrealists—Breton, Max Morise, Jeanette Tanguy, Pierre Naville, Benjamin Péret, Yves Tanguy, and Jacques Prévert (even though there are not seven folds in the page). Vasseur, "L'image sans mémoire: A propos de la cadavre exquis," *Les cahiers du Musee national de l'art moderne* 55 (spring 1996): 78; Caws, *Surrealist Look*, 225.

77   Dalí, "The Object Revealed in Surrealist Experiment," 198.

78   Dalí, *La vie secrète de Salvador Dalí* (Paris: Éditions de la table ronde, 1952), 248; cited in Lebel, *Juegos surrealistas*, 35–36.

79   Inasmuch as the exquisite corpse is here posited as both independent and self-generated, Dalí invests the game with a degree of menace based on doubling-as-absence, a "second self," "a being acting freely and arbitrarily"—the group ethos is mirrored as a threatening dystopia.

80   Jean Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), 292–93. Freud addresses the concept of overdetermination in two texts familiar to the surrealists: *The Interpretation of Dreams* and the *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis.* As André Masson has recalled, the *Introductory Lectures* was on display in the Bureau central de recherches surréalistes. See Jennifer Mundy, *Surrealism: Desire Unbound* (London: Tate Publishing, 2001), 58.

81   Following Freud, I am using the terms *overdetermination* and *condensation* interchangeably. See Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Penguin Freud Library, Vol. 4 (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 279–304.

82   Éluard is referring specifically to the surrealist language game "conditionals," whose "if-then" construction of secret assertions and corresponding responses

is in the same category as the exquisite corpse. Éluard, "Prémieres vues anciennes"; cited in Lebel, *Juegos surrealistas*, 75.

83 Benjamin quotes Alain Émile-Auguste Chartier, *Les idées et les ages, Vol. 1* (Paris: Gallimard, 1927), 183–84: "The basic principle . . . of gambling . . . consists in this: that each round is independent of the one preceding. Gambling strenuously denies all acquired conditions, all antecedents . . . pointing to previous actions; and this is what distinguishes it from work. Gambling rejects . . . this weighty past which is the mainstay of work, and which makes for seriousness of purpose, for attention to the long term, for right, and for power. . . . The idea of beginning again . . . and of doing better . . . occurs often to one for whom work is a struggle; but the idea is . . . useless . . . and one must stumble on with insufficient results." Cited in Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), 512.

84 This is precisely the reason Sartre rejected automatism. "Automatic writing is above all else the destruction of subjectivity. When we attempt it, spasmodic clots rip through us, their origin unknown to us; we are not conscious of them until they have taken their place in the world of objects and we have to look on them with the eyes of a stranger. It is not a matter, as has too often been said, of substituting their unconscious subjectivity for consciousness, but of showing the subject to be like an inconsistent illusion in the midst of an objective universe." Sartre, "Situation de l'ecrivain en 1947," in *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), 215–16.

85 It is certain that Breton read the essay; he cites "Le moi et le soi," another text from the volume *Essais de psychanalyse*, in his lecture "Position politique de l'art d'aujourd'hui" (1935). *La science des rêves* had appeared in 1926, *Totem et tabou* in 1924, *Trois essais sur la theorie de la sexualité* in 1923, *La psychopathologie de la vie quotidienne* in 1922. *Introduction à la psychanalyse*, which was displayed at the Bureau central de recherches surréalistes, had also come out in 1922.

86 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 275. The "dichotomy" between eros and the death instincts finds its full elaboration in "The Ego and the Id," which came out in France the same year. Freud's conclusion in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is "the aim of all life is death" (310–11). While up until now it has never been viewed from the perspective of play, the link of repetition-compulsion to surrealism has been well established. Both Rosalind Krauss and Hal Foster have addressed it through the phenomena of the uncanny and the death drive, Krauss in "Corpus Delicti," in *L'amour fou: Photography and Surrealism*, ed. Rosalind Krauss and Jane Livingston (New York: Abbeville Press, 1985), 55–111; and *Optical Unconscious*; Foster in *Convulsive Beauty*. See also Sue Taylor, *Hans Bellmer: The Anatomy of Anxiety* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), which treats Bellmer's disarticulated dolls as "uncanny automata"; and Lomas, *Haunted Self*, where Julia Kristeva's interpretation of the uncanny becomes a frame for Picasso's surrealist production.

87 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 284.

88 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 285. Play-as-mastery is an idea that reaches back to the Platonic rationale for play—as practice for adult life, a "rational and mimetic use of play." Spariosu, *Literature, Mimesis, and Play: Essays in Literary Theory* (Tubingen: Narr, 1982), 22.

89 The move parallels the synthesizing of a fragmented "Real" (and inaccessible, incommunicable) self into what Jacques Lacan would call the *Imaginary* and the *Symbolic*, effected in "the mirror stage" of infancy. Lacan himself refers to the surrealists in his essay "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," in *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), 3–4. This theorization of "the mirror stage" had developed from a footnote in Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 284, through which Freud expanded the fort-da game into the child's game of making their own image disappear from a mirror. Inasmuch as play lies in relation to mimesis, and in psychoanalysis, both play and mimesis are manifested through the vehicle of repetition, play is positioned as essential to entry into the Symbolic: "Repetition demands the new. It is turned toward the ludic, which finds its dimension in this new." Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), 61.

90 Freud, "La question de l'analyse par les non-médecins," *La Révolution surréaliste* 9–10 (1927): 25–32. I have used the Penguin translation in what follows, and the citations below refer to this edition: Freud, "The Question of Lay Analysis," in *Historical and Expository Works on Psychoanalysis*, Penguin Freud Library, Vol. 15 (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 283–353.

91 Freud, "Question of Lay Analysis," 294.

92 Freud, "Question of Lay Analysis," 296.

93 Freud, "Question of Lay Analysis," 301.

94 Baron, *L'an un du surréalisme*, 80.

95 The theorization of Ernst's overpaintings in terms of screen memory and the uncanny is in Krauss, *Optical Unconscious*, 32–93.

96 The players were Camille Goemans, Jacques Prévert, Yves Tanguy, and André Breton.

97 Breton cites this example of the written version of exquisite corpse in "Le cadavre exquis, son exaltation," 8; translation modified to accommodate English syntax.

98 By *sprawl* I am referring to Bataille's notion of the *informe* (formless). While informe is an operation set against the figure, as Yve-Alain Bois has pointed out, a "fragmentation of the body (itself temporally folded and unfolded) disturbs the surrealists' 'exquisite corpses'"; Bois himself also warns against treating the informe as sheer deformation, which would imply that even "the slightest alteration to the human anatomy, in a painting, for example, would be said to participate in the formless—which comes down to saying that modern figurative art, in its quasi-totality, would be swept up into such a definition." Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss, *Formless: A User's Guide* (New York: Zone Books, 1997), 34, 15.

