

Unwinding Duchamp: *Mots et Paroles à Tous les Étages*.

Volume 1. *Text*.

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own work and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract.

Practice is defined as the exercise of a method or profession, and a treatise.

Practise is defined as to practise tricks or artifices upon; to act upon by artifice so as to induce to do or believe something: to impose upon, delude: to make trial of, practically.

The practise that my practice reconstitutes was characterised by its executor, Duchamp, not as irony, *ironie*, but *ironisme*, the deployment of irony in debate.

Socratic irony is defined as feigning ignorance in order to confute an enemy in debate.

Irony is saying the opposite of what you mean. Duchamp's practice of the practise of *ironisme* did not then manifest itself in an art questioning its own conditions, by dissemblance, as is popularly believed, although it appeared to. The 'ironic' art which has been taken as the product of Duchamp's practice was then merely an allegorical appearance, since allegory, saying one thing and meaning something else, is cousin-germane to irony.

Duchamp criticism has been informed by such misconceptions to the extent that, as late as 1989, David Hopkins, in his review of Kuenzli and Naumann's *Marcel Duchamp: Artist of the Century* could still point to the need for "a full length study of Duchamp which convincingly contextualises his de-essentializing project, rather than blithely using it as a pretext for exercising contemporary critical strategies."

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Preface A.

Guide-âne: Instruction manual. [= Content.]
Traces by means of which a donkey is lead. [= Allegorical appearance.]

1. The structure of the text

The following text is not a description of the practice, but participates in it, as an expression of the form of the practice.

The structure of that text is predicated on the necessity to inscribe the indeterminate status of its subject, Duchamp's subject and practice, in the form of a practice which consequently assumes that indeterminate status.

Duchamp's subject matter was the Occult, whose indeterminate status, in 1912, rested on the question of the legitimacy of competing claims to its epistemological grounding, from science, psychology, popular occultism, state religion, etc.

This indeterminacy was an attribute of the antinomy inscribed in the shift in the grounding of Duchamp's practice, post-Munich 1912, which constituted a transfer in the site of truth from the sovereign authorship of the divine 'Orphic' artist to the higher authority deferred to in enunciation by a mere 'media-mystic' being.

This antinomian indeterminacy was itself rhetorically inscribed in the shift in the grounding of my former practice as a consequence of its submission to the academic protocols of a Doctorate in Research as Fine Art Practice.

This former practice was prompted by an art historical enquiry taking for its pretext an observation - of the fact of a radical change in form of Duchamp's post-Munich 1912 enunciation.

This observation required no special art historical or 'artistic' training, expertise or intuition.

Thus it is the process of the inscription of one antinomy within another which my practice seeks to elucidate.

The epistemological antinomy arising from Duchamp's post-Munich practice appears to have been noticed by one person other than myself, Jean Claire.

The engine of the multi-layered antinomy which the form of my practice subsumes is homophonic coincidence, the working tool which Duchamp acquired from Raymond Roussel; 'antinomy' is a homophonic inversion of Antimony - Stibium, Stibnite, the alchemist's 'Wolf in the Crucible', the powdered essence of kohl, Baudelaire's black eye-make-up, a veritable Powder of Projection, if ever there was one: the word 'kohl' derives from the Arabic, *al-koh'l*, (collyrium,) meaning 'distilled essence', from which, fortunately for Apollinaire, the word *alcool* derives.

Alchemical transmutation, a metaphor for spiritual enlightenment via initiation and intuition, is the subject of Duchamp's work post-1910, and of Apollinaire's *Alcools*.

The deferral of the epistemological grounding of Duchamp's practice to the higher authority of the Philosophia Perennis, which his post-Munich change of enunciation represents, (confirmed in his abdication of the avant-garde,) was then the pretext for, and requirement of, the deferral of the grounding of my formerly exclusive 'art' practice to the higher authority of the institution of a university within which Fine Art and Art Historical practices cohabit.

The indeterminate status of Duchamp's new practice, inscribing that of his subject, subsequently mistakenly regarded by the critical community as remaining subject to avant-garde aesthetics, is then inscribed in a location of my practice at the interface between the critical practices of Art Historical and Fine Art made institutionally possible by the perpetuation of an epistemological antinomy whose origins, in the 17th century, (coinciding with that of Duchamp's subject and practice,) resided in the conflicting epistemological claims of the Philosophy of Science and Occult Science on the meaning of experience of the world.

Like Duchamp, the translocation of my practice submits the status of intuitively acquired experience and opinion to the rigours of its testing as socially constructed 'objective' knowledge grounded in the factual nature of the historical subject, the sine qua non of the epistemological claims of, in my case, acadème, and Duchamp's, (which ever esoteric community whose needs he satisfied.) Thus the praxis, the imbrication of theory in practice, which this translocation affords me, thus legitimises and makes possible the evaluation of the rival claims made by authorial

identity and enunciation in Duchamp's own praxis - but only when inscribed rhetorically within my own.

It is then apposite that a university, like a Masonic Lodge which, like its namesake, the artist's *atelier*, is both a meeting place and the company which meets in it, is variously defined as a corporation or community; a whole body, a guild of masters or scholars: a whole body of teachers and students pursuing the higher branches of learning: such persons associated together as a corporate body, having the power to confer degrees or other privileges: and the whole universe.

2. The form of the text.

The rhetorical form of Duchamp's parabolic notes, being a model of his practice, is then a model of mine.

The authorisation for my writing in different manners came from my supervisor, Alex Parigoris, who simultaneously stressed the character of my public utterances - the one imbricated in the other. Thus the epistemological antinomy expressed in the Fine Art/Art History dichotomy is inscribed in competing analytical, descriptive and discursive forms of expression, a result of which is the privileging of enunciation.

For example, in order to inscribe the Rousellian origins of Duchamp's hypertextual semantic structures, the form of my text must display a promiscuous, and, seemingly, at times, arbitrary, vacillation between different textual fields, through the use of the same architectonic parenthetical devices; it must, for example, assume the right to the "delirium of mutability" haunting the 'onion skins containing onion skins containing onion skins' noted by Hugill in Roussel's texts.

It must then also emulate Stirner's method of "proceeding by assertion rather than argument, to insist on rather than demonstrate" noted by Leopold - as, for example, in the "Hegelian expression that property is selfhood (as revealed in the coincidence between) *Eigentum* and *Eigenheit*". That is, it must run a similar danger of becoming "an inchoate melange of aphorism and wordplay" (which is none-the-less decipherable,) rhetorically inscribing childhood, adolescence and adulthood in the tripartite structure of an argument divided into the categories of Realism, Idealism and Egoism.

And it must articulate a ubiquitous Schopenhauerian suspension, the diapason closing full on Raymond Roussel.

It must reflect the parabolic, allegorical nature of esoteric discourse, typified by the *divulgations* which Duchamp's generation consumed; those, for example, by Jouffret and Revel, who he is known to have read, and Pawlowski, who he admits having read: a parabolic and allegorical discourse continued by Breton and Duchamp, and Southard, in his characterisation of Duchamp's exegesis in *Mlle de l'Escalier* - viz:

" Whereupon there was nothing for it. Marcel burst the bounds of his French moderation and descanted at length upon his famous painting. Descant, expatiate, dissect, exfoliate – only by such terms can I fitly recall the phrases of Marcel. The entire rush of ideas from Aphrodite's foam to the red cotton night-cap country was displayed and no decision rendered."

3. Technical conventions, such as footnotes.

Pernety and Poisson were punctilious in their referencing of sources, since they were compiling dictionaries and guides, and so invoking the *auctoritas* of the sources of their *doctrina*. Laforgue, when he was writing poetry and prose, needed to cite no sources whatsoever; he neither acknowledged sources nor claimed authorial primogeniture for his esoteric content.

To inscribe this gamut, footnotes are used in an orthodox academic manner, in the text, to defer to higher authorities, although not all such authorities are thus deferred to, blurring authorial origins. This is designed to prompt the reader to independent confirmation of sources, as in the case of an esoteric initiate who is only told as much as s/he can understand, at any given time. And, in an inversion of Duchamp's use of the legends applied to his readymades, the footnotes are also, in the case of references to items in the *Pinacotheca*, (etc,) used take the mind to realms more visual.

4. Antinomy of 'authorship versus enunciation'; my voice in the text.

Author: The person who originates or gives existence to anything.

Enunciator: One who gives a definitive expression.

Messenger, interpreter.

Hermeneut, from Hermes [Trismagistus].

Hermeneutic: pertaining to interpretation, as distinct from exegesis.

Hermetic: Dealing with occult science; alchemy, magic.
An alchemist or chemist, a pharmacist.

The ambiguity of authorship of content at the point of utterance endemic to esoteric practice is inscribed in the range of writing styles adopted in my text, which blurs the line between content as acknowledged, as paraphrased and as originally generated, in order to inscribe, variously, the fact that:

Apropos the irrelevance of intellectual property issues in respect of the perennial reconfiguration of the doctrines of the *Philosophia Perennis*, in the language of the day, all producers and consumers were fully aware of the grounding of the authorship of the doctrines in a higher, ancient authority, accessible through Hermes Trismagistus, Thoth, Plato etc, fully aware, also, of the mediumistic character of their prophets - Boehme, Swedenbourg, Nerval, Péladan, Eliphas Levi, Papus, Blavatsky, Schuré, Steiner and so on; and for Duchamp's clients, himself.

Duchamp never revealed the sources of the content of his work, or the subject of any particular example, save allegorically, parabolically and emblematically. He didn't need to, since his clients already understood the content of his work and the means and purpose of its disinterment from the *matière* and *facture* within which it was inscribed. Further, his interrogators who were not themselves initiates were not required to understand, especially in regard to their innocent promulgation of Duchamp's pursuit of the purposes of the perpetuation of his spurious avant-garde credentials.

To this end, Duchamp's own public verbalisations, like the readymades themselves, were invariably banal and evasive, their meanings oscillating quietly behind the bland facade of their "allegorical appearance", as he put it, allowing his oeuvre to masquerade as 'art'.

This my text reflects.

5. The living voice.

Duchamp's voice, inscribed in his homophonic structures, is summoned, in the process of exegesis of its content, at the moment of enunciation by its bespoke consumer.

The homophone is the key to Duchamp's practice- the spoken, polysemic word; this is the key to how his works work. Meaning is generated via enunciation;

the works are spoken, if only in the head. It is the homophonic character of synonyms, antonyms and homonyms which is privileged in Duchamp's works; *parole* is privileged over *mot* and *langue*.

For 35 years I have practised teaching as practice, articulating meaning via the form of the discursive, algorithmic, hypertextual catechism. This has been the sine qua non of my enunciatory vocation, my calling, my living voice, now articulated through all the forms of the instruction manual which embodies my present practice, as with the case of Duchamp's oeuvre.

The viva voce inscribed in this Viva Voce is the ultimate institutional confirmation of the validity of the practice, the fulcrum on which all turns, whatever the institution, for me as for Duchamp. Thus the living voice constitutes the ultimate authentication of the practice, via a catechism, as in the esoteric tradition. The viva voce is then the ultimate authorising agent of the grounding of the truth of the datum, the *Étant Donnés*, whether the practice be avant-garde, esoteric or academic; at least for here, and for now.

Preface B.

The form and character of this document reflects an engagement with the issues addressed directly in two texts, by Jan Svenungsson (Bibliography entry No. 153) and Jane Webb, entitled *Research in perspective: the practice of theory*.⁽ⁱ⁾ In his section entitled *The decisive text*, Svenungsson addresses issues bearing directly on the relationship between theory and practice that an artist's text customarily articulates, focussing on the centrality to Man Ray's oeuvre of autobiography, whereas Webb conducts an enquiry more sharply focussed in epistemology.

Asking the question of whether it is possible to display the actual practice of research, including writing, within a thesis, whilst still maintaining the coherence of the text (an ambition which, at the time of writing, lay unfulfilled, since Webb had yet to complete her thesis), Webb traces the roots of the antinomy to the shift in the authorial grounding of the management of the theoretical knowledge of the world during the English Renaissance, as represented in the work of Francis Bacon and Johan Comenius, specifically *The Visible World Pictured (Orbis Sensuarium Pictus)* of 1658; Webb's thesis proceeds from the view that Bacon was responding to an identification of the academic philosophy of the time as something which had become "a web of vacuous self-referentiality", being "a continuous and useless regurgitation of knowledge that was detached from and therefore of little consequence to the actual physical world, or to society within it."⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ The result was a shift from language teaching based on the rules of rhetoric to one based on description, "at which point the practice and claim to creativity of the theoretical writer was lost."⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾

Following Wartofsky's view that "the way we see is socially specific and dominated by our representational conventions," Webb rejects the notion of the neutral, anonymous centralised viewpoint of the theorist as practitioner.^(iv) For Webb, the history of academic study depending from this approach "still informs the present model for research, particularly in the case of an academic apprenticeship like a Doctorate", since there are "certain basic methods and assumptions linked to that history," which she lays out.^(v) That of the most overwhelming importance is "the concept that there is a Truth that exists independently of the individual mind, "an existence 'out there', too great for any individual to grasp", so that "each thesis must

show that it adds to a repository, a meaningful translation...known as the body of knowledge." (vi)

" By implication", Webb continues, " the words (and one might add here grammar, syntax and rhetoric) that a writer uses within a thesis must intimately relate to its material subject." (vii)

This fundamentally scientific methodology then creates an " idea of objectivity by replacing the private view of the 'I' with a general unimpassioned consensus." At the heart of this antinomy, for Webb, is that which is of most importance to the Doctoral student, the primary source, that " precious nugget that goes some way to legitimising the 'originality' of a new piece of research", the " very essence" of the Baconian material world which, " whether chemical experiment or historical document, is the object from which the words must be made," because the primary source is " the genuine article, the absolute Truth." (viii) It follows then that " all the components (of the thesis), and the relationships between them, must be consistent, no matter from which viewpoint they are to be looked at, if the thesis is to make any claims on Truth." (x)

Opposing the Baconian model, Webb cites Anthony Grafton's view that the factual nature of the historical object is just as enigmatic and open to interpretation as any secondary source. (ix) And for Webb, such academic conventions as confirm the hierarchical status of different types of material, footnotes and the like, are merely that - theoretical conventions, and no more, the products of a process of socialisation into which fit few of the multifarious phenomena of social intercourse which equally, if not more-so, inform the process of the lived experience which ultimately shaped the work. And so, for Webb, the " idealised arc between pen and retina, created by the perspectival viewpoint " leaves " no place for the rest of the scholar's activities. The words he or she produces are still implicitly idealised as merely a neutral window through which the object has been seen. And so the tempo of the theorist's narrative can only be shaped by the tempo of his or her subject"; further, that it is " solely in the writing that the subject is generated, it is only through its practical construction that its logic and structure now exist." (xi)

Thus the nub of the problem lies, for Webb, in the recognition of the separation of practice from its representation which originated in the perspectival view, the solution to which was, for her, the simultaneous linking of subject to

process so that, at any time, "the same statements might be true of the object of study and the methods of research and writing."

Similarly, the thesis of the document which follows this Preface addresses, at fundamentally structural and enunciative levels, the issue of the imbrication of theory in practice, out of the necessity for rhetoric to inscribe the content of that praxis (the epistemological re-grounding of Duchamp's own practice) in its form, within the various forms of its expression enfolded within each other, being predicated on the assumption that theory is generated by practice, and not gratuitously imported as an afterthought. The deferral of the authoritative basis of content, to a higher power, that Duchamp's re-grounded practice assumed, is then inevitably inscribed rhetorically in this text - in the judicious blurring of distinctions between enunciator and author of content.

Webb has the root of the word theory as deriving from the phrase " to look at." Our enquiry, taking theory's origin in "'sight, spectacle and spectator", embraces the full width of its definition, as follows:

A conception or mental scheme of something to be done, or of the method of doing it.

A hypothesis that has been confirmed or established by observation or experiment, and is propounded or accepted as accounting for the known facts.

That department of an art or technological subject which consists in the knowledge or statement of the fact on which it depends, or on its principles or methods as distinct from the practice of it.

A mere hypothesis; speculation or conjecture; an idea or set of ideas about something; an individual view or notion.

A body of theors; a theor was an envoy sent to consult an oracle.

Notes.

- (i) *Working Papers in Art and Design*. Vol. 1. [URL. [http:// www.herts.ac.uk/research/papers/wpades/vol1/webb2.html](http://www.herts.ac.uk/research/papers/wpades/vol1/webb2.html) ISSN 1466-4917
- (ii) Op.Cit. p. 1
- (iii) Ibid. p.2
- (iv) Ibid. p.4
- (v) Ibid p. 4
- (vi) Ibid. p. 4.
- (vii) Ibid. p. 4.
- (viii) Ibid. p.4
- (ix) Ibid. p. 6
- (x) Ibid. p. 5.
- (xi) Ibid. p. 5.

Unwinding Duchamp: Mots et Paroles à Tous les Étages.

1.0 Epistemology: Research as Practice.

Epistemology: The theory or science of the method or grounds of knowledge.

My practice articulates the semantic consequences arising from the shift in epistemological grounding of Duchamp's own practice in 1912, when he abdicated avant-garde self-authentication in favour of an institutional validation predicated on the deferral of epistemological authority to a higher power. The subject that his new production elucidated, for a private mode of consumption, by a specifically esoteric clientele, was expressed through bespoke items whose understanding no longer necessitated deference to avant-garde art aesthetics.

It is then predicated on the premise that the discrete circumstances of the production and consumption of any particular artefact is inevitably informed by fundamental human mental processes and social and cultural context, from the broad macro-socio-economic ideological framework of a 'class consciousness' to the micro-monomanias of such co-conspirators as Braque and Picasso, or the membership of any private club or secret society.

This in turn is predicated on the premise that systematic and coherent bodies of ideas shared by cultures, sub-cultures or unique partnerships idiosyncratically inform unique behaviours and cases, a premise which underlies, for example, Lynda Henderson's assumption that the state of the understanding of contemporary science can, and did, influence the character of art produced in Paris in the first decade or so of the last century.⁽³⁾

Therefore, as a result of the bespoke character of Duchamp's own post-1912 production, the specific values of the individual consumer come into play. (We cannot, for example, hope to understand Duchamp's production in either Paris between 1913 and 1915, or New York between 1915 and 1918, in ignorance of the expectations, values and requirements of the major consumers of his contemporaneous production during those dates, in the latter period, Katherine Dreier, a committed Theosophist, and Walter Conrad Arensberg, an amateur cryptographer, enthusiast for Rosicrucianism, and collector of pre-Columbian artefacts. That the

objects Duchamp made for these patrons retained an aura derived from their origins must then inform our understanding that their identity cannot be accommodated outside the personal relationship which fine-tuned the over-arching elite socio-economic 'system' these protagonists inhabited.)

The precise nature of Duchamp's relationship to Arensberg, which is revealed in the letters he wrote from Argentina during 1918 and 1919, (in the company of Dreier,) removes any suspicion that theirs was a simple client/retainer-patron relationship. The same is true in the case of Dreier. Take, for example, the painting *Tu m'*, produced under Duchamp's direction, in a setting to which a small group of highly privileged collaborators had access (Duchamp's studio attached to the Arensberg apartment) but never publicly exhibited until a year after her death. This work was designed to dovetail simultaneously into both the unique form of her bookcase and the ideology inscribed in its literary contents, and nowhere else.

Or take the 'portrait' of Fania Marinof entitled *Fania(Profil)* that Duchamp produced on New Year's Eve 1915, provoked by the gift of a typewriter from Walter Arensberg; this, on the eve of his removal from 34 Beekmann Place to the Lincoln Centre Arcade. The work disappeared into Duchamp's patron-friend's private world, never to be seen until rediscovered in his estate after he died.

Or take the luggage labels Duchamp gave Ettie Strettheimer on the occasion of her birthday.

In all these cases, and more, the intimate dialogue these objects conducted occurred ultimately within a private discourse, in the manner of an encoded love-letter, or the Zimmermann telegram, both fabricated on an assumption which circumscribed their production and transmission - that their contents were to remain privileged.

Therefore, Duchamp's works did not so much offer insights into the producer's psyche as into his efficacy, functioning as therapeutic tools, by alluding to the commissioner, who projected shared values into them *sui generis*, transferred as to a talisman or fetish, which makes only a localised, unique sense. As such, their aesthetics acted within the discrete horizon of a highly particularised reception environment, the receiver completing the work by bringing themselves to it within a previously determined and agreed discourse. The producer was then negotiator of alignments, and manager of conjunctions, of the ideological spatio-temporal coordinates within which fabrication comes into being and functions; the results, not

commodities proper, such as works of art produced for promiscuous submission to the indignities of the market place. It is by such complicit subscription to a hermetic ideological discourse that any ultra-personal or quasi-mystical identification between the mind of another person, or attitude or period, can be effected. So functions the Masonic catechism, via exegesis of the allegorical symbols of the apron or tracing-board, both models of the Masonic lodge itself, which inscribe a pre-existing field of knowledge, the doctrine of Esoteric Tradition, thus providing a pretext for erudite discourse. Whilst the particular disposition of such signs within the emblematic field might be negotiable, within certain rhetorical limitations, their form and meaning is not. (For example, the image of a unicorn, which can be quartered anywhere on a blazon, or act as a supporter, cannot inscribe the meaning of a lion; nor can one tincture inscribe the meaning of another, despite any viewer's individual hermeneutic inclinations. In the same way, the tiled floor of a Masonic lodge does not inscribe the meaning of a tiled roof, nor does the direction East inscribe the meaning of West.)

So whilst hermeneutics might argue that although one cannot perfectly recreate the attitudes and original intentions or conditions of reception of the meaning of cultural artefacts in general, due to social, cultural and intellectual differences, if practiced self-consciously, forensic archaeology appears to work, and the encrypted meaning of a telegram can be decrypted only via the application of the code by means of which its meaning was originally encrypted.

Until 1912, Duchamp's aesthetic had subscribed to the post-Symbolist 'Orphic' conception of the artist formulated by his close friend Apollinaire, advanced in his preface to the catalogue of the *III^{me} Expo du Cercle de l'Art Modern, le Havre, June 1908*, entitled *Les Trois Vertues Plastiques*. According to Adrian Hicken⁽⁴⁾ here the poet develops the central assumption of his modern neo-platonic aesthetic, now in regard to painting. This assumed that it is the poet alone who can identify a unique personal rationality, assuming superiority over natural phenomena, only then after purification; and further, that personal insight developed from internal experience effects a transformation of the visible world which thus appears anew. The artist is now absolute creator possessing that which had been latent and instinctive. As he puts it;

To esteem purity is to baptize one's instincts, humanize art, and exalt the personality. The root, the stem, and the flower of the lily show the progression of purity up to its symbolic

blossoming. But the painter must above all be aware of his own divinity, and the paintings he offers up to the admiration of others will confer on them the glory of experiencing also, for a moment, their own divinity. To do that one must take a single glance to the past, the present and the future. ⁽⁵⁾

Apollinaire's essay on Duchamp in his *Les Peintres Cubistes* of 1912 ⁽⁶⁾ makes it quite clear that he considered his subject to fall into this category, but Duchamp's abandonment of a painting " offered up for the admiration of others", noted by Apollinaire on May 19th, 1914, ⁽⁷⁾ effectively immunised the consciously inscribed content of his work against interpretations predicated on his friend's aesthetic.

Thus an ever-widening disparity developed between Duchamp's expressed intentions and the interpretation of their results, rooted in different epistemological groundings. This, my practice seeks to restore; that its form might rhetorically inscribe this epistemological antinomy therefore requires the recognition, in its execution, of the implications emanating from the circumscription of two practices within two rather different extra- personal institutionalised philosophies. These were manifested, for Duchamp, in the catechistic praxis characterising exegesis of the *Philosophia Perennis* of the Hermetic Tradition, but for myself, in the protocols of scholarship. But these, through a formal coincidence, bear a superficial resemblance to one another. So whilst the authenticity of the latter, unlike the former, cannot be grounded in the types of resemblance inscribed in the Theory of Signatures, ⁽⁸⁾ none-the-less, the institutionalised fabric clothing their respective ideological configurations is identical, since progress through both esoteric institutions is attained, via initiation, on a gamut of ascending degrees closing full in Enlightenment.

So for myself, unaware of my own divinity as, one suspects, was Duchamp, if not his partisans, the prosecution of my practice requires something more than the baptising of my own instincts in the exaltation of my personality. That being so, the analysis offered in *Research through Practice; Positioning the Practitioner as Researcher*, by Douglas, Skopa and Gray ⁽⁹⁾ provides a rationale for the articulation of my practice within the framework of Fine Art rather than exclusively through that practice from which its subject emerges, the academic discipline of Art History whose formal research process and product it nevertheless automatically assumes. That is, the prosecution of my practice through the investment of a personal enquiry within academic protocols replicates, and thus embodies rhetorically, the shift in the epistemological grounding of Duchamp's own practice as presented by his abdication

of an avant-garde field of consumption whose causes my practice then takes as its subject. This in turn rhetorically inscribes the antinomy at the heart of Duchamp's new practice, the epistemological status of the occult, discussed below.

(A consideration of whether the abdication of avant-garde values was at the time understood as an ironic avant-garde strategy per se, and whether this informed Duchamp's decision, must await a further occasion.)

So whilst the research methodology of my own practice adheres to the protocols of art historical enquiry, the issue of whether or not Duchamp's practice continued to subscribe to the protocols of avant-garde art can only be rhetorically inscribed within a practice exemplifying that same antinomy; hence the hybrid discursive character of this text which, in passing from premises to conclusions whilst simultaneously digressively ranging over many subjects, emulates that of its model, Duchamp's own enunciative form, as derived from Roussel's .

Contemporary Fine Art practice, and a concomitant symbiotic hermeneutic emerging alongside it, has largely developed in relation to a perceived Duchampian model. That being so, the retort " No Marcel, therefore no Damien", represents a self-fulfilling prophesy incestuously confirming its tautological self. But the subsequent misconstruction of the epistemological implications of the radical change to Duchamp's practice characterising contemporary hermeneutics carries powerful consequences for any critical practice whose authenticity is predicated thereon.

Since it is not so much this matter which is the primary subject of the enquiry but the nature of the change which provoked it, its identity must be established first. Thus, my practice, in which content, as with Duchamp, is presented both through the practice itself and the conventions of exhibition and publication (etc), located within the practice, of necessity takes the rhetorical form of Research as Critical Practice. This is demonstrated, at the time of writing, in the exhibition, at the City of Leeds Art Gallery, entitled **Jemanden ein armutszeugnis ausstellen**, a phrase which, if spelled correctly, means, inter alia, to exhibit evidence of one's own incompetence, to make a poor showing, or to make an exhibition of oneself. Here an example is presented of the mediation arising from such an investment of the protocols of one practice within another, for errata (such as the misspelling of the first substantive, **jemandem**⁽¹⁰⁾), promiscuously mark the glossing text (entitled **Jemanden ein R Mutt's zeugnis ausstellen, Monsieur Goldfinch**⁽¹¹⁾). These breaches of **Etikett** rhetorically inscribing incompetence, are further confirmed in the

lack of the decorum, or etiquette, displayed by the erratic label, an **Etikette** or *etiquette*, barely attached to the text.

Thus the formal research which forms the methodological foundation of my enquiry is subsumed into an overarching Research as Critical Practice, and presented by it in the form of structured and evidenced argument. This formal research then informs the practice of Fine Art as research as critical practice by proving transparency and accountability in the research process, for the following reason. A research praxis (the imbrication of theory in practice) in an academic context generic to all academic disciplines, and recognised as a language across discourses, develops a reliable and shared body of knowledge within a discipline.⁽¹²⁾ This institutionalised syncretism then inscribes that of the Esoteric Tradition, upon whose protocols Duchamp drew for his subject.

Further, the process of formal research authenticates its results in that they can be communicated and defended to others, much in the way that Duchamp's subject matter, the assumed authenticity of which datum was beyond question to its partisans - *étant donnés*, so to speak - also became the basis for the evaluation of the mode of its formal expression. In both cases, emblematic form then becomes a means of embodying knowledge more appropriately than through text alone, as in a calligram by Apollinaire.⁽¹³⁾

The institutional re-inscription of Duchamp's practice within the milieu of the esoteric is then mirrored in the re-inscription of my practice within scholarship, both of whose formal research methodologies address ways in which new practitioners are trained, confirm the role of practice within a culture, and perpetuate values by progressing a discipline. Thus my teaching of the module *ARTF 3157: Duchamp and After*, constitutes practice, since it too assumes a degree of validation, authenticates knowledge in its mode of transmission, and is predicated on the acquisition of recognisable and relevant skills as a means of making a contribution to shared knowledge through a recognisable and generic process - as does a Viva Voce, and the text it takes as its pretext.

But in both cases, a useful contribution to knowledge cannot necessarily be assumed as automatic, since the definition of aims and objectives, including descriptions of appropriate methodology, and their contextualisation via literature review that this comprises, does not assume any degree of original thinking on the part of catechist or catechumen in the perpetuation of the eternal wisdom it embodies,

but merely a form of exegesis symptomatic of the historical moment. Thus the main motive to Fine Art Research as Practice is here assumed to be the explanation of a personally based project or product, through a discussion operating on a personal level of intention for the particular work, through anecdote, and documentation of its development, with varying degrees of rigour. Knowledge of this initially lies in the hands of the individual practitioner, not necessarily with a body of participating artists. Duchamp's practice after 1912, having abdicated his earlier avant-garde position, should then be considered in this light. To constrain my practice within these limits would however merely perpetuate the misconception of the nature of Duchamp's new practice, since the tracing of the import of the results of the process described here is limited to the individuals involved, and consumption of the knowledge embodied within the work relies on the complicity of the research community, (usually critics, theorists and historians,) in the process of its inscription, since the creation and import of any new knowledge is limited within this route or milieu. This is the nub of the antinomy identified above, in that this condition is as true of the esoteric field of consumption into which Duchamp translocated his practice as it is of the avant-garde field of production he simultaneously abdicated.

Notwithstanding the coincidence of belief shared by the post-Symbolist avant-garde and the esoteric community, their respective epistemologies divided them. Whilst both held that the cultivation of individual intuition was the key to enlightenment, the esoteric construction of the artist as a mediumistic being facilitating unmediated access to the eternal truths of an ancient wisdom, manifest in an emblematic universe written by some form of numinous power, runs absolutely counter to Apollinaire's conception of the divinity of the artist as the grounding of all knowledge. That these constructions conflate in the template against which Duchamp's patron Katherine Dreier judged the paradigmatic Kandinsky and Mondrian demonstrates that artefacts generated both within and without an avant-garde field of production could happily co-exist within an esoteric field of consumption, as Sheeler's photographs of Arensberg's apartment, and the advertisements for de Zayas' Modern Gallery, on the last page of *Blindman 2*, make plain; or, in the mistaking of a urinal for a work of art.

The issue of how Duchamp's new products might be identified as avant-garde art, as they were in the New York milieus surrounding the 'one or two people' he had

been looking for in early 1915, Walter Arensberg and Katherine Dreier, is then an expression of the epistemological antinomy arising in 1912. Evidence is indirectly provided by de Zayas.⁽¹⁴⁾

In seeking to identify the origins of modern art in the "primitive mentality" of the African Negro, de Zayas provides a rationale for Duchamp's relationship to his 'patrons', through the intermediary of his work, and a soteriological conception of the function of art. According to this rationale, the concept of the readymade and the style of the *Nude* of 1912 are seamlessly interwoven.

This origin de Zayas identifies on page 5.

Lately European art has sought in the work of the savage new elements for the development of plastic expression, and through the discoveries made in the art of the savage we have acquired new knowledge concerning differences of representation in relation to the different mental states, and concerning the different degrees of development in the evolution of art.

Duchamp's 'painting' *Chocolate Grinder No: 2* illustrates these "differences of representation in relation to the different mental states (and) concerning the different degrees of development in the evolution of art." Constructed in the period between the autumn of 1912 to the summer of 1915, partly made from lead wire, and thus distinguished from two earlier painted studies, it represents the transition from painted to constructed images which is reflected in all Duchamp's two-dimensional works from this period, including the 'rehearsals' for the *Large Glass* project, never exhibited at this time.

However, that one can also draw a distinction between Duchamp's self-consciously avant-garde painting, produced before the 1912/1913 hiatus, and the different kind of work he produced after that date, is confirmed in Drier and Arensbreg's domestic hanging policies. Echoing Katherine Dreier's library during the 1930's, the walls of Arensberg's apartment were hung with avant-garde paintings, by Picabia, Duchamp, Matisse et al, which cohabited with 'primitive' artefacts filling the rooms. But of the readymades, which were created exclusively for Arensberg, there are none. These were discretely sequestered in a private studio upstairs, just as in Duchamp's atelier on the Rue St-Hippolyte, where Suzanne found the bottle drainer, and a bicycle wheel, in 1916. The situation is less clear cut in the case of Dreier's hanging policy and practice, implying a more superficial understanding on her part confirmed by the criticism she published of the *Large Glass* in 1944.⁽¹⁵⁾ Nonetheless,

the *Three Standard Stoppages*, which she acquired in this period, as far as is known, remained in their box.

Duchamp's works in the Arensberg collection at this point can be assumed to illustrate de Zayas' analysis of the relationship between modern and 'primitive' art summarised above. As defined by de Zayas' understanding of the term 'primitive', the character of the fetish, to which the readymades might now subscribe, informs the aesthetic of both Katherine Dreier, who collected Brancusi, and Arensberg. De Zayas would seem to be drawing on Swedenborg's belief that ancient peoples possessed a knowledge of the correspondences between the outwardly sensory and the inwardly spiritual which, for the Symbolist generation, (i.e. everyone but themselves, i.e. avant-garde artists,) had lost. For them, as for Swedenborg, all journeys of the spirit were changes of state, and the more changes of state, the more inward the journey.

The critical factors, for De Zayas, in the influence of Negro 'art' on modern art, may be epitomised as follows.

The statuette fetish is not the representative image of the divinities. It is only a propitiatory instrument, considered the exclusive property of the individual, of the family or of the tribe, and is only good for them. The sorcerer is the intermediary between the Negro and the fetish, which is invisible, and manifests itself but seldom to the priest, the sorcerer. But his representation of it, which is variously a tree, a mountain, a pond of water, a heap of earth, a wooden statue, is feared, and in practice confounded with the fetish itself. The sorcerer, at the same time prestidigitator, a magnetizer and a medicine man, makes the fetish speak. To the Dahomean, for example, every manifestation of a force which he cannot define, every prodigy or phenomenon which is beyond his imagination or intelligence is a fetish - a thing of God which demands a cult. The thunder, the small-pox, the sea are fetiches; the telegraph and our railroads would also be fetishes if they were not " Machines of the White People."

The statuette-fetish is made to protect its owner from all evil, and the Negro sees in it a practical use, not giving it any esthetic value. The esthetic pleasure of the Negro lies principally in decorating it, always with geometrical combinations of lines. Since we have seen that the first criterion of the Negro is the spontaneous movement in which he sees the manifestation of life, it is logical to believe that since the Negro discovers his first criterion in movement, and is an animist, it will be movement and not objects that he tries to represent primarily. The visual element on which the Negro bases the actual representation reveals the primitive sensation of the cognition of form. The expressive quality of Negro sculpture is due in great part to the manner in which the artist handles his material. The Negro is naturally identified with the plastic resources of wood. He seems to let his work be guided by the material, and instead of putting his feelings into wood, seems rather to draw them out of it. In all the flat representations of the Africa Negro, only geometrical drawings are found; they represent movement and therefore have an abstract expression. And the geometrical structure of these drawings has been maintained in the construction of the statuary. Its plastic spirit is still movement. Negro art has awakened in us the feeling for abstract form, it has brought into our art the means to express our purely sensorial feelings in regard to form, or to find new form in our ideas. Negro art has made us conscious of a subjective state, obliterated by objective education. And while in science the objective truths are the only ones that give the reality of the outer world, in art it is the subjective truths that give us the reality of ourselves.

De Zayas' analysis would then appear to provide an ideological rationale for a transition from one form of expression to another immediately preceding and following Duchamp's damascene conversion in 1912, from the *Nude* of that year, via the *Large Glass* project, to the readymades, of 1916.

Christopher Green⁽¹⁶⁾ offers us evidence that de Zayas' thinking was in line with that of Apollinaire's of four years before. Green points out that by 1912 the so-called 'primitive' was commonly invoked in relation to Cubism, but more as analogy than a source or stimulus; the conceptualisation of Cubist painting was habitually aligned with the presumed conceptualisation of African and pre-Renaissance 'primitive' images by, for example, Raynal, on Giotto: and Apollinaire was describing a God of War, from Dahomey, in the Trocadero, as if it were a cubist sculpture. This particular item de Zayas must have known, since half of the 32 examples illustrated in his book were from that collection.

Green points out that this invocation echoes the current convergence in ethnology of the questions of logic and of the 'primitive', logic being a key concern of all major debates about the notion of magic in the 'primitive mentality' which informed the reasoning of Lévy-Bruhl. But whilst there is no evidence that either Apollinaire or Raynal were aware of the former's "Law of Participation" before 1914, none-the-less, by 1912, logic could be placed in opposition to the notion of 'primitive' conception. In Lévy-Bruhl's major work, *Les Fonctions mentales dans les Sociétés inférieures*, of 1910, 'primitive mentality' contradicted logic, since if logic could be defined as founded on the "law of non-contradiction", then the exposure of contradiction in 'primitive mentality' established the operation of different laws. In magical thinking, different things in different places at different times could be causally linked, as by a spell, and anything could participate in anything else, anywhere, at any time, as in a Paracelsian or Swedenborgian theory of Resemblance.