99 The double function of the fold in the exquisite corpse invites comparison with Gilles Deleuze's operation of baroque intelligibility as he theorizes it in *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of

Minnesota Press, 1993). Play is repeatedly invoked in Deleuze's essay to describe the "operative function" of the fold (66, 3); and like the surrealist paradigm, the baroque fold has been linked to postmodern forms and systems. The surrealist fold shares Deleuze's baroque critique of Cartesian space, a contestation that is enacted through dynamic seriality and the production of a unique variable; both systems foreground process and propose a new link between the "spontaneity of the inside" and the "determinism of the outside" (29). Deleuze even compares Leibnitz's labyrinthine thought with "a sheet of paper divided into infinite folds or separated into bending movements" (6). But the likeness between the folds of the exquisite corpse and those of the baroque model ends with the term *infinite*. Deleuze's fold is a crease that multiplies into endless curves and twisting surfaces, a "double operation" of simultaneous folding and unfolding in opposite directions, a fold that is not opposed to unfolding, that is neither "tension-release" nor "contraction-dilation" (7). Yet the exquisite corpse finds its significance as much in its pleated field of reception as in the culminating delivery of misrecognition accomplished at its *unfolding*—two operations that are linked, interactive, dependent, but discrete. While there is repetition and the possibility of inexhaustible seriality *across* its production, the exquisite corpse makes its specific critique of form in its individual instances—and each of these instances produces a framed and discrete image. Deleuze theorized the baroque fold as an anti-Hegelian infinite—"A process without spatial development . . . *plier, déplier, replier*" (xvi)—but the model for the exquisite corpse is a dialectic that *culminates* in a single irresolvable image. Call it an arrested vector or a failed potential for the articulation of pure open-endedness, but once open, the exquisite corpse is never refolded.

100 See Wigley, "Paper, Scissors, Blur," 29. Because the paper ground is ignored in the reception of drawing, Wigley argues, there is a kind of immateriality to drawing, "as if it occupies a liminal space between material and immaterial. This allows it to act as a bridge across the classical divide between material and idea."

101 Blurring the line between drawing and sculpture, here, is inevitable with the introduction of the tactile into the visual field. The exquisite corpse rejects the immateriality of flat representation and insists on being experienced as an object. This is consistent with Breton's conception of the ease with which the images on the page could be "constructed"—they are already understood as objects in the object-world. Breton insures against an utterly optic apprehension of the exquisite corpse by offering, as an example of a commensurate "surreal" found object, a Hopi doll, published alongside the exquisite corpse in *La Révolution surréaliste* 9–10 (October 1, 1927): 34.

102 Breton et al., "Le dialogue en 1928," *La Révolution surréaliste* 11 (March 1928): 7. The introduction ends: "We are not opposed to the fact that anxious spirits track there nothing more than a more or less perceptible amelioration of the rules of the game 'petits papiers.'" The statement is a reminder of surrealism's embrace of popular culture through the games. What follows in the article are not examples of the poetic exquisite corpse but of the "dialogue" game, in which questions and answers are formulated separately: "Qu'est-ce que la peur?"

("What is fear?"), "Jouer son va-tout sur une place déserte." ("To go for broke in a deserted place.")

103 See Lebel, "La erupción de la vida," 30. Twenty-eight of these were published in *Juegos surrealistas*, 112–39.

104 The exquisite corpse collages are folded, but they hold together unambiguously, with none of the tension attributed to the game as a process. Whereas the deployment of the folded line against the graphic line in the exquisite corpse has the effect of an intervention in drawing practices, when it is set against the already transgressive spacing of collage the syntax of the folded page becomes all structure. It operates like a double negative to undercut the juxtapositions the collage has already activated; in turn, collage as a medium has the effect of disarming the operations of the fold.

105 Lebel, "La erupción de la vida," 64. Foster, too, demonstrates that Breton focuses on eros, striving always for unity and reconciliation in his representational practices, yet all the while is subject to the death drive. Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, 15–17.

106 Bois and Krauss, *Formless*, 113. For example, proliferation to the point at which meaning is annihilated, the vitiation of mastery, the expansion of the possibilities of drawing from within drawing itself are leitmotifs that point to "the play outside meaning" of the exquisite corpse. It was perhaps the potential for this kind of destructive play that first attracted Bataille to Breton's surrealism.

107 For an alternative interpretation that presents the game as the illusory "deus ex machina" of its own appearance, see Vasseur, "L'image sans mémoire," 78–79.

108 Breton, "Les États généreaux," *Oeuvres Complètes, Vol. 3* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999), 27–34; cited in Baron, *L'an un du surréalisme*, 12. The original French of this chapter's epigraph preserves ambiguity in the statement through the polysemous word *si*, as well as the alliterative wordplay *abat-bâtit*, all lost in the English translation.

Chapter 4. Pun

1 Mark Ford, *Raymond Roussel and the Republic of Dreams* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 212–14.

2 Leiris kept his "cahier Raymond Roussel" from the year of the subject's death, 1933, until 1986. It has been published, along with pertinent essays, correspondence, and journal entries, as Jean Jamin, ed., *Michel Leiris: Roussel and Co.* (Paris: Fayard, 1998).

3 Jean-Jacques Thomas, "A One-Dimensional Poetics: Michel Leiris," *SubStance* 4, nos. 11–12 (1975): 18. In his journal entry of July 13, 1964, among the notes for the preface to the *Tombeau de Raymond Roussel*, Leiris compares his own ethnological method with the mode by which Roussel's fictitious scientist from Locus Solus, Martial Canterel, gathered information from his clients in order to re-create tableaux that "revived the most important scenes from their lives," coupling imaginative narrative with factual account that can only be described as quintessentially surrealist. See Jamin, *Michel Leiris*, 311–12. For the short form that the biographical project ultimately took, see Leiris,

"Conception and Reality in the Work of Raymond Roussel," in *Raymond Roussel: Life, Death and Works*, ed. John Ashbery, 73–85 (London: Atlas, 1987).

4 Jamin, *Michel Leiris*, 186–87, 305, 311. The artists to be included as Roussel's legacy are recorded several times in Leiris's journals, and shifted over time; likewise the title changed, from *Tombeau de Raymond Roussel* to *Roussel et quelques*. Eventually Leiris did publish his articles on Roussel, expanded with material from the notebook, as *Roussel l'ingenu* (1987).

5 Jamin, *Michel Leiris*, 305.

6 Jamin, *Michel Leiris*, 106.

7 See Octavio Paz, *Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare* (New York: Arcade, 1990), 11; Marie-Laure Bernadac and Christine Piot, *Picasso: Collected Writings* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1989), xxvii; Anne Umland, *Joan Miró: Painting and Anti-Painting* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2008), 2.

8 Leiris, "Alberto Giacometti," *Documents* 4 (September 1929): 209–14; Leiris, "Joan Miró," *Documents* 5 (1929): 263–69. For a brief account of Miró's ludic gestures that links play to Catalan myth and ethnographic rites among the *Documents* group, see Rémi Labrusse, *Miró: Un feu dans les ruines* (Paris: Hazan, 2004), 153–61.

9 Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Birth to Presence* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 262.