Levy-Bruhl's critical passage, from Lilian Clare's 1966 translation, entitled *How Natives Think* (Washington Square Press, 1966) is quoted by René Berger,⁽¹⁷⁾

Objects, beings, phenomena can be, though in a way incomprehensible to us, both themselves and something other than themselves. In a fashion which is no less incomprehensible, they give forth and they receive mystic powers, virtues, qualities, influences, which make themselves felt outside, without ceasing to remain what they are.

In other words, for this mentality the opposition between the one and the many, the same and another, and so forth does not impose upon this mentality the

necessity of affirming one of the terms if the other be denied, or vice versa. This opposition is of secondary interest.

In the light of this, the observations cited by de Zayas, that " the telegraph and our railroads would also be fetishes if they were not Machines of the White People", and that " the Negro sees in it (the fetish) a practical use, not giving it any esthetic value" would seem to establish a precondition for not only the conception of Duchamp's two-dimensional imagery, after 1912, and the form of his assemblages and the conception of the readymade as we identify it here, but also the contemporaneous assumption that these expressions constituted orthodox avant-garde art.

But this aesthetic conflation does not obscure the fact that a hermeneutic predicated on the retention of Apollinaire's Orphic construction within Duchamp's post-1912 aesthetic perpetuates a misunderstanding of the mechanism by which Duchamp could now translate ideas into objects by means of a simple, an-aesthetic rule-of-thumb method, thus allowing him to escape the aesthetic cul-de-sac into which he considered the avant-garde had blindly wandered, as the title of the magazine articulating *The Richard Mutt Affair* implies. But now, identification of Duchamp's products as art then renders their appearance allegorical, and masks their true aesthetic identity. But the perpetuation of the misconception that Duchamp remained an orthodox avant-garde artist by some other means, which he took no trouble to contradict, leaves the mediumistic Duchamp now ensconced rather precariously in the pantheon of contemporary hermeneuts.

The products of my practice then articulate an investigation into the epistemological dynamic generated by Duchamp's change of practice, in which intuition as the grounding of truth was replaced by various protocols of scholarship basing claims for their authenticity on the formal research disciplines employed. But the rigour of the theosophist Meade, displayed in his unimpeachable philological analysis of the *Pymanter*,⁽¹⁸⁾ for example, is not matched by the methodology displayed by the Rosicrucian Arensberg in his analyses of the cryptography of Dante, Shakespeare and Bacon, the results this obtained more symptomatic of their parabolic genre.⁽¹⁹⁾ So since my practice must perforce rhetorically inscribe within its expressive form this antinomy, it must, perforce, assume the form of fine art research as practice, this being the sine qua non of the subject under enquiry, the leitmotif of the identity of Duchamp's practice as Art, or not.

Douglas, Skopa and Gray's formulation of the mode of Fine Art Research as Practice can then be seen to inform how Duchamp's post-1912 non-art practice has been susceptible to classification as Fine Art ever since, in spite of his own disclaimers. For example, the expression of the developmental research process independently of the work itself, and through professional conventions, which these authors identify in notebooks, publications, interviews and so on, then serve in Duchamp's case as a catalogue of the expressive forms his production, his various sets of Notes, for example, or his presence obliquely hinted at in his anonymous participation in public displays of material in bookshop windows, joint exhibitions, or published interviews and aphorisms. Taken to be the Essence, they are in fact the substantial Attributes and Superficies from which a hypostatic practice might now be semeiologically diagnosed.

2. Ekphrastics and Forensics: Hermeneutics.

- Ekphrasis: Aesthetic transformative process whereby body parts became relics.
 Forensic: Suitable or analogous to pleadings in court.
 A speech, or written thesis, maintaining one side of a given question.
 Hermeneutics: The art or science of interpretation.
 [Hermeneut; messenger of the Gods: Hermes. *Hermes Trismagistus*: the founder of occult science and alchemy.]

Since its aim is the removal of obstructions, my practice is *ekphratic*, (its object, an *ekphrasis*, a plain declaration,) since it seeks to restore forensically a corpus previously constituted through *ekphrasis*, the poetic, lyrical and affective reproduction “ through the medium of words..(of)sensuously perceptible *objets d'art*”,⁽²⁰⁾ which erases the distinction between the work of art being venerated and its affective evocation, dissolving its frame and the difference between subject and object. Thus my practice constitutes a disinterment of Duchamp's corpus, the delineations of which, by the late 1970's, had all but disappeared under accretions of subsequent practices subsuming its identity into their own.

Thus it constitutes a stripping away of hermeneutically generated attributes in order to retrieve the primary material of Duchamp's original practice residing primarily in the work itself, augmented by various contemporaneous forms of documentation - letters, news reports, interviews, reviews, memoirs, photographs and so on - which also serve to qualify both the received wisdom of contemporary hermeneutics and Duchamp's own post-apotheosis reflections.

Evidence for the establishment of an identity for a Saint Marcel of the popular imagination is plentiful in Duchamp hagiography. A comprehensive overview is presented in the section of d'Harnoncourt and McShine's *Marcel Duchamp*, entitled *A Collective Portrait of Marcel Duchamp*,⁽²¹⁾ and in Amelia Jones' *Post-Modernism and the En-gendering of Marcel Duchamp*.⁽²²⁾ The second page of her *Preface* offers the following, symptomatic, example.

These quotations, several of which provocatively evoke the usually suppressed erotic charge motivating interpretive analysis, confirm that Marcel Duchamp has been an obsessive object (and subject) of desire (in the intersecting scenarios of overt desire and oracular respect) for art writers and artists in the United States, particularly those involved in challenging the hegemony of abstract expressionism. In texts discussing post-abstract expressionist art, Duchamp is fixed simultaneously and paradoxically as seductive and eroticised enigma; "not to be found, open for everybody, impossible to write about' yet eliciting a 'sweet taste' in the body of the writer, 'inexplicable' yet 'continually explained.

One might judiciously add to this any number of equivalents, such as this quotation from André Gervais, which Jones cites at the head of her *Intertext*, on page 191, which reads as follows:

(T)he onlooker is involved literally from head to toe in analysing and interpreting Duchamp's oeuvre... (T)he entire body of Duchamp's... works is mapped onto the onlooker's body... (T)he "creative act"... is basically the erotic exchange between author and an onlooker who responds to ironism with oculism. The viewer becomes a voyeur... the reader becomes a writer... from this... I find my authorization to proceed.

Typical of the ekphrasis which then seems to have become the stock-in-trade of the 'Fine Art as Criticism' which has become Duchamp's legacy, are the two examples cited, not intentionally, by Jack Spector⁽²³⁾ who discusses an exhibition by Mike Bidlo in 1995 entitled *Fountain Origins of the World*, referencing Courbet, of course, in which a urinal was installed in front of a copy of a vaginal flower painting by Georgia O'Keeffe, à la Steiglitz in *Blindman 2*. Unsurprisingly, the O'Keeffe flower is a Rose. Bidlo went on to produce more than 3000 variations on the *Fountain* motif. The second cites Tim Thyzel's exhibition, at the Cynthia Broan Gallery in N.Y.C, in the 1990's, of an ensemble of " Bathroom Brancusi's" which had been preceded by an endless column of toilet bowls; the artist is assumed to be interested in drawing comparisons between Duchamp and Brancusi's androgyny.

As his title suggests, and that of his article in Source XVIII.4 (Summer, 1999): 40-47, entitled *A Symbolist Antecedent of the Androgenous Q in Duchamp's L.H.O.O.Q.* confirms, neither Spector himself, nor the magazine in which he writes, *tout-fait*, is exactly immune from this condition. This inclination is confirmed by André Gervais' blatantly unashamed encomium in the 1999 issue of the same organ entitled *For a Portrait of Marcel Duchamp: The Dedications Speak*.

But this affect is neither new nor untypical, since the foundation of what is manifest by the time of Duchamp's death was deeply entrenched at the beginning of his career, since a lyrical approach to Duchamp's work, dissolving the boundaries between producer and consumer, was inaugurated in 1912 by Apollinaire, which Raynal noted in the first issue of *Montjoie !*, of 1914:

All men, all beings with whom we have passing contact have left traces in our memory, and these traces of life have a reality whose details can be examined and copied. Together these traces thus acquire personalities with individual characteristics that can be captured in art through a purely intellectual process.

Such traces are to be found in Marcel Duchamp's paintings.⁽²⁴⁾

This same transformative power of affective evocation is present in Breton's equally solicitous soliloquy on Duchamp's equally seductive exterior, from *Littérature*, October 1922, which consolidates the tradition:

The admirable beauty of the face imposes itself through no striking detail, and likewise, anything one can say about the man is shattered against a polished plaque that discloses nothing of what takes place in the depths; and those laughing eyes, without irony, without indulgence, that dispel the slightest shadow of concentration and reveal the solicitude of the man to preserve a perfectly amiable exterior; elegance in its most fatal quality, that goes beyond elegance, a truly supreme *ease*: thus Marcel Duchamp appeared to me in the course of his last stay in Paris; I had not seen him before, and, because of certain strokes of his intelligence that had reached me, I had expected something marvellous.

The role and importance of the March 1945 issue of *View Magazine*, series V⁽²⁵⁾, in this process cannot be over-estimated, not least because, in perpetuating Breton's aesthetic, it simultaneously rehearsed the curatorial strategies of Sidney Janis who, in the 1950's, retrieved and reinstated, via replication, the hitherto invisible genre of the Readymade. This canonisation of Duchamp's persona was rehearsed earlier by the hagiography Janis co-authored with his wife Harriet, which was printed in the edition of *View*, all of whose articles comprehensively venerate Duchamp in this rich vein. Here we learn of the counter-wise arch-rebel anti-artist under whose apostatic aegis new works miraculously and mysteriously come into being out of the depths of the serenity that surrounds, and the tranquillity that informs, his life and person. Here the man and his miracles emerge from the same crucible, to be cast from the same mould, this time, of an unfathomable serenity. So authentic are his works, so unorthodox, so far removed from centuries-old patterns of material and conceptual substance as to be scarcely recognisable as the products of creative activity at all, since their thaumaturge has departed from all existing norms. Typical is the veritable maze of cobwebs made from three miles of string, conjured for the surrealist exhibition dedicated to the Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies in 1941, which defied the un-initiate to see, perceive or understand (much as a Christian martyr's catacomb-enfolded shrine might defy the comprehension of the pagan.)

Janis' final, baptismal, paragraph, enriched by the rhetoric of chthonic excavation, (in which tapping the resources of the deeply embedded, little explored veins results in the rich yield of the treasure trove, born of the pulsating and fecund esthetic sensibility, still essentially untouched,) reads as follows.

As fascinating as are the many techniques and philosophic ideas in themselves, they serve the more important function of being aids to the reëxamination of esthetic concepts, of contemporary culture and its relation to culture in general. That Duchamp's esthetic

sensibility enabled him to do this on a high spiritual plane adds immeasurably to his achievement. Perhaps more than any of his contemporaries he has rediscovered the magic of the object and its esoteric relation to life, for centuries obscured in the Greek concept of sculpture. Contemporary points of view may be found in Duchamp's work, cubism, futurism, *collage*, dada and surrealism. This is not eclecticism, but the varied activity of a creative nature too large to be confined in any one movement. So all-encompassing, so pulsating with contemporaneity and so fecund is his work that as various phases of vanguard art unfold and develop, they find it in their counterpart....the treasure trove of subtleties of creative ideas and techniques is still essentially untouched. Tapping these resources will provide a rich yield for the new generation of painters, in whose awareness lies the future of twentieth century painting: for here, deeply embedded with meaning, is one of the great, little explored veins in contemporary art.

What is of interest here is that, interpolated between these eulogies, introducing Duchamp's whole oeuvre for the first time, is the first public identification of Duchamp with Roussel, and chess. In this centrefold triptych, produced by Duchamp himself, and Frederick Kiesler, Duchamp is represented as an adept in his laboratory, in a collage which conflates the *Large Glass* with the *Etant Donnés* he was to commence the following year. The significance of this is that, in that year, 1946, in an interview with J J Sweeney, Duchamp announced, for the first time, that it had been Roussel who was responsible for his *Glass*, in 1912.

3. Pragmatics. Duchamp's Milieu.

Pragmatic: Relating to the affairs of a community.
 Busy, active, businesslike.
 Meddling, opinionated, dictatorial, dogmatic.
 Treating the facts of history, and their connection with each other
 as cause and effect.

The advantages of a historically-grounded enquiry into the milieus from which Duchamp's new strategy emerged are displayed by the following texts, Adrian Hicken's *Apollinaire, Orphism and Cubism*, Lynda Henderson's *Duchamp in Context: Science and Technology in the Large Glass and Related Works*, and John Moffit's *Alchemist of the Avant -Garde*.⁽²⁶⁾

The virtues of rigour in the application of such an approach is ironically demonstrated by Jerrold Siegel,⁽²⁷⁾ who attempts to give a clear account of Duchamp's intentions and the ideas behind his work by deepening the common set of impulses linking his whole career since, according to Siegel's reasoning, Duchamp's objects can only be understood as symptoms of his psychological needs, beyond which there is no meaning, since they were presumably valued by their owners as representatives of that kind of art which was emblematic of a particular kind of modernity of experience. Siegel's argument is thus predicated on the assumption that, in order to understand the relation between modern life and the culture it spawned, we need to see, through Duchamp, what is taken to be destructive, and attend to how it was constructed, using Duchamp's work as evidence.

But Siegel's thesis founders, as does its inversion, Duve's,⁽²⁸⁾ on the reef of simple fact. Duve argues that the genre of the readymade emerged, as a result of Duchamp's Munich experience, not in Munich but in New York, three years later. This not only contradicts the causality on which his argument is predicated, for by the same token one searches in vain for a manifestation of a pre-1918 New York experience in the work that Duchamp completes in 1920's Europe after his return from Argentina in 1919; Duve's argument also denies Duchamp's own testimony, as presented to his sister Suzanne in a letter of January the 15th, 1916, from New York, in which he announces the birth of the genre.⁽²⁹⁾ But whilst agreeing with Siegel's argument apropos Duchamp's abdication of avant-garde practice (but in 1912) one cannot concur with a conclusion which depends from an assumption that the moment critical to Duchamp's assumed self-understanding, from which his radically altered activities apparently arise, was his passage to the new situation and audience of the USA, in

1915, since his work clearly demonstrates that the damascene conversion provoking his radical change of practice occurred three years before his emigration, in Munich.

Symptomatic of the methodological problems compromising contemporary hermeneutics is the appropriateness of the theoretical grounding of David Hopkins' thesis.⁽³⁰⁾ Genuflecting before a post-structural feminist theoretical construction, Hopkins attempts to identify in the products of Duchamp's pictorial practice, from before 1915, evidence of a prescient social construction of gender, which, drawing on Antliff, he claims Duchamp developed in a self-conscious reaction against an implicitly gendered, overtly masculinist, Cubist pictorial practice, making him "maybe almost unique" within his period in dismantling the codes by which the male viewpoint is privileged by and within representation.

This hypothesis would appear to stand or fall on Hopkins' ability to demonstrate that a culturally specific formulation can be replicated within a set of cultural determinants other than those which gave rise to it, to such a degree as to make the two indistinguishable from one another. But since the determinants which made Cubism possible must be assumed not to be identical to those which gave rise to a post-structural Feminism, in whose ideology his thesis is grounded, his ambition would seem to conflict with a fundamental precept of the theoretical position he assumes as a basis for his methodology - that specific cultural formations are culturally specific. And once we acknowledge the pre-eminence of the sources in the syncretistic Esoteric Tradition Hopkins himself points us towards, and examines in some detail, it becomes obvious that the themes he identifies in Duchamp's work all have their correspondences in sources to be found there -, Hermeticism, the Occult, Cabalism, Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism and Gnosticism, plus Philosophy, High Catholicism, Science, Symbolism, the Schulamite tradition, etc. One such theme is gender, but a gender constructed not socially or politically, but bio-metaphysically.

This decontextualisation constructing Duchamp's practice as a post-modernism *avant la lettre*, opens Hopkins' analysis to a propensity to cast it more as a reiteration of his own contemporary values.

What would seem to indicate a typical methodological weakness in the above is that for the process described to have any credence, Duchamp's practice, and the discursive context within which it developed, would have had to have been informed by both Saussurian linguistics and film-theory, a proposition historically unsustainable. Further, it was Duchamp's deliberate adoption of an emblematic form

of expression which not only gave rise to the specific expressive forms Hopkins identifies. This renders it susceptible to analysis not by a Semiotics predicated on an arbitrary relationship between a sign and its meaning, but rather by a semeiology predicated on exactly the opposite. This latter, inextricably bound to the form itself, was, like the subject it articulated, Hermeticism, formulated in late antique Egypt, not post World War 2 America.

Further, the authority for the theoretical foundation on which the validity of Hopkins' argument appears to stand is not situated squarely in his Introduction, where one might reasonably expect to find it, but tucked away in a dense bibliographical footnote in his first chapter.⁽³¹⁾ This reinforces a suspicion, which appears to be confirmed elsewhere, that Hopkins is not entirely happy with the viability of his project, as statements such as "even as the social construction of gender and post-modern theory ceases to have the methodological novelty it once had." and "If I tackled the same problem now, I would no doubt produce a very different book." would appear to indicate. And the late reflection that "it should be emphasised that the sense of Duchamp's identifying with a female mode of expression is, to a certain extent, an outcome of grafting contemporary concerns onto his work", would appear to vindicate such circumspection.

Hicken's more productive approach is informed by a recognition of the fact that "esoteric and occult literature and ideas which once informed much avant-garde artistic theorizing and production, which modernist formalist histories marginalized as irrelevant embarrassments or ignored altogether, has developed gradually," noting how contributions of Golding, Schwartz, Henderson, Moffit, Fabre and others "have transformed approaches to early twentieth-century art and its iconography."

Noting the controversial status of Shapiro's and Breton's iconographical investigations of the 1930's and 1940's, the products of whose successors, "attempting to uncritically expand the esoteric iconography of cubism ..became easy targets for post-Saussurian models of signification indifferent to those historical considerations and identifiable artistic intentions central to iconology", Hicken argues, in his Introduction, that "the greater variety of texts now deployed in the attempt to reconstruct those frames of reference with which identifiable producers and audiences, however small, consumed and made sense of particular works of art, is proving productive."

Henderson's intention is to use the four editions of Duchamp's published notes, of 1914, 1934, 1960 and 1980, (*The Box of 1914*, *The Green Box*, *A L'Infinif* and the *Posthumously Published Notes*) to account for the iconography and subject matter of *the Large Glass* in reference to contemporary developments in science, a subject she is more than qualified to characterise as having been largely ignored until 1966; her specific enterprise, to set the *Large Glass* against the context of a particular historical possibility, in order to identify the likely choices for Duchamp's possible meanings.

In privileging Duchamp's notes, Henderson follows Adcock, who had, in 1983, for the first time addressed systematically the question of Duchamp's (assumed) sophisticated understanding of contemporary innovations in Maths and Physics apropos conceptions of the 4th dimension informing the *Large Glass* and its Notes.

Whilst acknowledging that hermeneutics argues that such a context is complex and elusive, citing the standard touchstones, texts by Derrida and Skinner entitled *Signature Event Context* and *The Return of Grand Theory*, Henderson feels that it is possible to proceed with a historical investigation if constituting a self-conscious practice, mindful of the fact that we operate on the other side of a paradigm shift separating classical from quantum physics, and relativity. Hedging her bets, since she cannot with confidence necessarily assume Duchamp's intentions exactly, Henderson is confident that she can " establish a range of historically grounded possibilities by testing them against the evidence of Duchamp's work."

With this different focus, Henderson's thesis amplifies those of Hicken and Moffit, specifically through a magisterial identification of the iconographical sources of both the *Large Glass* and associated works in contemporary scientific innovation, conceived of as magic by many research and applied scientists, especially in electromagnetic communication, such as the spiritualists Tesla, Baird, Edison, Bell, and Marconi; the new magical science cohabited with the spirit world on the same music-hall bills, and, as a consequence, in the popular consciousness.

But, whilst comprehensively demonstrating all of the above, Henderson fails to fully acknowledge that the primary use of contemporary science, in art, was to allegorise the ancient esoteric beliefs that it was now seen to confirm. As Moffit makes exhaustively plain, Duchamp was neither scientist, mathematician nor scholar. (In fact, his profession was that of a cartoonist who had enjoyed no post-graduate education or specialised professional training in anything other than print-making , in

order to reduce his national service by one year), as an ‘art worker’, and with no more knowledge of taxonomy than that required of a library assistant, who shelves books. However, he could absorb the esoteric through myriad sources, such as the discussions at Puteaux, and Kupka.

Set within this broader Orphic framework, Moffit’s project aims to decipher and interpret Duchamp’s complete oeuvre as a coherent series of illustrations arising from the philosophical system of Hermeticism. Whilst conscious of its limitations he exhaustively demonstrates the virtues of a methodological approach which runs against the grain of assumptions symptomatic of a contemporary criticism he characterises as being unconcerned with formal description and preoccupied with the interpretation of intrinsic context, since it was founded on New Historicist assertions of cultural embedded-ness, claims that ideology creates style, and the view that the artist is a passive instrument merely recording quotidian intellectual fashions. As reiterated by Hicken, the subject which Moffit’s analysis privileges has largely been anathematized by advocates of this tradition, which seems to be symptomatic of the fate suffered by the Hermetic Tradition for much of its history. For the most part demonised, much like an embarrassing black sheep, Hermeticism has been marginalised by an institutionalised and repressive hegemonic orthodoxy.

As Stephan Hoeller⁽³²⁾ explains, ultimately anathematised by the increasingly normative Catholic Church in Rome, Hermeticism re-entered Western religious and philosophical thought through Ficino’s neo-Platonism, only to be repressed during the Reformation and Counter Reformation, its key texts, following Casauban, regarded as fraudulent. (The Wisdom God Hermes, representative of a new ecumenism of the late Roman Hellenistic world, was one of three principal Egyptian archetypes of divinity, the others being the Mother Goddess Isis and the Victim God Osiris, whose cults emerged simultaneously along the shores of the Mediterranean in a syncretic environment of interrelated old religions, new philosophies, rites and cults.) By the eighteenth century, anything occult, mystical and superstitious was so marginalized that no critical, academically respectable, edition of the *Corpus Hermeticum* appeared in English until Walter Scott’s *Hermetica* of 1924.

Apropos the contemporary circumstance Moffit is addressing, it would seem apposite to quote Hoeller verbatim at this point.

If one needs an example of how egregiously academic scholarship can err, and then persist in its errors, one need only contemplate the “official” scholarly views of the Hermetic

books over the 150 years or so, up to the middle of the twentieth century. The general view was that these writings were Neo-platonic or anti-Christian forgeries, of no value to the study of religion. By the middle of the nineteenth century, such scholars as Gustave Parthey and Louis Menard began to raise objections to the forgery theory, but it took another fifty years for their views to gain a hearing.

This takes us precisely to the period when Duchamp came to Paris, where the latter's *Étude sur l'origine des livres hermetiques et translations d'Hermès Trismegistus* had been published in 1866; the former's *Hermès Trismegisti Poemander* was published eight years before, in Berlin.

So to reject Moffit's thesis, and evidence, requires the entertainment of the probability that, of all of the members of Apollinaire's milieu, his siblings and friends, Duchamp alone was totally unaware of what had been staring both the general population and the avant-garde squarely in the face, in one form or another, for decades. That this view does not survive exposure to Moffit's evidence demonstrates that, symptomatically, Duchamp was deeply immersed in the Esoteric.

Moffit's approach is characterised by a thematic organisation of Duchamp's production also reflected in the articulation of Henderson's "4-dimensional geometric obsessions" of '83,⁽³³⁾ Adcock's "geometrical obsessions", also of '83,⁽³⁴⁾ Ramirez's "popular culture organic counterparts of Duchamp's erotic and mechanistic metaphors", of '93,⁽³⁵⁾ and Henderson's "contemporary scientific contexts to the iconography of the *Large Glass*", of '98.⁽³⁶⁾

His emphatically declared aim, assuming Hermeticism as the principal organising topic of Duchamp's operational philosophy, with Alchemy providing the substantial iconographical source material, is to link previous disparate conceptual concerns of esoteric geometry and overt occultism, and pseudo-science and auto-engendering, to an identifiable complementary and enhancing over-riding philosophy. The syncretic nature of the broad Esoteric Tradition to which Duchamp and his colleagues enjoyed easy access allowed a response outside predictable limits, not requiring the pursuit of personal aesthetic goals in isolation, and allowing the satisfaction of different customer requirements. Thus, contingent works could be provoked by specific and strictly unrepeatable circumstances.

Moffit is anxious to address lacunae pointed out by Daniels in 1992⁽³⁷⁾ apropos the danger of interpretation operating within formal iconographical resemblances alone, without any questioning of historical contemporary sources and influences. Fundamental to his robust approach is the assumption that the claim that

Alchemy informed Duchamp's art is not a new thesis, having existed long enough to have been disparaged by what he identifies as currently designated experts, authors of an academically approved picture of modernist originality, with which it does not accord, which is itself, ironically, like alchemy, a creation myth, for which originality only matters if one considers Moffit's case to be a challenge to the status of ART, and artistic genius, to essentially outdated Romantic perceptions of the sanctity of art and the originality of Artistic Genius, both exalted since the Romantic era, but which is an idea which it is now necessary to abandon.

Moffit's fundamentally forensic project makes a case presenting as material evidence innumerable citations from the "amply stocked" laboratory of Hermeticism readily available to the artist and his colleagues, (not least Apollinaire.)

In short, for Moffit, Duchamp's 'arcana' reflected subject matter and imagery widely available from scientific advances, and their modern counterparts, in modern occultist pseudo-scientific thought, practice and publications, to which he would have enjoyed most immediate access to via his brothers' neighbour, Kupka.

Equally iconographic and textual, coherent and contextually complementary, evidence for Moffit's case is abundant. Supporting the burden of his argument, Moffit finds in the published record only two disclaimers by Duchamp, and one affirmation. However, for him there too many coincidences, too many close alignments between Duchamp's scenarios and motifs, and their equivalents in traditional alchemical terminology and iconography, for his claims to be so easily marginalized or dismissed

Further, Moffit's addressing of the forgotten historical sources originally propelling avant-garde modernism can be comfortably set within the wider framework examined by Tuchman,⁽³⁸⁾ of contemporaneous avant-garde and abstract painting, whose territory circumscribed to a large degree the parameters of Duchamp's own social environment.

For Moffit, Alchemy provides the model for his explication, since it was a major statement propelled by a unique, already pictorialised ubiquitous ready-made topic. His thesis then addresses the lacunae which are a consequence of the fact that up to now there has been a lack of a substantial historical foundation specifically linking Duchamp's thought and art with Alchemy, just one strand of the Esoteric Tradition, since only this would satisfy the demand that only a modern Occultism - which Alchemy patently was - is pertinent to Duchamp's project. So the existing historical vacuum, with its subsequent lack of a credible cultural context,

compromised previous interpretations of the esoteric in any explanation of Duchamp's career as a whole. What was absent was a detailed analysis of the individual character and historical situation of various diverse components of the Esoteric Tradition, plus any demonstration of their relationship to it expressed in Duchamp's work and thought; and further, in a broader field of production, as Henderson shows, of its identity with the unquestioningly progressive, i.e. 'modern', ambitions of Duchamp's contemporaries, which Hicken also demonstrates, using Apollinaire as a focus. Added to this is a hitherto lack of chronological analysis of Duchamp's exposure to, and forms of acquaintance with, this subject matter, which, Moffit feels, notwithstanding a lack of evidence of any a linear trajectory to his work hitherto presented, can be clearly demonstrated.

So Moffit seeks to address the problems arising from a general lack of methodologically sound historical analysis which manifested itself in problems with the discourse on the internally complex and dynamically evolving Esoteric Tradition. As a consequence, he seeks to remedy the lack of detailed analysis of the crucial historical role played by both the Esoteric Tradition and scientific innovations within the French Symbolist milieu of Duchamp's early maturity, typically omitted in interpretive studies of the artist. In attempting to remedy this, he recognised the requirement of a solid grounding in broader cultural problematics, in historical and documentable fact, without which earlier esoteric interpretations applied to Duchamp have lacked credible foundation, leading to the approach being dismissed out of hand, a point reiterated in Hicken's methodological preamble.

Typical of the evidence Moffit cites is the fact that in the critical period in question, just at the time Duchamp gained first-hand access to original source material in the Bibliothèque Ste-Geneviève, a bibliography listing hundreds of publications dealing with 'psychic and occult' sciences was published in France. This was Caillet's *Manuel Bibliographique*, a handy catalogue of all components of the 'indigestible mishmash' that was the Esoteric Tradition, comprising Alchemy, the Cabala, the Tarot, Rosicrucianism, Theosophy, and Anthroposophy, in short, the essential ideological context for Hermeticism, whose oldest texts go back to the Hellenistic era.

This analysis naturally leads Moffit to the question as to what the inner significance of *L'Alchimie* was for Duchamp post 1911; according to his reasoning, since Duchamp's modern mind was neither medieval nor particularly scholarly, it is logical to turn for evidence for the strictly modern range of alchemical ideas to

explanations written by his own contemporary, equally French, and modernist, minds, such as Albert Poisson, who had, typically for an archetypal esotericist, nothing at all new to contribute to the ancient Philosophical Science. Since his *Theorie et Symboles Alchemique*,⁽³⁹⁾ an inexpensive *divulgateion* of the ancient wisdom, costing 5 francs, was designed to be consumed by modern Frenchmen, why try for originality. But this digest of otherwise indigestible primordial wisdom, now easily accessible to Duchamp, like the work of the author on which it draws, Pernety,⁽⁴⁰⁾ constantly quotes from his sources, scrupulously citing author and title. This limited bibliography then became extended after Duchamp's Munich trip, which coincided with both a total change of mode of expression and direct access to classical sources at the Bibliothèque Ste-Geneviève. Moffit identifies in both its catalogue and its extant holdings references to much older publications, many in Latin, and some with German titles, both languages which Duchamp read.

In short, Duchamp only needed Poisson to get started; Poisson then directs him to Pernety, whose almost inexhaustible *dictionnaire* leads him to further sources, and whose invocation, apropos Alchemy being a kind of artwork which actively works to perfect Nature, recommends that " you will yourself experience great pleasures through deciphering, by spelling out, so to speak, this unknown language."

Hicken's project focuses on the manner in which Apollinaire's erudite emblematic interests bore an immediate effect on the Cubist artists within his Orphic orbit, as manifested in the effluorescence of recondite imagery which informs the work of these painter friends for whom he was apologist; for example, his *Le Bestiaire* opens with the image of Orpheus who addresses the reader in obscure terms ultimately developed from the author's familiarity with, and commentaries upon, and poetic adaptations and translations of *The Pimander* of Hermes Trismegistus.

Apollinaire offered ideals such as the 'sublime' for his painter friends to realize. His model, 16th and 17th century syncretism, embodied the pursuit of the emblematical and allegorical, and thus that of *le sujet (poesie)*, within contemporary painting; for Hicken, Apollinaire's esoteric sources for *Zone*, the paean to modernity recited by him to Gaby Buffet's mother, in Duchamp's company, during the Etival adventure of 1912, demonstrates the poet's immersion in the art and iconography of French Renaissance and 17th century culture through its identification with the sacral, mysterious transformative power of art, an idea whose immediate precedents lay in

the transcendent metaphysics and platonic emblematisation of light, and in the Hermetical textual fragments of classical antiquity, including alchemical allegory, of late Symbolism. Such an emphasis within pictorial representation inevitably engendered the general tendency towards the diagrammatic which was symptomatic of much of the work which resulted.

The ubiquity, in the milieu in question, of substantial quantities of a wide variety of texts, which for Hicken illuminates a much broader and deeper frame of reference within which identifiable producers and audiences, however small, consumed and made sense of particular works of art, is matched by that of the occult interests that Hicken identifies.

In order to recover Apollinaire's conception of Orphism and its impact on his contemporaries, Hicken proposes his subject's programme to be an iconographical synthesis based on an analysis which aims to reveal material determinants and ideological discourses. In moving away from an orthodox debate focussed on the 'abstract', 'musical' and 'pure' colour values commonly associated with the 'abstraction' of the Delaunays, Hicken advocates the consideration of the neoplatonic aspirations of such works as Robert Delaunay's *La Ville de Paris*.

In the same period Mercereau, who was both in the Cubist milieu and close to Papus, dedicated a number of works, sedulous listings of Hermetic sources and commentaries available since 1911, to the founders of *La Rose et Croix*. This acknowledges the growing number of new editions and re-impressions of works by Albertus Magnus, Paracelsus, Agrippa of Nettesheim, Böhme and Duchanteau et al, published alongside contemporary works by Crookes, Barlet, Papus, Durville, Baraduc and so on. Mercereau also notes an expansion of periodical literature dealing with occult and esoteric themes. He also published supernatural stories in the spiritualist journal *La Vie Mystérieuse*, of Eugene Figuière, who published both *Du Cubisme* and *Les Peintres Cubistes*.

Apollinaire's fascination with the arcane embellished a reputation for erudition. In containing volumes on the subjects of iconography and emblematica, medical iconography, esoteric and occult philosophies, his personal library mirrored the collections of the institutional libraries he frequented, at one of which Duchamp was to find employment. That Apollinaire's own collection would have provided as immediately accessible for the furthering Duchamp's own esoteric interest as his mind clearly did seems barely worthy of remark. As heir to a tradition which

understood poetry to be the exploration of the mysterious, the wide variety of occult sources Apollinaire cultivated in pursuit of more potent metaphorical and allegorical imagery – as had his predecessors Nerval, Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Mallarmé – was symptomatic. But, as Hicken stresses, although Apollinaire's fundamental artistic attitudes were unremarkable for his times, his early immersion in them was the exact opposite.

Whilst the Symbolist renewal of theoretical and self-reflective aspects of alchemical discourse prefigured a mobilisation of metaphor, allegory and enigma familiar to avant-garde art practice, at the same time Apollinaire's narrower conception of classical survival belonged to the more accessible popular playful continuance of allegorical practice evident in humorous magazines such as *Fantasia* or *La Vie Parisienne*, the very periodicals of the type to which Marcoussis, Gris, Duchamp and his brother, Jacques Villon, submitted cartoons; and here it is worth noting that the very time at which these designers began to adopt cubist mannerisms in their own painting, and so visibly declare their allegiance to the avant-garde, witnesses the simultaneous decline and disappearance of many of the titles they patronised. So it should come as no surprise that the staple sentiments and imagery expressed in magazine advertising and copy then reflect an equivalence to the revival of allegorical themes and classical motifs within the avant-garde. That it also corresponds visually with the emblematic vocabulary of esoteric organisations representing the occult revival is of no small consequence to our thesis. So it should come as no further surprise that those paintings by Duchamp which Apollinaire specifically cites, in his entry in *Les Peintres Cubiste*, are those works characterised by (essentially rhetorical) N-shaped compositions, displaying flames of colour and the effect of teeming movement, in which the artist creates a contrast between the actual composition of his paintings and their highly intellectual titles, pursuing this to the condition of the esoteric or frankly abstruse; in short, emblematic images evoking the illustrations of the hermetic tradition, articulating conceptions not determined by aesthetic considerations but by the energy of just a few lines. This clearly refers to *Vierge 1* and *2*, which Duchamp produced in Munich, one of which was shown at the Salon d'Automne of 1912 immediately preceding the Section d'Or. As Hicken demonstrates, these works illustrate the same esoteric themes and alchemical and cabalistic images, such as the androgyne, through which Chagall articulates a poetic identity for Apollinaire, in his 1914 portrait. It was these works which are assumed to

have provoked Gleizes' observation, made in *Du Cubisme*, about the systematic obscurity and fanciful occultism of cabalistic signs.

In this milieu, the idea of the artist's studio as [an alchemical] research laboratory now became ubiquitous. In it cubists would, in the same breath, invoke the theories of Leonardo and Riemann and the 'fourth dimension', or embrace Le Section d'Or, a concept borrowed from Peladan's earlier translation of Leonardo's *Treatise on Painting*. Recourse to Poincaré's essays, referencing a knowledge of his philosophy of science, identified an air of 'conventionality' or normative use of a Euclidian conception of space, and the embracing of the idea that it was not true but merely 'advantagious' being symptomatic of a licence to break with conventions of pictorial rendition.

Belief in universality of personal experience remained largely unquestioned, historical hero-worship was rampant, individual action and achievement reached mythical proportions and avant-gardes embraced an anti-materialist millenarian synthesis, trends synonymous with ideals of the Esoteric Tradition, and identified by 1913 by Apollinaire and Raynal. Hicken's observation that the philosophical implications of higher dimensions, as opposed to more literal geometric ones, were regularly summarised in the many Parisian theosophical and esoteric publications, such as *La Gnose*, with which Apollinaire was routinely familiar, is then of some importance to our thesis.

By this time, the popular notion of the nature of science had changed; now, it revealed matter to be not solid but radiant. New families of natural, 'alchemical', transformations were discovered, and familiar chemicals were now perceived to be different, the grossly materialistic now demonstrated to be a transcendent reality of scintillating insubstantialities, of electrical charges and ethereal forces.

Since the Symbolists, alchemical transmutation had become common metaphor for artistic creation, and the work of art was now seen as an androgynous product of the artist's interaction with nature, approximating the perfection of the ideal. In this milieu, Mallarmé had called his projected poetic resolution of his project *Le Grande Oeuvre*, the object of which was to create an intensely controlled language capable of expressing the essence of things. In his 1892 essay *Les Symbolistes*, Aurier articulated a common mystical ideology in claiming the work of art as a new being, an additive sum of two souls, artist-father and nature-mother.