10 Jamin, *Michel Leiris*, 267.

11 See Robert Desnos, "Raymond Roussel, coincidences et circonstances de la destinée," *Nouvelles Hébrides* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), 191; Desnos, "Une vie excentrique: RR le mysterieux," *L'intransigeant* (August 7, 1933): n.p.; Roger Vitrac, "Raymond Roussel," in *Raymond Roussel: Life, Death and Works*, ed. John Ashbery (London: Atlas Press, 1987), 43–53; and Jamin, *Michel Leiris*, 70. Desnos particularly earned Roussel's admiration for his punning retort to one of Roussel's detractors: "Nous sommes la claque et vous etes la joue." See Jamin, *Michel Leiris*, 205.

12 Vitrac, "Raymond Roussel," 50. These are the phrases Leiris himself would repeat to explain the effects of the *procédé* in his later essay, "Conception and Reality in the Work of Raymond Roussel," in *Raymond Roussel: Life, Death and Works*, ed. John Ashbery (London: Atlas, 1987), 73–85, where he claimed that Vitrac was on the verge of discovering the wordplay at the root of the procédé (78). See also Leiris, "Entretien sur Raymond Roussel," in Jamin, *Michel Leiris*, 267.

13 Vitrac, "Raymond Roussel," 51. Roussel himself characterized his own creative spirit as a "strange factory" in which workers draw rhymes from the depths of his soul, in his early poem "Mon Ame" (1897). See Roussel, *Nouvelles impressions d'Afrique et l'ame de Victor Hugo* (Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1963), 124–25.

14 This is Michel Foucault's characterization, in Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel* (London: Continuum, 2004), 70.

15 For Benjamin, it was essential "to explore the great law that presides over the rules, and rhythms of the entire world of play: the law of repetition." See Miriam Hansen, *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 194.

16 Roussel, *How I Wrote Certain of My Books and Other Writings by Raymond Roussel*, ed. and trans. Trevor Winkfield (Cambridge, MA: Exact Change, 1995), 3–28.

17 Roussel, *How I Wrote Certain of My Books*, 3–5.

18 Actually these sentences bracket an early short story of Roussel's, and *Impressions of Africa* merely borrows the details of this first narrative, expanding the tale. See Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Philosophy through the Looking Glass* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1985), 18.

19 Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth*, 33.

20 Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth*, 48; cited in Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953–1974* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2002), 73.

21 Deleuze, *Desert Islands*, 72.

22 The skew between the apparent and the actual resonates with psychoanalytical models, another point of attraction for surrealism. Roussel's commitment to the inscrutable significance of random association may be traced to his treatment under Pierre Janet, the figure who most thoroughly theorized automatism. See Janet's account of Roussel's treatment in Pierre Janet, *De l'angoisse a l'extase, Vol. 1* (Paris: Société Pierre Janet, 1926), 115–18.

23 Leiris lays out the three stages of Roussel's text-producing mechanism in his notebook: "1. Au depart, aspect formel fortuity (calembour) suscitant les elements à confronter et mettre en oeuvre. 2. Élaboration d'un reseau de rapports logiques entre ces elements. 3. Formulation de ces rapports en une histoire, de sorte qu'on trouve à l'arrivée un mythe substitué au jeu de mots. C'est un equivalent littéraire du mécanisme mis en oeuvre dans certains jeux de société, par example, les charades, sous leur forme théatrale." Jamin, *Michel Leiris*, 101.

24 Roussel, *How I Wrote Certain of My Books*, 12.

25 Roussel, *How I Wrote Certain of My Books*, 12–15.

26 Deleuze, *Desert Islands*, 73. Against authorship, language itself becomes, as Leiris pointed out, "the creative agent." Leiris, "Conception and Reality," 79.

27 Roussel, *How I Wrote Certain of My Books*, 13–14.

28 Jamin, *Michel Leiris*, 98. Rosalind Krauss has stated this succinctly in the context of Roussel's relation to Duchamp: "Roussel thought of writing, then, as a kind of a game for which he had established an elaborate and binding set of rules. And this game, based on a ritualistic exercise of punning, became the obscure and hidden machine by which he constructed his work." Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981), 75.

29 See Breton, *Mad Love*, trans. Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987); and Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, trans. Mary Ann Caws and Geoffrey T. Harris (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990).

30 Pierre Schneider, "La fenêtre, ou piège à Roussel," *Cahiers du sud* (1951): 290; cited in Charles M. Cooney, "Intellectualist Poetry in Eccentric Form," *Contemporary Literature* 48 (2007): 71. For the pun as anticommunicative, see Attridge, "Unpacking the Portmanteau," in *On Puns*, ed. Jonathan Culler (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 140.

31 "Raymond Roussel has nothing to say and he says it badly," Alain Robbe-Grillet crows, in Robbe-Grillet, "Riddles and Transparencies in Raymond

Roussel," in *Atlas Anthology 4, Raymond Roussel: Life, Death and Works*, ed. Alastair Brotchie, Malcolm Green, and Antony Melville (London: Atlas Press, 192), 100.

32 Breton, "Les mots sans rides," in *The Lost Steps*, trans. Mark Polizzotti (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 12.

33 Mary Ann Caws, *Surrealism and the Rue Blomet* (New York: Eckyn Maclean, 2013), 44–45.

34 Leiris, "45, Rue Blomet," in Caws, *Surrealism and the Rue Blomet*, 15–21.

35 Leiris, "45, Rue Blomet," 39. See also Pierre Kleiber, *"Glossaire: J'y serre mes gloses" de Michel Leiris et la question du langage* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999), 144, 135–37.

36 Leiris, "Conception and Reality," 75.

37 Michel Leiris, Madeleine Gobeil, and Carl R. Lovitt, "Interview with Michel Leiris," *SubStance* 4, nos. 11–12 (1975): 48. "This is in part what gave me the idea of using index cards; these cards being for me what the terms of the 'equations of facts' were for Roussel, in other words, the materials which I had to interrelate."

38 Leiris, "Glossaire: J'y serre mes gloses," *La Révolution surréaliste* 3 (April 15, 1925): 6–7; 4 (July 15, 1925): 20–21; 6 (March 1, 1926): 20–21. In 1939 Leiris expanded the "Glossaire" into a short book illustrated by André Masson, and this version was reprinted (with a dedication to Robert Desnos, "the inventor of lyrical wordplay") in Leiris, *Mots sans mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 71–116. Leiris would revisit wordplay yet again near the end of his life in *Langage Tangage* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985).

39 For additional translations and an extended analysis of the lexical operations Leiris used in the "Glossaire," see Gérard Genette, "Signe/Singe," in *Mimologics*, trans. Thaïs Morgan (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 277–96.

40 Leiris, *Scratches: Rules of the Game, Vol. 1*, trans. Lydia Davis (New York: Paragon House, 1990), 239.

41 Leiris, *Journal (1922–1939)* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), 218.

42 Kleiber, *"Glossaire,"* 173. Leiris's own text-generating method involved scraps or tatters as well: he worked with index cards, jotting resonant words and thoughts, shuffling facts and memories like a deck of cards as if to induce a prerequisite of disorder. See Denis Hollier, "Notes (on the Index Card)," *October* 112 (spring 2005): 35–44.

43 Leiris, "Glossaire," *La Révolution surréaliste* 3 (1925): 7. In his autobiography, *Biffures* (1948), Leiris again laments the moment when "language was almost lost to me, reduced to the purely human role of the instrument." Leiris, *Scratches*, 48.

44 "The alternative grammar of the Glossaire is full of conflicting demands and chance combinations," writes Kleiber in his monograph on the work, "the text appears to have fixed by instantaneous successions the essential mobility of verbal substance." Kleiber, *"Glossaire,"* 189.

45 Leiris, "Metaphor," in *Brisées: Broken Branches*, trans. Lydia Davis (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1989), 18.

46 Kleiber, *"Glossaire,"* 11.

47 Leiris, "Conception and Reality," 80; Leiris, "How I Wrote Certain of My Books," in *Brisées*, 51.

48 Leiris, *Journal*, 137–38.

49 See Robert Lubar, "Miró's Defiance of Painting," *Art in America* 82, no. 9 (September 1994): 90–91.

50 Krauss, "Michel, Bataille et moi," *October* 68 (spring 1994): 6.

51 Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954–1955*, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), 164. The Medusa metaphor originates with Freud, "Medusa's Head," in *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, ed. Philip Rieff (New York: Collier Books, 1993), 212–13.

52 Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan and Co.: A History of Psychoanalysis in France, 1925–1985*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 294.

53 Leiris, Gobeil, and Lovitt, "Interview with Michel Leiris," 45. For the importance of the pun to Lacan, see Francoise Meltzer, "Eat Your Dasein," in Jonathan Culler, ed., *On Puns* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 156–63.

54 Nancy, *Birth to Presence*, 255–56.

55 Nancy, *Birth to Presence*, 259.

56 See Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977), 70–76. Miró would recall his admiration for Duchamp's *Large Glass:* "I see it through word games. I loved his puns." Georges Raillard, *Joan Miró, Ceci est la couleur de mes rêves: Entretiens avec Georges Raillard* (Paris: Seuil, 1977), 107. Miró not only read Roussel, but attended the premiere of Roussel's *L'étoile au front* (1924) with Leiris on Leiris's wedding day. This was the performance at which Desnos shouted out his punning retort to a heckler: "We are the slap and you are the cheek!" thus endearing himself to the playwright. Raillard, *Joan Miró*, 23.

57 Leiris, "Conception and Reality," 78.

58 Jamin, *Michel Leiris*, 220.

59 Miró, letter to Leiris, August 10, 1924, in Margit Rowell, ed., *Joan Miró: Selected Writings and Interviews* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1992), 86. These early "small things in wood" are lost, but the description fits the much later *Object* (1931), a wood and wire mesh construction in which the elongated neck and torso of a nude precisely follows the wood grain in the image. This is another technique based on visual punning, originating in a bistable image, namely, the nude that Miró "saw" in the wood grain of the panel. The Roussel work Miró is referring to is *Impressions of Africa*.

60 Miró, letter to Leiris, August 10, 1924; Miró, letter to Pierre Matisse, November 16, 1936, in Rowell, *Joan Miró*, 130.

61 See Carolyn Lanchner, *Joan Miró* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1993), 42–45.

62 *À baiser* (to kiss) is French slang for "copulation," and *oiseau* is slang for "penis." See Margit Rowell and Rosalind Krauss, *Joan Miró: Magnetic Fields* (New York: Solomon Guggenheim Foundation, 1972), 58–60. Rowell links Miró's

puns to those of his close friend (and intimate of the rue Blomet), Robert Desnos, deepening the association of the Bataillean group with the earliest interests of the surrealist époque floue.

63 Leiris, "Joan Miró," in *Brisées*, 26; first published as "Joan Miró," in *Documents* 5 (1929): 263–69. Rosalind Krauss has in turn linked this transitive devolution to Bataille's erotic novel, *History of the Eye*, in Krauss, "Michel, Bataille et moi," 16–17.

64 Leiris, "Joan Miró," in *Brisées*, 26.

65 Miró, letter to Leiris, August 10, 1924.

66 Lanchner, *Joan Miró*, 38–40.

67 Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 5. The alignment with photographic reproduction is unmistakable.

68 Lanchner, *Joan Miró*, 41. On page 40, Lanchner goes so far as to compare the 1924–25 "Charbo" sketchbook to an "image bank."

69 Miró, letter to Leiris, August 10, 1924.

70 Francesc Trabal and Joan Miró, "A Conversation with Joan Miró," in Rowell, *Joan Miró*, 95.

71 Anne Umland draws attention to Miró's mimicry of "factory work" in Umland, *Joan Miró*, 118. For the sources of the mass media images in the collages, see Fèlix Fanés, *Pintura, collage, cultura de masas: Joan Miró, 1919–1934* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2007).

72 Francisco Melgar, "Spanish Artists in Paris: Juan [*sic*] Miró," in Rowell, *Joan Miró*, 117.

73 "It is difficult for me to talk about my painting, since it is always born in a state of hallucination, brought on by some jolt or another—whether objective or subjective—which I am not in the least responsible for." Miró, "Statement," in Rowell, *Joan Miró*, 122.

74 Éluard, "Les plus belles cartes postales," *Minotaure* 3–4 (1933): 85–100. Man Ray's untitled photograph appears above the table of contents in *Minotaure* 7 (1935); Miró contributed the cover of this issue.

75 Dalí, "Communication: visage paranoïaque," *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* 3 (December 1931), n.p.

76 Trabal and Miró, "Conversation with Joan Miró," 95.

77 Leiris, "Joan Miró," in *Brisées*, 27.

78 Leiris, "Joan Miró," in *Brisées*, 25–29.

79 Alan J. P. Taylor, *The Course of German History: A Survey of the Development of German History since 1815* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 20. My thanks to Betty Schlothan for pointing out this key pun.

80 The differences in the individual drawings and their resistance to being understood as a logical progression has made the order in which they were produced impossible to determine with certainty. The drawings are numbered according to the order in which the Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona received them. Later scholarship at the archive there regrouped them iconographically, and this second sequence is the one I have reproduced here.

81 Trabal and Miró, "Conversation with Joan Miró," 98.

82 For excessiveness and constraint in Roussel's work, see Annie Le Brun, *Vingt milles lieues sous les mots, Raymond Roussel* (Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1994), 101–5. For Miró's advance planning and descriptions of promised work, see Lanchner, *Joan Miró*, 41; and Umland, *Joan Miró*, 70.

83 The series picked up the title "imaginary" in 1962, an ironic misnomer given that all were based on mass media reproductions of previous paintings. Jacques Dupin, *Joan Miró: Life and Work* (New York: Harry Abrams, 1962), 192.

84 Briony Fer, *On Abstract Art* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 79. Fer groups the *Dutch Interiors* and portraits together with Miró's more violently figured collages, rather than separating them from Miró's subsequent "crisis" work, bolstering her argument with this 1929 publication of the work. See *Documents* 5 (October 1929): 263–69.

85 Leiris, "Joan Miró," in *Brisées*, 26, 28.

86 Genette, *Palimpsests*, 12.

87 If it is the seriality of the drawings that manages to hold together the "liquefaction" Leiris identified at work in Miró's portraits, it must also be remembered that the violence of repetition has been harnessed to Bataille's formless as well. See Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss, *Formless: A User's Guide* (New York: Zone Books, 1997), 163, 181.