That which had been on the boil since the 1870's, which saw Cross and Peladan published by Chacornac and Chamuel, was now symptomatically reflected in Apollinaire's adoption of the pseudonym Paracelsus, in the signing of his articles in Paul Guillaume's *Les Arts à Paris*; and by mid-1914 he had reviewed the re-edition of the *Mutus Liber* (1677) presented by the Martinist 'Papusian', Dr Marc Haven.

So Duchamp's closeness to Apollinaire in the years running up to 1912/3 appears significant in the light of Apollinaire's interests detailed above, not least since it was Duchamp's works specifically dealing with established alchemical themes and motifs which were reviewed by the critic in late 1912 within his new category of proto- Orphic art. Richardson confirms Hicken's characterisation of a milieu imbued with the occult and esoteric in his discussion of Derain:

His interests in literature, philosophy, mysticism, comparative religion, science, mathematics, aesthetics and musicology were the more congenial to Picasso in that they tended towards the magical and arcane. Derain's notebooks and letters reveal that he had studied the Cabala, astrology, Pythagoras, Buddhism, the Tarot, Charles Henry's mathematical theories, numerology, Wagner's operas, Nietzsche and Plotinus (neo-platonism was one of the few constants in Derain's ideology) Much of this knowledge had already filtered down to Picasso by way of Apollinaire and Max Jacob, but they were poets. Derain had the advantage of perceiving how philosophical theories and mystical beliefs of the most diverse kind could be woven into a personal aesthetic, just as antithetical styles could be welded into a pictorial synthesis.⁽⁴¹⁾

(As for Picasso, so with Derain, and Duchamp, perhaps.)

Derain's 1912 woodcut entitled 'The Orphic', suffused with eucharistic iconography, promoted a connotation with the fourth dimension acceptable to Apollinaire. From 1912 Apollinaire identified the Orphic as a metaphysical development of Cubism, a tendency which had started in 1910. To him, the Cubist initiative represented the "*marque de l'époque, le style moderne*", combining the metaphysical with the 4th dimension, which designated the realm necessary for the Platonic ideal to occupy. His figurative use of the term indicated a quasi-religious transcendence he wished to identify in certain contemporary works of Chirico.

So Apollinaire's Hermetic and Classical inclinations were neither nostalgic nor historicist, nor, being screened through the veil of modern images and experience in the manner of a simultaneous projection, a bigoted evocation of lost heritage.

Apollinaire's bibliographic acquisitions mirrored heterogeneously those of the libraries he most frequently visited, the Mazarin and the Bibliothèque National, comparing his library in the terms of that of his fictitious heresiarch Benedetto Orphie in *L'Heresiarch et Cie* of 1910 - precious, commonplace, theological, philosophical,

literary and scientific. However, his voracious appetite for the arcane was expressed as much through friendships and professional contacts, developed with scholars and writers, as by his own efforts; for example, through Leo Rouanet, translator of Francisco de Hollanda's *Quatre Dialogues sur le Peinture* of 1548: or Pierre Paul Plan, the biographer of Rabelais, and author of the fully illustrated catalogue raisonné of Jacques Caillot's *Maitre Gravure*, of which Apollinaire possessed a presentation copy: and the erudite Remy de Gourmont, founder of the *Mercure de France* and collaborator of Jarry, who took his cue from his ancestor Gille, who had been instrumental in introducing into France the vogue for cursive Greek types established by Manutius in Venice. In addition, he published *L'Almanach de l'Ymagier* in 1897, dealing with matters zodiacal, astrological, "magique, cabalistique, littéraire et prophétique." In 1904 he founded the *Revue des Idées*.

Symptomatic of this social context for the exchange of esoteric references were the Puteaux Sunday soirées.

So, quotidian social intercourse being a routine mechanism for the dissemination of ideas on all matters esoteric amongst the membership of Apollinaire's avant-garde milieu, Duchamp's acquaintance with the available emblematic literature was far from unlikely, unusual or superficial, to the point where any suggestion of his ignorance of it would seem unrealistic.

Occultism had become fashionable with the Symbolist revival of hermetic confraternities; typical, by 1903, was, the studio of a fictitious 'eroto-mystic' painter-prophet Norlinger, in Lorraine's *Pelleastres*. Characteristic of an artistic posture still available to younger artists, in which sacral and ritual objects jostled with alchemical retorts presenting something of the appearance of a laboratory, this was to be replicated 20 years later in the weird apartment of Alexandre Mercereau crowded with bric-a-brac and somewhat mournful ecclesiastical momentos; Mercereau had known Gris at the Abbé de Creteil. (One might add, of course, Duchamp's own studio attached to the Arensberg apartment at 33 West 67th Street, New York City. Siegel notes, on page 127, that visitors to Duchamp's studio in New York were struck by the way he had filled it with what seemed ridiculous objects; that in 1917 Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia described him there inhabiting what she called a kind of Capernaum, surrounded by chosen objects. She could only perceive disorder in the collection, because Duchamp alone knew the private language which his objects spoke to him.

H P Roché gives a similar account of a visit to Duchamp's studio in his novel about Duchamp, *Victor*.⁽⁴²⁾

Apollinaire himself received his visitors in the mock solemnity of 'Platonic' banquets, adopting the posture of hierophant in the enactment of cryptic rituals formerly associated with symbolist circles, and reminiscent of the evocations of antiquity by the renaissance humanists Apollinaire knew from his reading of the *Commedia dell'Arte*. They were characterised by a pomposity tempered with humour and a gleeful obscurantism; Raynal describes Apollinaire as a *sorte de sensualiste mystique*. This was an artificial world with countless jokes, rites and expressions unintelligible to others, *pastiches à la mode*, an *esprit de blague de l'atelier* promoted at the same time at the Bateau Lavoir, where, according to an habitué of both locations, Apollinaire's close associate André Salmon, "modernism, orphism, cubism were simultaneously in serious preparation." In the 1950's Duchamp recalled⁽⁴³⁾ that all this was difficult to understand unless you were an intimate, (which he was.) Salmon would also appear to confirm this in his Testimony against Gertrude Stein, in which he says the following.

When we dined together, for instance, Jacob would often pretend that he was a small clerk, and our conversation in a style that was half slang half peasant amused everybody in the restaurant. We invented an artificial world with countless jokes, rites and expressions that were quite unintelligible to others. Obviously she (Mss Stein) did not understand very well the rather peculiar French we used to speak.⁽⁴⁴⁾

We shall show how Duchamp's appropriation of Roussel's method illustrates perfectly how their cryptic symbols and hermetic language were adopted and adapted to new needs in an ironical ritual-cum-play of a younger generation for whom the occult and historicism were obsolete, yet they were happy to indulge in the ritual formulae. The hermetic traditions thereby transmitted across a generation provided a stock of images and procedures on to which any individual might graft their own meanings, as a cursory view of the imagery produced by, at one extreme, Chagall, and at the other, Chirico, bears witness. Therefore, Apollinaire's encouragement of an identification with 16th century procedures, with hieroglyphics and emblems, ensured that the Occult sciences formed one of the principle foundations of the avant-garde art within his orbit.

The very strangeness and mystery of this imagery was itself a recommendation to artists in search of novelty. The satisfaction to be derived from emblem books and occult authors was vicarious and poetical, exercising the

imagination in the development of artistic metaphors. The range of occult sources and the attitudes adopted towards them are revealed conveniently in two contemporary poems, Apollinaire's *Propheties*, published in *Soirées de Paris* in May 1914, and Jacob's *Connais-vous Maître Eckhart?* Here we should bear in mind, as reported by Richardson, ⁽⁴⁵⁾ that Fernande Olivier recorded in her memoirs that Jacob himself made talismans and held séances. The mock-seriousness with which this was taken, particularly by the ultra-superstitious, such as Picasso, means that it was but a small step to the many types of séance inflicted on the sincerely gullible by both the genuine and the cynically meretricious, across café tables, in drawing rooms, corner shops, beer halls, railway stations, scientific laboratories, music-hall stages, occult temples, salons, stately homes and royal courts in Europe at this time.

Duchamp needed to look no further than his milieu for a model.

Apollinaire borrowed freely from antique sources, mixing allusions with modern emblems, such as the symbolic and emotive associations of the arch and landmarks of Paris illustrated in *La Ville Lumière*. This was a practice he encouraged in his painter friends, as can be seen in Chagall's *Paris through the Window*, or in contemporaneous works by Chirico, in which fragments of the past can be seen in Paris side by side with urban novelties – gas, electricity, the Metro, department stores, the Eiffel tower. This synthesis within a Parisian milieu, of the Antique, the Renaissance and the Modern, characterises the two poems of 1912 opening and closing his *Alcools*, *Zone* and *Vendemiaire*. The first invokes the charm of a small industrial street located somewhere between the *rue Aumont-Theville* and the *avenue des Thernes*; *Vendemiaire* presents the image of relentlessly turning machinery of French industry counterpoised with the mythical wheel of Ixion: as a consequence, Paris is now centre of the universe.

So whilst Occult themes were discussed just as much as science in artistic circles, a correspondence reflected in the fact that the publisher of Gleizes and Metzinger's *Du Cubisme*, Mercereau, a member of cubist circle of Puteaux, also published *La Vie Mystérieuse* by Figuière and Apollinaire's *Les Peintres Cubistes*. Schurés *Les Grandes Initiés* of 1889 expresses views also typical of this new understanding.

Physics has insensibly come to identify the idea of matter with that of force, a step towards spiritualistic dynamism. To explain light, magnetism and electricity, scientists have been forced to posit the existence of a matter which is subtle and absolutely imponderable,

filling space and penetrating all bodies, matter which they have called ether, and this is a step in the direction of the ancient idea of the soul of the world. ⁽⁴⁶⁾

Apollinaire, a close friend of Henry's secretary Victor Goloubeff, noted Duchamp's employment in a library whose collection included not only scientific holdings but also embraced thousands of manuscripts from the 9th to the 17th centuries, hundreds of incunabula, nearly all the published works of Albertus Minutius and the family of Elzevier, and most periodicals from the 17th and 18th centuries. And it was precisely those works by Duchamp with established alchemical themes and motifs that were received by Apollinaire into his newly defined category of 'cubisme orphique', such as the 'N'-shaped compositions he treats of in *Les Peintres Cubiste*. In Hicken's view, the example from the King and Queen series of cubistic chess paintings, exhibited at La Section d'Or in October 1912, shares with others allusions to folkloristic personifications of the female and male principles following the fragmentation of primordial Adam Kadmon at the moment of the world's beginning, which features in Chagall's 'Apollinarian' works at the same time. These are the same King and Queen who at midnight on the Sabbath furnished the image of the *Mysterium coniunctionis* in later hermetic and alchemical philosophy, and thus anticipate the theme of alchemical stripping, the subject of the *Large Glass*, manifesting its first appearance in Duchamp's wedding gift to his sister in 1911, in the form of (*Jeune Homme et Jeune Fille dans*) *Le Printemps*, unless we count *Pour le Menu de dîner de la première communion de Simone Delacour*, of June 6th, 1909.

Thus it would seem that the primary material of the two 'sides' of Duchamp's expression which Roussel helped him with, his subject matter, and the conventions of representation appropriate to its articulation, were the commonplace stock-in-trade of the milieu that he had inhabited since before 1910, and from which he would strike out on his own.

Thus the fundamental precepts, identified by Moffit, shared by the partisans of all versions of the Esoteric Tradition inform Duchamp's practice. For example, the apparitions of Duchamp appearing in photographs taken in his New York studio reflect the use by spiritualist mediums of mirrors to evidence the world beyond, visible solely to privileged clairvoyants; (we note here that, in French, *séance*, also means photographic session, as *atelier*, studio, also means Masonic Lodge.) That this sub-physical manifestation from on high took the form of some sort of luminosity,

representing Cosmic energy, demonstrated that the Universe/Cosmos represents a single, eternal, ineffable substance, the fifth element, or Section d'Or;

Duchamp's admission that his life had been spent as a reconciliation of opposites reflects the belief that all things evolve according to a dialectic, through the combination of the male-female, light-dark and vertical-horizontal (etc) binaries; the goal of the Great Work, addressing the nature of man's relation to this reality, was to arrive at the equilibrium of harmony in the *coniunctio oppositorum*, a marriage of opposites expressed in image of the Bride of Conjunction;

Swedenborg transmitted to the Symbolist generation the belief that since phenomena in the physical world had dual meanings, recognition of an ongoing life 'beyond' could be achieved through the enlightened perception of symbols. Moffit traces Baudelaire's concept of correspondance, rooted in Swedenborg, through Nerval's *Amelia* and Balzac's *Seraphita*, of 1835, which features that most ubiquitous of Symbolist symbols, the androgyne which, appearing in the German Romantic novel, reappears in works by Xavier Gautier, Sâr Josephine Peladan and the Dumas Brothers. But its most familiar treatment is in the literature of Alchemy, where it functions as a symbol of the Hermetic-Alchemical *coniunctio oppositorum*. Duchamp's view that eroticism was the only 'ism' worth bothering about, being universal, thus concurs with the esoteric view that the sex act is the very image of the Creation, as the divine sign from *au-delà*, from On High, through which man (Marcel Duchamp ?) achieves his inherently female nature (Rose Sélavy?), the harmony of perfection inscribed in one flesh made whole again;

The composition of the *Large Glass* embodies the concept of 'as above, so below', that mind and matter are one, that Man is the microcosm of the Universal Macrocosm, in whom its perceptible operations are uniquely observable; what occurs in one is reflected symptomatically in the other, through Correspondence, since the Human body is a privileged sign of the Creation. The co-existence of two mutually dependent hermetic operations, one spiritual, the other material, in The Great Work, is echoed, for Moffit, in Duchamp's note reading 'the separation is an operation.' Whilst many of Duchamp's other pictorial compositions are constructed from two viewpoints, notably the *Coffee Mill* of 1911, this definition in fact includes an entire post-1912 oeuvre made up of objects consisting of a material component and an applied legend, the most obvious examples of which are the short-lived readymades;

The random assembly, and parabolic nature, of Duchamp's notes would appear to reflect the belief that his work cannot by definition contain any single definition of itself, a characteristic of its subject, the *Philosophia Perennis*, which is held to demonstrate that all religious movements are part of one single, transcendental, but now lost, primordial Unity;

Duchamp's emphasis on 'grey matter' as opposed to the functioning of the retinal in art illustrates the occult belief that the imagination is the only true reality, since imagination is defined as the action of forming a mental concept of that which is not actually present to the senses, the power the mind has of forming concepts beyond those derived from external objects, the operation of the mind, the creative faculty and genius;

The completion of the task of a self-realisation, the purpose of life, is to be realised through progressive self-discovery, via illuminist initiation; endemic to the various institutionalised versions of the Esoteric Tradition is the concept of the passage through successive ascending layers or stages of human psychical development. Duchamp's bespoke practice underlines the fact that Esotericism is fundamentally elitist. Duchamp was recommended to Alfred Steiglitz by Charles Duncan, the brother of the theosophist dancer Isadora,⁽⁴⁷⁾ as an *Urbemensch*, descended to help the less illuminated, in order to enlighten them, rather in the manner of the wise men from the East periodically venerated in the West; *Urbemenschen* are visible, to the privileged, by their arduous practice, grace, virtue and experience;

Expression of the Esoteric Tradition reveals an obsession with unique and extraordinarily complicated symbolic systems, the most common of which since the Renaissance was the numerology of the Cabala. By the application of such techniques, practitioners are empowered to influence less illuminated minds on unconscious levels, and mundane everyday or trivial objects anonymously imbue the environment with their radiance; Aleister Crowley's sigils, for example;

The linguistic grounding of Duchamp's compositional method embodies the view that underlying all was the Logos, the 'One', a Universal Creator, the Divinity of Nature expressed as Emerson's 'Over Soul', for example; and so on

In these Occult beliefs we can trace the origins of Duchamp's semiotics; via Levi, occultist postulates of Symbolist art became standard modern art theory. The

strongest evidence for this is a shared vocabulary, used by Rimbaud and Baudelaire. In it a community of shared beliefs is expressed through constantly reiterated buzzwords of both the esoteric and avant-garde traditions, words such as Analogy, Intuition, Memory, Ancient Wisdom, Harmony, Imagination, the Dream, Correspondence, Suggestion, the Symbol, Manipulation of Matter, Essences, Will, Hidden Energies, Vibration and Abstraction.

Essential to both Alchemy and Symbolism were the sign and analogy, the connection between the Sign and the Idea it signifies equating to a connection between the visible and the invisible in a way which runs counter to Saussurian or post- Saussurian Semiotics. The significance of Alchemy to Symbolism lay not in its physical procedures but rather in the symbolic, poetic value of the quest for purification it advanced. This was not Operative, but Speculative Alchemy, which for Moffit becomes the key which unlocks Duchamp's esoteric concerns - the alchemy of the word, since the transmutation of dross or lead into gold was an allegory of spiritual transmutation, whose mystical core was also that of the doctrine of the Eucharist.

Levi, like the Symbolists he influenced, exalted the word as sign of the veiled truth lying *au delà*, tantalisingly just beyond.

A key element of Apollinaire's Orphism was the idea that the sound of words was expressive of a synaesthetic rejection of the traditional mimetic functions of painting. This new genre of poetry without words, sound poems whose purpose is to return to the innermost alchemy of the word, is later reflected in Zurich Dada. According to Elderfield, the editor of Ball's diaries, an entry for June 1916 reveals him to be a dada performer in the role of magical bishop, his unique version, akin to the magico-spiritual philosophies of alchemists and theosophates, deserving the title of aesthetic mysticism. Here was the master of an art that was irrational, complex and primitive, speaking a secret language best expressed in the idea of esoteric meaninglessness, the innermost 'alchemy of the word'.

In his *Correspondances* of 1851, Levi treats of forms constituting a language which speak to us while asleep, akin to the products of hypnosis; the dream is the mirror of the soul: the invisible resides within the visible. Levi's explanation of the historical necessity for occultist obsessions with imagist signs and symbols, which rehearses Duchamp's own expository literary style, argues that hieroglyphic writing was revived, and pentacles and characters invented, to summarise an entire doctrine in

a single sign, or in whole sequences of tendencies and revelations in a word, that the prophets spoke in parables and images because abstract language was wanting to them, and because prophetic perception translates naturally into images. Taken literally by the vulgar, these images become idols or impossible mysteries.

Moffit also cites Aurier advocating, in the 1890's, that the normal and final end of painting, as well as for other arts, can never be the direct representation of objects. Its aim is to express ideas by translating them into a special language. Objects appear to clairvoyants as signs, so artists must resort to abstractions. The task of the artist, whose eye is able to distinguish essences from tangible objects, is a necessary simplification of the vocabulary of the sign. Objects are nothing but the revealers of the appearances of these ideas and, as a consequence, have importance only as signs of ideas. The canvas, made up of ideational signs, is "*l'art primordial*."

Duchamp was clearly not alone in his preoccupations; Moffit quotes Lipschitz's acknowledgement that he and his Cubist colleagues;

..made determined, if good humoured, searches in the realm of practical magic and alchemy, and tried to cultivate their spirit, if not actually pursue their ends. Thus, we had *The Emerald Tablet* by Paracelsus...the Cubists were also very much interested in the occult properties of images...We used to spend hours playing this (neo-alchemical) game, as if to prove to ourselves that there really were intangible properties in matter that transcended physical reality. ⁽⁴⁸⁾

(That the *Emerald Tablet* had been attributed to Hermes Trismagistus since the Renaissance should warn against any expectation of much scholarly rigor on the part of these artists; clearly, the occult visual markers of their works, Sacred Geometry and Higher Planes of Existence, were merely those of the then popular esoterica. That Lipschitz was a member of the same Masonic lodge that Gris joined in 1924, the Voltaire, would appear to confirm a seamless continuity between the esoteric and exoteric manifestations of occult beliefs.)

Alchemy had actually become newsworthy in Duchamp's youth, since its 'truth' was seen to have been proved by the transmutation in radiation, thus satisfying the esoteric requirement to speak in a modern voice, as Henderson's identification of Duchamp's allegorised scientific iconographical sources for the *Large Glass* indicates. Due to Elias Levi, Transmutation, the idea of essence being transmuted through varying substances, became a metaphor for progress of self-perfection, enlightenment and a return to the Great Oneness. In 1902 Alchemy became officially scientific, and therefore a topic of modernist interest. The announcement of Rutherford and Soddy's

theory of transmutation of elements via radiation became an intellectual bombshell when widely reported in the popular press, since the products of the decomposition of radium, the inert gases, possessed attributes utterly unlike those of the hypostatic radium itself, as Henderson notes. This overturning of conventional ideas of matter seemed to confirm Bequerel's mysterious effects of radiation, which the esotericists called N-rays, which Marie Curie argued were secondary radiation, emissions of thorium and uranium stimulated by their absorption of rays analogous to X rays that pervaded all of space. Soddy, arguing in print that radium was the new Philosopher's Stone, was exhorted by Rutherford not to use the term transmutation itself, for fear of being judged an alchemist. Thus the host of new 'invisible realities' were exposed by 'unimpeachable' scientific experimentation, confirming the long held gospels of the Occultists. Jollivet-Castelot's *L'Alchimie* of November 1895, published in the *Mercure de France*, confirmed it. Now alchemy becomes a topic in contemporary literature, and scientific publications do not seem to offer evidence of opinions finding these analogies far-fetched. For example, the Edinburgh Review published in January 1907 *The Old and New Alchemy*, an article by Urstoff on Crookes' "Radiant Matter" and "swarming electrons." According to Henderson, "supra-sensible vibrations of the electromagnetic spectrum like x-rays offered contemporary occultists a scientific rationale for phenomena such as clairvoyance as well as telepathy." The allegorical "dance of the electrons" she examines on page 19, citing George Matisse's article in the *Mercure de France* of October 1908, critiquing Poincaré and Gustave le Bon, provides convincing iconographical reference for Duchamp's *Vierge* drawings of 1912.

Moffit now delineates the impact of the above on Duchamp's production, identifying evidence for a change of practice, in the summer of 1912, in the truly inspired transformation of a "technically poor" painter's mediocre, art characterised by "mentally flaccid execution bereft of original ideas, inept drawing, brushwork neither descriptive nor decorative, colour unimaginative and conventional, and formats stylistically derivative", echoing Apollinaire's 1910 observation apropos Duchamp's really ugly nudes at the Salon d'Automne. This chronological parade of the trendy identifications of the impressionistic, symbolist, fauvist, expressionist, futurist, orphic and so on, which now disappear, are, in fact, the very categories to which, Duchamp tells his sister, in 1916, that the readymade does not subscribe to aesthetically.

Duchamp's *Portrait of Dr Dumouchel* of 1910 shows a subject who was, with Ferdinand Tribout, one of Duchamp's oldest friends. Dumouchel was a recently graduated medical student; in the Esoteric, specifically in the Germany that Duchamp visited in 1912, Medicine and the Spiritual seemed to go together. The fiery vibrations emanating from the figure of the doctor are explained by Moffit in the following way. A key text Duchamp is known to have actually owned is Revel's⁽⁴⁹⁾ and Clair quotes Gascoygne⁽⁵⁰⁾ as claiming it as an extremely important source. Published in 1905, it deals with the transmigration of souls in relation to the *effleuves humains* of *les rayons 'N'*, and of Swedenborg and Mesmer's magnetic fluid permeating the universe, previously discredited by official science. Now Charpentier and Blandlot in Nancy had identified new rays emanating at same time as X rays, which they called N-rays which, for occultists, represented "thought forms". That each sickness had its own distinctively coloured vibration thus demonstrated the basis of a diagnosis which would lead to better cures. Revel discusses Baraduc's photographs showing imprints of a man's vital force, divided into two categories, of waves of emanation/irradiations and "flashes of vitality" in the human body. Since similar auras can be seen in Duchamp's *Nu Debout* of 1910, and *Apropos de Jeune Soeur* and *Le Buisson*, of 1911, Moffit then turns to more general sources on body auras, and, more specifically, Besant and Leadbetter's *Thought Forms*, which was quoted by Kandinsky in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*.

For Moffit, the importance of these neo-Spiritualist phenomena for the art historian is that (1), they were once widely reported, (2), they deal with visual materials, (3), the effects attributed to them could be very colourful indeed, (4), they were typically tied to the contemporary findings of legitimate scientists, and (5), they historically preceded the acknowledged dating of wholly abstract painting.

The key to this interpretation is that Duchamp inscribed the reverse of the painting with the following legend "*a propos de ta 'figure' / mon cher Dumouchel / Bien Cordialement / Duchamp.*" Here the term *figure* is figurative, not literal, indicating the doctor's typological form as distinctive configuration. The nature of this inscription means that Duchamp is representing some intrinsic quality of Dumouchel, something about his psychic figure. In doing so, Moffit points to a form in which image and legend replaces picture and title.

Here then is a specific example of a subject that appears first as a routine staple in the occult literature entering into avant-garde criticism.

This is again rehearsed in Duchamp's *Paradis* of 1910-11, in which Dumouchel appears again, this time as Adam who, with Eve, represents the epitome and source of eternal masculine-feminine polarities of the *coniunctio oppositorum*. For Schuré, drawing on Eliphas Levi's *Dogme et Ritual de la haute Magie* (1856), (itself drawing on Pernety's *Dictionnaire Mytho-hermetique* of 1787,) this primordial conjunction conveys great Kabbalistic wisdom. The key to its numerological meaning is the Duad, the being who knows and the object known. Here Adam is the prima materia, the perfection of the red stage of the Alchemical operation. Duchamp's Adam/Dumouchel is pale brick red. His white Eve represents the less important Magisterium of the Wise, a sign of approaching whiteness in the cooked alchemical matter. Our primordial researcher, the novice physician Dumouchel, is then the therapeutic alchemical Child of Science in search of the Universal Secret of Life.

Having established that Duchamp had, like Jarry and Roussel before him, simply borrowed useful models from the closely related realms of occultism and science, Moffit proceeds to identify the most likely published sources for such a picture as *Young man and Girl in Spring*, which Duchamp painted as a gift to his sister Suzanne on the occasion of her wedding, in August 1911.

The first of these is the *Mutus Liber : Le livre muet: dans lequel tout la philosophie hermetique et representee en figures hieroglyphique: The Wordless Book: in which, nonetheless, the entirety of Hermetic Philosophy has been pictured by means of hieroglyphic figure, and these are uniquely dedicated to the Sons of Art*, an alchemical emblem and motto book, of which one the of many French re-printings was to be reviewed by Apollinaire in 1914. Whilst, as Moffit reminds us, the original edition of 1677 is still in Bibliothèque St-Geneviève, in fact Duchamp had no practical need to consult this, since all iconographic elements encountered in the print first published in 1677, and in Duchamp's painting of 1911, are post-medieval hermetic commonplaces, reproduced in the many esoteric books published up to, including and beyond the Symbolist period, whose accompanying texts, in the manner of emblemata, reveal their full meanings.

The authoritative, strictly alchemical explanation for Duchamp's distinct pairing of an act of espousal is also easily found in another text easily accessible to Duchamp at his place of work, Martin Rulandus' *Dictionary of Alchemy (Lexicon alchemicae)* of 1612, also illustrating the standard Hermertic topos, Marriage, the joining of Sun and Moon, the union of the fixed and volatile, for which all seasons are

suitable, but spring is best. Thus the tree in centre of Duchamp's painting is the Arbor Philosophicus, discussed by Pernety, and Poisson, in his *Théories et Symboles Alchemique* of 1891 - the 5th plate, illustrating this motif, includes, inter alia, the philosophical egg. So Poisson provides Duchamp with both composition and iconographical prototypes for his painting, and the allegorical scenario propelling its subject - the two sides to his expression.

And Pernety's description of the alchemical significance of Spring, often citing Rulandus, whilst informing any number of other themes and motifs in Duchamp's painting, provides the explanation as to why Duchamp chose this subject for a *cadeau de mariage*, of a pharmacist, in Summer; Pernety's Alchemical Marriage is incestuous, conducted between brother and sister, since they allegorically represent Sun and Moon and Mother with Son, the Fixed with the Volatile, in a union best made in Spring. (One might add that as a pharmacist, Suzanne's husband was a fraternal alchemist, since artists, such as herself, obtained their pigments from *droguistes, marchands du sel*, like himself.)

Anticipating the title, and the material expression of its subject in a large glass vessel, both must be *mise à nu*, stripped down to their hypostatic prima materia for the transmutational union to bear fruit as the Philosopher's Stone. This reconciliation of contrary principles engenders the Royal Child of the Philosophers, the homunculus more powerful than his parents, who appears in the glass retort at the centre of Duchamp's painting. Alchemists call this the Incest, the elements representing the stages of the Magisterium, the mystic sister representing the White Stage.⁽⁵¹⁾ The child born of this union converts imperfect materials into one perfect one, as silica and ash become glass, and thus completes the *Grand Oeuvre*. Wickedly allegorised by Schwartz as evidence of a dark family secret, a red-herring no doubt concocted to bamboozle gullible critics,⁽⁵²⁾ this particular scenario, of the mystic sister's role in The Great Work, clearly bore a more innocent, (yet ultimately, for Duchamp's later reputation, potentially more dangerous) biographical resonance, since Duchamp's sister was merely getting married to a pharmacist, a modern alchemist.

This analysis confirms that, with *Portrait of Dr Dumouchel*, the work is an archetypal example of the genre of Duchamp's post -1912 production, the talismanic, and in this case auspicious, *pièce d'occasion*, in the form of a horoscope, marking the moment of spiritual rebirth. In citing evidence both graphic and textual, which has previously not entered into its analysis, material complementary to each other and

easily accessible to the artist, for Moffit, the Alchemical Wedding becomes the *motif-a-clef* which runs throughout Duchamp's career.

Moffit's esoteric analysis, from page 276, then also provides a rationale for Duchamp's adoption of chess as a subject for the series of his most overtly cubist-style pictures of 1911, since they articulate a specific response to the occult/avant-garde trope, the 4th dimension. Besides Father Francis Niceron, S.J., the only author interested in geometrical-spatial subjects cited, by name and opus, in all of Duchamp's notes, was Jouffret, from whom Duchamp notably borrowed his fundamental concepts of non-Euclidian geometry and, more specifically, the term 'inframince', first addressed seriously by Adcock. Jouffret's *Traité Elementaire* ⁽⁵³⁾ was a major source of Duchamp's 'scientific' understanding of the mathematics and mystical meta-physical identity of the 4th dimension; Duchamp underlines in a *Green Box* note the last three line of page 86 of Jouffret's book, concluding with a statement by Jouffret dealing with the intrusion of the 4th dimension into our imaginations, citing the particular point cited by Duchamp himself;

To this end, let us consider the horizontal shadow which attaches itself to your person when you walk beneath the sun and which, long or short, thick or thin, seemingly repeats your movements as if a shadow understood your commands.

This Moffit relates to Duchamp's Note 3 ⁽⁵⁴⁾ referring to 4 dimensional figures casting shadows in our space as 3 dimensional shadows, noting that the very next section of Jouffret's book, a chapter dealing with the subject of esoteric chemistry, begins with a discussion of two categories of applications of 4 dimensional Geometry, dealing with the mathematical and the physical sciences. Thus Moffit identifies Jouffret's essentially occult interpretation of the physical workings of the Cosmos, reiterating a passage in Papus' earlier, and at the time much more widely read, *Traite Elementaire de la Science Occulte*, reading:

la Chaleur, la lumiere, et l'Electricite, representing the three phases of the most elevated [esoteric] thing (wherein Heat represents the positive force, Light is Equilibrium, and Electricity the Negative Force) as " the [hidden] forces of our [occult] world. ⁽⁵⁵⁾

So Jouffret's text is just another alchemical text, different only in being modern for making constant references to the new electrical and atomic phenomena so often discussed and misunderstood at the dawning of the 20th century; one of the broad attractions of the Occult, as represented by Theosophy, was that its scientific, philosophical, noble and humanitarian programme was irresistibly modern.

Moffit thus sees Duchamp's simultaneous turn towards both allegorical sources, and his touchstone, the non-retinal, as the result of a turn towards Apollinaire's literary and religious art, in which alchemical subject matter is articulated through the form of the emblem.

4. Linguistics and Philology: Roussel's Method.

Linguistics: The science of language.
 Philology: Love of language.

My practice takes as its starting point the fact that after the summer of 1912 the form of Marcel Duchamp's expression changed; now painting pictures was replaced by constructing, in both two and three dimensions, closely followed by the appropriation, manipulation, modification and augmentation of pre-formed materials, as any quick scan of his oeuvre demonstrates. His products now included works on glass which conformed to no genre previously employed, establishing the foundations of an oeuvre in which the formal diversity displayed between, for example, the two versions of *Erratum Musical*, and *Trois Stoppages-Étalon*, all of 1913, (the latter cited later by Duchamp as his most important work,) is symptomatic. No two objects that Duchamp subsequently made were alike, and their titles appear to enjoy no connotative association with their figurative identity, as the snow shovel, or miniature window, entitled, respectively, *In Advance of the Broken Arm* and *Bagarre d'Austerlitz*, demonstrate.

Duchamp's acknowledgement, supported by biographical information, that it was at this time that he gave up the production of art, and the life of the avant-garde artist, would appear to confirm the status of this change. According to Duchamp himself, the catalyst for this change was his attendance, in the company of Apollinaire and Francis and Gaby Picabia, at one of the late performances of Raymond Roussel's *Impression d'Afrique*, at the Théâtre Antoine, in June 1912.

This coincidence of the abandonment of avant-garde aesthetics and a simultaneous embrace of Roussel's method made Duchamp unique among his peers, and if Max Jacob is to be believed, Duchamp was also unique in his enthusiasm for Laforgue; in his *Souvenirs sur Picasso contés par Max Jacob* Apollinaire's chum states that their collective literary opinion was " Down with Laforgue ! Long Live Rimbaud ! The ' Long Live Rimbaud !' was prophetic, as we all know." ⁽⁵⁶⁾ Put together, these factors support the contention that Duchamp's aims, after 1912, diverged significantly from those of his former colleagues.

It was not until Duchamp gave two interviews, to J J Sweeney in 1946 ⁽⁵⁷⁾ and Pierre Cabanne, in 1967, ⁽⁵⁸⁾ that he acknowledged the importance, to his subsequent

activities, of his attendance at *Impression d'Afrique*. The sincerity and accuracy of these views have never been doubted.

It was fundamentally Roussel who was responsible for my glass, *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even*. From his *Impressions of Africa*, I got the general approach.

This play of his which I saw with Apollinaire helped me with one side of my expression.

The contents of those statements, presenting various aspects of Duchamp's life, work and philosophy to a new audience, can be summarised as follows. According to Duchamp. Roussel, who thought himself a philosopher, philologist and metaphysician, but who was essentially a poet, was responsible for Duchamp's *Large Glass*; Roussel showed him the way: it was from his visually striking *Impressions d'Afrique* that Duchamp got the general approach for the *Glass*: it helped him with one side of his expression: from it he saw how he could use Roussel as an influence: Duchamp admired Roussel because he produced something he had never seen before, and for the delirium of his imagination.

Later, for Cabanne, Duchamp augmented this view with the following. That Roussel had given him the idea that he could try something in the sense of *anti-sens*; Roussel had later explained his method, a word game incorporating kinds of parentheses, which produced word-play with hidden meanings, which were unlike those of Mallarmé and Rimbaud, in that they possessed an obscurity of a different order.

Here Duchamp specifically links the term *anti-sens* to the literary technique that is opposed to that of the two Symbolist poets. But what *anti-sens* does not mean is *pas de sens* - 'nonsense', a term which does not appear in the statement.

Duchamp described Roussel's example, which helped him with one side of his expression, as a model for a general approach. Since expression comprises two generic categories, content and form, the radical change to Duchamp's practice did not, as Moffit's thesis confirms, involve any change in subject matter, but rather what the fabric of Duchamp's oeuvre emphatically declares, form.

Duchamp cites the example of Brisset in the same breath as Roussel as an important influence at this time, identifying, in a typically slightly misleading contemporary statement, *The Great Trouble with Art in this Century* ⁽⁵⁹⁾ that what impressed him was the delirium of their respective imaginations. But it is not delirium that can be observed in the methodical procedures which gave rise to Roussel's and

Brisset's visible results. Whilst Roussel proceeded to wrap up meanings in narratives of a bizarre complexity through formal involution, Brisset's method reciprocated this in a pseudo-philological peeling away of layers of meaning in the quest for the ultimate ur-paronym secreted, as an involuted essence, within the myriad inflexions of the lexicon. This seems to provide a context in which Duchamp could say that it was Roussel who was responsible for the idea of his *Glass*, not, the ideas in his Glass. Duchamp is referring here to an object, constructed from Roussel's techniques, something in the sense of what he saw in the forms arising from the method of construction of the text, *mise en scène* and stage props of *Impressions d'Afrique*.

Here form and content are analogous since involution and evolution, rolling-up and unrolling, stand for the declivity and acclivity, the downward and upward slope, the *pente* and *côte* which together spell *Pentecôte*, Pentecost. These symbolise the embodiment of the soul in gross matter, through descent, the misfortune of mortal birth, (a spiritual death) and its subsequent liberation through mortal death (spiritual rebirth); Duchamp's major patrons, for the rest of his life, were esotericists. This rhetorical functioning of form is to be noted in Duchamp's later painting, *Tu m'*, produced for his theosophist patron Katherine Dreier, in which the compositional anamorphosis, which can never work optically when the work is viewed in situ, functions rhetorically, in inscribing esoteric subject matter, since an anamorphosis is simultaneously a distorted optical projection and an abnormal transformation due to degeneration or change of habit, which alludes to a standard topic in the racial cosmogony of Theosophy, the conception of Root Races.

So, describing Roussel as one who considered himself philologist, philosopher and metaphysician, and Brisset's method as being based on a philological analysis of language worked out by means of "an inconceivable network of puns", Duchamp confirms his accounting for the source of the change to his expression. But philologists, in the academic, professional and scientific senses which pertain to theoretically driven research into origins in Historical Linguistics, Brisset and Roussel most decidedly were not. All three, amateurs with no formal linguistic training or qualification, were merely practitioners of language as a pragmatic tool. What Duchamp produced required no expertise in linguistics beyond an everyday practical familiarity with the common usage of a wide range of popular forms exhibiting endless innuendo and word-play.

The *Ephemerides* entry for August the 7th, 1912 states:

Le Passage de la Vierge à la Mariée which is not a 'physiological passage' but 'a passage in my life in painting, one after the other - a pun again. A pun in the title, that idea of the titles...The pun is a poetic element like a rhyme. A rhyme is a poem; " juxtalinéaire translation (as he describes the formula of the homophone in which two words or phrases sounding the same but with different meanings determine the narrative,) Duchamp realises he can kick over the traces, and achieve something.

But in offering confirmation that the Munich hiatus was rooted in Roussel's method, this commentary misleads, since *traduction juxtalinéaire* does not depend on homophonic consonance, or punning, for its prosecution. But in an undated note in *A l'Infinitif*, Duchamp links his compositional use of *traduction juxtalinéaire*, apropos the paintings he executed in during the Munich sojourn, to the *Large Glass*, via his *Broyeuse du Chocolat* paintings, offering us an insight into the fundamentals of a method whereby a *texte* can be translated into a sign, as if a letter in an alphabet. The critical passages of the note reads:

*Ce texte et a pour but d'expliquer (et non pas d'exprimer à la façon d'un poëme). c.à.d. il est une traduction juxtalinéaire de la figure (tableau). Cette traduction juxtalinéaire ne devant plus avoir d'intention hiéroglyphique (le tableau, lui, est la donnée hiéroglyphique de la Mariée mise à nu - -) cette traduct, ne devra pas être à base de mots et de letters, ou du moins.
L'alphabet employé sera entièrement nouveau c.à.d. sans aucun rapport avec les letters latines grecques - allemandes – il ne sera plus [phonétique], mais seulement visuel on pourra le commenmdre des yeux mais On ne pourra pas le lire des yeux ou à haute voix –
Le principe de l'alphabet ainsi compris sera sténographie idéalé – Les signes aussi nombreux que possible seront les
elements
(comme dans tout alaphabet) des groupements (analogues aux mots) destinés à traduire la deformation progressive du phénomène hiéroglyphique conventionnel (Broyeuse de chocolat etc) en sa nominalisation n'exprimant plus qu'une idée [morte] ⁽⁶⁰⁾*

Lines 5,6 and 7 explain clearly the functioning of juxtalinéaire translation in the creation of a work from a *texte*. It reads." The purpose of the text is to explain (and not to express in the manner of a poem) e.g.it is a juxtalinéaire translation of the figure (picture). The principles of such an alphabet will be an ideal stenography. The symbols, as numerous as possible, will be the elements (as in every alphabet) of the groups (analogous to words) destined to translate the progressive distortion of the

conventional hieroglyphic phenomenon (Chocolate Grinder etc) with its nominalization which then only expresses a single (dead) idea.

Describing a methodology paraphrased by his patron, Katherine Dreier, in her volume on the *Large Glass*, Duchamp takes here the example of a chocolate grinder considered not as an object to which that name adheres but as a conventionalised hieroglyph, that is, as an enigmatic emblematic figure standing for a spoken word or syllable and thus forming an element of a species of writing, conventionalised in the sense that its form consists of or results from an artificial treatment of a 'natural' object and, further, that it pertains to the nature of an assembly of like figures. This hieroglyph is progressively distorted through translation into a symbol which similarly belongs to an alphabet of like elements. At this point, the name 'chocolate grinder' ascribed to the chocolate grinder loses its meaning since the original object has transmuted into a letter in an alphabet of symbols – into a representation which, in relation to a chocolate grinder, is in shorthand – stenography. As such it will be subject to grammar and syntax. The *Chocolate Grinder* is thus nominalised in that it now exists in 'name' only. The sign, specifically, the linguistic sign, which represents it, is a concept with no correspondence in reality, (one clearly could not construct a functioning artefact from Duchamp's 'blueprint',) since the 'stenography' is 'ideal'.

That is, the paintings of the *Chocolate Grinder* Duchamp completed in 1913 and 1914 reflect the above in that they bear some formal but no utilitarian resemblance to their purported source, the industrial machine in the window of the chocolate shop in Rouen. The implement one might reconstruct from Duchamp's technical (wire-) drawing could not pulverise anything, including chocolate; entitled *Broyeuse de Chocolat*, rather, they are made from the colour of milk and dark chocolate.⁽⁶¹⁾

Traduction juxtalinéaire was part of the *Lettres-Philosophique* curriculum, which Duchamp followed at the Lycée Corneille, since it is the method by means of which all classical texts were edited in French Humanities. Its algorithmic form expresses the process of translating a text from one language into another, and then back into the original, repeatedly, until the full semantic potential of the original text has been displayed, in the form of layer upon layer of connecting synonyms, antonyms, homonyms and homophones. Threaded through this network are the cores of any number of potential narratives, occulted inside a superstructure of redundancies

serving as their reciprocal allegorical appearance, and whose individual foregrounding is determined by the discourse within which they are induced to function.

This procedure generates a lexicon which can translate into the *matière* and *facture* of a three-dimensional object, as did one of Duchamp's models, the stage-prop from Roussel's *Impressions d'Afrique*, which was conjured from the word *empereur*. Dividing it into its three syllables, *hampe*, *aire* and *heure*, produces a pole or staff, wind and time. Roussel conflated these into the image of the Wind-clock from the Land of Cockaigne. Thus a wind-clock can reciprocate with an emperor, just as a platinum metre-rule can inscribe a stallion with the gift of the gab, at least in French, since both translate as *étalon à platine*. These are relatively simple examples of Roussel's everyday method of transcribing from literary text to image or material object linguistically. It would seem but a small step from here to the realisation that a rebus inscribing the identity of Roussel could be constructed from a wheel and a stool; in order to represent Roussel, Duchamp, in New York, constructed a hieroglyphic rebus from two hitherto unrelated pre-existing forms whose combined names coincided homophonically with that of his subject, thus: *roue* + *selle* = *Roussel*. By this means content is inscribed in form via the synonymity enjoyed by the attributes of a *roue* and a *selle* and those of *Roussel*, as with a hieroglyph.

Pontus Hulton gives an example of how the same method of linguistic encryption of content in form created that part of the *Voie Lactée* in *The Large Glass* known as the *Pistons de Courant d'air*.⁽⁵⁹⁾ The three distorted rectangles forming it were derived photographically from a single square of gauze which, wafting in the breeze, became *voiles 'actées'*.⁽⁶²⁾

(The linguistic method we have identified here was briefly explored by Peter Read.⁽⁶³⁾)

Thus Roussel's method became the template of the tool by means of which Duchamp broke out from his aesthetic impasse in 1912. Rather than superficially emulating Roussel's bizarre proto-Surrealist iconography, Duchamp substituted conventional avant-garde aesthetics with a rule-of-thumb method by means of which he could progressively translate meanings from one form of language to another until *matière* and *facture* distilled into form an-aesthetically. Its reach is revealed by the definitions of these two terms, *matière* (material, matter, substance, subject, theme, topic, grounds, cause and discourse) and *facture*, (treatment, workmanship, styles,

tailoring and calibre of), in which the products of this radicalised practice are embodied.

Duchamp's familiarity before 1912 with Roussel's full range of procedural techniques, only fully described in the latter's posthumously published *Comment j'ai écrit certain de mes Livres*, can be assumed from the schedule below.⁽⁶⁴⁾ So his method had been accessible in various embryonic forms, published, as '*impressions à fric*', (at the author's own expense,) in works well before 1912, such as the poetic and theatrical forms of *Impressions d'Afrique*, or the novel *Locus Solus*.

1909. 10 July to 14th November. *Impressions d'Afrique* in *La Gaulois di Dimance*
 2nd October. *Impressions d'Afrique* published by Lemerre
- 1911 September. Six representations of *Impressions d'Afrique*, adapted by the author, played at the Théâtre Fémina, 90 Champs Elyssées
 11th May to 10th June. *Impressions d'Afrique* at the Théâtre Antoine.
- 1913 December to 29th March 1914. *Quelques heures à Bougival* appeared in *La Gaulois du Dimanche*
Locus Solus. Lemerre. 24th October.
- 1918 Sections from *Impressions d'Afrique* and *Locus Solus* published by Lemerre. (Adaptation by Pierre Frondale.)

The key to Roussel's method was the use of the homophone as a link, lens or hinge between one textual field and another, creating a promiscuous linguistic form and structure today qualifying as hypertext. An example is to be found in *The Greenish Skin*.

The first and last sentences of this short story, *La peau verdâtre de la prupe un peu mûre*, and *La peau verdâtre de la brupe un peu mûre*, demonstrate how two different meanings of the same (homophonic) phrase or sentence, transformed by the substitution of only one letter for another, act as terminals of a parenthesis containing a narrative leading from one to the other. Here, a fierce little *crime passionelle* unfolds as a ripening plum, *la prupe un peu mûre*, is projected through the lens of a greenish skin, *la peau verdâtre*, parabolically re-focussing in the dark beauty of a rather blowsy brunette, a little past her prime, *la brupe un peu mûre*.

As cited universally, in the posthumously published *Comment j'ai écrit certain de mes Livres*, Roussel describes his basic compositional techniques, such as those used in *Impressions d'Afrique*, exploiting the polysemic character of words, as follows:

I chose a word and then linked it to another by the preposition; and these two words, each capable of more than one meaning, supplied me with a further creation....I would like to

cite some examples: taking the word *palmier* I decided to consider it in two senses, as a PASTRY and as a TREE. Considering it as a PASTRY, I searched for another word, itself having two meanings which should be linked to it by the preposition: thus I obtained (and it was, I repeat, a long and arduous task) *palmier* (a kind of pastry) and *restauration* (restaurant which serves pastries); the other part gave me *palmier* (palm tree) and *restauration* (the restoration of a dynasty), which yielded the palm tree in Trophies Square commemorating the restoration of the Talou dynasty.

So Roussel's synonyms, homonyms, paronyms, antonyms and homophones acted as technical devices effecting the refraction of conjugations, declensions and inflexions through series of contiguous textual fields, forming a structure of bewildering subliminal complexity. Describing the open form thus created as capable of endless ramifications, Clarke ⁽⁶⁵⁾ characterises the hyper-discursive narratives and conceits thus produced as enveloping their initial starting-points like onion skins, created by digressions within digressions within digressions. And many of the manuscripts examined by Ford ⁽⁶⁶⁾ included early unfinished epic poems, consisting of thousands of pages of obsessive descriptions, and endless digressions from the main point, the result of a "compulsive prolixity" which inevitably informs the form of Duchamp's own constructions, as the account by Southard of Duchamp's exegesis of the *Nude descending the Staircase* clearly confirms. ⁽⁶⁷⁾ So Roussel's compositional tool allowed iconography and subject matter to reciprocate prismatically with one another via the *matière* and *facture* of a form far removed from its origins.

Hugill proposes that,

Roussel's works are characterised by descriptions which expand and engender other descriptions which are then followed by explanations of those descriptions. His *Nouvel Impressions d'Afrique* is constructed of brackets within brackets within brackets, plus footnotes - hypertext waiting for hypertext. For example, in the opening of the third Canto, which extols the virtues of a column on the outskirts of Damietta which, when licked, cures jaundice, the narrative is arrested after five lines by the mention of hope, leading to a parenthesis dealing with an American uncle whose nephews have hopes of inheritance, a scene which is not completed for at least another five pages, since the word "American" provokes a double-parenthesis dealing with " that land, still young, still un-exhausted", and whose dog's cold nose triggers a trio of brackets which in turn triggers a bracketed aside within four parentheses, and then another within five, and so on. The presence of parentheses within parentheses within parentheses to seeming infinity stretches the memory beyond the point where it can follow all the multiple trains of thought.

As described by Hugill, Roussel's texts are composed of:

Lists growing from the seed of an idea...lists of people affected by fortune's wheel, of the ways in which animals show greater forbearance than mankind, things that diminish, and many others. Most extraordinary of all is the massive list in Canto II of things that might be mistaken for other things...It grows from the image of a man listening at a wall and overhearing some other people discussing the faults in his character. Complacent, he has not noticed these faults, just as though he were under a spell which make him liable to mistake...What follows is a list of visual correspondences, mistakes which one would not

make unless one were bewitched. Page after page, the list goes on in a kind of delirium of mutability.⁽⁶⁸⁾

Roussel's *procédé* was then not like that of the Surrealists, who, distrusting revision, approached literature antithetically, subscribing to the well-established sub-Romantic notion that literary imagination and methodological strategies are inimical to one another. Roussel was not spontaneous, but fastidious.

Thus Duchamp's conjugation exercise '*Moustiques domestiques demi-stock*' illustrates the dependence for its own logic on the alliterative consonance displayed in Roussel's construction of the image of the zither-playing earthworm, *Le verre de terre jouer le cithare*, from the *Impressions d'Afrique*.

Roussel's method does not appear to require perfect syllabic replication of homophonic elements in order to be valid; the end justified the means, and there seemed to be no attempt on the author's part to ensure exact syllabic equivalence in the transmutation from one form to another. That is, formal leakage did not inhibit compositional development, the licence Roussel assumed allowing him to create the required distance between the irrational superstructure of the iconographical surfaces and its rational armature. Duchamp's confession to Katherine Kuh illustrates his proximity to this position.

I like words in a poetic sense. Puns are for me like rhymes...a play on words that can start a whole series of considerations, connotations and real investigations. Just the sound of the words alone begins a chain reaction...you know, puns have always been a low form of wit, but I found them a source of stimulations both because of their actual sound and because of unexpected meanings attached to the interrelationship of disparate words...Sometimes four or five levels of meaning come through.⁽⁶⁹⁾

One can pick at random Duchampian equivalents to the Roussellian examples quoted above from components of wider works composed throughout his career. For example, whilst the phrase, published in Sanouillet and Peterson, *un souffleur de chair chaud* reciprocates, in a spoonerism about nursing babies and hot-house cauliflowers, with phonic exactitude to its invert, *un choufleur de serre chaud*, for the 'returning of favours' to reciprocate poetically with the 'finding of replacement penises', the phrase *à charge de revanche* cannot reciprocate exactly with the meaningless phrase it strictly mutates into, *varge de rechanch*, but must rather mutate, with a certain licence, into *verge de rechange*.⁽⁷⁰⁾

Opinions differ as to the role of Roussel's imagination in this creative process, by turns, the objective of complete artificiality caused Roussel to state he drew none

of his creations from real life, Roussel derived none of his striking creations from experience, and wrote unimpeded by introspection or sentiment, unhampered by moral reflection or facile realism, and the author's creative procedures are the final revelation; who did he think he was trying to kid ?, and so on.

Few commentators take Roussel's final work, *Comment j'ai écrit certains de mes livres*, at face value. But alone of all his peers in the Paris avant-garde, Duchamp did, and it is this single factor which so radically distinguishes his work from theirs. As Duchamp confirmed to Sweeney, Roussel was accompanied on the pantheon of his *bibliothèque idéale* ⁽⁷¹⁾ by Jean-Pierre Brisset, whose magnum opus, *La Science du Dieu*, or *La Création de l'Homme* ⁽⁷²⁾ is listed alongside works by Allais, Apollinaire, Jarry, Laforgue, Lautréament, Mallarmé and Stirner. A copy was lodged in the Bibliothèque Ste-Geneviève, where Duchamp worked between 1913 and 1915.

But the theoretical foundation of the work of this author, who Duchamp apparently took very seriously, rested merely on phonic consonance, since for him the acoustic character of language took precedence over any scientific grounding of its validity. For Brisset, the key to human origins was encrypted by and discernable in the common forms of language usage, the secrets of which could be revealed by philology. His personal contribution was a complete explanation of the Universe incorporating God, Mankind and Nature, through a somewhat eccentric linguistic theory which has yet to enjoy any scientific acceptance, affirming the belief that similar sounds have the same meaning in any language, regardless of differences in their dictionary definitions. As he put it,

toutes les idées énoncées avec des sons semblables ont une même origine et se rapportant toutes, dans leur principe, à un même objet.

For example, the phrase *Les dents, la bouche* consists of the phonic elements lay, donn, lah and boosh. Through homophonic conjugation these generate 13 separate indexes, *Les dents. Là bouchent / Les dents la bouchent / L'aident la bouche / Lait dans la bouche / Laid dans la bouche / Laides en la bouche / L'aide en la bouche / Les dans la bouche / L'est dans la bouche / L'est dam la bouche* [which necessarily transposed reads as “*Il est un dam(mal) ici à la bouche*” meaning “I have a tooth ache’], and *Les dents-la bouch* [which transposed reads as “*Bouche [cache] ces dents-là*”: “shut your mouth.”]

These then sit in 13 different discrete discourses. But not satisfied with this, Brisset then inverted the two terms of this paradigm and conjugated again; and so

on.⁽⁷³⁾ By this means, that which is frightful becomes synonymous with the spouse who sells a table since, for Brisset, *c'est épouvantable* sounds identical to *cet époux vend la table*, and good grammar reveals the Grand Design, since *la bonne grammaire* is similarly indistinguishable from *la bonne Grand'mere*, because *elle parle selon la voix du peuple qui et la voix aussi la voie de Dieu*.

Thus the meanings Brisset sought in his construction of a historical anthropology could be induced from words by modification of their spelling or syntax. As he says in *La Grammaire Logique*: " On January 5th, 1883, it is this day that it was revealed to us that Latin is slang and successively that the word went up with the creation of the ancestors of the man to the frog."⁽⁷⁴⁾

So for this 'Prince de Penseurs'⁽⁷⁵⁾ the origins of human practice of communication are bio-evolutionary, since the earliest word-users were our direct biological ancestors – frogs, apparently. This insight was revealed to him when, in his own words.

Un jour que nous observions ces jolies petites bêtes, en répétant nous mêmes ce cri: coac, l'une d'elles nous répondit, les yeux interrogateurs et brillants, par deux ou trois fois: Coac. Il nous était clair qu'elle disait: quoi que tu dis?⁽⁷⁶⁾

As all French frogs must be aware, a paronym, such as *coac/quoi*, is a word derived from another or from the same root: a paronymous word is then derivatively or radically cognate, having the same sound as another but a different orthography and meaning. According to Brisset's 'reasoning' all other known languages must naturally have derived from his native tongue; philological frogs really do speak French. However, whilst care should be taken in ascribing to either Duchamp or his exemplar any 'scientific' authority for their method, which it has yet to be accorded, this does not mean that Duchamp did not have a use for it. Indeed, he gleefully admitted that he had had.

Duchamp also cited the work of Max Stirner as an important influence on his own as that of Roussel. His magnum opus, *The Ego and its Own*, became available to Duchamp's generation, on the back of the Nietzsche revival, when it was published in France in 1899, under the title *L'Unique et sa Propriété*.⁽⁷⁷⁾ and Duchamp could feasibly have read an earlier German edition. What Leopold⁽⁷⁸⁾ identifies in the characteristics of Stirner's literary style reflects the close proximity he enjoys to Duchamp's other exemplars cited in the *Bibliothèque idéale*.

In characterising Stirner's literary style, which proceeds by assertion rather than argument, as didactic, Leopold simultaneously identifies Duchamp's predilections. The significance of Leopold's further identifications is demonstrated in our analysis of the work which Duchamp cited as having been specifically influenced by Stirner, his *Trois Stoppages-Étalon*,⁽⁷⁹⁾ made between 1913 and 1914, and which Duchamp maintained, in 1960, was his single most important work. Naumann notes that it was motivated by Stirner's book⁽⁸⁰⁾ which advances his ideal of Egoism. through the concepts of personal freedom, self-interest, self-government, self-determination of the will, and the conceit that nothing exists beyond, or independently of, one's own mind - in a word, autonomy.

Our analysis proposes that the decryption of Stirner's philosophy, inscribed within the formal attributes of Duchamp's work, permits an erudite elucidation of its substance, facilitated by direct comparisons which might be drawn between the form and composition of the two works. This division is introduced in Stirner's account of 'A human life', which treats of individual development as a difficult process of self-discovery divided into the three chronological stages of childhood, youth and adulthood. According to this, children are realistic, their development frustrated by the external forces of their world, for example, parental disapproval. This initial and inadequate stage is overthrown when, with the self-discovery of mind, children discover in their own courage and shrewdness, a means to outwit these powers. However, this liberation is simultaneously a new enslavement, since the youth is released into a still more exhausting battle with conscience and reason, which constitutes the period of idealism. This dialectic of progression is a curse broken only with the transition to adulthood, which takes place with the second self-discovery, of the corporeal self, in which individuals discover their own self-embodiment, their existence as individuals with material interests of their own. In this adulthood of egosim, individuals deal with everything as they wish, setting their personal satisfaction above everything else.

From page xiii, Leopold links the subject of self-realisation to a linguistic form of its expression in an analysis of Stirner's method, echoing Brisset's, and illuminating Duchamp's.

Yet almost every feature of his writing is calculated to unnerve. The use of aphorism and metaphor, the neologisms, the mixture of self-consciously obscure terminology with colloquial language, the excessive italicisations and hyperbole all confound the received framework in which the (philosophical) argument is conducted. Perhaps most striking is

Stirner's juxtaposition of words with formal similarities, or related meanings, not simply for humorous effect, but as a way of presenting his views. The method of proceeding by assertion rather than argument exploits etymological connections - for example, between words with connotations of individuality and words referring to ownership, as in the play between *Eigentum* and *Eigenheit* ('property' and 'ownness', or 'belonging to oneself') - in order to insist on (rather than demonstrate) a claim - here, the Hegelian assertion that property is expressive of self-hood.

Despite its appearance as an inchoate mélange of aphorism and wordplays, *The Ego and Its Own* has a decipherable, if complex, architecture, structured around Stirner's tripartite division of human experience into the categories of realism, idealism and egoism, embodied in his accounts of individual development, of human history, and in his racial reading of that history.

But since neither law nor science sits easily with Stirner's egoist rationale, Duchamp's interest in 'playful physics' and 'chance', which he claimed this work embodied, produces problems for an automatic and unqualified acceptance of the philosopher's influence. And it is equally not so obvious how Duchamp's profiles of threads and templates can express Stirner's conception of the individual, since Duchamp's alleged parodying of the concept of an absolute standard through these forms runs counter to Stirner's ideal of nothing less. Given such anomalies, it would seem sensible to work with what we've got - what Duchamp made - and proceed from an analysis of the raw linguistic material universally accepted to have been his substantive starting point, the attributes of Stirner and his work. These are the words Max, Stirner, Ego, and Owner, the last three - *trois* - of which converge on the third component of the title, *étalon*, meaning standard, which inscribes homonymically Duchamp's alternative starting point, the heel of the invisible mending shop-sign, the *stoppage* making up the second element of the title, translating as *talon*. [see Pinacotheca: *Stirner*(*Stirner Stuff*.)]

The method which Duchamp distilled from his exemplars was then a working *procédé*, by means of which he could construct works whose form was analogous to that of Roussel's. For example, just as in the latter's *Locus Solus*, Duchamp invariably begins a work, such as the *Roue de Bicyclette*, with an image or idea as a basic paradigm which generates the raw linguistic material for translation into an object whose seemingly infinite form always seems to resolve itself within its original subject. By the same means, but in reverse, the meaning encrypted in matter, à la Roussel, can be retrieved from the result by using the same process, decryption, à la Brisset. The product of this process was then two parallel texts, one in the form of an

object within which the other, its literary content, is inscribed. By this method, every component and attribute of the form of the work is accounted for, with no redundancies.

As Duchamp later confirmed, in the case of the readymade, both parallel texts of object and inscription point towards, and reciprocate via, that realm more verbal where the subject articulated by both resides, the glossing text which, in the case of the *Large Glass*, is in the *Green Box*.

The model for both genres is the allegorical emblem, in which three separate elements, a visual component, the *impresa* - here, the object and its attributes - bears the second, a legend or motto, masquerading here as the 'title', both of which translate into the third, a glossing text amplifying the subject. Hence Duchamp's advice to Cabanne that the *Glass* can only be read through the Notes. These three elements are represented in modern parlance as hardware, login and software, since the French for procedure, *procédé*, also means computer programme. In order to activate the hypertextual semantic circuit of the work, one merely 'logs in'. This method furnished Duchamp with the means of creating, from any given starting point, a hermetic work in the form of a Rousselian parenthesis, whose subject was now subliminally encrypted within a form functioning as the allegorical appearance of its content.

Thus, in order to retrieve the subject wound up in the form of any of the works that Duchamp constructed after 1912, all one needs to do is unwind these encrypted devices by applying the same method to their attributes; the form is the starting point. Working back from it, through the involutions of its linguistic construction, the encrypted subject progressively emerges via a reciprocal evolution, situating the reader, having arrived at Duchamp's starting point, in the same relationship to the meaning of the work as was its original consumer.

This the purpose of my practice.

Duchamp's experience as a cartoonist, prior to his embrace of avant-garde painting, provided an early model for this post-1912 form of expression, in that the successful functioning of a cartoon, in the form of image and caption, depends entirely upon a complicity between author and audience grounded in a shared familiarity with a common language and values. (Displaying an equivalent contingency, the successful functioning of a joke requires one specific 'punch-line' to

complete the semantic circuit jointly inscribed within the expressive elements of image and text.)

The necessarily formulaic nature of this expression is represented in Duchamp's competent but derivative graphic style and typical humour, a judgement seemingly confirmed by the citation accompanying the following example, reproduced as item 20 in the Centre Pompidou catalogue, as worthy of inclusion in the *Almanac Vermot*. This publication is characterised, by Michel Sanouillet, in a discussion of Duchamp's work in the context of the everyday Parisian linguistic milieus of street, cafe and music hall, with their argot, vulgarisms, in-jokes and puns, the language of pamphlets, advertising and so on, as a " little museum of French popular humorous traditions." ⁽⁸¹⁾

(We note here that in 1913 Duchamp acted as chaperone to his sister Yvonne, when she took an English course at Herne Bay. As the *Ephemerides* entry for August the 8th records, here he was exposed to examples of popular entertainment, both high and low, which reflected the polyglot, 'franglais', character(s) of the Parisian music Hall with which he was already familiar.)

So, for example, in the case of the consumption of his cartoon *Flirt*, of 1907, ⁽⁸²⁾ a familiarity on the part of the audience with various forms of punning must be assumed; that, for, example, between *piano aqueux*, the 'watery' piano eminently suited to the rendition of the subject of the tune cited in the caption, Blue Buoys, and a *piano à queue*, the grand piano illustrated. But innuendo augments the sexual allusion conjured by the mademoiselle's wandering fingers dextrously stroking the ivories, because the verb in the French translation of the English phrase for 'to tickle them', *taquiner (l'ivoire)*, means to tease, torment, tempt, fiddle and toy with, not least the Muse of Music. The evocation of the white slave trade, prostitution, by *ivoire*, is then reinforced by the alternative routine expression for to tickle the ivories, *écraser l'ivoire*, since *écraser* means to 'be on the game.' This cartoon is then a typical example of the precise management of a discourse in order to elicit a specific audience's particular understanding; one needs to be aware, for example, that *queue* is slang for penis.

The cartoon by Duchamp published in *Rire*, August the 6th, 1910, confirms this formulaic identity. The *Ephemerides* entry describes it as showing a young man, still in his braces and shirtsleeves, who looks at himself in a mirror hanging over the mantelpiece, and combs his hair. The young lady sitting on the sofa, waiting to go out,

loses her patience, complaining " What a long time you take to comb your hair". Quoting *L'Orgueilleux*, by Destouches, he replies: "*La critique est aisé, mais la rai difficile*", which the *Ephemerides*, translates, somewhat idiosyncratically, as " Criticism is easy, but art is difficult."

But slang translations identify a more risqué discourse grounded in her criticism of his getting his parting - his *raie* - right. She implies that since he is taking so long, he must be counting his hairs which, as *compter les poils*, means to masturbate. He has resorted to doing so before the *chambranle*, the mantelpiece, a portmanteau word deriving from *chambrier* and *branler*, whose inflexions reinforce this sexually charged little *mise-en-scène*. *Chambrier*, to poke fun at someone, also means both to lodge together and the effect of doing so, to confine to a room, and to take the chill off. *Branler*, to wag one's hand, in admonition, also means to masturbate, a meaning augmented by the phrases *branler dans le manche*, to be loose in the handle, since a *manche* is a penis, and *se branler*, not to give a toss - ironically so, since a *branleur* is a wanker who, by definition, has a good wrist action.

The relevance of the *Ephmerides'* citation of Destouches' *L'Orgueilleux* now becomes clear, since the cognate of *orgueilleux*, vainglorious and proud, *orgueil*, also means fulcrum or lever - *manche*, which also means the young man's shirtsleeve. Since his parting, his *raie*, is also the crease of his buttocks and his perineum, then her *critique* is critical, since this is as crucial as his, and her, crotch.

That the form of Duchamp's post-1912 work was modelled on the cartoon and the joke might then inform his note advocating the making of a 'hilarious' picture. If so, it certainly suggests that his works were not *cartes blanches* to be interpreted by the viewer ad hoc, or that they articulated no privileged reading; quite the contrary, suggesting that the specific meanings inscribed in the fabric of the work were only accessible to a consumer au fait with a mode of encryption investing a specific discourse within forms now assuming the status, for us, of the most important forensic evidence articulating Duchamp's intentions.

One form of French slang is *lanver*, or *verlan*, whose character is revealed in the English term back-slang. There are others, constructed from interpolation and inversion, such as *largonji* and *loucherbem*, inversions of *le jargon* and *le boucher*, the jargon of the butchers of Les Halles. But *lanvers* is the descendent of *langue vert*, which is postulated as a mystical, perfect or divine language, magical when used by birds, widely held to be psychopomps in the ancient world, to communicate with

initiates. Inspiring some a priori Renaissance musical languages, it appears in the *Poetic Edda* and *Völsunga* saga; the 11th century Ramsund carving depicts how Sigurd learnt it.

Reputedly the secret language of the Troubadours, based on puns and homophony, it was connected to the Tarot. It is also referenced in the 12th century Persian *Conference of the Birds* by ud-Din Attir, in *The Parliament of Fowls*, by Chaucer, and in Aristophanes *The Birds*.

More pertinent to our deliberations, it is popularly believed to be the secret language and key to perfect knowledge of the Kabbalistic alchemist. If so, the banishment of the esoteric from Duchamp studies renders it, too, invisible.

Sanouillet discusses Duchamp's linguistic interests under the title *Marcel Duchamp and the French Intellectual Tradition*. Citing Breton's *Anthropologie de Humour Noir* of 1945, he considers that Duchamp's mentors were the 'proto-Dadaists' Huysmans, Lautréamont, Laforgue, Rimbaud, Brisset, Roussel, Mallarmé and Jarry, whose use of vulgarities, neologisms, aberrant figures of speech, abstruse rhetoric and unintelligible syntax he deliberately emulated. The key to the nature and role of humour in Duchamp's work is implied by the quotation from the *Edition du Saggiatoire* of 1940, page 110.

Huysmans style is the product of a fraudulent misuse of many vocabularies whose combination in itself provokes spasmodic laughter while the circumstances of the plot least justify it.

For Sanouillet, Huysmans et al represent a new tradition, born of a Symbolism, no longer interested in the connotative functions of language. This generation of writers now began concentrating on verbal cells in their pure denotative function in the presence of certain catalytic elements, and " finally the rupture of conjunctive tissue, the cancerous metastases, such as Jarry's *merdrre*, perhaps its most popularly notorious expression." In identifying " the archetype from which, in a perennial transmutation...every imaginable linguistic theory can be constructed", Sanouillet is perpetuating the critical tradition which assumes the creation of works of art by Duchamp whose meanings are wills-'o'-the-wisp ultimately beyond identification and analysis. Sanouillet suggests that Duchamp borrowed from Brisset's *grammaire logique* with an exemplary rigour and universality, beginning with the simple rules of polysemy, methodological alteration, and so on, thus developing a

new phonetics, morphology and syntax, adapting methods and categories of traditional grammar with the single purpose of attacking, and finally demonstrating, its inadequacy; from an inflexible reasoning founded in the obstinate exploitation of variant stereotypes and semantic confections occasioned by phonetic identities which inevitably open up onto vast and strange domains where words play feely.

Our analysis suggests that, in following the common usage of his mentors' examples, the purpose of any destruction of Duchamp's part was a reconstruction in which connotative and denotative procedures were not so much inimical as complementary, since his extension of the purview of Roussel's *procédé* to include *matière* and *facture* allowed him to move beyond images such as Roussel's wind-clock, (whose precise gimcrack, stage-prop form was ultimately completed by Roussel's imagination,) to the logical fabrication of entirely unpredictable objects constrained by no predetermined genre, yet whose attributes enshrined their origins, thus rendering them susceptible to a logical exegesis.

Of course, it might all be much simpler than Sanouillet would have us believe, as Duchamp's view, as reported to Katherine Kuh, if taken at face value, suggests.

The attributes of Roussel's method might superficially appear, from an initial engagement with their sheer, prolix density, volume and structure as symptoms of an obsessive or compulsive psychic disorder. However, as with any comprehensive system of encryption, the attention to detail the exercise of the method demanded would have hardly been unfamiliar to a lycée pupil, taking the Philosophy-Literature curriculum, routinely versed in *traduction juxtalinéaire*, as Duchamp was. Further, as the son of a notary public, Duchamp would have been familiar with his father's rhetorical stock-in-trade, authoritative legal documents, such as mortgages, affidavits, birth, death, divorce and marriage certificates. Examples representing the various genres Duchamp's father was charged with authenticating were, like Roussel's parenthetical texts, constructed from myriad qualifying sub-clauses within sub-clauses, themselves qualifying clauses which glossed sentences, establishing, through an abstruse vocabulary, facts - seemingly ad infinitum - but eventually resolving their themes, unlike Wagner's musical phrases, on the tonic of authority. And, like autobiographical works of art, these formulaic documents dispassionately inscribed, in their measured rhetoric, grammar and syntax, intense narratives marking the rites of passage of the public and private lives of their subjects and their property.

Duchamp's familiarity with the mechanics of the exhaustively multi-layered text was noted, in New York, by Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, who reported that he, like his exemplar Roussel, would spend weeks cloistered with his dictionaries. This observation chimes nicely with Duchamp's own later statement that sometimes it would take up to six months to find the form of readymade appropriate to the already worked-out subject it was pre-destined to inscribe.

La Marie mise à nu par ses Célibataires (, même.)

The most vivid confirmation of Duchamp's acknowledgement of the transmutational power of Roussel's method appears in the gestation of Duchamp's most celebrated work, the *Large Glass*. Its birth is marked in the passage between two preparatory drawings, both addressing the same subject, the *Alchemical Wedding*, entitled *La Mariée mise à nu par ces Célibataires*, standard examples of which, from the Hermetic tradition, are reproduced in Moffit, Hicken and Henderson.

The formal variety of the five other works bearing this title, made between 1913 and 1934, then confirms the power of Roussel's *procédé* to allow the egoist never to repeat himself. That Duchamp's subject remained the same whilst the form of its expression changed is demonstrated by the fact that between 1912 and 1934 no less than six entirely different forms of expression share the substantive core of the same title, *La Mariée mise à nu par ces célibataires*. These were as follows; an illustration from 1912: a blueprint and an inscription on plaster, both to scale, of 1913: two musical scores of 1914: a glass panel executed between 1915 and 1923 and a boxed set of notes published in 1934. This formal diversity, markedly different from a production previously limited to paintings, cartoons and drawings, demonstrates that the particular form of an expression is the consequence of the manipulation of its ingredients. The linguistic mechanics of this transmutation, for that is indeed its subject, are demonstrated in a note from the *Box of 1914* appropriately titled *Recette*.

The *Large Glass* itself shares the same grammatical form of title with three other works in this group, the blueprint of 1913, the inscribed intonaco in the Rue St-Hippolyte and *The Green Box*, which differs from the drawing of 1912 through the suffixing of '*même*'; in the case of the second version of *Erratum Musical* the comma separating the suffix from the original title is omitted. This group of associated works, the variations in the form of their titles grammatically constructed

from the same inventory of elements, then demonstrate that the same recipe, Roussel's *procédé*, if applied to modifications of the same basic set of ingredients, can produce widely different forms.

The first of these was completed just before or during Duchamp's sojourn in Munich. The second, executed after that event, is considered to be a one-to-ten scale drawing for the copy transferred to the fresh plaster of Duchamp's studio in the rue St-Hippolyte, in Paris, which he completed the day of his brother Jacque's wedding, to which he was witness. That fresh plaster is defined as *vierge* appears to confirm the rhetorical character of Duchamp's chosen mode of expression, since that is what he inscribed on it. This drawing establishes the basic composition of the *Large Glass*.

Whereas the drawing of 1912 entitled *La Mariée mise à nu par ces célibataires* is a captioned illustration, in the second, of 1913, the transferred 'title', now appended to an engineering drawing, or blueprint, has acquired the suffix ', *même*'. So it is grammar which denotes the shift in the epistemological grounding circumscribing Duchamp's change of practice these two drawings represent. This appending of the suffix ', *même*' to the 'title' effects this grammatical change, now privileging an allegorical identity over a previously literal one for both image and the caption. So at the same time that it marks a shift in pictorial conventions, from illustration to an emblematic mode of representation, the appending of the suffix also changes the status of the title, replacing the ratiocinative character of a discursive sentence with the digressive character of a discursive motto.