88 Alastair Brotchie and Mel Gooding, *Surrealist Games* (Boston: Shambala Redstone Editions, 1993), 32.

89 Jamin, *Michel Leiris*, 151. Leiris's observation is on page 46 of his *Cahier Raymond Roussel.*

90 Roussel, *New Impressions of Africa/Nouvelles impressions d'Afrique* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011).

91 Jamin, *Michel Leiris*, 151. Leiris cites particularly pages 53 and 57–65 of the French edition, *Nouvelles impressions d'Afrique.*

92 Leiris, "Conception and Reality," 79.

93 Jamin, *Michel Leiris*, 187.

94 Alberto Giacometti, "Objets mobiles et muets," *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* 4 (December 1931): 18–19.

95 Krauss, "No More Play," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 42–85. For Breton's new interest in surrealist objects, see Haim Finkelstein, *Surrealism and the Crisis of the Object* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1979).

96 In his early essay, "Words without Wrinkles," Breton called this slippage "words making love," the *au-delà* of wordplay, and by 1931 René Crevel had linked the strategy directly to *Suspended Ball* by observing that its parts "slip into one another," sharing their frantic eroticism with the viewer, but always, by the action of the wire, keeping the ball in a state of tension: "by no means permitting it to fall into the nirvana of satiation." Breton, *Lost Steps*, 102; René Crevel, "Dalí ou l'anti-obscurantisme," in *L'espirit contre la raison, et autres écrits surréalistes* (Paris: Société nouvelle des éditions Pauvert, 1986), 114–30.

97 Dalí, "Objets à fonctionnement symbolique," *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* 3 (1931): 10. For Dalí's own preoccupation with visual puns, see

Dawn Ades, *Dalí's Optical Illusions* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

98 Krauss, "No More Play," 57–58.

99 Jamin, *Michel Leiris*, 160.

100 John Ashbery, *Raymond Roussel: Selections from Certain of His Books, Atlas Anthology* 7 (London: Atlas Press, 1991), 16.

101 Christian Zervos, "Quelques notes sur les sculptures d'Alberto Giacometti," *Cahiers d'art* 8–10 (1932): 337–42; Giacometti, "[Notes on *The Palace at 4:00 am*]," *Minotaure* 3–4 (1933): 46; Ashbery, "Postscript on Raymond Roussel," 199. Ashbery points specifically to Roussel's fictitious invention *resurrectine,* a serum through which figures can be brought back to life in order to repeat life-altering traumas, as an important concept to Giacometti.

102 Jamin, *Michel Leiris*, 118.

103 Leiris, "Conception and Reality," 73–85.

104 For an analysis of "the void" in relation to Giacometti's later works, see Christian Klemm, "Maintenant le vide (Now, the Void)," in Klemm, *Alberto Giacometti* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2001), 110–11. Note that the title of the Giacometti sculpture from which Klemm's essay takes its name, "Mains tenant le vide," itself has a double meaning: when spoken, it translates as both "Hands Holding the Void" and "Now the Void."

105 *Bifur* 6 (July 1930): n.p.

106 Zervos, "Quelques notes sur les sculptures de Giacometti," 337–42; and Zervos, *Die Sammlung der Alberto Giacometti-Stiftung* (Zurich: Kunsthaus Zurich, 1971), 94. According to Zervos, Giacometti was concerned to create a "caractère d'enigme." See Giacometti, *Écrits*, ed. Mary Lisa Palmer and François Chaussende (Paris: Hermann, 1990), 12.

107 Thierry Dufrêne, "Dalí-Giacometti: Images paranoïaques et objets indécidables," *Revue de l'art* 137 (2002–3): 33.

108 Krauss, "No More Play," 73–75.

109 Dufrêne, "La pointe à l'oeil d'Alberto Giacometti," *Cahiers du Musée National d'Art Moderne* 11 (1983): 155. Piranesi's prints had been circulating in the *Documents* group; five from the "Prison" series appear with Henri-Charles Puech's article "Les 'prisons' de Jean-Baptiste Piranèse," *Documents, deuxième année* 4 (1930): 198–204.

110 Krauss, "No More Play," 69–70.

111 Caillois, "La mante religieuse," *Minotaure* 5 (1934): 78. Caillois's essay appeared in *Minotaure* two years after Giacometti made *Point to the Eye,* and one year after Man Ray photographed the object for *Cahiers d'art*. But by his own admission, Caillois was only committing to paper ideas that had long circulated between Breton, Éluard, and Dalí. Caillois's first, autobiographical book, *The Necessity of the Mind* (unpublished until 1981), of which "La mante religieuse" formed the fifth chapter, is haunted by the "systematic overdetermination of the universe," a universe that presented itself, emblem-like, as a series of unstable images. This book is the germ of his later, deep study of the ludic impulse, *Man, Play and Games*, where mimesis would be theorized as one of the four major variants of play (see chapter 5 of this volume). Caillois,

The Necessity of the Mind, trans. Michael Syrotinski (Venice, CA: Lapis Press, 1990), 76.

112 Caillois, "The Praying Mantis," in Frank, ed., *The Edge of Surrealism*, 79.

113 Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," in *The Edge of Surrealism: A Roger Caillois Reader*, ed. Claudine Frank (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 100, 99. According to Pierre Klossowski, Benjamin "assiduously" attended talks at the Collège de sociologie, an intellectual colloquium founded by Bataille and Caillois, but he generally disagreed with their views. See Hollier, *The College of Sociology (1937–39)*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 389.

114 Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," 102.

115 Dufrêne, "Dalí-Giacometti," 33.

116 If *Point to the Eye* performs a destructive little game, played out by an apparatus aimed to destroy vision—not a "seeing machine" (like the camera) but a blinding machine—it is an apparatus as deliberately anticreative as the strange jackhammer of *Locus Solus*, and as unfulfilling as the *Large Glass*. Not by coincidence, Duchamp was the first owner of *Point to the Eye*. See Angel Gonzalez, *Alberto Giacometti: Works, Writings, Interviews* (Barcelona: Poligrafa, 2007), 52.

117 Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth*, 16.

118 Krauss, "No More Play," 54–55. The alignment of "alter(n)ation" with play calls for a revision toward irony of Bataille's characterization of formless as a "job." See Bois, "The Use Value of 'Formless,'" in Bois and Krauss, *Formless*, 13–40.

119 Agnès de la Beaumelle, *Alberto Giacometti: La collection du Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 1999), 84–86.

120 Krauss, "No More Play," 83–84.

121 One wonders what Marc Vaux, who photographed the lost sculpture *Woman, Tree, Head* doubled in a mirror, would have made of *No More Play*. Mirror writing appears elsewhere in the surrealist ludic, as the Duchampian title of the rayograph *esoRRose Selavy*, and as palindromes in Desnos's wordplay and Leiris's "Glossaire" (see chapter 1 of this volume).

122 See Duchamp, *Salt Seller: The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973). *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* (*The Green Box*) appeared in 1934, one year after Roussel's death and the revelation that he had left a manuscript explaining the key to his famous procédé.