The fifteen notes in the five sets of Duchamp's *Box of 1914* can now be seen to function as examples demonstrating this process of transmutation. With one exception, none make direct reference to the iconography of the *Large Glass* whose meaning the *Box* purports to illuminate. But all offer models of the process whereby content is inscribed within form, since they are equations, expressing conversion ratios.⁽⁸³⁾ The *Box* is then more a *manuel d'entretien*, an instruction manual, than the *tarif album* which Duchamp described it as, since the contents of the *Box* bear no superficial resemblance to that of a mail order catalogue. But like a mail order catalogue, by virtue of which icons miraculously transmute into things, those contents transubstantively collapse space and time into a singularity. And, at the same time, the modern department store, to which the equally modern mail order catalogue is an analogue, shared with God the title of 'Universal Provider'.

Since the notes are examples of how rhetoric and grammar mediate meaning, they are models of the semantic fabric of the *Large Glass* as inscribed linguistically within its iconography, and not an inventory of its forms. As Adcock pointed out long ago, the iconography of the *Large Glass* resides nowhere but in the *Green Box* notes. Duchamp himself confirmed this identity in his remarks that the *Glass* should be read through the notes, and that the content of his work resided in that realm more verbal than the 'title', such as that appended to a readymade, served to transport the mind to.

Pinacotheca entry *Box (Box of 1914: a world in yellow.)*,⁽⁸⁴⁾ demonstrates a snapshot of the process of incarnation of the discourse articulated by the subject, *La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même*, in the formal attributes of the *Large Glass*.

In the period between the inception of the *Large Glass* programme and the making of his statements, forty years plus later, Roussel's example did not assume the same prominence on any critical agenda that Duchamp himself accords it in 1946, and on precious few after that, beyond confirming a love of puns, and an interpretation of the iconography of the *Large Glass* solely in terms of Roussel's 'sublime absurdities'. It is then hardly surprising that Duchamp's assertion that it was Roussel who was responsible for the *Large Glass* has not signified greatly in its analyses, or of that of his oeuvre in general.

Mink's approach is typical.⁽⁸⁵⁾ In casting Roussel in the role of Duchamp's midwife, Mink assumes that a wind-clock from the Land of Cockaigne, a stallion with the gift of the gab and an alliterative zither-playing earthworm liberated Duchamp's creative imagination, Roussel's extravagant stage effects thus bringing forth the bizarre encounter between the mechano-morphic bride and her frustrated bachelors in the *Glass*. Similarly, Moffit finds little reason to disagree with a current view that no real influence resulted from Duchamp's experience of Roussel's play, inducing him to qualify Duchamp's acknowledgements as contradictory, and consequences unlikely.

This neglect is even more exaggerated in the cases of Brisset and Stirner, who Duchamp specifically links to Roussel.

So, whilst set against the burden of post-1945 hermeneutics, Duchamp's assertions of Roussel's significance might seem eccentric, nevertheless, the way in which the latter's own posthumously published testimony can be used to account for the form of Duchamp's work confirms the forensic value of the latter's post-war

observations, establishing its primacy as credible evidence for Roussel's assistance with one side of his expression. This the provenance of Duchamp's production between 1911 and 1913 corroborates, since it demonstrates that it was not until after the summer of 1912 that the form of his work changed radically. In this forensic testing of the credibility of Duchamp's claims, permitting the qualification of received wisdom with fact, we follow Breton's proposal from *The Lighthouse of the Bride*,⁽⁸⁶⁾ which suggests that, due to the prodigious speed with which Duchamp's work developed, and the limited number of his public utterances, our understanding can result only from a deep historical understanding of the development of his work, to which the events of 1912 would appear to be crucial.

There would, of course, have been no purpose in Duchamp misrepresenting Roussel's methods, since they had become a matter of public knowledge in 1935. So the fact that he did raise a subject which has been all but ignored demands attention, not least since Moffit's analysis corroborates Duchamp, establishing beyond any doubt that it was not the 'other' side of his expression, his content, that changed. On the contrary, his subject matter became, in 1912, progressively more precisely focussed.

But Duchamp neglected to discuss the matter of Roussel's impact until thirty-three years after the event, and then, only very briefly; and he is totally silent on the circumstances in which Roussel's example had its effect - in Munich. Up to his re-launch in the United States from 1942, his modus operandum, and way of life, clearly did not require any such public declaration. But this neglect, between the Sweeney interview of 1946 and the discussions with Cabanne in the 1960's, arose, we suggest, for two reasons. The first is the threat to Duchamp's newly burgeoning identity, as the grandfather of a new kind of avant-garde practice, posed by the insight into his an-aesthetic method that assumes a knowledge of Roussel's. The second is Roussel's, and Duchamp's, occult credentials, as a number of events support. For example, in the early forties Duchamp declined to accept the bequest of the mystical portrait Florine Stettheimer had painted of him in the 1920's. And in the early fifties, Katherine Dreier's death presented him, as executor of her art estate, with the opportunity to destroy her equally esoteric portrait of him, of 1918, into which he had painted his own portrait in the form of his astral or etheric body; this he did.

That there are more cannot detain us here.

Since Duchamp was silent on the subject of Roussel before 1945, the question arises as to why he chose to discuss it when and where he eventually did. The answer to that question unfortunately takes us beyond the strict purview of this enquiry, but what is clear is that, in 1945/6 and 1963, he appears to have been promoting himself anew to an old, neglected but now newly rediscovered audience. The first, American, had initially embraced him, in 1913, as the *enfant terrible* of the 1912 *Nude*. The second, French, was not effectively addressed until 1959, when Lebel published the first substantial monograph. But his former compatriots would have to wait until 1967 for anything remotely like a retrospective - no more than an essentially family show first held, complete, in Rouen. Up till then Duchamp had shown the occasional work only intermittently, in France - on 22 very short occasions, sometimes in shop windows, between 1946 and 1963, and invariably in Surrealist company.

The sidelining of Roussel was largely by omission rather than denial. For example, Breton's *Lighthouse of the Bride*, which sets the *Large Glass* into the context of Duchamp's overall oeuvre, does not refer to Roussel. Whilst citing Poe, Lautréamont, Baudelaire and Rimbaud, both directly and indirectly, the text establishes the basis of what would become the orthodox interpretation of the iconography, substance and meaning of the *Large Glass*, an 'apotheosis of virginity/frustrated desire'. This identification was subsequently reinforced, from 1959 onwards, by Lebel, et al, perpetuating what has become a fundamental over-arching theme of the *Large Glass* that Breton introduced in *The Lighthouse of the Bride*, the mechanistic and cynical interpretation of the phenomenon of love; the passage of a woman from the state of virginity to that of non-virginity taken as a theme of a fundamentally a-sentimental speculation, almost that of an extra-human being training himself to consider this sort of operation. Here the rigorously logical and expected are married to the arbitrary and gratuitous.⁽⁸⁷⁾ And a year later, Julian Levy's *Surrealism*⁽⁸⁸⁾ devoted just 150 words, on page 16, to the work. In characterising it as a product of the technical skill of an essentially Surrealist painter, Levy describes the *Glass* as an organic machine no more utilitarian than a Bach fugue, or Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, but says nothing about Roussel.

But contemporaneously Leiris, whose review of the work appeared in the December edition of *La Nouvelle revue française* of 1936, does. According to Denis Hollier,⁽⁸⁹⁾ reflecting that the association of Duchamp and Roussel's method was, however, coincidental, (Duchamp's interest in Roussel having been rekindled by the

revelation, afforded by the posthumous publication of Roussel's exposition of his methods in 1935, apparently), that his narratives, apparently, as articulated in the novel edition of *Impressions d'Afrique* of 1910, had been generated from puns reminiscent of Duchamp's *LHOOQ* of 1919. Hollier's discussion of Duchamp's reference, in a letter to Leiris of December 14, 1936, to Roussel's 'secunderism', the psychological mechanism which, according to Freud, regulates our behaviour, suggests to Hollier that Duchamp would appear to be directing his younger correspondent's attention towards what he identifies as Roussel's endless deferrals of fixed meanings as an important characteristic of his own method, highlighting Duchamp's advancement of his own primogenital claim apropos his independent exercise of the method. This results in the minimisation of the role of his exemplar.

So, for Leiris, who had known Roussel, as a friend of his father, the latter's method would appear to have played no part in Duchamp's radical change of method of composition, beyond this odd coincidence not implicating the *Large Glass*. However, of interest to our own thesis is that Hollier reports that Leiris tantalisingly claims that in all probability, if one applied to the *Large Glass* the cipher used by Andre Breton for Roussel's *Poussière de Soleils*, one could obtain astonishing results, and goes on to reference the Tarot, in the context of the symbolism of the colours red, white and black, the colours of the alchemical operation, as informing the meaning it embodies.

Jumping forward, we find ourselves in territory inhabited by Mink, where Lynda Henderson's aim⁽⁹⁰⁾ is to remedy a past over-emphasis on Roussel's remarkable use of language. This is attempted by focussing more on the stage machinery of *Impressions d'Afrique* which would, she feels, have appealed greatly to Duchamp through its brilliant inventiveness and ironic commentary on technology, whose origins she, and others, misconceive as 'mad-cap'.

Even though citing Roussel's own descriptions of his method of generating stage props from language games familiar to his assumed audience, the burden of Henderson's thesis, which takes iconographical correspondence as its key, encourages a focus on the vast increase in verbal and visual vocabulary that she assumes Duchamp gained from Roussel's example. So whilst identifying that very basis of the exchange at the heart of the *Bachelor Machine*, by means of which ideas are translated into motifs and materials, Henderson proposes that Duchamp would not, in

1912, have been in a position to appreciate the full significance of the method he had purloined from Roussel.

Here Henderson faithfully follows Duchamp's remark to Cabanne, that he hadn't really listened to Roussel's text, but just enjoyed the spectacle. But slightly before this, Duchamp had stressed the importance of the spoken, rather than the written, word, of *parole* rather than *langue*, which underscores the importance of Roussel's use of the homophone, the key compositional device subsumed by Duchamp's own method. And his literary contribution to the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition *The Art of Assemblage*,⁽⁹¹⁾ first published in the volume 1, 1966, page 47, of *Art and Artists*, made in reference here to the readymade, cited the function of the title of a work as carrying the mind of the spectator "towards other regions more verbal".

And it is worth noting that immediately following his remark to Cabanne, Duchamp confirmed, not saying by how much, that later he had seen the connection between what the text sounded like and what the play looked like; that is, the connection between the aural and the visual, reconciling method with product. This insight could have occurred ten years, or ten months, or merely ten minutes, later, since the chronology of Roussel's works in print, up to 1919, speaks of the possibility of Duchamp's early familiarity with it, from 1897, when Roussel was first published by Lemerre.

An assumption of Duchamp's familiarity with Roussel's method well before 1912 places him in a position to have been aware of how the latter's verbal convolutions created his visually striking images. It is therefore quite feasible that, by the time Duchamp stepped off the train in Munich, Roussel's penny could have already dropped.

Identifying the roots of the multitude of iconographical correspondences between the *Large Glass* and its model in modern scientific developments, Henderson cites Anne-Marie Auriot's view that Roussel's machines are humorous because of the disparity between the amount of ingenuity expended in their invention compared to the meagreness of the result obtained. For Henderson, therefore, Roussel's approach to science was ironic, since in parodying a modern scientific language that any modern Frenchman would have known, he served as an exemplary inventor of such fantastic machines as Duchamp was to incorporate into the imagery of the *Large Glass*.

But, as Moffit establishes, such irony was wholly consistent with the approaches of many occult authors of the day, not merely Roussel, addressing the same subject.

And whilst Henderson identifies a science and technology which ‘vastly increased’ Roussel and Duchamp’s verbal and visual vocabulary, she acknowledges that they were inextricably linked, in the very sources she cites - Crookes, Tesla and Flammarion, and in the works of authors whom we know Duchamp to have read. - to the outer realms of the Occult. Claire informs us that Duchamp knew the work of a number of occultists who published *divulgations* during the critical period - Pawlowski's *Voyages aux Pays de la Quatrième Dimensions* serialised in *Comoedia*, of 1911, for example, Louis Farigole's *La Vision Extra-rétienne et la sens paroptique*, of 1921, and Camille Revel's *Le Hazard, sa loi et ses conséquences dans les Sciences et en Philosophie*, of 1909 ⁽⁹²⁾ And of course as Moffit, critically, points out, Duchamp himself references Jouffret specifically in the Notes to the *Large Glass*.

So whilst what Duchamp took from *Impressions d’Afrique* and applied to the *Large Glass* appears to Henderson to have been its strange collage-like nature, the randomness of its events and the outlandish impossibility of its plots and actions, at the same time the themes of miraculous and ingenious mechanisation, of the role of chance in artistic creation, of human/machine hybrids, atomic transformation, and so on, are all topoi identified by Moffit as pre-existing in the Esoteric Tradition. Thus the occult themes Henderson cites in *Locus Solus*, as expressed in the fantastic inventions of Cantarel, reinforces the observation that Roussel, like Duchamp's generation as a whole, was more interested in science fiction than science fact; Roussel's favourite author was Jules Verne. For Roussel’s peers, the New Science was simultaneously The Occult. So, whilst avoiding following the implications of Duchamp’s focus on method, Henderson links him to Roussel and a ubiquitous Occult allegorised in the verbal and visual languages of contemporaneously consumed modern pseudo-science, and the advertising of the fruits of modern scientific and technological advance, such as bicycle chains, and gas lamps, and automobiles.

But at the same time, Henderson fails to grasp the allegorical irony qualifying the character of Duchamp's response to that science. Therefore, whilst mildly flirting with the question raised by Duchamp’s acknowledgement, none of these commentators privilege it. But given his various citations, it would seem that a more focussed consideration would appear necessary – not least since there is a general lack

of a convincing identification of any other rationale to Duchamp's radical change of expression around 1912. For example, Moffit's analysis, which established for the first time a wholly convincing case for Duchamp's Hermetic iconographical programme preceding 1912, in providing no good reason for Duchamp's ceasing to paint, sees no reason to address Roussel's compositional method.

Since of the commentators cited above, it would seem to be Lebel above all who most accurately intimates a link between Duchamp's methods and products and those of Roussel, whom he locates within the context of the other symbolists in Duchamp's *Bibliothèque idéale*, it is interesting that Monique Fong, and old friend, and loyal supporter of Duchamp, generously confirmed to this author that Duchamp would never have divulged to Lebel anything he didn't want him to know. Whatever, whilst qualifying Roussel's style in reference to Louise Malescot's bizarre painting machine, which the author described with the utmost seriousness, Lebel also characterises the effect of *Impressions d'Afrique* as a "revelation of a universe governed solely by words which...in the absence of any clue...seemed to be systematically given over to caprice", thus perpetuating the privileging of bizarre effects over method.

Lebel also notes the possible early manifestation of this effect in Roussel's own early publications, from 1909 onwards, in *Gaulois de Dimanche*, the Sunday edition of an ultra-conservative daily, in which his excerpts appeared next to advice for the love-lorn, and poems by Stephen Liégeard, President of the Society for the encouragement of Virtue, since each edition was an inexhaustible source of new humour, and Duchamp only had to scratch the surface to find materials which he proposed to introduce into art. But the linguistic connection appears more precisely in how Duchamp's ideas were to develop through play on words, according to a plan which owed nothing to ordinary logic. Duchamp avoided the volubility of his mentors; he is master of the deceptively transparent, lapidary phrase, whose crystalline forms seem self-evident, that Roussel's assertion that his *Impressions d'Afrique* originated in the likeness between the words billard and pillard then corresponds to the principle Duchamp in his statement that if what you want is a grammatical rule: the verb agrees with the subject in consonance, and so on.

The primary purpose of this document, to elucidate the particular causes of the change that occurred in 1912, limits the degree to which we might address the question as to why Duchamp first acknowledged his debt to Roussel in the contexts, to the audiences, and at the time that he did. So whilst this concern does not fall strictly within our discrete purview, since Duchamp's later acknowledgement uniquely informs the undeniable change his practise underwent in 1912/13, the fact that he did so does.

Duchamp's target audiences of that acknowledgement, initially limited to the readership of *View*, 1945, and the *Museum of Modern Art Bulletin*, of 1946, was specific, and the advertisements and articles *View* carried indicate the nature of the constituencies Duchamp must be presumed to have been addressing beyond that of an informed, pro-Surrealist, avant-garde and/or modern art establishment capable of recognising his actual agenda. In short, it was the *beau monde* of New York, who wore Schiapirelli and emitted the seductive odours of Helena Rubinstein, who browsed at M.O.M.A and Brentano's, who 'grooved' at the Blue Note and, when in France, visited Mary Reynolds, the war-widow Duchamp consoled, and the Paris representative of *View*, at 24 rue Halle (XIV)

The association of the author of the *Large Glass* with Roussel in the March 1945 edition of *View*, specifically in the centrefold, which had been rehearsed the year before in the publication of excerpts in translation, by Edmond Roditi, from *Impressions d'Afrique*, inaugurates Duchamp's new promotion; and we might recall here that, as Duchamp's letter to Pach establishes, ⁽⁹³⁾ he emigrated to the U.S.A. in 1915 solely in order to find one or two people. Nevertheless, the impact of this on the non-specialist reader must have been minimal, since Roussel's work was known only to a few, highly select, aficionados in the United States at the time. And in France, from the date of Leiris' review, in the April 1935 issue of *La Nouvelle revue française* (*Documents sur Raymond Roussel*), all of Roussel's work were to remain out of print for about 30 years, until a number of publications, beginning in 1950, began a revival of interest in the author. Anticipated by Breton's four pages in his *Anthologie de l'Humour Noir*, in 1950, Michel Butor reflected a renewed interest in an essay reprinted in his *Répertoire*, and in the same year, Marcel Jean and Arpad Nezei's three chapters in their *Genèse de la Pensée Moderne* advanced the view that Roussel was the culmination of a tradition deeply tinged with occultism.

Lack of space limits any protracted discussion here of the well documented interest in the occult of Duchamp's first wider audience of the *Large Glass*, the Surrealists readership of *Minotaur*. But the promotion, between 1944 and 1946, of an identity between Duchamp's work and Roussel's example would seem to underscore the importance of the connection. It is then in this context that Duchamp's direct references to Roussel in 1946 and 1967 must be judged.

It was in the centre-fold *Triptych* of the March issue of *View*, 1945, designed by Duchamp and Kiesler, that Roussel's enduring presence is variously confirmed. But any appreciation of the meaning of this collage, or of the significance of the contents of the Sweeney interview of the following year, would have required intimate familiarity with a number of specialist subjects. That is, whilst an account of the iconography of the *Large Glass*, in the context of Duchamp's oeuvre in general, was provided by Breton et al on other pages of a magazine comprehensively dedicated to Duchamp's esoteric identity, familiarity with Roussel's methodology could hardly have necessarily been assumed on the part of the target readership. But none-the-less, in the pages of this magazine, on whose editorial board he sat, Duchamp is establishing what he had rehearsed the year before, and confirms a year later, and again to Cabanne, the link between Roussel and the *Large Glass*.

Reinforcing this, the issue carried adverts for Katherine Dreier's book, on the *Large Glass*, published the previous year, but which made no reference to Roussel. But then Katherine Dreier, the second and last private owner of the *Large Glass*, was already a Duchamp partisan.

That the function of the *Triptych* was, in reprising the *Large Glass*, to rehearse *Étant Donnés*, whose construction Duchamp was to commence the year of the Sweeney interview, would seem to be born out by the parallel drawn in the dishevelled state of the atelier that the adept Duchamp occupies in the centrefold. Evoking the typical laboratory of the archetypal alchemist, this recalls the condition of the 'capharneum' in which the *Large Glass* was assembled. But it is clear from the details of the same anaglypta wallpaper that are to be found in the Philadelphia Museum *Étant Donnés* instruction manual photographs,⁽⁹⁴⁾ that the *Triptych* is a collage of photographs taken in the very studio in which this latter work was first assembled. And as Henderson has established, the iconography of all three works coincides. And as we know, Duchamp was fascinated with anaglyphs until the very day on which he died. This would suggest that the answer to the question raised above

is that Duchamp was indicating to a new audience the tool by means of which a new work, with whose iconography and subject matter they were already familiar, *Etant Donnés*, might be unlocked - that method which he had used to construct the *Large Glass*, and all his subsequent work; Roussel's.

The *View* centrefold Triptych, and its commentary, deliberately links Duchamp to Roussel in the context of esoteric cosmology and chess, within the ambience of the *Large Glass*. Duchamp's mediumistic and spiritual identity constructed here reiterates that promoted in the following texts; that published by Breton in 1935, (reprinted verbatim in *View*): that by Levy, of 1936, (reprinted verbatim in 1968): that by Dreier and Matta's text of 1944, (advertised in the March 1945 issue): all other designated articles in the March edition of *View*, 1945, and by Breton's 1945 '*Testament*' preface to it. This latter introduced Roussel whilst eschewing any direct reference to the occult, or to his method, which then appear, minus occult overtones, one year later, in the Sweeney interview of 1946. But Roussel's occult identity seems undeniable.

Roussel's linguistic procedures themselves exemplify an 'alchemy of the word,' in which multiple meanings are occulted in layers of text via a linguistic encryption practised by all bona fide adepts. One of the more common exemplars known to Duchamp's generation is discussed by E P Wijnants.⁽⁹⁵⁾

Discussing Khunrath's various identifications, in both volumes, of the elixir of the Philosophers, or the Philosopher's Stone, Wijnants, echoing Moffit echoing Pernety, notes the symptomatic ambiguity of typical alchemical discourse, in which the same words are applied to different things in an allegorical vocabulary in which, for example, the metal antimony is called 'the grey wolf', or 'the wolf in the crucible', since, by the agency of its catalysis, gold is 'devoured' in becoming alloyed with silver, thus giving birth to the 'king' (of metals).

Further, in *A Lovely Curiosity* William Clarke⁽⁹⁶⁾ notes the following - Caradec's identification⁽⁹⁷⁾ of the fact that on several occasions Roussel visited the scientist, astronomer and occultist Flammarion, on whom he partly based the character, appearing in *Locus Solus*, of Martial Cantarel.

Clarke also notes that Roussel, Jarry and Duchamp all " borrowed useful models from the closely related realms of occultism and science", and that evidence of Roussel's knowledge of radioactivity and electro-magnetism appeared, in *Locus*

Solus and *Impressions d'Afrique*, in the same context as his knowledge of the occult, and so on.

Synchronistically locating this issue within the period of Duchamp's discussions with Cabanne, Rayner Heppenstall's historiographical review⁽⁹⁸⁾ notes that all early French commentators on Roussel identified an occult context to his work, a conclusion, coincidentally, Heppenstall rejects, as did Duchamp in reference to his own work, in public, at the same time. Breton's later presumption that an occult revelation lay at the heart of Roussel's work had been anticipated in 1925 by Eluard, in his reference to *Étoile du Front*.

So whilst in 1945, Duchamp is identifying his esoteric self with Roussel, overt references to the occult have been dropped by the Sweeney interview of 1946, in which Roussel's methods are cited in an exercise securely attaching Duchamp's artistic identity to *Large Glass*.

5. Allegorical Emblematics: Laforgue.

- Allegory: Speaking other than one seems to speak.
Description of a subject under the guise of another, of aptly suggestive resemblance.
- Emblematics;
Emblem: a thing put on: an ornament or inlaid work: a drawing or picture expressing a moral fable or allegory: an object representing symbolically an abstract quality.

In the interview published by Sweeney⁽⁹⁹⁾ Duchamp linked Laforgue's poem, *Encore à Cette Astre*, directly to the subject of his *Nude Descending the Staircase No. 2*, also citing Laforgue's *Hamlet* as being particularly to his taste at the time, the significance of which becomes apparent below. Laforgue's poem was first published in 1902-3, in the *Oeuvres Complètes*.

The linkage of the subject of the drawing with that of the paintings, which Duchamp confirmed in 1967, would also appear to be supported by the fact that Duchamp gave the drawing to Frederick Torrey, who bought the second nude from the Armory Show in 1913, rather than to John Quinn, with whom Duchamp was not acquainted at the time, but who owned *Nude Descending the Staircase No.1* by that later date. The drawing remained with Torrey until acquired by the Arensbergs in 1930. However, the account Duchamp gives Cabanne of the discrepancy between the dating of the drawing, first 1913, then 1911, a state of affairs he described as a “confusing mess”, is unconvincing, and fails to dispel an atmosphere of, at best, evasion. Duchamp encouraged this confusion by stating that Torrey had visited him in Paris before 1914, which makes either date for the gift possible.

This initial later dating of the drawing to after 1912 effectively denied it any role in the evolution of the paintings. So for forty years, this ruse, if noticed at all, denied the possibility of any discussion of the paintings' origins in the poetry of Laforgue; for which, one might assume, there must have been good reason. But if knowledge of the painted nudes' actual origins in Laforgue's Hermeticism is assumed for the time of the 1912 Independents, Laforgue's subsequent reinstatement confirms Gleizes' association of Duchamp with occultism.

Whilst the two paintings were shown in the United States a total of 24 times between 1913 and 1952, *Encore à cette Astre* was not shown at all. That later date marks both the first public appearance of any evidence of Duchamp's interest in Laforgue, in the form of the exhibition of the drawing *Sieste*, and the first exhibition of the second *Nude* outside the U.S.A, in London, six years later.

For Moffit, the significance of Duchamp's source lies in its alchemical subject, the upward yearning towards a metaphorical state of elevated consciousness and golden spiritual purity, symbolized by the Sun. What Laforgue calls 'this star' is a path to astral gold, for the artist allegorised as seeker, properly considered as occultist psychic self-realisation, a quest frustrated by the unregenerate materialism of the mob, somewhat akin to Duchamp's response to his brothers' alleged request for him to compromise the *Nude* he submitted to the Independents. This results in a failed transmutation, a deceitful counterfeit, nothing but a flamboyant shimmering froth, presenting alchemical material as a mockery of its original intention; darkened, spotted, blemished, eaten up and corrupted due to lack of spiritual integration.

The ubiquity of alchemical motifs in the poem is revealed well before the last two stanzas; the poem ends in this pessimistic fashion since there is only *putrefactio*, in meagre cloddy earth which fails to transmute, signifying the failure of the Great Work.

Pernety's *Dictionnaire* provides Moffit with an alchemical identity for the Star, as *Astre*. But Laforgue's "lemony, ersatz" gold represents no poetic invention on his part, since according to traditional alchemical laboratory procedures, a process called 'citronizing' was the specific means by which a colour denoting imminent consummation of the *Grand Oeuvre* was achieved. Moffit, referencing A E Hitchcock's *Remarks on Alchemy and Alchemists*, of 1857, concludes by observing that, like all esotericists, Laforgue offered no new links in the alchemical chain. Thus his "Again, again, again, after that (unattainable) star" evokes the failure to achieve spiritual union with the heavens and thus acquire the beneficial aspects of the Sun's elixir-like, golden enlightenment.

Moffit takes up the theme again on page 155, examining the implications of Steefel's identification of four figures in Duchamp's drawing, challenging the orthodox characterisation of the composition as comprising two, one male and one female, flanking a large mask. Steefel's description of a hand as "crenellated", and of the right hand male figure as pausing on the staircase, and turning to look back out of a barred window, appear to allude iconographically to elements of a source suggested in a text we examine below, by Southard - Browning's poem entitled *Turf and Tower, or Red Cotton Nightcap Country*.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

Moffit's claim that the central figure in Duchamp's drawing changes to female is not entirely born out by the ambiguous pictorial evidence; whilst a successful

operation results in a hermaphroditic rebis, if the figure is female the process is incomplete, or has failed. Duchamp's reluctance to admit (to Nixola Greeley-Smith, in New York ⁽¹⁰¹⁾) any fixed, or mixed, gender to the figure, would appear to confirm the ambiguity of quite which stage has been reached. But the compositionally anomalous black strips running down the edges of canvas of the *Nue* of 1911, and the later *Reseaux de Stoppages-Étalons*, confirm the black sage of alchemical putrefaction.

Moffit is, however, entirely convincing in his identification here of the significance of the chromatic variations, ranging from excrement to gold, *le monde en jaune*, so to speak, which represented this same process in the earlier, autobiographical, *Sad Young Man in a Train*.

Duchamp never discussed any potential underlying content to these paintings, focussing rather on a formalist exposition of the cinematic representation of motion they apparently represented, though why via an *academie*, an academic nude exercise, he does not explain. But perhaps Duchamp's expressed desire to become a cinema projectionist, which he confessed to Pach in 1915, illuminates Moffit's cinematic interpretation is substantiated with the latter's quotation from Bergson's *L'Évolution Créatrice*. This Duchamp's American friends could have read in Stieglitz' *Camera Works*, before his arrival in New York. The section which Moffit reproduces reads as follows:

Suppose we wish to portray in a screen a living picture, [then] there is a way of proceeding [:] it is to take a series of snapshots of the [subject] and to throw these instantaneous views on the screen so they replace each other rapidly. This is what the cinematograph does. The mechanism of our ordinary knowledge is of a cinematographical kind. ⁽¹⁰²⁾

Moffit translates Duchamp's description of his method as *démultiplication* as a failure to multiply, or 'un-multiply', since, according to Pernety, multiplication is action on exalted and perfected materials, as in a physical dissolution into Mercury via the transmutational Powder of Projection. Therefore, to de-multiply routinely means to employ raw rather than exalted materials, effecting a return to first principles in the *Prima Materia*. This retrogression is then expressive of the stripped Mercury of the Philosophers descending rather than ascending. Martinus Rulandus' *Lexicon Alchimae* (1612) which, as Moffit demonstrates, was easily accessible to Duchamp, provides him with a number of complementary meanings of the alchemical word 'descent.' These are:

DESCENSIO, either Warm or Cold, the name of a process whereby a thing becomes less noble, as when Sun becomes Mercury, when the vapour again descends and the sediment remains in the glass, in a Deliquification, or Filtration.

DESCENDUM, or Descensiorum, an Oven or Chemical Furnace into which the liquid goes down when separated from gross matter.

Thus Duchamp's descending figure can be seen to inscribe the theology of Eucharist, since the sediment of urine, which, during uroscopy, settles out in the glass vessel known as a urinal, Pernety's alchemical alembic, is called the hypostasis.

But what the *Ephmerides* reports, for the 15th of June 1912, would seem critical for the chromophotographic emphasis to Duchamp's reading of the term demultiplication, because it cites in this very context two very un-cinematic images, *Pour une Partie d'Echecs*, and *Etude pour les Joueurs d'Echecs*, at the time on show at the third exhibition of the Société Normande de Peintre Moderne, just before Duchamp went to Munich.

This brings Moffit to the matter of the staircase, in Latin *scala* or *scalae* – stairs, or a ladder, which in French is *échelle*, derived from *échelon*. Moffit notes that Poisson cites in his bibliography an anonymous but well-known alchemical treatise called the *Scala Philosophorium*, the *L'Échelle des philosophes*, and Pernety has *échelle* as meaning “the material of the work in the black-most-black- stage, in perfect putrefaction.” As illustrated in many alchemical treatises, this symbolises the vehicle by which one gains enlightenment.

So, for Moffit “what appears to represent intrinsically the most plausible and internally consistent narrative scenario for a pictorial series culminating in the *Nude Descending the Staircase* must now be acknowledged as having been written long before by the Alchemists.” That is, Duchamp's painting, like *the Young man and Girl in Spring* and the *Large Glass*, articulate a specific alchemical narrative of a (failed) *Grande Oeuvre*.

Thus Moffit's identification helps to shed light on an interpretation of the second nude offered by none other than Duchamp himself, to a fellow member of the Arensberg circle, in 1916. This was Dr Elmer Ernest Southard, whose account appears, as Appendix “F”, in Frederick Gay's *The Open Mind* ⁽¹⁰³⁾ Here, once again, the term “shimmering froth” connects Southard's gloss of Duchamp's subject with his source. The whole text, of November the 17th, 1916, reveals itself to be just another

parable of the *Grande Oeuvre*. The first section quoted here is the sole part cited in the *Ephemerides entry* for March the 18th, 1912. The second was not.

Discussing this art with Marcel one night. I inadvertently let fall some words about Diana and her now famous *defi* of the staircase. Whereupon there was nothing for it. Marcel burst the bounds of his French moderation and descanted at length upon his famous painting. Descant, expatiate, dissect, exfoliate – only by such terms can I fitly recall the phrases of Marcel. The entire rush of ideas from Aphrodite's foam to the red cotton night-cap country was displayed and no decision rendered.

" Well ", said Marcel, when the phrases of the caramel custard and the red cotton night-cap country had arrived, " it is idle to explain it; I do not explain it. It is after all the fourth dimension".

These sentences contain two hitherto un-remarked, and ostensibly unlikely, references to Robert Browning, linking him by allusion to the fourth dimension; firstly to his poem, set in the Normandy of Duchamp's youth, and secondly to the poet himself, since caramel custard is synonymous with browning, since both translate into French as *brulée*.

The validity of Southard's suggestion, that Browning's poem informs Duchamp's *Nude*, would seem to depend on his credibility as a witness.

The most accessible general source for an enquiry into Southard's qualification is Gay's biography of Southard, his colleague.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ This gives us some insight into his subject's philosophy, to which we must limit our enquiry; that he was a neuro-psychiatrist whose major claim to public eminence lay not merely in his quotidian professional work at Harvard, but more specifically his pioneering work on shell shock, which Gay discusses from page 242, cannot detain us here

Southard was a member of the circle around Arensberg, for whom he performed the role of advisor, giving the latter advice, for example, on Aquinas; Gay quotes from a letter (" I'll send you section VI of Book II, a section of *The Difference of Sex* in biblical psychology.") in which Southard discusses, apropos Biblical Psychology, the following. The current Roman Catholic view that the soul and spirit are identical. A concept of Spirit which may correspond more with Dante's Anagogical, i.e.mystical, spiritual and allegorical conception, Dante's Moral type of symbolism, the Gospel of St John, and the Book of Revelations, as represented in Delitzsch, Hebrew characters, and finally Sheldon's book on the *Strife of Systems and Productive Duality*.

Towards the end of his friend's life, Arensberg proposed to fund Southard's abortive project to edit the philosophical works of Charles Pierce.

The two had met at Harvard, where Southard was taught by Willam James.

Reports of the Arensberg Salon confirm that Southard, sharing a passion with Arensberg and Duchamp, was a dominant force in the Harvard Chess Club.

(Ringing Jouffret's bell), according to a certain W Healey;

In his chess playing he could do six blind-fold simultaneously. I once gave him a visual learning test, a series of digit-symbol combinations; he took no ordinary time for it, but apparently mastered it by some form of mental photography.

Allegedly, Southard would make notes of emotions felt during the making of chess moves, which activity he characterised under the heading of *Psychic Complexes, Memory and Imagination: A Record of Introspection for Chess Imagery*. This involved the two stages of first playing a game, and then playing it again blindfold, recording auditory and visual impressions for each move. This practice, of encoding with symbols, and the inscription into different languages of content expressed in a variety of reciprocal sensory forms, brings us close to the forms Duchamp' expression post-1912.

Southard, who, like Duchamp, could read German, Greek, Latin and French, and frequented libraries stocked with "classics and curiosa", collected polyglot dictionaries in order to investigate grammatical categories. In last years of his life, his attention turned towards the two activities bearing directly upon our discussion, *Vers Libre*, and short-story writing. The link between these latter and Southard's clinical interests lies his theory of 'Telesmatics', his neologism for the science of effects, which can be compared to the semeiology propelling a Paracelsian diagnostic practice, grounded in the Theory of Signatures.

Of relevance to our thesis, in the *Delusions* section page 235, Gay examines Southard's interest, addressing the theory of grammar, in the heuristic value of grammatical categories in ordering the concepts of Delusion, for which he claimed no specialist knowledge. Gay notes that Southard, according to a linguistic theory seemingly worthy of the delusional Brisset, concluded that the grammar of verbs would give better comparable results than any other data of linguistics, believing that there was a certain relation between the modalities of logic and the so-called modalities of grammar. (The concept 'contingent' of logic is close to the concept 'subjunctive', 'possible' to 'optative', 'necessary' is not far from 'imperative', and certain relations between the logical concept 'impossible' and the 'indicative' mood

can be drawn.) In *The Diagnosis of Mental Disease*,⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Southard later pointed out the importance of, and the means of realising, this end, through the 'Empathic Index'. The point was not to identify grammatical voice with a type of delusional situation, but to borrow from grammatical categories a classification suitable for delusional structures.

The pathological basis of Southard's psychological theorising, the underpinning of his aesthetics, manifested itself in the address he gave to the first annual meeting of the Society of Independent Artists in 1917, the year of the infamous urinal. Its title was *Are Cubists Insane ?* What he proposed to show was a parallelism between certain types of modern painting and certain psychopathic types as corresponding, in extremis, to certain normal types, which fits neatly with the occult conception of the 'man of destiny' as an a-historical agent of historical evolution, as Duchamp and Kandinsky were held to be by Katherine Dreier. In this, Duchamp was classified as schizophrenic. According to the 'Ecstatic Tetra', Cubism was then a portal to Aesthetic Experience.

At the heart of Southard's aesthetics, or science of sensual knowledge, was the issue of Beauty, Cubism demonstrating that beauty can best be understood as a condition of ugliness.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Taking his cue from William James' failure to deal with aesthetic experiences, Southard took up this theme in a lecture at the Charaka Club, New York, in 1919. Here he addressed *Ecstasy, the greater emotional experiences of life*, which naturally profits from being compared with similar categories. There were four species of this identifiable via the 'Ecstatic Tetral', since;

It is far more than a bit of pretty mysticism to ascribe logical value to the letter 4. The " Holy tetractis", having existed since the time of Pythagoras, were again employed in Francis Bacon's four 'Idols', and represent a double dichotomy.

Dichotomy is the origin of contrast, (a four-dimensional *coniuncto oppositorum*', James' *meum et tuum*, so to speak,) the division of 'this' from 'that'. And, as Gay continues;

from four, as a higher power of duality, can be derived an infinite number of combinations.

and, re-invoking a racially-grounded evolutionism;

Perhaps the differentiation between the lower and higher races lodges in the capacity not to stop at a single division of 'this' and 'that', but to push on to the double dichotomy.

One might note at this point the coincidence between Southard's 'tetractis' and Blavatsky's *Man the Square*, cited by Bragdon, in his *A Primer of Higher Space*⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ (taken from page 39, of Vol. 3, of *The Secret Doctrine*. Third Edition.) The now proto-cubist sage opines thus;

The phenomenal world receives its culmination and reflex of all in MAN. Therefore he is the mystic square - in his metaphysical aspect - the Tetraktys: and becomes the cube on the creative plane.

For Southard, " there are also four Ecstasies of Expression; Religion, Love, Invention and Artistic Accomplishment. They may be correlated for their better understanding, as were delusions, with the modalities of logic, and with grammatical moods." They are.

Modality of Logic	Mood of Grammar	Ecstasy of Experience
1. Necessary	Imperative	Religious
2. Impossible	Indicative	Amorous
3. Contingent	Subjunctive	Inventive
4. Possible	Optatic	Artistic

Southard's contention, that the schizophrenic Duchamp was a practitioner of a disorder, indicates that the value of Cubism lay perhaps in its indexical capacity to invoke an underlying pictorial hygiene of which it was merely a pathological symptom, its ugliness revealing to us a beauty it does not itself possess but can only point us towards. Thus, for Southard, Arensberg's Free Verse is the exaggerated - pathological even - expression of an orthodox poetry which is itself already the pathological expression of emotion. Southard's embrace of an esoterically grounded free verse is demonstrated in such poems as *Shoulders*, and *The Star Temple*, which dwelt on God, the Devil and Reincarnation, and in which;

the card catalogue of heaven contains all names; you are you as A is A, but reincarnation lies in the 'is' linking A to A, 'is' making the first A different from the second.

Here the autobiographer, in the home of Hermeticism, Egypt, with the Sphynx, Horus, Hathor, and Cleopatra's serpent, conceived as an Orouborus, is casting a horoscope, much as the Arensberg circle dabbled in chiromancy:

...perhaps I was the priest of that star temple
and made my sacrifice to that star

upon that star's particular hour
 watching, watching
 through all the doors and floors and windows and ceilings
 through the fairway
 the fairway fashioned for that star
 and for another star..."

Once more *Encore à cette Astre*, it would appear.

The Mordant, another poem about desiring a woman, deals with the difference between sensual and intellectual knowledge.

But also found among Southard's notes were suggestions for a series of psychopathic short stories, ideas worked out as a result of a wish to make literary creation out of psychopathic hospital material; Southard had elaborated a theory of short story writing, by a technique reminiscent of Browning's use of court records as a source for the subject of *Red Cotton Nightcap Country*, which follows medical case-histories, emulating the construction of the scientific laboratory data, and recording the whole somewhat on the lines of the Russian short-stories, or those of Artzybashev, citing his suggestion of oriental origin, with a suspicion of the Arabian Nights, the principal title formation to cover that of *Ivanhoe* as described by Scott. According to Southard, these tales should be non-sentimental. If they were to be used for propaganda they should, nevertheless, be divorced from any such effect, for according to Artzybashev, either every fact should be worked over into something different and symbolic of the original fact, or else the story should be naturalistic - the very attributes of Duchamp's fabrications. Thus it would appear that in his own prose, Southard's indexical semiotic method mirrors Duchamp's own; and thus it would appear also that Southard's aesthetic and clinical preoccupations equipped him to assume fully the role of reliable witness.

So in the latter part of 1916, Southard wrote a group of 'novelettes', exclusively dealing with the moral degeneration of a feeble-minded individual who comes to a sorry legal end, with such engaging titles as *Din-Din and the Yeast Cake*, *Peter's Pyre*, *Dimple's Coif*, *Kill-joy Kate* and *The Phoenix of the 4 Wisps* - and *Mlle de L'Éscalier*. But in judging these stories singularly disappointing, since there are too many side-lines of thought to promote the narrative to best advantage, Gay identifies in them what we now recognise as Duchamp's compositional method, formal structure and exegetic method, as described by Southard, whose final remarks would appear to

indicate a tincture of Laforguian irony in his rhetorical conceit, which the spirit of the piece would appear to demand.

However, if we are to make any sense of Southard's parable, then we must address the more unexpected linkage of Duchamp's painting with this most unlikely of sources, Browning's poem, *Red Cotton Nightcap Country*, a work based on a local, and national, contemporary French scandal. The date of Browning's poem coincided with the second of three court actions brought by members of a prestigious Parisian jewellers, the Mellerio's, still trading today, against the beneficiaries of a family will. The first action passed through the civil court at Caen in 1872. The second was held at the Court d'Appel, in Caen, in the year Browning's novel was published, and the third, in 1874, was held at the Court de Cassation, again in Caen. The Mellerio tragedy, which provoked to the failed actions, played itself out both in Paris and at substantial properties in Normandy, near St Aubin.

Duchamp might have encountered the subject of Browning's poem in his youth, since he was born and grew up in the Normandy in which the events it addresses took place; in 1881 his father had acquired the practice of *notaire* at Blainville-Crevon, a few kilometres from Ry, where Delphine Couturier, one of the models for Flaubert's Emma Bovary, was born, and it would seem impossible to believe that this country notary, whose business it was to know everybody's business, and who brandished 'Madame Bovary's' marriage certificate, which resided in the archives of his practise, at every social opportunity, could not have known about the Mellerio scandal. There can of course be no question that Duchamp *père* was professionally involved with the case. This would have been impossible on chronological grounds alone, but also because the business of a *notaire* was not to plead in court, but was dedicated to the guaranteeing of authenticity to legal documents - ante-nuptial agreements, wills, mortgages, death certificates and gifts 'inter vivos'; in addition, to be counsellor and arbiter in disputes arising in the small community over which he held jurisdiction - a little like Duchamp apropos the Surrealists, later. But any dispassionate interest in the Mellerio case might well have been revived for the Duchamps in 1886, when the family acquired, through marriage, Mellerio relatives in Paris.

The basic scenario informing the relationship between the poem and its source is examined by Mark Siegchrist.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ The events, as Browning recounts them,

represent a circuitous arrival at a subject of the poem's narrative, which, put simply, means it's parabolic.

The Lady in Browning's story, borrowing a local sartorial habit for a metaphor, coins the term 'White Cotton Nightcap Country' to encapsulate the tranquillity of the *genius loci*. In brutal response, the Gentleman, searching for an episode so terrible as to render a better metaphor, lights upon 'Red Cotton Nightcap Country', on the basis that there is always a moral to be discovered beneath a public service.

The suggestion that Browning was alluding to the cap of the *sans-culottes* would not appear to take us far here; Southard's citation of the complete title, including the last word 'country', would appear to point away from revolutionary politics towards Browning's gentleman, rambling on about the local highlights until his eyes light upon the church tower of *La Délivrante*, reminding him of the coronation service of the Virgin; the tower had been generously donated by the wealthy Parisian jeweller family of Mellerio, whose *château* lay nearby. This reveals his "tragic bit of red", or "melodramatic scarlet", of which there is, incidentally, a patch in Duchamp's *Nude* of 1911, but not its successor of 1912.

Antonio Mellerio, an unstable mixture of emotion, loose sexual morality, superstitious religious faith and dim intellect, a volatile combination, which runs its course until expressed in the delusional *dénouement*. The model for Browning's Miranda was in fact an orthodox catholic youth who, descending into dissipated libertinage, meets, at the theatre, at the age of 25, a gold-digger, the "poor but noble" Mme Debacker, a.k.a. Alma de Beaupré, in life, one Anna Sophie Trayer, a.k.a. Lucie Steiner, of Commercy, whose sordid past, as a concubine, belies her ostensible respectability.

They fall in love; it ends in tears; and that's just the beginning.

Antonio Mellerio/ Léonce Miranda, on his tower, having realised his lack of true faith in the power and mercy of the Virgin, in an *auto-da-fé* intended to move the Virgin to a miracle, and in order to redeem his life and the whole of France, acts. In an ascent of the spiral staircase (to water the plants) which mirrors Mallarmé's descent of Igitur to the family vault, Miranda recalls the myth that the statue of the Virgin at *La Délivrante* was carried by angels to the spot, and in an attempt, according to the Browning version, to resolve the struggle in his spirit between idealism and materialism, jumps from the belvedere.

The April 23rd-29th, 1870, edition of the local newspaper, the suitably titled *Bonhomme Normande*, carried a report protested against by only Mme Debacker - via her gardener. Perhaps it is not too fanciful to see the 'crenellated' fingers identified by Steegel in Duchamp's *Encore à cette Astre* in the excerpt from this report cited by Siegchrist which reads:

Convinced that he faced damnation because of his illicit relations with her, he placed both his hands in the fire and burned off all his fingers, leaving only the shapeless stumps, that were hereafter always covered with leather gloves tipped with wood. ⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

It is clear from the publishing history of Browning in France that Duchamp's generation were in a position to be well informed about his work; in *Browning through French Eyes* ⁽¹¹⁰⁾ Patrick Pollard examines this reception, listing the publications, in French, available to Duchamp up to 1912.

Whilst no mention of Browning's work appeared in Hippolyte Tain's *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise* (1863; tenth edition 1899), Gabriel Sarrazin's *La renaissance de la poésie anglaise*, (1798-1889, Paris, Perrin, 1889,) contained a section on Browning, between pages 199-232; *Quelques aspects de la foi moderne dans les poèmes de Robert Browning*, (Paris: Faculté de Lettres, Université de Paris), 1907, was followed by articles on Browning's thought in *Revue des synthèses historique*, of August-September 1910: in 1912, Pierre Berger's *Robert Browning*. (Paris.Bloud.) appeared.

But, significantly, two prominent journals, the *Mercure de France* [in 1903, 1904 and 1906] on which Duchamp's close friend Apollinaire worked, and, the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, founded in 1908, featured articles, translations and notes. Pollard also notes the discussion of shorter poems appearing as occasional pieces in French publications in 1885, 1890, 1900 and 1913.

Further, in 1903 Davray, who had, since 1896, run the *Revue de la quinzaine*, a well-informed section on English literature in The *Mercure*, published a brief eulogy on Browning (XLVII. July-September, 1903. p. 257-8.)

In 1904 the *Mercure* published a short notice of the first volume of the *Poetical Works* by Grant Richards; and Chesterton's *Robert Browning*, of 1903, which Davray reviewed in that year, in fact provides an analysis of the poet's practice which provides evidence for a rehearsal of the issue of what Duchamp might have borrowed, in methodological terms. In his fifth chapter, entitled *Browning as a Literary Artist*, Chesterton treats of the linguistic mechanics of Browning's alleged obscurity of style.

Further, in 1912, the *Mercure* published an extended *Revue de la quinzaine* dedicated to a selection of contemporary critical opinions, a number dealing with Browning's work. In the same year Pierre Berger published the first substantial monograph in French of Browning's life and work, for a general public; Pollard notes Berger's identification of Browning's prolix complexity and luxurious superabundance.

It was also in 1912 that the 7th, Centenary Edition volume of *The Works of Robert Browning* was published, in London, edited by F W Kenyon.

The possibility of a concordance between Browning's dramatic monologues and those of Mallarmé and Lafourgue is indirectly raised by Elizabeth A Howe.⁽¹¹¹⁾ For example, Michelle Hanoosh's review of it⁽¹¹²⁾ identifies Howe's insistence on Browning's concern for creating a whole, life-like character, a 'mimesis' of reality, presenting well-defined characters intended to simulate real human beings, and his belief in a unified knowable self, making his monologues one half of a dialogue. And since Southard's citation of Browning's poem is clear, perhaps he might have been in a position to concur with Chesterton's view, cited by Berger on pages 189 and 192, apropos Brougram and Sludge, that " There is nothing that Browning loved more[...] than the utterance of large and noble truths by the lips of mean and grotesque human beings."

Gold from dross, or the divine spark in the dust, perchance?

In this context, it would seem pertinent to note that numbers 4 and 5 of a seven part series on *Precursors of H.P.B.*⁽¹¹³⁾ discuss Browning's *Paracelsus*, who the anonymous author uses to illustrate Browning's mystical tendency. This mage was not the father of modern chemistry but the seeker after eternal wisdom, for in the wanderings of Paracelsus, Browning found footprints which every seeker after truth could follow, and in the experiments of the great alchemist, a symbolic outline of a method whereby the baser metals of the lower, personal desires might be transmuted into the pure gold of altruistic service.

Clyde de L Ryals⁽¹¹⁴⁾ paints a very similar portrait to that identified above. His restless seeker after knowledge aims to render the physical and spiritual universe legible by comprehending the works of God with his mind; the world being mind, the individual consciousness can encounter the universal (the goal of all esoteric doctrines taking alchemy as a metaphor). Further, this encounter can be recorded in language.

Paracelsus believes that he can comprehend Nature through a knowledge of God, not by reading the works of others. But the text of the world is not so easy to read, unaided. He seeks the help of a Greek conjuror, who requires him to write a autobiography by means of which he discovers his failings. Thus Paracelsus' life becomes a metaphor for two Operations of the Great Work, in which purification is achieved only by means of a previous putrefaction and death of the self.

At this moment a voice from within speaks to him.

This Aprile has loved the beauty of the world not for what it means, but what it is, never reaching beyond the beauty of the signs of the world. Overwhelmed and bewildered by the beauties of the phenomenal world, he has not had the strength to deal with them, or replicate them in his art. Now, having aspired to overcome the defects of a common speech useless to his ends, in the transmutation of life into beautiful forms, Aprile must work in the present, with the limited means and rude tools (to which Duchamp turns after 1915) since no-one can play the role of God.

For five years, Paracelsus attempts to follow Aprile's advice, but, like Laforgue's protagonist, unsuited to the role, he merely casts his pearls before swine, and in so doing, realizes his true path, just like Duchamp after his rejection by the Independents. Paracelsus does not have the language in which to set down his discoveries, and what he cannot express to himself, he cannot communicate to others. So, knowing that the divine must be realized in the present, he returns to his old search for absolute knowledge, now aware of the futility of the quest. Now he regards his previous discourse as cant, and (yet another) frothy shower of words, realizing that some things, such as a notion of the afterlife, cannot be put into words at all. Paracelsus' quest, predicated on a belief in a language which could express absolute truth, and which would read and record phenomena in a novel fashion, has taught him of the falseness of this assumption.

This sense of the impossibility of ever reaching an absolute understanding would appear to chime with Southard's judgement, made at the end of his gloss, expressed as “ (and) no decision rendered”, which in turn suggests a reinforcement of the sentiment Moffit identifies as driving Laforgue's *Encore à cette Astre*.

So now, as Paracelsus reads the world, he does so indexically, " with fore-finger pointing...like one who traces in an open book / The matter he declares. "

This is the result of his embracing of the doctrine of becoming, since it has lead him to a new theory of language, in which words evoke responses, act as stimuli,

are inter-animating. Words are not symbols mediating the noumenon and the phenomenon: they do not permit vision, as he had thought: rather they are signs that allow man to gain a larger grasp on himself, and thus grow in understanding beyond present verbal constructs. As Paracelsus develops his linguistic theory, he shows that man deals with the world around him as language presents it to him, for language ties him to the world. He is not, however, a logical positivist, since “ he does not accept the permanent separation of the finite and the infinite. Language has its limitations in that it cannot speak of the noumenal; spiritual insight cannot be expressed in words.”

Adrienne Auslander Munich ⁽¹¹⁵⁾ outlines, on page 7 of her *Introduction*, Browning’s adoption of an emblematic method of composition (and see page 134, *passim*), giving us the following definition;

Differing from illustrated poems or captioned pictures, emblems consist of an image, or *impresa*, and a glossing text, sometimes summarized by a motto, the whole constituting a unified work of art. Each element gives the whole a sense of inevitable truth, the aphoristic motto summarizing its wisdom. Munich ⁽¹⁰¹⁾ outlines on page 7 of her *Introduction*

Early emblem writers;

invoked the model of Egyptian hieroglyphics, thinking its ideographs were more immediately communicative than phonetic signs, and yet were more mysterious, a coded language of a priesthood. ⁽¹¹⁶⁾

(It is hardly surprising, then, that the emblem is still the chosen form of expression for partisans of the Eternal Wisdom; since the meaning of the image is not available to the common reader, the function of the glossing text is particularly important.)

Munich stresses that Browning’s emblems, in a Kristevan formulation, function analogously to the semiotic marker which, functioning in a non-linguistic realm requires a symbolic discourse to articulate its meaning in the way that the *impresa* requires of the glossing text; (hence Duchamp’s conception of the function of the Notes to the *Large Glass*, his best known emblematic work, which was not to be looked at in any normal sense, but read through those Notes, issued in Paris in the form of *The Green Box*, and the character of the 'titles' of his readymades.)

Munich now indirectly identifies how the Perseus and Andromeda myth brings into fortuitous conjunction Browning and Laforgue. Munich notes Browning's earlier deliberate construction of an emblem, in the form of a ‘surreal’ portrait of his own mind, from a number of mysterious and precious personal objects; Browning

makes an *impresa* of his writing place, glossing it to create a macabre emblem of his poetic soul. She then turns to an emblematic treatment of Andromeda as central figure to a later poem. In this, Browning imagines himself as a woman; rather than making the characters in the Andromeda myth into dramatic figures, the poet uses them as emblematic ciphers, susceptible to the poet's interpretation- since only he can read the code. By using Andromeda's attributes – her chains, her nakedness, her hair – as emblematic objects, the poet gestures to elements in the myth and interprets their meaning as if he were an emblem. Thus, in *Pauline*, the sign of hair evokes the skull looming behind it.

But it is Browning's *With Francis Furini* which brings Duchamp's 1911/12 nudes into sharper focus, since it features a debate concerning the propriety of painting the nude, and the issues and meanings which arise from it. His target, in defence of his own son, was evolutionists and conservative critics. Here Munich sums up Browning's "uneasy" ' evolutionist versus emblemist' argument thus.

Both the emblem maker and the scientist observe similar objects with a view to another meaning, a pattern outside the thing observed, but the emblemist finds a more exalted one. Evolutionists trace the exquisite female form back to simian origins. The emblematic artist observes a representation of an exquisite female form and ultimately finds God.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

Critical to an understanding of Paracelsus' diagnostic method was the Theory of Signatures, predicated on Resemblance. In Paracelsus' method " An object's appearance leads one to grasp its meaning. Every natural object is a signature, cipher or character." That is, by understanding and interpreting the indexical sign correctly, one can grasp the connections its essence enjoys with the whole of nature. But, "Only a person who is chosen to decipher the code, to read the handwriting of objects, can gain a knowledge of transcendence."

So, in opposition to the Theory of Signatures, Darwinian evolution conflicts with a view of the textuality of the world – and thus with the Paracelsian world of textuality. This theory is predicated on the belief that the purpose and meaning of the universe dissolves if the signature signifies nothing beyond itself; without signs that add up to something, there is no plot for human existence. In trying to reject the evolutionist view, Browning, like Paracelsus, seeks a language that will encompass the minute, the bizarre, the anomaly, uniting multitudinous-ness in a system of signs; even though the world contains an infinite vocabulary, it none-the-less constitutes a

language. Browning's second Andromeda emblem thus prosecutes his project to reconcile evolution with eternity.

As a Paracelsian signature, Andromeda represents emblematics in opposition to the epistemology of the evolutionary scientist, who fails to grasp the transcendent meaning of the object he scrutinises, whereas emblematic vision both describes the object and finds its meaning. Thus the literal-minded can only understand the material body in which the emblematiser sees soul, and the poet, in translating an object's silent meaning, challenges a world full of things emptied of significance. So for emblematisers, nakedness could signify a spiritual attribute, and so nude paintings, such as those by Peter Paul Rubens, could imitate fallen nature by honouring the Creator of naked Eve.

For Munich, the concrete Andromeda, as formulated in the early *Pauline*, advanced an inadequate argument for the permanence of art. Now Andromeda points to a different form of sign, since Browning claims a comparison between the artist's delineation and "the Almighty's imitation of his supreme-est work in the heavens" since "God traced Andromeda with stars."

The artist who sees this idea in the sky did so by the authority of God; that is, since the truest artist is one who imposes a pattern on otherwise arbitrary signs, then the interpretation of those signs is the highest form of criticism. The artist's imagination can discern the heavenly Andromeda, whereas to the uninitiated, the night sky is merely an unconnected mass of lights; (so too the occultist astrologer-artist, perhaps.)

Emblematic constellations thus require a divinely inspired decoder. Like a child playing a cosmic dot-to-dot game, the artist agonizes to trace in the dust a figure of a woman, in which imagination requires external validation, but not that of the evolutionist; looking in the wrong place for evidence, and arguing from the lowest forms of life to man, the evolutionist emphasises descent, thus closing off all possibility of ascent, or, as the Theosophist would say, declivity and acclivity. On the other hand, the poet's perspective from the vastness of cosmic space exposes as paltry the evolutionist's painstaking survey of physical minutiae. Now, the Andromeda constellation makes possible transcendent knowledge. Closed to the critical, scientific, evolutionary mind, emblematic interpretation requires intuition, not microscopic observation to understand.

For Munich, Browning's final version of *Andromeda* refines representation to an almost pure semiotic sign. That "almost" is 'not quite' need not detain us here, since Duchamp's representational aims were not Browning's. Duchamp's post-avant-garde goal was not a self-sublimating autobiography, since the 'truth' of his subject was already inscribed in an Esoteric Doctrine, which he articulated through semeiological indices, not pure semiotic symbols.

In the conversations with Cabanne cited above, Duchamp admitted a specific interest in the humour of the Laforgue's *Moralités Légendaires*, first published Paris in 1887; but he did not explain why, instead of illustrating them, he took inspiration from *Encore à cette Astre*.

Paz, (whose title, *The Castle of Purity*, is a quotation of the last four words of Mallarmé's *Igitur*,) in reference to the Sweeney conversation, states that " Duchamp emphasises that it was not so much the poetry of Laforgue that interested him as his titles; *Comice Agricole*, for example."⁽¹¹⁸⁾ But whilst the title, *Comice Agricole*, Agricultural Show, or Cattle-show, would not seem to recommend itself to the exemplification of what Paz goes on to describe, the miraculous ability of puns to ironically exalt and, simultaneously, abolish the power of language, the ironic humour which Duchamp identifies in Laforgue's work does.

Michael Collie⁽¹¹⁹⁾ affords us some insight into this matter, in his epitomes of these "anti-romantic myths." Here we learn that Hamlet is more interested in the play he has written than in his domestic situation, Ruth in *Le Miracle des Roses* believes she is miraculously cured of the curse which causes the suicide of every young man she sees, without ever knowing that yet another kills himself on the very day of the 'miracle', *Salomé*, having obtained the head of the prophet Iakannan, in trying to fling it into the sea, falls over the cliff and kills herself, and so on.

Similarly, in *Les Deux Pigeons*, a reprise of *Tristan*, we learn of two lovers who try to avoid each other but who, in-spite of their best efforts, are reunited against their will by the irony of life and the accident of fate, since they are doomed to remain together in order to expire in a slow death. It is almost pedantic to note that it takes no special skill to recognise in this scenario an allegory of the Hermetic hermaphroditic *coniuncto oppositorum* of the *Grand Oeuvre*.

Collie identifies Laforgue's anticipation of the uses to which myths have been put in the twentieth century, since he chooses his legends not for their intrinsic interest, but because they admit an ironical, mock-heroic play on a well-known theme, and give the author the opportunity of reversing the point or moral, in this case by proposing down-to-earth though fantastic alternatives for the ancient chivalric motives of the main characters. This observation might equally be made of the fabricator of the alchemical subject matter of the ironically allegorical *Large Glass*. And in a passage which comes very close to describing Duchamp's own position in the critical period of 1912, Collie proposes that this is one of the ways in which a writer can ease himself out of stock situations of one generation, or of a particular society, and, under cover of the fable, with the protection of the irony with which he handles it, explore alternative attitudes which occur first as the attitudes of his characters, rather than as the moral basis of his own work. Thus one expects an interest in myths either at a time of change, when orthodoxy is under attack, since the mock-heroic possibilities give an author the freedom he needs, or alternatively, at a time when the author's relation to society, not as a person, but as an author per se, is a dubious one; in which case the obliquity of his handling of myth lets him avoid the banality he sees every-where, his own actual standing-point remaining ambiguous. And, if his new practice was anything to go by, in his reorientation Duchamp can be seen to subscribe to Collie's characterisation of a Laforgue who "did not believe in the activities of ordinary people, or in the motivations underlying their activities."

So, like a routine alchemical esotericist, having adopted a legend, Laforgue writes a new version in which the inter-relationship of character with situation tends to be psychological. That Laforgue took his interest in psychology from von Hartmann's psychology of the unconscious is illustrated, for Collie, by *Salomé's* epitaph, which reads, (in a thoroughly 'Tristanesque' sense) "Birth is a departure, Death is a re-entering."

But, as Collie puts it, these stories do not depend on these themes of repression and frustration; it is, rather, Laforgue's ironic, humorous, anti-romantic handling that gives them their sardonic point, since he gives these tales a quality which quite removes them from the world of serious meaning. Since the situations and the scenes which he describes constitute only the fantasy world of myth, Laforgue is able to do to language what he does with the stories themselves. Normal usage is not important to him, except as something to be played upon; extraordinary usage is the intention.

Decadence is achieved at the breaking point of meaning, as it were, when a word or phrase is taken to the extreme of extravagance, so that the words are used in the configuration of a masquerade, the spontaneity of language being altogether destroyed.

At the risk of belabouring the point, one has only to read Duchamp's notes, whether from the *Box of 1914*, or from the *Green Box*, to feel that the parallels between his fixation on language and Laforgue's are too obvious to be denied, as is the fact that Duchamp's subjects are also taken from myth, and, ostensibly, equally removed from the world of serious meaning.

Collie proposes that Laforgue's difficulty with symbol was at last resolving itself at the same time as he was composing the *Moralités Légendaires* and planning *Les Fleurs de bonne volonté*. The idea of symbol, as objective correlative, becomes important when the subject of the poem is the relationship of, on the one hand, the poet, and, on the other, the 'external world.'

This was not a problem for Duchamp after 1912, for reasons we have discussed above. What does describe the character of his products after then, as we have characterised them, is touched on in the next passage, in which Collie develops his thesis apropos Laforgue's own development.

An image in a poem which does not have this personal focus derives its force not merely from the originality or inventiveness of the man who conceived it, but from the relationship, however remote, to some fixed point of reference, whether it is the explicit subject of the poem, the author's evident intention, or the reader's vague assumption of the stability of the world in which the image occurs. This is reinforced by Collie's characterisation of the stage Laforgue had reached in the last summer of his life, by when he had found a way of writing the poem, the verbal stream of consciousness in which, without artifice, the various facets of his imagination were at last integrated;

....he wished to write a poem that would be free from formal limitations, a poem, that is, that on the analogy of painting and music, would have the form appropriate to its subject, in such a way that it would be sophistical to distinguish between the two.

Of course, it was distinguishing sophistically between the two which drove Duchamp's epistemological antinomy; and once more, at the risk of over-egging the pudding, one notes here the "verbal stream of consciousness" characteristic of

Southard's description of Duchamp's exegetic method. Further, one merely needs to remove Duchamp's products from an affective aesthetic for the above passage to identify precisely the form of his post-Roussellian expression, in which the translation of subject into form, as we shall see, produced a Laforgue-ian and Stirner-esque oeuvre markedly lacking in repetition.

So Laforgue's method, developed in the *Moralités Légendaires* and *Dernier's Vers*, provided Duchamp with a model of compositional procedure which he could use allegorically, as Laforgue had, but not for poetical ends; that he had given up.

So whilst identifying themes in the *Moralités Légendaires* corresponding with those of *Encore à cette Astre*, for example, the allegorical articulation of the Eucharistic theme (as represented by an eligible young man transformed from the man or creature Andromède had known before in the form of a Monster), space here does not afford the further prosecution of a Hermetic identity for the *Moralités Légendaires* or *Dernier's Vers*. And although *Hamlet* naturally offers rich possibilities, for the time being, *Encore à cette Astre* must do; and we must also forgo the pleasure of iconographical correspondence that *Igitur* would appear to offer, beyond those we have already mentioned.

This Laforgue-ian form of expression (which ironically offered Duchamp a model of expression at the point at which his aims were shifting away from the production of commodities for the avant-garde art market) is discussed by Anne Holmes ⁽¹²⁰⁾ who proposes that Laforgue's poetry and prose provided insight into a philosophy, the knowledge of which, we suggest, could not only have informed Duchamp's own work but also served him well in his later satisfaction of his esoteric clients' requirements, and with which, there is good reason to believe, he was himself in sympathy. As she puts it, Laforgue's cosmos remains conventional when it, rather than the poet, is the focus of the poem. And yet its importance to him is undeniable. When in his later work it becomes an objective correlative for the poet, rather than being the directly addressed or described subject; when the stars, sun, moon, wind and rain echo and modulate human consciousness; man's isolation in an unknowable universe is never treated by Laforgue as a main philosophical theme; instead it becomes an integral element of the narrator's psychology.

This identification, not of the author in the text, but of its executor, is then sublimated into Duchamp's within months of his completion of his Laforguian nudes.

Holmes continues that Laforgue's earliest writings refer to Schopenhauer - as indeed to Hegel - with familiarity. Edouard von Hartmann came later, and was for Laforgue both a comforting and a liberating presence; comforting, because he provided a world view that, pessimistic though it was, amounted to a system (*Philosophie des Unbewussten*. Fr 1877): and liberating, because von Hartmann set art firmly in the realm of the unconscious, beyond the power of human reason. For a poet who needed to break new aesthetic ground, this was a kind of salvation.

This reference to von Hartmann's work rehearses a subject much more pertinent to our thesis, our final subject and primary focus, Duchamp's 1912 sojourn in Munich.

That von Hartmann's outline " of the three stages of human illusion (the first that happiness can be attained by the individual in this life, the second that it can be obtained in an afterlife, and the third that it will be attained in some future state of the world's evolution) ...would have been generally acceptable to him (Laforgue) in 1880", ⁽¹²¹⁾ would have also been highly acceptable to any esotericist adhering to Rosicrucian and Theosophical doctrine, goes without saying. Laforgue's poetry, represented by his first volume, *Le Sanglot de la terre* (1880-2), claimed by Holmes as " just as much as Baudelaire's, dependent on capturing the moment, (since)for Baudelaire, the ephemeral was the necessary path to the absolute: for Laforgue, it was the substance of art as well", ⁽¹²²⁾ thus provides a model for the contingent *pièces d'occasion* making up Duchamp's oeuvre, at least from the time of his wedding gift to his sister.

Given our earlier qualification of the differences between their aims, we must bear in mind that here that Duchamp was never a poet, that he gives up art at this time, detaching himself from the professional orbit, and aesthetic aims, of Apollinaire and Co, immediately after painting his to-be-rejected, Laforguian, *Nude*. After Munich he moves away from the milieu at Neuilly, to the Rue Saint-Hyppolite. Finally, Duchamp alone privileges Laforgue and Roussel.

One of Holmes' observations apropos Laforgue would certainly appear to confirm Moffit's identification of the modernist ideology which would inevitably have circumscribed Duchamp's aesthetics, as follows. The *Moralités Légendaires* consist of two contrasting elements ⁽¹²³⁾, as must any retelling of myth, a modern and realistic element, and a legendary and imaginary element, elements appearing in Duchamp's works as actual content and its allegorical appearance. Holmes tells us that Laforgue

called the stories *de vieux canevas brodés d'âmes à la mode* - which seems a fair enough description of a hermetic allegory dressed in the colours of a modern old master, a Futurist *académie*, so to speak. That the later poems offer parallel contrasts between the immediate and modern, conveyed in the main narrative, and the literary and mythical, conveyed by metaphor and inter-textuality, seems, again, to make the same point.

And apropos his enthusiasm for the work of Böcklin, whose bizarre and anachronistic mythological figures influenced not only Laforgue's verse, but also, and more obviously, his *Moralités Légendaires*, one notes here that Duchamp's European tour of 1912, using Munich as base, can from the outset be understood as a tour of the most prominent galleries housing Böcklin's work.

Observations suggesting parallels in technique abound, from page 110 onwards, such as the following examples evoking the catechismal practice required for the interrogation of Duchamp's post-1912 productions.

In their narrative and mode of presentation of character, we see that Laforgue's narrator clearly directs his observations to his reader, keeping himself well in view, so that his sensibility remains the final impression of the stories, as it is of the poems. This establishes an early familiarity with the reader, and the style of his stories, as of his verse, frequently has the intimate character of speech and a deceptive appearance of spontaneity. The narrative voice comments, enumerates, questions, and is both unfailingly courteous and at the same time elusively flippant.

The short stories offer, therefore, a self-conscious dialogue with the reader, the interior monologue of two or more voices of the self.

Others evoke the Rousellian devices of synonym, antonym, homophone and homonym functioning as inter-textual hinges between fields to construct a stratified form which would today be described as hypertext:

The technical devices of poetry abound: the rhetorical question, the theatrical aside, apostrophe, parenthesis, enumeration, and that particular use of repetition that consists of the recapitulation of a word as basis of its further development, which Laforgue used so frequently in the *Moralités* that his publishers frequently cut it out.

In the seventh and eighth of the *Derniers Vers* (one) can easily see the importance of something very like the recurrent Wagnerian motif, each motif develops through the poem - that is, follows a modulated sequence. Whilst the motifs are contrasted with each other, they also interrelate, introducing or provoking one another.⁽¹²⁴⁾

As our analysis of the character of Roussel's method demonstrates, the fact that while Duchamp's aims were not compromised by the need to attempt to express personal feelings, the techniques described here were none-the-less not denied the

status of a perfect tool, as his use of "formulas constantly repeated", rather than "possession" of language, bears out;

The narrator in the *Derniers Vers* visibly confronts the difficulty of attempting to express personal feelings in a language created by others, as formulas constantly repeated, a language that he cannot 'possess' but merely 'use'. Trite *idées reçues* exemplify the state of affairs, seeming to destroy any potential that language might have for self-expression." ⁽¹²⁵⁾

Further correspondences, iconographical, methodological, autobiographical and content-wise, can be discerned in Laforgue's embodiment of his sense of himself as the failed idealist, or idealist-turned decadent at once expressing and mocking his disgust at life by his use the mask of Hamlet. This not only recalls the central motif of Duchamp's drawing, but also suggests an element of stage-management apropos the 'rejection' of his *Nude* by the 1912 Independents. In this light, Duchamp's later acknowledgement, in a statement privileging Laforgue, that it was not the example of Mallarmé, but Roussel, which had offered him a way out of Symbolism, seems important. So the sense of failure embodied in Mallarmé's character reinforces, in the light of Moffit's alchemical analysis of Laforgue's poem, an autobiographical dimension to Duchamp's drawing and paintings.

This latter offers further evidence of correspondences, in this case, iconographical, conflating the imagery of Laforgue, Mallarmé and Duchamp, plus that of Browning. For example, Lamont tells us that every step that Mallarmé's hero takes on the winding stairs "closes the lid of his coffin over his head, the steps are so many lids, the walls which mirror his prison are the sides of the same coffin where he longs to rest. He carries to his grave the sorcerer's book and in the other hand holds a candle which he will blow out, a symbol of the extinction of life." ⁽¹²⁶⁾

Such iconographic correspondences can then be seen to implicate Southard's ostensibly perverse identification of Browning's poem. For example, the "stranger wherever he treads, accompanied at every step of his mysterious pantomime by a host of private ghosts, Hamlet is the theatrical hero in a supreme sense, the Christ-like actor celebrating the ritual of self-immolation" ⁽¹²⁷⁾ seems synonymous with Browning's *Miranda*, and the atelier of "Laforgue's Hamlet, also a writer (who) inhabits a tower surrounded by stagnant water; its Gothic furniture, tarnished mirror, dusty books, discarded brushes and tools afford a perfect setting for one who juggles with ideas, although clichés might be the more appropriate word", ⁽¹²⁸⁾ recalls not only

Browning's emblematic construction of his own studio, but also Duchamp's capernaum in New York, stocked with equally desultory artefacts.

And the sense of a symbolist field of fugitive indexical images and values characterising his mentors' works is close to the form of Duchamp's form and its exegesis that Southard describes, in an exegesis inevitably representing the semantic structure of the work susceptible to it; a work whose formal architectonics supports an allegorical appearance mistaken, by the uninitiated, for that very form itself, producing an illusionistic aesthetic upon which so much Duchamp criticism has subsequently been grounded.