123 Duchamp, letter to Michel Carrouges, February 6, 1950, in *Le macchine celebi/The Bachelor Machines*, ed. Harald Szeeman (New York: Rizzoli, 1975), 48–49.

124 Michel Carrouges, *Les machines célibataires* (Paris: Arcanes, 1954).

125 Carrouges, "Directions for Use," in Szeeman, *Le macchine celebi*, 21.

126 Leiris, "Alberto Giacometti," 209–14.

127 Leiris, "Alberto Giacometti," 214.

128 These riddles in turn activated a mind-bending string of mnemic associations for Leiris: "the saltiness of waves and stars since they too have their tides, and then the salt of tears, tears of laughter, despair or madness, gentle and vaguely malicious tears, grotesque tears, or heavy tears full of the salt of bones and

frozen carcasses, always drops of water, falling silently . . ." Leiris, "Alberto
Giacometti," 210.

129 Leiris, "Stones for a Possible Giacometti," in *Brisées*, 139.

130 Leiris, "Stones for a Possible Giacometti," 135.

131 Leiris, "Stones for a Possible Giacometti," 139.

132 Walter Benjamin and Asja Lācis, "Naples," in Benjamin, *Selected Writings,
Vol. 1, 1913–1926*, ed. Michael Jennings and Marcus Bullock, trans. Edmund
Jephcott (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 414–21, 416.
Translation modified from *scope* to *room-for-play* to reflect the use of the word
Spielraum in the original text.

133 Benjamin, letter to Theodor Adorno, May 7, 1940, in *Briefe* 2 (1966): 849;
cited in Gyorgy Markus, "Walter Benjamin, or The Commodity as Phantas-
magoria," *New German Critique* 83 (spring–summer 2001): 5. Caillois, who
was beginning to formulate his ludic typology, had given his last talk, on
festival, at the Collège de sociologie on May 2, 1939. Benjamin attended, as he
did all the lectures. See Hollier, *College of Sociology*, xxi.

134 Nancy, *Birth to Presence*, 255–56.

135 Caillois, "Spécification de la poésie," *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* 5
(May 15, 1933): 30.

Chapter 5. Postlude

1 *Le jeu de l'oie* is a version of a traditional French board game with surrealist-
inspired iconography. For a full-scale reproduction, see Alastair Brotchie and
Mel Gooding, *Surrealist Games* (Boston: Shambala Redstone Editions, 1993).

2 André Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, trans. Mary Ann Caws and Geoffrey
T. Harris (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 139.

3 Breton, *Conversations*, 107.

4 For the Hegelian origins of objective chance, see Margaret Cohen, *Profane Illu-
mination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 120–53. A turn to Hegel
would necessarily entail a turn away from the irrational ludic: for Hegel play was
"the only true seriousness." Hegel, *Erste Druckschriften*, 128; cited in Mihai Spari-
osu, *Dionysus Reborn: Play and the Aesthetic Dimension in Modern Philosophical
and Scientific Discourse* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 33.

5 Michel Murat, "André Breton: La part du jeu," in *Jeu surréaliste et humor noir*,
ed. Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron and Marie-Claire Dumas (Paris: Lachenal
and Ritter, 1993), 32, 34.

6 *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* 3 (1931): 38–42. In *Communicat-
ing Vessels* Breton claims that the assemblages were made according to Dalí's
paranoid-critical method—"the fabrication of animated objects with an erotic
meaning"—although he admits that "such objects too particularly conceived,
too personal, will always lack the astonishingly suggestive power that certain
almost everyday objects are able to acquire by chance." Breton, *Communicating
Vessels*, 54, 55.

7 Salvador Dalí, "The Object as Revealed in Surrealist Experiment," *This Quarter*
5, no. 1 (1932): 197–207.

8 Dalí, "Objets psycho-atmosphériques—anamorphiques," *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* 5 (May 1933): 45–46.

9 Arthur Harfaux and Maurice Henry, "The Irrational Understanding of Objects," *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* 6 (May 1933): 10–24. These are transcripts of survey-like games initiated to "determine the irrational characteristics of objects." The Tanguy drawing is on page 42 of this issue. Breton, "Surrealist Situation of the Object; Situation of the Surrealist Object," in *Oeuvres completes*, ed. Marguerite Bonnet (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 472–96.

10 The 1936 installation was photographed by Man Ray, and the range of found, assembled, and annexed objects is commensurate with the taxonomy laid out in *LSASDLR*. See Gérard Durozoi, *History of the Surrealist Movement*, trans. Alison Anderson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 324.

11 The image is reproduced embedded in the text of Breton's "L'objet fantôme," *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* 3 (December 1931): 20–23.

12 Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, 52.

13 Breton would symbolically cut himself off from the game board with the diatribe "Profanation" (1944), in which he defends card playing as preferable to the intellectual refinements of chess. Breton, "Profanation," in *Free Rein*, trans. Michel Parmentier and Jacqueline d'Amboise (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 75–76. The statement follows his 1940 production of a deck of surrealist playing cards, *Le jeu de Marseille*.

14 See Rosalind Krauss, "No More Play," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 42–85. The account of the flea market trip, along with reproductions of the Man Ray photographs, is in Breton, *Mad Love*, trans. Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 25–34.

15 Breton, *Mad Love*, 34.

16 Breton, *Mad Love*, 32.

17 Roger Caillois, "Festival," in *The College of Sociology*, ed. Denis Hollier (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 281. The group of critics who, along with Bataille, would form the "College of Sociology" were particularly interested in carnival in relation to the sacred and ritual; that is, they were concerned with making a distinction between the dynamics of festival and the passive consumption of enjoyment we call leisure. Caillois's insistence on the salutary distinction between the sacred and the profane is in stark contrast to Breton's call for the integration of those two spheres in surrealism.

18 Anne Umland, "Giacometti and Surrealism," in *Alberto Giacometti*, ed. Christian Klemm (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2001), 17.

19 Michel Leiris, "Alberto Giacometti," *Documents* 4 (September 1929): 209–14.

20 *Homo Ludens* would become a key text for the Situationist International in the 1950s and 1960s.

21 Sections of appendix 2 of "Play and the Sacred" had already been published in 1945 as a review of *Homo Ludens* in the journal *Confluences*, as cited in Émile Benveniste, "Le jeu comme structure," *Deucalion* 2 (1947): 164n1.

22 Benveniste, "Le jeu comme structure," 159–67; Breton, "L'un dans l'autre," in *Perspective cavalière*, ed. Marguerite Bonner (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1970), 50–79.

23 Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism," in *Selected Writings, Vol. 2, Part 1, 1927–1930*, ed. Howard Eiland, Michael Jennings, and Gary Smith, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 209. The unstated subtext to this debate is undoubtedly the appearance of Claude Lévi-Strauss's "The Elementary Structures of Kinship," which he defended as his dissertation in 1948 before a jury that included Benveniste. The publication of the text in 1949 is widely regarded as having inaugurated the structuralist movement. See François Dosse, *History of Structuralism, Vol. 1*, trans. Deborah Glassman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 18. Benveniste was a colleague of Marcel Griaule's at the Collège de France, where certainly Griaule's *Jeux dogons* (Paris: Institut d'ethnologie, 1938)—published the same year as *Homo Ludens*—would have been available to him as well. The tension between Caillois's and Benveniste's texts is surely inflected by Caillois's animosity toward Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology; see the "heated exchange" cited in Claudine Frank, ed., *The Edge of Surrealism: A Roger Caillois Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003)*,* 364n15.