This substantiation of Southard's linking of Duchamp with Browning, here via literary aesthetics, which now appears to have some foundation, is in fact reinforced biographically, since the date of the first Mellerio case, 1872, also marks the date of the birth of Duchamp's cousin, Marguerite, the daughter of his father Eugene's brother Mery, whose name, since it rhymes homophonically with the name of the photographer whose work inspired the style of Duchamp's *Nude* of 1912, Jules Etienne Marey, would augment the formal stratification to the overall discourse informing the *Nude* in Southard's representation of Duchamp's exegetic method.

But there is firmer ground than this.

As her father, a Parisian pharmacist, had been Marcel's godfather before, so Marguerite became, in the year of her marriage, 1896, godmother to Yvonne, Marcel's sister: the *Arbre Généalogique de la Famille Duchamp*,⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ tells us that Marguerite Duchamp (1872-1956) married a certain Etienne Mellerio (1858—1936) in that same year. But the *Ephemerides* entry, for June 22nd 1919, tells us something more – that on that day, and still in Buenos Aires, Duchamp is packing, in order to sail at three that very afternoon. He is packing two items, the second of which is a circular tablecloth he is bringing back for the same Marguerite Mellerio, in Paris, whose surname, like that of Antonio, her namesake, is here spelled with the double 'l'. This tablecloth has been embroidered for her by her cousin in Buenos Aires, one of Zeo Enrico's five daughters. (Unfortunately, the Caumont and Gough-Cooper family tree does not stretch as far Uncle Henry and Marguerite's five Argentinian cousins.)

Further, the family could also claim more substantial acquaintance with Flaubert himself beyond the fictionalisation of Delphine Couturier's marriage certificate nestling in the notary's bureau. Yvonne's godmother's mother was the

daughter of Julia Pillore, daughter of Marie Nicolle by her first marriage to Léon Pillore, the late owner and editor of a local newspaper, the Pays de Caux, and, under the nom-de-plume of Saint-Valery, author of both pamphlets, on public works - one, for those keen on coincidences, prophetically entitled *L' Eau et le Gaz* - and a novel entitled *Age de Cuivre*, which he submitted to Flaubert for an opinion. The writer replied with a sentiment that the 'mediumistic' Duchamp was to re-iterate himself, in advising Crotti, et al, many decades later - that " only posterity decides" what is good or bad in the arts.

It may of course be no more than an interesting coincidence that on January the 1st, 1913, Duchamp, in Rouen, and thinking of his old Parisian friends Dumouchel and Tribout, sends them a postcard of the Hotel Dieu, where Flaubert had spent his childhood. Mere coincidence or not, Caumont and Gough-Cooper see fit to include this in the *Ephemerides*.⁽¹²⁹⁾

6. **Metaphysics: Occult Munich.**

Metaphysics: A science of things transcending what is physical or natural.
 That branch of speculation which deals with first principles of things, including such concepts as being, substance, essence, time, space, cause, identity, etc.
 Theoretical philosophy as the ultimate science of Being and Knowing.
 Occult or magical lore.

In *A Science for the Soul*, Corinna Treitel⁽¹³⁰⁾ examines the culture of the occult in the Germany which Duchamp toured in 1912. Here the everyday, very much exoteric, occult was respectable, and at the time, the subject which had been the focus of philosophical debate at the boundary between science and spiritualism for the previous half century, the incursions of the unconscious as a factor of human psychology, still retained an indeterminate status.

Thus the nub of the issue which Treitel identifies was epistemology. The unconscious was sited now in the middle of a new zone to which philosophers, psychologists, physiologists, physicists, doctors, clerics and educated and lay people could all lay legitimate claim. But under whose control this novel approach to the experimental study of the human psyche would fall, since it was a multidisciplinary effort to establish the "criteria for objective knowledge, while at the same time leaving room for intellectual freedom and moral values", remained unresolved. The human psyche and fourth dimension belonged to no one, never functioning as private property. Mathematicians wanted ownership of the latter, and psychologists, power over the former, but X-rays, in the 1890's, and quantum theory, in the 1920's, never became the private property of any group. Astro-physicist Zöllner appropriated the fourth dimension from Helmholtz, who appropriated it from the mathematicians; German occultists appropriated concepts from German science: and as Zöllner passed the fourth dimension into general culture, so mediums and magicians evoked scientific research. Experiments were commonly carried on at home, with a mixture of domestic props such as coffee tables, bowls of flour, writing slates and scientific instruments; it was compasses and prisms which unlocked the fourth dimension, as Duchamp himself would later demonstrate, with his optical and geometric devices. It was neither fully laboratory based, nor entirely domesticated, neither physics nor

philosophy, elite science or popular practice. The origins, in the sixteenth century, of this epistemological antinomy are examined by Russell Hvolbeck. ⁽¹³¹⁾

In the late 15th and 16th centuries theories of knowledge and their mode of investigation remained the same but the subjects of their studies changed, evidenced in the shift from Caspar Schwenckfeld's concerns about how to attain salvation in a comprehensible cosmos to Jacob Böhme's attempt to understand God's universe, and man's place in it, now made incomprehensible by the new science.

Hvolbeck notes the rise during the last quarter of the sixteenth century of discussion of questions about cosmology, natural philosophy and Christology amongst German noblemen and commoners alike. Despite the solidification of the orthodox position, many Lutherans continued to proclaim the importance of "inward spirituality." Johann Andreä, Lutheran minister, son of a Lutheran minister, and the person most frequently associated with the Rosicrucians, elaborated similar epistemological and anthropological ideas in his *Chemical Wedding* (1616).

(It is a version of this text which Moffit identifies as the model for Duchamp's *Etant Donnés*. First published in French in 1928, *Chymische Hochzeit: Christianus Rosencreus, Anno 1459*, but available to Duchamp at the Bibliothèque Geneviève from 1913, was cited, and directly quoted from, by Arensberg in *The Shakespearean Mystery*, of 1928.)

Hvolbeck notes that the publication of the Rosicrucian tracts (1614-16), both ridiculed and taken seriously, aroused a heated battle of pamphlets, essays and even books questioning the validity of the secret knowledge; this was an enthusiasts period, when questions about inner knowledge, and the path to it, were significant concerns. Böhme extended enthusiast ideas the farthest. The only authors he begrudgingly professed learning anything from were Schwenckfeld, Weigel and Paracelsus; he could not claim otherwise if all his knowledge was intuitively derived: thus he claimed all his books were the consequence of divine revelation. (This is identical to the Masonic revelation described by Wilmshurst ⁽¹³²⁾ since he cites Böhme as a model, on page 139.)

Hvolbeck stresses the importance of science here; Böhme's contemporaries were Galileo, Harvey, Kepler and Bacon. He was aware that the Copernican thesis had thrown the universe out of joint, and Paracelsian nature philosophy was turning more heads than Lutheran doctrinal issues. Böhme's interests, but not his epistemology and anthropology, changed. No longer focussing on the Bible and

salvation, Böhme's interests lay in the individual's relation to nature and the cosmos. Whilst seeing himself as part of the growth of the new sciences, accurately perceiving their mathematical and observational aspects, he claimed that they could only observe the external and visible, and investigate the letter of nature through the five senses. But empiricism only offered one part of the picture. His concerns were more with a universal truth which transcended time; his anthropological stand was "designed to work through issues which take place in time so that a knowledge could be received that was beyond time.

This is precisely the sentiment that Duchamp tells Walter Pach he will attempt to recommend to John Quinn.⁽¹³³⁾

But now in the twentieth century, as Treitel examines, what the orthodoxy, the new psychologists, deplored, Kandinsky applauded, i.e, that human psyche was a world unto itself, of mysterious, hidden depths and occult powers, and that each person carried within their psyche a world which linked the individual to the cosmos. And what could now ameliorate the 'soul sickness' of the age was amenable to modern techniques of experimental investigation. Kandinsky is also known to have read du Prel's *Studien aus den Gebeite der Geheinswissenschaftler*, Aksakow's *Animismus et Spiritismus*, and articles in *The Sphynx* also privileging not the objective world of the senses, but the mental world of subjective experience.

Trietel's argument underlines the fact that the appeal of the occult was pragmatic, since it solved specific problems; for example, Kandinsky proposed a blue-print for a spiritual art the modern age demanded. And the truth of the phenomena lay with the practical consequences of the belief in the phenomena. For the thousands of Germans who believed, Zöllner's knot experiments, and telepathic communication, dream dancers, automatic writing and materialised spirits were all manifestations of the soul in action. Jung's 1902 Ph D thesis on the occult, which references Zöllner, then testifies to an explicit linkage of the German occult sciences with a key modernist movement within fin-de-siecle European culture.

Examining the evidence, Treitel draws on periodicals, investigative reports, memoirs, monographs, personal papers, and cultural holdings such as the papers of Hübbe-Schlieden at the University of Göttingen, and the collection at the Stadtslichbibliothek at Munich, whose former director, Ludwig Held, observed the occult movement as it happened.

This widespread enthusiasm for plumbing the depths of human psychological experience, so as to bring consciousness to an understanding of itself, was based on decades of attempts to reconcile the previously transcendent realm of the human psyche with the methods and claims of modern science, in which the occult was the link, since occult phenomena opened the door to the transcendent which scientific materialism attempted to dismiss as metaphysical speculation. That the occult was entirely respectable is born out by the fact that by the time Duchamp visited Germany in 1912, the Munich based *Psychologische Gesellschaft* was in the twenty-sixth year of its attempt to make science, in its broadest sense, relevant to the study of the human psychological experience. Founded by du Prel, Schrenk-Notzing, Hübbe-Schlieden, the engineer Denhardt, and the curator of Alte Pinakotek (which Duchamp visited every day), Adolf Bayersdorfer, and the painters Trübner, von Max and von Keller, its manifesto had been published in an occult magazine, the *Sphinx*, in 1867. Full international respectability for psychical research was achieved by the holding of the First International Congress of Physiological Psychology in 1889, in Paris. The roster of the four hundred highly respected delegates reads, as Treitel puts it, "as a virtual who's who of the new experimental psychology."

In contrast to the du Prel generation, fin-de-siècle occultists sought a private wisdom, not by experiment, but through self-focussed empiricism; not a scholarly, but a populist, elaboration of self-transcendence, as the change in editorial emphasis of occultist magazines, such as *Sphinx*, illustrates - from its early period under the guidance of de Prel and Hübbe-Schlieden to that of its successor, the *Neue Metaphysische Rundschau*, which cultivated the occult as a cult of self-development. For Treitel, then, the occult must be understood as an essential component of an alternative modernity, not least because from circa 1900, occultism had been deeply implicated in the contemporary innovative elaboration of subjectivity.

The Occult Public which Treitel identifies lived in a modern society with a well-developed public realm. Heated debates were routinely held in national dailies, occultists travelled by train to occult conferences, communicated by phone about their experiences, bought and sold horoscopes on city streets, bought texts, by Kandinsky, from specialised bookshops, (according to which reasoning, Duchamp was an occultist) borrowed material from public libraries set up by occultists, mounted public exhibitions, such as Kandinsky's *Blaue Reiter*, established journals anyone could buy, and printed inexpensive editions of occult texts, the equivalent of French *divulgations*.

The essentially exoteric German Occult was, in short, a very public enterprise whose size, geographical distribution, and social and political composition were key mechanisms in its diffusion. The eclectic core of a mass-movement, the occult was efficacious and quickly adapted itself to the exigencies of modern consumer culture. The protestant minister Theodore Traub recorded that by 1900, Berlin alone boasted more than 60 working mediums. The trial for fraud of the medium Anna Roth, in 1902, was reported in local Berlin newspapers and engaged the attention of the nation. Tens of thousands belonged to the clubs, and read the publications of the presses, which Treitel lists in her appendices, (A) and (B); Berlin, for example, enjoyed 10,000 spiritualists, 400 mediums and 15-20 spiritualist clubs.

Munich was also a hotbed of occultism; police records testify that in 1923 10,000 families held séances, a habit repeated in many smaller cities. A modern industrial infrastructure eased access of an educated and bohemian urban population to occult events. In Munich, lectures were regularly held in public drinking establishments, stations and hotels. For example, the Uranus Gesellschaft für Astrologische staged astrological lectures in the big hall of the Kreuzbrau, and the Gesellschaft für Physische Forschung und Astrologische Gesellschaft conducted meetings in the restaurant at the Holzkircher train station.

The phenomenon was not just metropolitan, as the centre at Monte Verita, connected to bohemian Schwabing, attests; and we know that Duchamp visited Bergmann's *plein-air* painting school at Haimhausen, whilst renting a room, in Schwabing, from a young machine operator, called Gress.

The occult attracted Germans of different backgrounds, from the lowest to the highest echelons. Treitel cites the proletarian Joseph Weissenberg, a labourer who attained great wealth as a magnetist in a working class district; Karl Zuckmayer, a miner: and of course, in Paris, Franc Kupka, a spiritualist taught by a saddler, who attended science lectures at the Sorbonne, and was a close friend of the Duchamp brothers, in Montmartre and Neuilly. A favourite medium of Schrenck-Notzing was Rudi Sneider, the son of a lowly typesetter from a small town in Austria.

There was Adelbert Hanigg, a postal worker turned scholar around World War 1, who established the Verien Freibund, which met in beer halls and hotels, at which he would give demonstrations of 'the will'. There was Clair Reichardt, a salesgirl daughter of a tailor; a Munich dancer, she set herself up as clairvoyant: (the men were often tailors and shoemakers.) The 300 fortune-tellers noted in 1924, in Munich,

comprised not only waitresses, like Duchamp's friend in Schwabing, Mucki Bergé, but also widows, and wives of civil servants.

It was the propertied and middle-classes who dominated psychical research and Theosophy, but whilst professionals from the law, medicine, business and journalism were well represented, academics tended to be lacking, with some exceptions, such as Lipp, in Munich. So the petit bourgeois Duchamp, who was not an academic, would have felt at home here. Since a bourgeois profession was a marker of status in the German occult, many practitioners assumed spurious titles; there was a performative aspect to occultism: 'expertise' and 'professional training' were badges of legitimacy. This applied particularly in astrology and characterology, in which special certificates, schools and titles distinguished the 'scientist' from the mere amateur.

Middle class women were present in large numbers, often leading and speaking at sessions, their presentations tailored to their interest and expertise, such as child-rearing, getting married, practising law or medicine, getting a profession; Treitel notes Schwabing bohemians looking like innocent members of a knitting bee. Women outnumbered men as mediums.

The German occult was then a mass movement, its cultural tenor syncretic, politically polyvalent and diverse. Theosophy, arriving in Germany in 1884, brought an eastern flavour to indigenous Christian elements, which eventually lead to Rudolf Steiner's split, and his founding of Anthroposophy. Many of Germany's theosophical groups had strong links with USA, and many mediums working the German circuit were Americans, the market towards which Duchamp turned after the outbreak of war.

Occult beliefs and practices were widely disseminated through texts, a form which features heavily in conversion stories of occultists, such as the modern writer Gustav Meyrinck, who was saved from suicide by a chance encounter with a Theosophical text. Treitel also cites van Lansdorf and Gottfried Krall reporting how cheap editions, pamphlets shoved under doors, changed their lives. Occult texts functioned as information billboards, typically bundled with several pages of advertisements for related books and services, instructions on how to dowse, and analyse handwriting, how to stage an occult event, step-by-step ways to cast a horoscope, conduct family séances and transmute gold. There were therapeutic cookbooks, self-help medical texts, tracts on sexuality and how to succeed at everything.

They carried adverts for occult clubs, bookshops and special products.

They created specialist niches; the dozen or so specialised periodicals existed by 1914. Thus, the occult text, increasingly printed by new small presses, was instrumental in precipitating conversions, advertising services and goods and educating novices and adepts, because behind them was an extensive publishing system producing cheap and readily available titles. This specially helped to connect the German Occult to the larger context of modernism, and link it, for example, to psychoanalysis. Publishing houses, acting both as cultural patrons and entrepreneurs, were then crucibles for the fusing of new cultural forms. The Nirvana Verlag, in Berlin, was, for example, before World War 1, the biggest specialist business plugging the Occult. On the posh Wilhelmstrasse, at the heart of metropolitan Berlin, it offered ease of access to hundreds of texts and items in a regularly updated catalogue - in 1922, of 937 texts, mostly fully annotated, on a full range of topics. Its prompt and helpful service confirmed the customer was buying from experts. Its new lending library, sponsored lectures and demonstrations and brochures about schools and services made it an active agent in the reform of life, promoting a modern lifestyle, in which fictional experiences had solid basis in fact.

It was the same in Munich, where occult groups sponsored psychical research via lecture courses and well-constructed laboratories for mediumistic research. Not limited to occult institutions, for a select clientele there was a range of services.

New, male professional astrologers augmented the older network of individual astrologers who gave lessons at booths in local fairs, on the street, made house calls, held office hours and offered other services such as hypnosis, telepathy, character analysis and techniques of healing.

Typical of bourgeois Munich was the actress Josephine Ziever who, with her housekeeper, was adept at using mail to find customers. The German Occult therefore belonged to the larger culture of consumption and the consumerist ethos, and was very adaptable to the modern mass market place and the department store, to a vibrant marketplace satisfying the needs of this world as much as the next.

This novel emphasis on individual experience was a reflection of the elevation of occult powers furthering an apolitical cult of the self. A matter of personal will and conscious expression, now the path to enlightenment was the individual. The Theosophically inspired emphasis on self-focussed occultism was reflected in the lecture programme of the second of June, 1912, meeting of the

Internationale Theosophische Verbrüderung, noted by Hübbe-Schleiden as featuring personal development, *Barriers to Self-Knowledge*, and *The Meaning of Art for the Life of the Spirit*. The Hübbe-Schleiden apartment Rudolf Steiner visited in 1900 was full of wire contraptions representing chains of molecules, physical and transcendent configurations serving as graphic three-dimensional illustrations of scientific proofs with which to persuade Germans of the Theosophical message of transcendent reality and universal brotherhood. These gimcrack contraptions appear to have inspired the 'spirit science' stage props that Steiner designed for his play, which we discuss below.

The degree to which the Occult can be seen to permeate the aesthetic culture of modernism is revealed in how, to some, the turning inwards onto the self amounted to a new experience of the existence of a universal creative urge binding the art of the avant-garde to the schizophrenic, itself the result of a general craving for direct intuitive experience combined with a mystical self-deification, and a concern with metaphysics, from the general philosophical to the Theosophical. Thus affinities could be established between the art of the avant-garde and that of the mentally ill, since both renounced the outside world and denigrated surface appearances. Therefore, contemporary art, whether high modern, avant-garde or schizophrenic, is an outgrowth of the zeitgeist in which psychological experience and metaphysics so common in the Occult was carried well beyond the boundaries of canonical modernism. For Treitel, the modernist aesthetic and the occult are then but two facets of a single phenomenon, the emergence of a modern sensibility defined by the privacy of intuitive experience.

Wilke's satirical cartoon of 1898 which Gombrich illustrates then raises the issue discussed by Ringbom of how painters, dedicated to a depiction of an invisible spiritual reality, were to convince viewers that their artworks were not the product of a fantastic private vision, since the immaterial objects that no-one but the artist could see must be rendered into visual form. The cartoon, ⁽¹³⁴⁾ published in the German weekly *Jugend*, in which a dumfounded critic is obliged to patronise a caricature by an occult artist with his assessment of a squiggle, apparently representing "the metaphysical line" of the artists "personality", with the judgment that it is a very good likeness, is not only interesting in its characterisation, but in the fact that it was datelined from Paris, in 1898!

Kandinsky's answer, in Munich, in 1912, was that the universe resonated with vibrations of immaterial entities. To paint this "sounding cosmos" artists only had to tune their souls to the cosmic waves and let those ringing souls express themselves on canvas. They would then play on the viewer the way the cosmos played on the artist; "Colour is the keyboard. The eye is the hammer. The soul is the piano, with many strings. The artist is the hand that purposefully sets the soul vibrating by means of this or that key. Thus it is clear that the harmony of the colours can only be based upon the principle of purposefully touching the human soul". For Kandinsky, artist, viewer, artwork and immaterial objects were bound together in a cosmic circle of resonance - Klang. This was no answer for Duchamp, who merely symbolically references it, in 1918, with the spurious signature appended to *Tu m'*, allegedly the name of sub-contracted sign-painter; Duchamp's Bavarian response was to give up painting altogether. His Munich experience must account for why, or perhaps, how.

In this context, 'Munich Moderne', and its avant-garde, including figurative painters, offers a unique insight into the circumstance in which Duchamp enjoyed his "total liberation" triggered by Roussel. We might bear in mind here that whilst Duchamp characterises as old friends the modern French art he sees during his trip, Fauvism and Cubism, the two artists in whom he finds inspiration, according to the *Ephemerides*, were Böcklin and Cranach, both religious painters.

A founder member of the Psychologische Gesellschaft was the painter, Gabriel von Max, a Buddhist and leading member of Germany's first theosophical group, who enjoyed a reputation among avant-garde critics as an aesthetic pioneer equivalent to Böcklin and von Keller. In the mid 1880's von Max painted a series of works based on the ecstatic visions of the German nun Anne K Emmerich, which are now in the Neue Pinakotek in Munich; ecstatic visions were a favourite topic of conversation in '80's and '90's in German Occult journals. A supporter of reformist causes, like pacifism, a friend of Haeckel and an enthusiast for Darwin, anti-Christian and pro-Science, von Max's art shows a fascination with the transcendent; his subject, the foundation of the beyond, and the secrets of religious fanaticism displayed by female seers, the possessed, and martyrs.

Producing work depending from the psychology of extreme female spiritual experience, in 1875 he painted the subject of a dead female revived by Jesus. In 1879, it was a young woman being touched on the shoulder by a spirit from the beyond. The

1880's saw Ann Emmerich. By the time he died, von Max had painted Katie King, the control spirit of the English medium Florence Cook.

Not only for von Max were mediums ideal models for the liminal experiences that so intrigued him. Keller was also interested in 'psychic realism'. He hosted fifty séances at home, using four mediums, and between 1885 and 1907 produced twelve paintings invoking scenes from psychic work. Keller used paintings as suggestive objects which would induce the medium Lina Matzinger to make facial expressions and bodily gestures of a woman returning from the dead. The resulting photos became the raw material for paintings, such as *Die Somnabule*, of 1886. 1888 saw *Hexanverbrennung*, or Witch burning, the victim beaming the smile of the hypnotised medium, taken from a photograph of Matzinger; it is the image of a woman between life and death, in the liminal state of hypnagogia. This interest in psychological liminality was common all over Europe, Klimt's females returning from the outer reaches of sexual ecstasy, a subject to which he came a little late, in the 1890's, being perhaps the best known of the genre. Treitel proposes that all were tapping the emergent modernist sensibility dedicated to exploring how the irruptions of the unconscious drives, desires and emotions played out on the surface of the face and body. Duchamp's *Passage from a Virgin to a Bride*, "not a physiological passage", sits happily in this company.

At the same time, female mediums themselves were being appropriated for their aesthetic potential of liminality, mediums such as Madelen G, who performed her dream dances, in Munich in 1904. Schrenck-Notzing invited this wife of a French businessman, who was being treated by Magin, in Paris, for a cure for headache. Effecting this by hypnosis, he discovered her mediumistic powers of dance. For Schrenck-Notzing, hypnosis then might facilitate creativity. Through a series of public experiments, she became a public sensation, offering glimpses of the mysterious sources of artistic creation - a defining moment, for some, such as von Keller. Schrenck-Notzing's universalising of the creative process equated Madalen G with Isadora Duncan in the potential of the creative unconscious to make modern art. Whilst for von Max in 1882, "Painters are unconscious agents of spiritualism. Before the two-dimensional surface on which they communicate their opinion of the third dimension, they are medium and spirit", now not only could artists act like mediums, but mediums could be artists. Without training, no longer merely artist's models, mediums could be artists in their own right, albeit unconscious ones.

Wilhelmine Assinann, for example, who painted in a trance, saw herself merely as a medium, serving the paint, as Pamela Colman Smith was to claim to Stieglitz, and Duchamp in his *Creative Act* statement of 1951. Assinann created a market niche for herself by selling paintings under the slogan 'Flowers from another World'.

Or Herwarth Nusslein, who became very rich in his mid-20's by virtue of the occult. Meditating for self- renovation, he found himself writing and drawing automatically. He developed skills in clairvoyance and mesmeric healing, and became a 'psychic picture-writer'; here then is an example of a passive mediumistic artist combining art with healing. He was very prolific; by 1928 he had done 2000 paintings in 3 years, which had risen to 18,000 by 1935. Exhibited in his own castle in Nuremberg, and galleries in Munich and London, Conan-Doyle reportedly bought one. Theosophy had let Nusslein translate his inner vision into modern aesthetic acts. For him, the proper content of art is the spiritual. Cosmic vibrations were the source of his art; he used his soul as an antenna to capture cosmic radiation to be translated into visual form. He was a transceiver for invisible waves; with left hand opening and closing to catch the waves, his right hand moved the brush. Unlike Kandinsky, the results were not abstract, but fantastical permutations of visual objects.

Or Bo Yin Ra, a.k.a. Anton Sneiderfrancken, a spiritual teacher whose revelation, also in 1912, lead him, (like the Duchamp of the " red thing on glass",) to the variation of 'occult realism'. Believing that nothing should stand between the eye and the soul, artists, in creative moments, receive vibrations sent out in original spiritual form whose cosmic signatures they enshrined in their work. Paintings, just like Rudlof Steiner's ' spirit science' stage props, are then instruments radiating waves from the world of spirit into the viewer's soul. Theosophically inspired spirit travel had enable Bo Yin Ra to paint Jesus from life; this was not vision, nor occult manipulation: he had actually met Jesus.

This new mode of modernism represents a switch by artists from a traditional aesthetic focussed on objective reality outside themselves to a new aesthetic emphasising the primacy of intuitive experience. Trietel claims many adopted this aesthetic as a result of breaking down in personal crisis and then finding their inner voice; according to some interpretations, Duchamp, in Munich, suffered such a personal crisis, and travelled to Etival, in Jura, where he spent a long night talking to Gaby Buffet-Picabia. Some, such as Rilke, in the 1920's, benefited from a more occult

prosthesis, known as the 'spirit guide', as does the character Thomasius, a scientist-engineer, in Steiner's *The Guardian of the Threshold*.⁽¹³⁵⁾ The higher authority of spirit guides offered release from the pain and loneliness of personal crisis and access to a world beyond the senses, and so a spiritual means of liberation from a creative block.

Treitel's *Conclusion*, consisting of the analysis of a piece of fiction epitomising the face of German Modernism which she divines in the occult, would seem to offer a direct insight into the texture of the cultural fabric which Duchamp encountered during his sojourn in Schwabing. This was parapsychologist Willy Jaschke's *Maria: Eine Stimme aus dem Jenseits ?* (Maria: A Voice from Beyond), of 1928. Compiled from dozens of true-life experiences, it tells of how an enterprising young man made contact with his dead fiancé in a home research laboratory, in Schwabing. Thus it was " an ideal introduction to the highly contested realm of mediumistic phenomena: their nature, setting, research, social context, usefulness, legal and scientific status, and apparently irreducible mysteriousness."

In short, what it turned on was epistemology.

Frank Werner discovered the occult in a small, smoke-filled café in Schwabing, " home to Munich's bohemian sub-culture " familiar to the Duchamp of 1912 who we learn of in the *Ephemerides*. Immersed in a local newspaper, the strains of a Beethoven sonata unleash in Frank a wave of anguished memories. Recalling the train crash which killed his beloved, his gaze settles on an advert in the paper advertising serious scientific sittings with mediums. His response produces an invitation to a preliminary meeting, not with mystical spirit-conjurors, but perfectly normal young people who require him to sign a document acknowledging that the Bavarian criminal code imposed regulations on such 'scientific experiments', since the source of the mysterious phenomena they investigated was as yet unknown. This domestic research laboratory contains a medium's cabinet, four cameras, ten chairs, a zither and a work-table equipped with a red light. Werner, struck by the objectivity, sobriety, warmth and cosiness is invited to his first séance the next Friday. Participants from all social classes are present to observe the many mysterious events - from the standard repertoire of the séance - whose occurrence without any mechanical intervention convinces Frank of the absolute authenticity of occult phenomena. Now, the medium helps Frank to contact the dead Maria who, existing in another form, still loves him. Frank is ecstatic, but the para-psychological medium,

and the sceptical but open-minded colonel, have no way of telling whether the 'intelligence' had been Maria.

Treitel sees in Jaschke's tale evidence that Germans turned to occult beliefs and practices by the early twentieth century to both challenge and utilize the forces of modernity shaping both their experience of life and their mental universe. But contemporary science had created an antinomy, inducing in students of occult phenomena objection to the faceless, materialistic and meaningless universe identified by that very science which they utilised to reinvigorate their lives in the world, through experimental research and developing the occult powers of the psyche.

In *Maria*, the heterogeneous presence of scientific modernity turns on the the poles of the train and the laboratory, the former, an agent of both anxiety and progress, and the multivalent latter, the cozy and reassuring domestic science lab in which inexplicable mystical events were scientifically authenticated. Treitel identifies the occult as offering modern men and women, adrift in a world disenchanted by an ethic of reason, both relief from their suffering under modernity's burdens and the promise of the restoration of purpose to their meaningless existence - on scientific grounds. In an anonymous, irrational world the occult offered the discovery of one's true identity through enlightenment of the self, the solution of crimes, the finding of the well-springs of one's inner creativity, the healing of the body, the researching of the unconscious, travel through time and space and the selection of a mate (- precisely what the advertisements in the back of *Vogue* offer today's fashionista.)

In the form of séances, it catered to all classes and estates - men, women, professionals, workers, petty-bourgeois and aristocrats, doctors, psychologists, engineers, teachers, writers and housewives, in cities, town and country, the honourable and the impostor, the opportunists and actors in search of fame and fortune; and the mediums were not so much wild-eyed unbalanced mystics as the clear-eyed, fresh-faces epitomes of modern healthy youth that we see in photographs of Duchamp, by Man Ray, in New York, after 1915, or the same subject in Buenos Aires, in 1918, or in Apollinaire's *Peintres Cubistes*, taken in Franz Marc's old studio, in Schwabing, in 1912.

It was the psychological condition of Argentine women which Katherine Dreier was to research, for her book, *Nine Months in the Argentine*, in the company of Duchamp in 1918.

Treitel also notes how Jaschke's tale confirms the importance of the market place in setting occult ideas and practices into general circulation. Werner finds his way to the occult via a general-circulation Munich newspaper in a bohemian café; presses were particularly important in disseminating occultism to the masses in the decades before World War 1, and after 1918, the growing market place of occult books, instruments, medicines, clairvoyant character analysis, horoscope casting, water-divining and graphology quickly and efficiently made occultism available to anybody with the modest fee. And the ambiguous and contested status that the occult retained for both consumers and authenticating authorities, including the academic and scientific communities, the church and state, is pointed up by Frank's requirement to sign a document acknowledging legal restrictions on para-psychological experiment at home, whose results remained un-certifiable. At the heart of this antinomy, and of Duchamp's new practice, this gap through which the occultist like Steiner slipped, was the thoroughly modernist recognition of the ultimate uncertainty of all human knowledge, since neither priest, scientific nor legal expert employed by the state could completely resolve the uncertainty surrounding the occult sciences, which bent the laws of chemistry and physics just a tad.

In the second part of *Duchamp at the Turn of the Centuries*⁽¹³⁶⁾ Jean Claire underlines a seamless continuity between the occult milieus of Paris and Munich, drawing direct parallels between examples of Duchamp's work and occult phenomena; the comparison between *With my Tongue in my Cheek*, of 1959 and the mould of an imprint produced by the medium Eusapia before the editorial committee of the magazine *Lux*, for example. Perplexed by Duchamp's destination and his length of stay, Claire now confirms Treitel's identification of this Hauptstadt, described here as the most kitsch town in Europe, as a polyglot melting pot, the home of refugees from the east and the south, such as Jawlensky, the brothers Burliuk, and Chirico. Bohemian Schwabing drew other anti-conformist spirits, such as Lenin, and Hitler, who never succeeded in being accepted at the Academie; it was more difficult to live as an artist in Munich, the ambiguous European capital of the occult, than Vienna.

By the time Duchamp arrived, the *Gesellschaft für Psychologie* was in full swing, and multiplying its exchanges with Italy, England and France. The Kosmiker Stephan George circle functioned as a barometer of all things occult. Von Stuck and Marées perpetuated Symbolism; von Max, and his photographer brother, who supplied his mediumistic imagery, we have already discussed.

But the most important occult institution which Claire discusses is Rudolf Steiner's enterprises. As Claire recounts, between 1909 and 1913, his mystery play, and lecture series, attended by Klee, Kandinsky, Jawlensky, Gabriella Munter and Marianna van Werefkin, were staged here.

We have established that the Steiner Archive has no record that Duchamp or Bergmann had direct involvement with Steiner's organisation, but Claire asks whether it is credible that "this disciple (who) was reading (Kandinsky's *Du Spirituel dans l'art*) so attentively" could not have been "listening in", in some way. And in that it was in Munich that Duchamp "discovered" the theme of his *Grande Oeuvre*, Alchemy, how could he have failed to have gone to Alchemy Museum, with its "cornues threaded into one another like the sieves in the *Large Glass*?"

What may account for any fragmentary or dislocated character to Duchamp's response to the culture of Munich was his access to sources, and the less than satisfactory grasp of German that he reports to his grandmother on August the 25th. However, whilst only members of Steiner's society were admitted to his plays, anyone could attend his lectures, and since the milieu in which Duchamp moved included, by his own admission, the visually sensitive, artists, he could easily have benefited from vivid and accurate descriptions of stage-props and sets. But Duchamp, who could read German, had direct access to theatre reviews and the contents of the scripts, since these were on sale two days before the premiered performance. Further, the performances took on average two months to rehearse, and were not necessarily closed to the public. And since each play was revived each year, 1912 saw a performance of the entire trilogy in the period Duchamp was in Munich.

Robb Creese ⁽¹³⁷⁾ offers some insight into the circumstances of the production of Steiner's plays.

Each was finished just a couple of days before they opened. Scripts were literally still wet from the press when the actors got their parts. They barely had time to memorise the lines of the final scenes. The Mystery Dramas were not well received in Munich. Many things confused the audiences. Each play took all day to perform, with one break in the middle of the day. Characters in the dramas appeared in different incarnations and in different spiritual states of being. The performance style was highly conventionalised and the words were recited very slowly and rhythmically.

Richard Rosenheim ⁽¹³⁸⁾ notes that spectators who were inwardly aware of occult science were deeply moved by the plays. Others laughed at the performance and many were silent. The reviews condemned the plays as too dogmatic and too doctrinaire to be performed.

Never returning to Munich, after his success at Armory Show Duchamp turned his eyes towards to occultists in the eastern United States, particularly after the outbreak of hostilities which would have inhibited the cultivation of a potential German market. But a cryptic comment to Walter Pach suggests that in Paris, after 1913, Duchamp's abdication of painting was the consequence of his experience of a decidedly exoteric Esoteric Munich. In the letter appearing as Item No. 6 in *Affetueusement Marcel*, Duchamp tells his friend in New York that he is doing some work " pretty well interrupted by a bunch of people one never sees in peacetime but whom one is forced to see by the war."

Orthodox biographies offer no insight into what Duchamp maybe referring to here. It could not be his library employment, which he described in a letter of January the 19th as " even more extravagant than in peacetime. By which I mean how little we have to do". But having, in the first paragraph of the letter, cogitated on the American art sales Pach has helped him with, here, speaking in the singular, Duchamp refers to what is presumably that which he had clarified in a letter of March the 12th, the " few minor things" on glass from that year, including the realisation on glass of his *Cimetière des Uniforms et Livrées*, the blueprint for the *Neuf Moules Malic*, which he describes to Pach as his " red thing on glass."

Since Duchamp was not known to have been involved with war work in any form, and was not medically qualified, or a practising optician, dentist or lawyer, it would seem reasonable to propose that his particular experience of the Munich occult identified by Treitel could have equipped him to offer services to bereaved women calling upon mediums for reassurance of the survival of the souls of their dear departed, services which Duchamp provided for the war-widow Mary Reynolds after the war, and until her death; and Katherine Dreier, as a careful sifting of the evidence presented throughout the *Ephemerides* demonstrates.

(Andrew Lambirth⁽¹³⁹⁾ informs us that, in Paris after the second war, Duchamp was generally considered to be, amongst the art community, a well-dressed parasite, living off rich women, which his comment to Bill Copley, reported by Tomkins,⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ confirms; Duchamp tells Copley the he had made parasitism into a fine art.)

These services increased exponentially during the First World War, on both sides of the channel, as Robert Graves reports in his memoirs, noting particularly the mediumistic charlatans increasingly clogging the London courts, who had sprung up

overnight on every street corner and in every back-street of the capital, and as J Williams⁽¹²⁴⁾ confirms for Paris. Here mourning wear became widespread, worn by women for any relative, close or distant, "killed on the field of honour", and a huge demand developed for mourning brooches and trinkets of black jet. Williams also confirms John Covert's observation on church attendance, noted below, and records that the New Testament became a popular talisman amongst the conscripted.

At the same time, Paris saw a vast influx of middle-aged workers from France, Belgium, Italy and Spain, clearly not in mourning, though quite how Duchamp might have satisfied any enthusiasm for avant-garde art they might have espoused is difficult to divine, as none appear as purchasers of his accredited works; those which did not remain in his possession, such as the *Moules Malic*, went to his friends and relatives.

There was also a huge increase in drug taking, of cocaine in particular, but we lack evidence implicating Duchamp with the satisfaction of either that or the paradoxical home-front extravagance represented by the free-spending on 'non-essentials', such as the 1,000,000 plus items of scent and fancy underwear sold by a popular store in the Rue de Rennes in 1915.