24 See Dosse, *History of Structuralism, Vol. 1*.

25 Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 13.

26 Jacques Ehrmann, "Homo Ludens Revisited," in *Game, Play, Literature*, ed. Ehrmann (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 31–32. Ehrmann's deconstruction of both Caillois and Huizinga is based on their underlying assumption of "reality"—a reality opposed to play—as given. The ensuing hierarchy will always subordinate play to a reality outside it, an intolerable assertion for Ehrmann, who maintains that culture (and therefore play) produces reality.

27 Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 46.

28 Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 35.

29 See Susan Laxton, "From Judgment to Process," in *From Diversion to Subversion: Games, Play, and Twentieth-Century Art*, ed. David J. Getsy (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 6–9. Huizinga rejects Schiller's Spieltrieb on page 168 of *Homo Ludens*, on the grounds of its "primitivism." But his reading is narrow; he never attends to Spieltrieb's operation as a civilizing agent, which matches his own attribution. Huizinga's alignment with Schiller throws the situationists' admiration for *Homo Ludens* into a perverse light— the Situationist International apparently received the book's message about the imbrications of play in culture as subversive without noting the overarching conservative tone of the work regarding play's civilizing, rather than transgressive, power. See Libero Andreotti, "Play-Tactics of the Internationale Situationniste," *October* 91 (winter 2000): 37–58; Stewart Home, *The Assault on Culture: Utopian Currents from Lettrisme to Class War* (Stirling, UK: AK Press, 1991), 35; and Anselm Jappe, *Guy Debord*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 149. On the other hand, *Homo Ludens* does demonstrate play's cultural pervasiveness to the extent that the ludic might well have been received by the Situationist International as the single force able

to erode the strict demarcations that Schiller had imposed between "exteriority and interiority, heteronomy and autonomy, technology and nature, violence and self-determination, coercion and voluntary consent." See Constantin Behler, *Nostalgic Teleology: Friedrich Schiller and the Schemata of Aesthetic Humanism* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 70.

30   Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 7.

31   Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 1.

32   Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 7, 10. Huizinga goes on to claim that in spite of the fact that play is a necessity, it remains disinterested because "the purposes it serves are external to immediate material interests," a position consistent with a strict Kantian nature/culture division.

33   Given that this text was drafted on the brink of World War II, it is easy to see why Huizinga might find the question of civilization and its founding tenets of some urgency.

34   Caillois, *Man, Play and Games,* trans. Meyer Barash (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), 9–10.

35   Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 170. Elsewhere, Caillois includes mimesis in this category: "vertigo and simulation are in principle and by nature in rebellion against every type of code, rule, and organization" (157). Nevertheless, as we shall see below, Caillois will claim that the rebellion is always contained.

36   Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 11–36. The categories are organized into a table on page 36.

37   Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 9–10; and on page 162: "The facts studied in the name of play are so heterogeneous that one is led to speculate that the word 'play' is perhaps merely a trap, encouraging by its seeming generality tenacious illusions as to the supposed kinship between disparate forms of behavior."

38   Caillois, *Man and the Sacred*, trans. Meyer Barash (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1959), 157.

39   The historical role of carnival, with its inversions of "normal life," its proximity to religious institutions, as well as its character as a form of temporary, administered revolution is an example of this sort of neutralization of political critique. See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968); and Rawdon Wilson, *In Palamedes' Shadow: Explorations in Play, Game, and Narrative Theory* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1990), 25–73.

40   Caillois, *Man and the Sacred*, 159.

41   Caillois, *Man and the Sacred*, 160. Freedom in Caillois's ludic model is to a great extent freedom from worry about the consequences of one's actions, and he sets up a hierarchy of anxiety: *sacred-profane-play,* with the uncontrollable and distressing *sacred* at the top and orderly *play* at the bottom.

42   Caillois, *Man and the Sacred*, 162. Caillois's approbation of "civilization" is clear—morality as well is attributed to the ludic, which fosters "mutual confidence" and "respect for others."

43   Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 58.

44   See Frank, *Edge of Surrealism*, 33.

45 Frank, *Edge of Surrealism*, 16. Frank points out that in 1945 Meyer Schapiro called this *reactionary avant-gardism*.

46 Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 55. See as well on page 167: "In a general way, play is like education of the body, character, or mind, without the goals being predetermined. From this viewpoint, the further removed play is from reality, the greater is its educational value."

47 Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 159. In this opinion I differ from Frank, who commends Caillois for his acknowledgment of cultural systems like play that are paradoxical or open ended. She concludes that Caillois rejected Bataille's sacred transgression, substituting "a civilized manner of integrating order and disorder, system and rupture," whereas it is my feeling that Caillois's insistence on curtailing play within institutional parameters necessarily renders those ruptures ineffectual, and in direct conflict with an avant-garde politics of representation. Frank, *Edge of Surrealism*, 5.

48 Caillois, *Man and the Sacred*, 152; Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 27.

49 While Caillois's theories of play and the mimetic loosening of difference were formed in the crucible of surrealism, they were radically reshaped by the horrifying excesses of World War II, to the extent that Caillois would ultimately claim that the play impulse had not disappeared at all in modern life (as Huizinga claimed it had); it had been desublimated into war. Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 53, 49. Conversely, Bataille most admires the game when it has material *consequences,* which explains his interest in the ancient Mexican ballgame, whose play entailed injury and sometimes death. See Krauss, "No More Play," 59. For an overview of Nietzschean play, see Laxton, "From Judgment to Process," 10–14.

50 Benveniste was aware of Caillois's 1945 review of *Homo Ludens*, which had appeared in the journal *Confluences* in 1945 (he cites it in "Le jeu comme structure"), and Caillois had read Benveniste's essay in manuscript form, and presumably offered a critique that would be reflected in "Play and the Sacred," the chapter appended to *Man and the Sacred* in its 1950 edition. See Benveniste, "Le jeu comme structure," 164n1. Both Benveniste and Caillois (as well as Bataille) were also aware of Marcel Mauss and Henri Hubert's "Essai sur la nature et la function du sacrifice," *L'année sociologique 2* (1899): 29–138, where sacrifice is discussed as an inherently ambivalent phenomenon. My thanks to Lisa Florman for pointing out this pathway between play and ritual.

51 Benveniste, "Le jeu comme structure," 161.

52 Benveniste, "Le jeu comme structure," 164.

53 Benveniste, "Le jeu comme structure," 163–64; cited in Ehrmann, "Homo Ludens Revisited," 51.

54 Benveniste, "Le jeu comme structure," 165. Benveniste uses the word *brisée*, which I have translated as "splintered" in order to convey the paradoxical sense of something that is broken from another thing yet joined to that thing through the break, but it is notable that this is the term Michel Leiris used to characterize (and entitle) his nonfiction essays. See Leiris, *Brisées: Broken Branches*, trans. Lydia Davis (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1989).

55 Ludus is the sphere of pure form and regulated action; jocus is deregulated speech or content typical of puns. Benveniste, "Le jeu comme structure," 165.

56 Benveniste, "Le jeu comme structure," 164–65.

57 Benveniste, "Le jeu comme structure," 166–67.

58 Benveniste's characterization inverts Bataille's 1929 characterization of the prefix *sur*—"above" the real—as the sign of Breton's idealism. See Bataille, "The Old Mole and the Prefix *Sur* in the Words *Surhomme* and *Surrealist*," in *Visions of Excess*, ed. Alan Stoekl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 32–44.

59 Benveniste's schema implies that play, as pure structure, is free of myth, an easily refuted characterization. This insistence on binary oppositions would become the structuralist movement's most vulnerable point. See Ehrmann, "Homo Ludens Revisited," 31–32.

60 It is worth mentioning that the context of Benveniste's essay includes the exhibition *Le surrealisme en 1947*, Breton's first postwar attempt to reconstitute the surrealist group. The theme of the show was "myth," and the exhibition catalogue included Bataille's essay "The Absence of Myth," where myth is pronounced the glue that holds together social groups. See Bataille, *The Absence of Myth*, trans. Michael Richardson (London: Verso, 1994), 13. The "desacralizing" function of play becomes very clear in the context of surrealism when one considers that for Bataille the sacred meant "communication." Play, meaning nothing, blocks communication.

61 See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 141–64. Derrida directly addresses play as instability working against the "metaphysics of presence" on page 50. His 1966 lecture at Johns Hopkins University, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," is considered a key moment in the history of poststructural thought. See Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 278–93.

62 Breton, "L'un dans l'autre," 50–79.

63 *Le jeu de Marseille* is a conventional deck of playing cards with surrealist motifs replacing the suits, and figures important to the movement depicted on the face cards. Drawn by Victor Brauner, André Breton, Óscar Domínguez, Max Ernst, Jacques Hérold, Wifredo Lam, Jacqueline Lamba, and André Masson, it was reproduced by André Dimanche, the Marseille card maker, in 1983.

64 Breton, "L'un dans l'autre," 53. Later, this claim would be extended to include all actions and people. For an account that draws decalcomania into the range of the game, see Kern, "From One Exquisite Corpse (in)to Another," in Kocchar-Lindgren, Schneiderman, and Denlinger, eds., *The Exquisite Corpse*, 3–28.

65 Breton, "L'un dans l'autre," 54–55. The essay goes on to cite numerous examples that find, for example, a terrier in a flower pot, a butterfly in a sorcerer's wand, Madame Sabatier in an elephant's tusk, and so forth (58–61). Reverdy is cited by Breton in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), 20.

66 Breton, "L'un dans l'autre," 55. He cites Huizinga on page 51.

67 Caillois, "L'enigme et l'image," in *L'art poetique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), 175–87. It was first published as "Actualité des Kenningar," in *La nouvelle revue française* 30 (June 1955). See Frank, *Edge of Surrealism*, 46.

68 Breton, "L'un dans l'autre," 50.

69 Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 4. For an analysis of the ways surrealism pitched poetry against law, see Michel Beaujour, "The Game of Poetics," 58–67.

70 Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 115, 36.

71 Benjamin, "Surrealism," 207–21. The nexus of use value, immediacy, index, and commitment in surrealism, as framed by Walter Benjamin, is in Hollier, "Surrealist Precipitates: Shadows Don't Cast Shadows," *October* 69 (1994): 111–32.

72 Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 4.

73 Caillois, "Riddles and Images," in *Game, Play, Literature*, ed. Jacques Ehrmann, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 156.

74 Caillois, "Riddles and Images," 150. For an alternative reading of "L'un dans l'autre" that sees this demystification as the articulation of a heuristic device against which to measure the "surrealism" of past poetic production, see Murat, "André Breton," 19–37.

75 Bataille, *The Story of the Eye*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (San Francisco: City Lights, 1928); Roland Barthes, "The Metaphor of the Eye," in *Critical Essays*, trans. Richard Howard (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 239–47.

76 Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 5.

77 James A. G. Marino, "An Annotated Bibliography of Play and Literature," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* (June 1985): 307–58.

78 See Tilman Küchler, *Postmodern Gaming: Heidegger, Duchamp, Derrida* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994). For the role of the ludic in the work of Heidegger, Deleuze, and Derrida, see Spariosu, *Dionysus Reborn*, 99–124, 143–63.

79 Küchler, *Postmodern Gaming*, 23.

80 In his commemoration of André Breton, Maurice Blanchot directly attributes poststructuralist play to surrealism. See Blanchot, "Le demain joueur," *La nouvelle revue francais* 172 (April 1967): 863–88.

81 Lacan published along with the surrealists in the journal *Minotaure*; he cited Salvador Dalí and Roger Caillois in his seminars; he owned work by André Masson. See Lacan, "Motifs du crime paranoïque," *Minotaure* 3–4 (October 1933): 35–37; Lacan, *The Four Fundamentals of Psychoanalysis,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), 87–88, 73, 99–100, 109; and Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," in *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), 3. See also Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe*, trans. James Harkness (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

82 See Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss, *Formless: A User's Guide* (New York: Zone Books, 1997).

83 See Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), x, xi. Foster links surrealism and postmodernism through their parallel historical dilemmas, claiming that the autonomy of culture itself in the first decades of the twentieth century "provoked, at least in art, a counterproject in the form of an anarchic avant-garde." He continues: "Although

repressed in late modernism, this 'surrealist revolt' is returned in postmodernist art (or rather, its critique of representation is affirmed), for the mandate of postmodernism is also: 'change the object itself.'" Both the historical avant-garde and its postwar neo-avant-garde counterpart engaged the task of bodying forth the "death of the subject," the loss of "master narratives," and the difficulty of opposition in "consumer society."

84 Jacques Fillon, "New Games," in Ulrich Conrads, ed., *Programmes and Manifestoes on 20th Century Architecture*, trans. Michael Bullock (London: Lund Humphries, 1970), 155. See also Andreotti, "Play-Tactics of the Internationale Situationniste," 37–58.

85 See Catherine de Zegher and Mark Wigley, eds., *The Activist Drawing: Retracing Situationist Architectures from Constant's New Babylon to Beyond* (New York: Drawing Center, 2001).

86 Sol Lewitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," 834.

87 See Benjamin Buchloh, "Hantaï, Villeglé, and the Dialectics of Painting's Dispersal," *October* 91 (winter 2000): 24–35.

88 Already by 1944 John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern had published their game theory (*Theory of Games and Economic Behavior* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1944]), codifying chance as statistical probability and reactivating a validation of control and institutional order that had arguably been in formation since the nineteenth century. For the historical prelude to this, see Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

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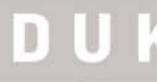Foster, Hal. *Compulsive Beauty*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993.

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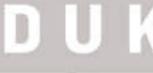Simmel, Georg. "The Stranger." In *Georg Simmel*, 187–98.

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