John Covert, Walter Arensberg's cousin who had studied painting in Munich and Paris between 1909 and 1914, reported on conditions in Paris at the outbreak of the war, remarking that,

The churches, they too were busy, filled and packed to overflowing with men who had probably not been to church in years. Now they came for a service before going off to the front.⁽¹⁴²⁾

Both Houdini's far from unique personal crusade to expose the charlatans preying on the bereaved and desperate, sales of ouija boards, peaking in 1916, and articles carried by theosophical magazines such as Bibby's Annual, bear witness to the magnitude of a problem which the boom of séances, palmists, fortune-sellers, soothsayers and much sought-after crystal-gazers confirms; its cause, the mounting tide of casualties: 19,000 British soldiers died on the first day of the Somme offensive alone.

This epidemic of crystal gazers was matched by one of venereal disease, resulting from the relaxation of moral standards caused by the changed social conditions during the war. This might have offered an opportunity for a form of crystal gazing, à la Max Jacob, via an occult version of the stained glass window, as our analysis of the 'Rousellian' *Large Glass* suggests.⁽¹⁴³⁾

On the way to Munich, Duchamp, whose enthusiasm for the Cranach's he saw in Munich was viscerally translated into the last two paintings he produced there, could have seen Grünewald's therapeutic Isenheim altarpiece, showing a venereal Man of Sorrows, in Colmar, where he began his transalpine jaunt, followed shortly by a possible viewing of Böcklin's *Peste*, since, as the *Ephemerides* entry for the 19th of June tells us, in Basle Duchamp was much taken with the work in the Böcklin Museum.

Now, relieved of military service, divorced from the avant-garde, and kicking his heels in a library, Duchamp was free to pursue the career of consultant occultist for which Munich had offered endless models, an occupation he plainly followed in New York later. Encouraging this thesis, Kim Munholland,⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ reviewing Jay Winter's *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European and Cultural History*, notes that;

Living with loss under harsh material conditions meant that millions of widows, orphans and veterans sought ways to express their grief and mediate their bereavement. Some turned to spiritualism and sought to communicate with their dead relatives. Traditional forms, seen by Winter as an eclectic mix of classical, romantic and religious motifs, held greater powers of healing than the ironic, hard-edged anger of modernism.

Traditional forms like stained-glass windows, perhaps, or the vivid and luminous *Hinterglasbilder*, paintings on glass, showing saints and seasons, which Duchamp also saw at the Alte Pinakothek, in Munich.⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ That Duchamp's change of style, rejecting Cubo-Futurism in favour of an allegorical realism, was evidence of his following the market Jay Winter identifies would indeed seem to be supported by Duchamp's "red thing on glass."

To support this thesis we suggest that the anachronistic style of the diagrammatic *Large Glass* is highlighted by its essentially Symbolist graphic character, as Sandro Sprocatti's summary of typical Symbolist conventions of representation, in his chapter entitled Symbolism suggests.⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ According to Sprocatti, works by Gauguin and the Nabis were;

exquisite icons, in which nature became stylised, imbued with mystical values and elegantly rendered by means of arabesques, curves and the *à plat* technique. But the fact of nature, however stylised, was never abolished, like the anecdote, the *fiction symbolique*, the theme. Symbolist painting exploits religious, philosophical and mystical motifs in order to construct a pictorial reality, and it never uses colour and shape as independent elements. Gauguin had already arrived at a Symbolist synthesis in 1888, creating large flat areas of

colour encased in strong dark outlines. His compositions are all based on the interplay of unexpected shapes resolved by means of slanting angles and the addition of diagonals intended to remove any illusion of depth. Resisting all analytical-descriptive temptations, Gauguin built up his compositions in layers, with brightly contrasting colours, in order to obtain an icon-like whole.

In a passage recalling the *Nude Descending the Staircase*, Sprocatti further identifies;

the titles of the (Polynesian) works inscribed directly onto the canvas in the native language (as assuming) a linguistic dignity equal to that of the pictures, strong enough to form solid, plastic figures. The title of *Whence do we come? What are we? Where do we go?*, is written, rather like a cartoon caption, in the corner of the canvas, which is filled with people portrayed in an accentuated stylised way and surrounded by a mysterious and magical atmosphere. The vibrant, linear repertoire of the Symbolists was ideal for an icon-like portrayal of modern life. Hodler never abandoned the anecdotal; instead he strengthened it by imposing an allegorical role on his figures, which are arranged in the foreground in processions that nullify any perspectival differences. The faces of these figures are depicted in a precise, analytical way, while their bodies, elegantly delineated by firm, modulated outlines, are strongly modelled.

This identification seems to confirm the more conventional nature of the products of the *Large Glass* project when compared to Duchamp's assemblages and readymades. Perhaps now we can establish why.

As we recall, on page 47, Moffit cited Jolivet-Castelot's adept's curriculum, which includes a reference to Nicholas Flammel, and note that his Illustration No.12 shows the frontispiece of Poisson's *Théories et Symboles des Alchimistes*, entitled Flammel's *Hieroglyphic Figures from the Cemetery of Innocents*. On the next page Moffit recalls how in Huysman's *Là-bas*, which "neatly pictured the current state of esoteric knowledge at the height of the Symbolist period, and created its wide diffusion", Durtal takes from a shelf a manuscript written by Flammel, the "celebrated hermetic artist of enigmas."

It is precisely this volume, we learn on page 58, which Breton recommends in his *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, pages 10-11, as a guide to ensuring the incomprehension of the common herd.

And on page 213 we learn that Pernety cites Flammel in his definition of the Powder of Projection. But on pages 215 and 216, Moffit ties Flammel's unique record of the appearance of the medieval tympanum erected in the Cemetery of the Innocents in Paris specifically to Duchamp's "red thing on glass."

As Moffit's bibliography informs us, the 1612 edition, published in Paris by Guillaume Marette, was in the Bibliothèque Ste-Geneviève before Duchamp took up employment there.

Some of the figures in Flammel's *Explication des figures de cimetièrre des Innocents* are, like Duchamp's, professionally designated. Besides "Gendarmes" (à la Duchamp) there also appear "un Roi", "des Soldats", "petits Enfants", "Les Mères", "du Innocents" and others. To an uninitiated layperson, nothing suggests an alchemical interpretation, but according to Poisson's neo-alchemical gloss,;

the body, the spirit and the soul, otherwise The Matter of the Stone, which are shown here to be figured like men and women dressed in white; these are the ones who are raised up, in order to symbolise the revivifying whiteness which only comes after death, here meaning the black phase, *putrefactio*.

As we now know, in alchemy, new life comes only from death, the Black Phase, followed by the Red, which Duchamp's figures presumably represent; *putrefactio* is the preliminary to the culmination of the *Grande Oeuvre*, and in which the Matter of the Stone is fixed; death before resurrection.

But Moffit did not go back quite far enough, back to Poisson's source, as Duchamp had been in a position to. Stanton J Linden⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ gives us more than Moffit's Poisson does. Here we are informed how the late sixteenth century sees "the emergence of a new pattern of alchemical imagery which places primary emphasis on change, purification, moral transformation and spirituality", an important part of which was imagery which fused alchemy with eschatology, the Christian doctrine concerning Death, Judgement, Heaven, Hell and the Second Coming, and millenarianism, the belief in an approaching millenium or earthly paradise, instituted by divine intervention. Prophesied in Scripture, these subjects (portrayed, notably, by Kandinsky) will bring about a new and radically better state of existence for the Elect. The result was a strikingly original and effective *concordia discors* whose provenance includes passages from a variety of alchemical treatises.

Seventeenth century alchemical authors were, Linden explains;

especially interested in setting forth the sacred implications of the art, chiefly by devising or reaffirming intricate systems of correspondence occurring within their alembics and spiritual transformations taking place within their hearts and souls. In each case the desired end was purification and perfection; the attainment of the philosopher's stone, or the moral and spiritual regeneration of a believer whose soul, through God's grace, has been fitted for salvation.

Central to this analogical system was, of course, the traditional idea of Christ as the philosopher's stone; the agent of healing, the deliverer from sin and baseness, the rewarder of merit, the author of grace and salvation, and the creator of new heavens and a new earth.

The successive stages of the preparation of the philosopher's stone are likened to Christ's Nativity, Crucifixion and Resurrection; and by a curious extension of the analogy, the two major events of the world's past and future, the Creation and the Last Judgement, are often described in terms of alchemical processes. In its most extreme form, this analogical mode of thought leads to a direct identification of Christ, or his attributes, or God, with the

master alchemist who creates, directs, and will some day end the world and the course of human history.

And just as alchemists had the power to draw forth a purifying and restorative balm or transmuting agent from base matter, so God can "extract" the "Elixir" of "true penitence" from sin itself.

The 1624 English edition of Flammel is explicitly directed to making gold and to reporting philanthropic work, which the supposed transmutation makes possible. Its illustrations, Linden reports, are at once personal (representing Flammel and his wife) religious and pietistic, and alchemical.

In describing the celebrated figures which he caused to be painted in the fourth arch of the Church-yard, of the *Innocents* in Paris, Poisson states that they are;

the most true and essential marks of the *Arte*, yet under *vailles*, and *Hieroglyphical Couvertures*, which may represent two *things*, according to the capacity and understanding of them that behold them. In the first place, these figures may teach the truths of the Resurrection, the Day of Judgement, and the Second Coming; secondly, they may *signifie* to them, which are skilled in Natural *Philosophy*, all the principle and necessary operations of the [alchemical] *Maistry*.

The possession of the philosopher's stone, for Flammel, removes the holder from the roote of all sinne (which is covetousness.)

We are then shown how Flammel's eschatological emphasis and pervasive alchemical allegorising fused in an analogy between mercury's irrepressible fusibility and Christ's Second Coming; as the Saviour will purify souls and drive away impurity, so the white Elixir, which "unites to himself all metallic natures", becoming silver, rejects all that is "impure, strange, *Heterogeneous*, or of another kind": for Flammel, the analogy between the Elixir's potency as transmuting agent and Christ's capacity to purify and regenerate human souls is close enough to permit a virtual identification of Christ and *lapis*. Linton notes that now simile and analogy give way to metaphor, in which the terms are nearly interchangeable.

So Duchamp's alembic-like *Hieroglyphical Couvertures*, his *Uniformes* and *Livrées*, would appear to inscribe a highly topical discourse, one whose exposition appears to be rooted in standard esoteric linguistic practise, creating a *concordia discors* around an alchemical soteriology, since a *livrée*, a livery, can also be, according to the rules of grammar Duchamp espoused, a delivery, a *livraison*, since *livrer* means to deliver, and Resurrection means deliverance, from sin, death and eternal damnation. Further, a *couverture*, a protective covering, is a covert, which also

means sheltered, secret, of hidden meaning, a characteristic of a hieroglyph.

Ironically, it also means cover for troops, under fire.

Troops wear uniforms, when they are not wearing the the everyday liveries of the station-masters, policemen, delivery boys, flunky's, priests, mounted soldiers, and undertaker's mutes, whose designations appear on Duchamp's drawing of 1913 entitled *Cimetière des Uniformes et Livres No.1*, and who parents, children and widows mourned in war-time Paris.

According to the analogical conflation of alchemy with Christology described above, Christ's Nativity is synonymous with the White Stage, his Crucifixion, the Black, and Resurrection, the Red, the colour of Duchamp's *moules*. If so, his *livrées* espoused a reassurance, for the fallen, of healing, delivery from sin and baseness, the reward of merit and the blessing of grace and salvation from the creator of a new heaven, and of an new earth for the bereaved; a *délivrance*, both deliverance and delivery, release from troubles and the delivery of new birth.

Such an analogical conflation within *Hieroglyphical Couvertures* had already occurred in Duchamp's milieu. In Figures 97 and 98, Henderson illustrates scientific equipment she associates with Duchamp's drawing, her Figure 96. These illustrations, taken from *Nature*, of 1910 and 1896, show equipment for the investigation of aspects of electrical discharge in rare gases, and Crookes' tubes, and other types of cathode ray tube, for experiments with X-rays. These matters she discusses, on pages 41 and 42, apropos Crookes' concept of Radiant Matter, which, preoccupied with the state of residual gases and radiation in cathode ray tubes, this scientist obsessed with occult phenomena characterises in the following ways. As a condition as far removed from gas as a gas is from a liquid; as little particles supposed to constitute the physical basis of the universe: as being by turns as material as a table and as immaterial as Radiant Energy: as existing at the border where Matter and Force seem to merge into one another: as standing on the threshold of the Known and Unknown: as the Ultimate Reality, subtle, far reaching, wonderful.

These are the well-attested attributes of the Philosopher's Stone, which is why Madame Blavatsky cites Crookes' work in both her hugely influential major tomes, and Jolivet-Castelot takes it up. So, apparently did Duchamp, since these retorts would appear to be ideal iconographical sources for the form of his little alembics, in which the Great Work is brought to fruition, the *Neuf Moules Malic*, as *Pinacotheca Item Moules Malic (Couvertures Hieroglyphique: cimetière.)*⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ illustrates.

In order to contextualise the above, at this point our enquiry must be limited to a consideration of those elements of Steiner's philosophy and practice which appear to resonate directly with Duchamp's specific activities in Munich, during the first production of *The Guardian of the Threshold*, whose basic epistemological theme is that the mutually inimical spiritual and scientific groundings of truth are reconciled in a time-honoured esotericism; that, from time immemorial, exalted spirit beings have instructed humanity in the mystic shrines, in secret, investing the mystic lore they must pass on into the souls of those now ripe to be ordained. All the present mystic schools therefore derive from one source. Now it is the turn of the present to inherit the treasures passed from age to age. History teaches that 'modern science' has always existed in the cosmic scheme. But Thomasius, a scientist who the Mystic League of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood is attempting to recruit, fearful of the consequences of his powerful knowledge being put to the wrong use, has come to warn humanity of the dangers of misapplied technology; Lucifer wants Thomasius to unite scientific human knowledge with spirit sight, for his own evil purposes.

According to Steiner, the great struggle of being human is the balancing of the 'Ahrimanic' and 'Luciferic' impulses which Ahriman and Lucifer transmit. The psyche experiences any domination by either impulse as 'The Devil'; if Luciferian, the individual becomes controlled by passions, emotions and desires: if 'Ahrimanic', by obsessive materialism and the blind faith in the exclusively mechanistic aspect of modern science.

Maria, Thomasius' soul mate and spirit guide, reassures him that, once guided over the Threshold by her, he will leave the world of the senses and science for the world of spirit, He will abjure mundane science, and "wait in silence for the spirits' gifts".

So, as Thomasius needed a soul-sister, Maria, Duchamp later needs a Rose.

But what Thomasius abjures, Strader embraces. Spiritually starved, after years of research, Theodora shows him how, such striving being in vain, spirit pupil-ship worked on the human soul. Bereft of faith in science and good sense, seeking oblivion

in a distracted life of technical pursuit, he had met Theodora, who showed him the higher worlds. Giving himself to spirit guided knowledge, he crosses the Threshold and becomes divine.

The introduction of the character Strader to this debate concerning the benefits and dangers of modern science leads us to Steiner's second theme, good design, the philosophy of which is summarised by Strader thus;

Through application purely technical Restore that freedom to humanity In which the soul may find development. No more shall men be forced to dream away Their whole existence, plant-like, fashioning in narrow factory rooms unlovely things. Industrial power will be so dispersed That every man shall have what he may need To keep him in his work, in his own house Arranged by him, as he may think it best.

Strader's spirit technology, first appearing in Scene Four, in the form of stage props, relates directly to Steiner's third theme, art; on his table, in a room that he and his mediumistic wife use in common, are mechanical models resembling the apparatus that Stiener had inspected at Hübbe-Shlieden's. But Maria and Capesius, set free in the supra-sensible realm from their earthly bodies, reflect that,

The body which is proper to earth's souls Bears now itself the means to recreate In lofty pictures loveliness sublime, Which pictures, even if their substance now Seems but a shadow of the human soul, Are yet the buds which the future worlds Will open out to blossom and to fruit.

According to Steiner's reasoning, in a passage recalling Papus' astral body which appears to have been the pictorial source for Duchamp's *Bride* ⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ what happens here in pictures comes to pass to everlasting life in spirit worlds, via 'spirit pictures', in which one sees the spirit equivalent of life on earth: attempting to cross the threshold, to reunite with his spirit guide Maria, Thomasius had referred to pictures of spirit forms of 'earthly beings.'

Magnus Bellicosus fills the picture in.

Thomasius gave himself to painting's art Until he felt an inward spirit call To take up science as his work in life...he saw full well that spirit science must first find a firm foundation, and for this The sense for science and strict reasoning Must be released from mania for set form.

Steiner's view is that in order to attain true spiritual enlightenment an artist must give up painting in favour of spirit science, which is precisely what Duchamp does at this very point, in Munich, on the very night which witnessed the premier of *The Guardian of the Threshold*; As Maria says to Thomasius,

Johannes , No longer wilt thou now Weave only in thy pictures that which souls Still pent within the body, live in dreams. For far from cosmic progress are these thoughts Which but as self-begotten show themselves.

Steiner's philosophy of design is ultimately clarified in the fourth play, of 1913, *The Soul's Awakening*, in which Hilary's factory manager complains about a failing business unable to compete with its rivals;

A plan to fabricate such wonder wares Suits not the spirit of the present age. The aim of all productions now must be Complete perfection in some narrow groove.

Due to Hilary True-to-God's failure to separate business from mystic interests, quality and delivery are down. And now a mystic is to be made head of design, because;

So will the product made by our machines Be moulded by his will to artist forms, The useful with the exquisite combined. Art and production shall become one whole And daily life by taste be beautified. So will I add to these dead forms of sense For thus I do regard our art just now A soul, whereby they may be justified.

Strader's the man to do it, but the manager thinks his spirit-science-based industrial design philosophy has no place in the actual market place, (except, presumably, one exclusively populated by wealthy occultists, of which there was no shortage in Germany at the time.) But Hilary will have his way, the factory will be turned into a Sanctuary for Spirit Knowledge, the manager will be enlightened, the now dead Strader recognised as a genius, and Ahriman revealed to be the Devil, by his cloven hoofs- all of which come to pass.

Informing our judgement of Duchamp's post-Munich fabrications, the issue of the impact of the industrial design that he might have seen in Munich, which is addressed by Thierry de Duve, in *Resonances of Duchamp's Visit to Munich*,⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ would then appear to be resolved here. Set against Duve's assumption of a significant difference between German and French industrial design theory, practice and style we should perhaps bear in mind that in March 1910, the year in which Duchamp met Max Bergmann, Apollinaire reviewed an exhibition in Paris of decorative arts and industrial design from Munich.

The industrial design philosophy variously expressed through the characters of Hilary, Thomasius and Strader situates Steiner's understanding squarely within the milieu of German-speaking European modernist industrial design theory and practice of the time, one manifestation of which must suffice here as illustration. Hilary himself appears to be cast from a similar mould as the real-life factory owner, Karl

Bensheidt who, by the April of 1911 had engaged Walter Gropius (who married Mahler's widow, the theosophist Alma Mahler), to take control of the design of the Fagus Factory, in Aafeld. Through this factory the manufacture of shoe lasts was intimately connected to the new concepts of health and improved education examined by Treitel, and which Steiner's Waldorf education system still espouses; the name Waldorf comes from the cigarette factory where the first of such schools was set up. As a sickly child, Bensheidt had become fanatically keen on using every scientific advance to counteract diseases and bodily malformation. From the start he insisted that his workers should enjoy all the benefits of American industrial planning; well-ventilated machine shops, a strictly linear throughput to minimize unnecessary transportation, and well-lit offices and studios. Following Muthesius' rehearsal in 1901 of Hilary's policy statement;

Let the human mind think of shapes that the machine can produce. Such shapes when they are logically developed in accordance with what machines can do, we may certainly call artistic. They will satisfy because they will no longer be imitation of handicraft, but typical machine-made shapes.

The key issue of the day focussed on the relationship between the soul of the creator and the spirit of the machine subsuming it into anonymous industrial forms of mass-production, which the romanticising and humanising of the machine and its products made more acceptable. This nullification of the attributes of craftsmanship promoted the search for absolute laws of good proportion residing in colour, line and texture.

So Duve's assumption of the radical difference between the cultural milieus of Paris and Munich is undermined further by the strong contacts individual artists maintained, not least those exhibiting in the capital of Bavaria, one of the more prominent of whom was the close friend of the brothers Duchamp, Pierre Girieud, who also exhibited in Moscow and St Petersburg. In the case of the occult, the links were even stronger and well developed, as the relationship between Steiner and Schuré illustrates. The Steiner's were very familiar with late Symbolist Paris. In the late 1890's, whilst co-directing productions of Maeterlinck's *The Intruder* with Otto Hartleben, for a Free Dramatic Society in Germany, an independent theatre dedicated to producing 'misunderstood' plays, Steiner also directed two of Schuré's plays. Steiner's wife, Marie von Sivers had studied artistic recitation in Paris, where she had

become friends with the Theosophist Schuré, whose works she translated, and through which she became acquainted with that of Blavatsky. Schuré considered himself a play-writer of the *Théâtre de l'Âme*, in the mould of Villiers de L'Île-Adam, Péladan and Maeterlinck, as he makes clear in his eponymous text of 1922. In May 1907, Steiner produced and directed von Sivers' translation, in free verse, of Schuré's *The Sacred Drama of Eleusis*, for the Theosophical Congress in Munich, and in August 1909, his *Les Enfants du Lucifer*, at the Munich Playhouse.

Like Steiner, Schuré wanted to regain contact with spiritual powers through drama; the " Eleusian idea" was the realization of the divine in the other life through the deliverance of the soul which had achieved perfection. Greek tragedy contained the " Promethean idea" of the realization of the divine life on earth that modern theatre would make possible, and that a harmonic synthesis resided in the blending of the two. According to Schuré, it is only through experiencing the earthly and sub-earthly realms that a purification of the occult initiate's innermost being, a rising to the ethereal spheres and a marvellous sense of harmony with the Cosmos, becomes possible.⁽¹⁵¹⁾ Steiner's theatre drew then on Symbolist theatre, Mediaeval miracle and mystery plays, and Goethe, particularly *Faust*. Frantisek Deak identifies the various practices which Steiner adopted from the former, among which were verbal orchestration, a recitational acting style, slow movements, ritualistic behaviour, a resemblance between iconography in the visual arts and the actors on the stage, an emphasis on imagination and the inner life, hidden reality, spiritual aspiration, ideas of mysticism and an initiated audience.⁽¹⁵²⁾ The everyday setting for the modern gnosis is revealed in the setting for the Prelude to Steiner's *Portal of Initiation*, at the Goetheanum - a living room containing a sofa, couch and other familiar items. However, the walls did not match the height of the proscenium, the exposed space above showing a cyclorama decorated with esoteric symbols resembling stained glass imagery.

The Strader machines suggest themselves as the precise trigger for Duchamp's 'total' liberation, because we know what they looked like; one, resembling nothing so much as an anemometer from the Land of Cockaigne, is described in *Memories of Hans Kuhn (1889-1977)*,⁽¹⁵³⁾ Kuhn informs us that (in his punctuation);

Beside the bigger object there were originally three objects that were more little. Additionally there was an open copper sphere on the wall at the performance in Munich. I hereby refer to the apparatus that was built during the winter of 1912/13, after specification to Rudolf Steiner, by Dr. Oskar Smiedel and his mechanics. When the *Guardian* was performed

for the first time in 1912 in Munich, a sort of dummy was used for which Imme von Ekhardstein (who had been publicly praised by Steiner in the first lecture of August, 1912) received specifications by Rudolf Steiner." The next Winter we had the time to work out an exact model, for which various metals, that were specified by Rudolf Steiner, were used for the four half spheres R S did entrust to Oskar Smiedel for their production. Two of the half spheres were made from Antimony, one from Nickel, one half of the fourth was made from Copper. The other half should be completed with a metal that was so far unknown. Very thin feel/sense organs made from gold foil (1/1000 mm thickness) were hanging at the side of this double bowl. At the fourth side of a cross of lead a tip of uranium pitchblende should be mounted. The connections between the six tips were partly made of copper and partly of tin. From one bowl to the opposite one there was a spiral glass tube. Even more cryptic were the three additional objects. One was a glass container with a wire of platinum that was hanging inside of it or as molten into it, the second was a lemniscate of glass tube with a coal tip on, that had a little copper bowl above it. The third object should have four uranium tips at the same level. The form of this object let it seem probable that it could rotate. Electricity should be kept away. The original models have vanished, though they survived the Goetheanum fire. One didn't take enough care and recognise the importance of the apparatus. Today they show a dummy at the performances.

So the 1912 audience witnessed rough-and-ready approximations of the real thing. Fragments of a biography, by Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, also carrying Kuhn's text, ⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ discusses the magical new energy associated with this technology, another astral force, for which the world is not ready.

From this, and more, it is quite clear that no proper understanding of the principles of orthodox science is required of any occultist, or of a Marcel Duchamp interested in bending the laws of chemistry and physics. But whilst it is the visual appearance of this ramshackle organic machinery which, we suggest, directly informed the techno-visceral imagery of Duchamp's two exactly contemporary paintings, it was the concept of spirit-technology which it embodied which lead to Duchamp's simultaneous rejection of painting in favour of the construction which informed his post-Munich production, coincidentally demonstrating the idea that if three-dimensional realities can be proved in the two-dimensional representations of his essentially spirit-technology blueprints, the same must be true for four dimensions.

But Steiner's set design, as described in the *mise-en-scène*, also appears to confirm Duchamp's knowledge of Steiner's theatrical productions. Evidence for this would appear to be those two paintings he describes as " a juxtaposition of mechanical elements and visceral forms" which combine structures from the two drawings entitled *Vierge*, with which he now terminates his avant-garde painting career, *The Passage from the Virgin to the Bride*, and *The Bride*.

There is, for example, a notable correspondence between the iconography of Duchamp's these paintings and the set design for Lucifer's Kingdom, which, in Scene

3 appears as a space which is enclosed, not by artificial walls, but by fantastic forms which resemble plants and animals. Likewise, Scene 6 shows a space enveloped by intertwined plants, like trees, and structures which spread out and send shoots into the interior. Finally, scene 7 is a landscape composed of a fantasy of forms. These images echo Strader's description of man's plant-like existence fashioning, in narrow factory rooms, unlovely things, cited above.

And indeed, Duchamp's two paintings do appear to satisfy Steiner's design ethos, as identified by David Adams.⁽¹⁵⁵⁾

Attempting to achieve an organism-like relation between part and whole, Steiner employed the principle of metamorphosis in the abstract form, relating this to Goethe's studies of biological morphology, creating forms which not only fulfilled but also directly imaged their functions, which Adams labels 'organic functionalism.' Steiner had edited Goethe's natural-scientific writings for the *Körschners Deutsche National-Litteratur* series, published between 1883 and 1901, in which Goethe's way of researching the organic realm provided Steiner with a model of a possible methodological bridge between nature and the spirit.

Sharing Goethe's opposition to the arbitrary expression of subjectivity in art, (which Duchamp rejects at precisely this moment,) Steiner felt there must be something as true and lawful in art as in nature, frequently quoting Goethe's saying, " Art is a manifestation of the secret laws of nature, without which they would never be revealed." Steiner's term " organic structural thought" expresses his belief that only through intuitive thinking could the laws governing organic beings be understood. He constantly stressed that no forms of his buildings, of which designed 17, all in collaboration with qualified architects, imitated any organic form in nature, as in his eurythmic 'dance'; nor were designs intended to be allegories or symbols of anything but themselves.

The formal qualities of Steiner's designs bring us very close to Duchamp's last two paintings completed in Munich, and which display a much more organic character than the preparatory drawings constituting their immediate antecedents.

The third of Steiner's five concepts of " organic architecture" is expressed in his conception of the " living wall", conceived as continuous sculptural surfaces expressing the play between the polarities of concave and convex, above and below, right and left, and load and support; as he remarked; " The wall is not merely a wall, it

is living, just like a living organism that allows elevations and depressions to grow out of itself." it was " a relief full of meaning."

Steiner also attempted to make sculpturally visible virtually every detail of the various tensions of the spatial and load-bearing relationships throughout the building; the only way to express the functional organic-ness was sculpturally - " the life of the surface itself, the soul of the form itself.", the curved surfaces embodying what he called " the simplest Urphänomen of life", both a convexity produced by " cosmic" formative forces of nature working inward, and a concavity resulting from the polar, centrifugal forces working outward.

The fourth organic characteristic was metamorphosis, which is the subject of the first of Duchamp's two paintings under consideration here. This phenomenon had first been recognised and articulated by Goethe as part of plant morphology; Goethe described a plant as fundamentally a leaf, but one that rhythmically metamorphoses through an ordered procession of expansion and contraction, to become a seed, calyx, blossom (an *épanouissement*, so to speak) and fruit. Yet all the sequences cannot be observed in one organic form in a single specimen, only sequentially, in their progression through time, demonstrating that the qualities of any form in the sequence are always both hidden and prefigured in the previous form, and continue, to some degree, in the succeeding shape.

This rather brings to mind the 'cinematic' *Nude Descending the Staircase*.

All this was illustrated in Steiner's design for the first Goetheanum, which he sometimes called the House of the Word, linking the mobile element of human communication to the surrounding architectural forms; as Steiner says, " Up to our time architectural thought has been concerned with the qualities of lifeless, mechanical rest. Now, however, architectural thought becomes the thought of speech, of inner movement, that draws us along with it."

This fusion appears to be manifested in both visual and literary components of Duchamp's two Munich paintings, thus. The verb *Marier*, the homophone for the French for both Bride and Groom, *Mariée*, means both to unite and join, and to splice. Duchamp's painting technique used in these works, so the *Ephemerides* tells us, was to blend the colours with his fingers; to blend colours is *marier des couleurs*, and alternate masculine and feminine couplets are termed *Rimes mariées*.

The final aspect of Steiner's approach was what he termed the " semblance of consciousness", by means of which the edifice was attuned to human consciousness,

responsive and sympathetic to its function to "bring expression as in one living being, the spiritual, the psychical and the physical." This is the empathy theory at the heart of Expressionism, according to which, aesthetic expressive features of either a living organism or an aesthetic object stimulate an impression that affects a viewer physically and psychically.

And as we know, from Duchamp's own mouth, *The Passage from the Virgin to the Bride* does not represent a physical passage, but a psychological one, a stage in Duchamp's life as painter.

The first Goetheanum was then a Gesamtkunstwerk, whose origin lay in projects beginning in 1907. From March 1911, this new building was planned to house, inter alia, the mystery dramas, its basic form, two interpenetrating circles of stage and auditorium. This "Johannesbau" was rejected by the City of Munich in 1911. A drawing from 1912, Adams' Figure 9, shows the building as it would have been constructed, in the Munich-Schwabing where Duchamp listened to café conversation. It contained such details as a curving stairway, freely fashioned, whose zoomorphic shapes were meant to express its structural dynamics.

Recalling here Duchamp's insect dream⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ which occurred on the night of the performance of *The Guardian of the Threshold*, in which the image mutated into a creature which lacerated him with its elytra, a *Virgin* is a female insect which produces eggs by parthenogenesis, and a *Bride* is a network which connects patterns in lace.

Other, uncanny, liaisons, such as the subject of Dame Balder's dream, a "shining-light child" anticipating Duchamp's 'headlight child' from his Jura-Paris Road text, composed a few months later, cannot detain us here. But the correspondences drawn by the *Ephemerides*, such as that between two cults of bearded virgins, one in Bavaria and another in Duchamp's Pays de Caux, under-scores the way in which Duchamp's self-confessed key Munich experiences can be seen to have set the scene for Roussel's pfennig to drop.

And a speech that Maria delivers, on page 76, illustrates how Steiner's semiotics coincides with Roussel and Duchamp's practice. It runs:

So must the Master bring them to this place
Where words do not depend on human
speech But are imprinted on their souls by signs,
Here he transforms speech into word-
happenings – A word descriptive language for the soul.

Following this, we learn on page 82 that cosmic speech occurs as Thought Forms representing words; those spoken by Lucifer and Ahriman are visualised, on stage, through dance, by their 'creatures'. Reciprocally, Benedictus' words uttered on earth have effect in the spirit world, where souls grasp the meaning of everything with ease, because each explains itself through something else - through resemblance.

That Steiner's semiotics is predicated on a non-arbitrary indexicality, each sign having a direct and specific equivalent in another language, was clearly explained by him in a series of lectures he gave in 1907, in Stuttgart.⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ Steiner's semiotics, enacted in the flesh on a Munich stage in the summer of 1912, can then be seen as a final confirmation of Duchamp's way out of Symbolism, whose semiotics are summarised by Shearer West, as follows,

The 'symbol' in Symbolism is not a one to one correspondence between the signifier and the signified, but rather a rejection of such a correspondence. Symbolist paintings were often intentionally meaningless.⁽¹⁵⁸⁾

Stirner's, and Duchamp's, semiotics run counter to this conception.

In lecture 1, *The Creative Cosmic Tone*, we learn the following;

Symbols and signs, not only in the profane world, but also in the theosophical, often give the impression of something arbitrary that only "signifies" something. This is not correct. In order to understand what the occultist says about the pentagram, we must first call to mind the seven fundamental parts of the human being, and it is above all the etheric body that is especially relevant to this consideration. Thus when the occultist speaks of the pentagram as the figure of man he is speaking of it as the anatomist speaks of the skeleton. This figure is really present in the etheric body. It is a fact. All signs and symbols that we meet in occultism direct us to such realities.

Lecture 3 deals with the symbolism of numbers; The number One has always designated the indivisible unity of God in the universe. God is indicated by the number one. Two is called the number of revelation in occultism, whatever appears to us in the world, whatever is not in any way concealed, stands as a duality. Everywhere in nature you find that nothing reveals itself without being related to the number two. Light alone cannot reveal itself. There must be shadow or darkness - that is, a duality. Two, duality, is the number of appearance, of manifestation.

Behind every duality a unity is hidden. Therefore three is nothing but two and one, that is, the revelation and the existent divinity backing it. Three is the number of divinity revealing itself...One is a number for God, and also the three. So you can see how we can reflect on the number three. We should not take off and spin pedantic thoughts about it, but we must look for the duality and triad that is to be met at every turn.

Four is the sign of the cosmos or of creation...the present planetary condition of the earth is its fourth embodiment.

And so on, via seven, the number of perfection, until Steiner brings his audience full-circle, because;

today (man) is under the influence of the number five insofar as he can be good or evil. As a creature of the universe he lives in number four. Everywhere number seven can be observed as a kind of number of perfection. There is no superstition of magic in this.

In each case, the meaning of the number is linked to comprehensive theosophical evolutionary cosmology, the subject occupying most of lecture two. But in his return to the divine nature of the number one, Steiner plants an idea which perhaps comes to fruition later for Duchamp as a result of his Munich visit, for next he advocates the following;

Take a thin gold plate of glass and look through it. The world will then appear yellow because that is the colour that will be reflected...Hence, a red object appears red because it reflects the red rays and absorbs the rest. It is not possible to separate red from white light without leaving the other colours behind. With this we touch the edge of a world secret. You see a red cloth and visualise at the same time the green hidden in it. In this way you have accomplished what in the Pythagorean sense is called " The division of the One so that the rest is preserved," through which you can attain great spiritual heights.

'A world in yellow', *le monde en jaune*, is precisely the term Katherine Dreier used, in French, to describe the spiritual condition accessible via Duchamp's *Large Glass*, in her monograph of 1944; it is also the subject of a note from Duchamp's *Box of 1914*. In slang, *le monde en jaune* means the world of a not necessarily homosexual sodomy. But since *jaune* also translates as egg yolk, the phrase can also mean the world contained in the alchemical egg, from which is born the Philosopher's Stone.

And in this third lecture, Steiner links semiotics to the esoteric concepts of evolution and involution, the two 'sides' of Duchamp's expression fabricating his *Trois Stoppages Étalon* of 1913.

His fourth lecture, entitled *Man, the Most Significant Symbol*, analyses a series of images from seven seals hung in the Festival hall during the Munich Congress, which showed the evolution of men in connection with the world to which they belong. Their style subscribes to standard allegorical conventions of representation still used in Rosicrucian, Theosophical and Masonic pictorial emblematics, and to which Duchamp turns after Munich. Details of a selection will suffice to give the sense of how their symbolism functioned indexically.

The sixth seal shows us that the human being, when he had achieved the highest spirituality, takes on the form of St Michael fettering the evil in the world, symbolized by the dragon.

The seventh seal has a border containing the letters J.C.M.P.S.S.R.E.D.N. A rainbow occupies the top half of circle within it. The following symbols are arranged

along a central vertical axis. At the top, a dove with outstretched wings appears to hover within a double spiral of three turns, emanating from the mouths of two snakes below; these close above the dove in a form resembling a fish-tail. The bodies of the two opposed snakes form a circle occupying the bottom half of the seal. Tendrils emanating from them point at and into a transparent cube sited between them; they roughly form a kind of four petalled clover-leaf form. According to Steiner;

Space in the physical world is not simple emptiness, but something quite different. Space is the source from which all beings have crystallised. The occultist presents this space into which the divine creative Word has been spoken as the water-clear cube. The cube represents the three dimensions of the physical world...there is a counter-dimension to every dimension of space, in all, six counter-rays representing the primal beings of the highest human members. The physical body is the lowest. In their development, these counter-dimensions form themselves into a being that is best described when we flow together into the world of passions, sensual appetites and instincts. The process of purification is symbolised by the counter-dimensions converging in two snakes standing opposite each other. As mankind purifies itself, it rises through what is called the world spiral...this has deep significance.

There follows an attempt, symptomatic of Steiner's understanding of science, to point out how anomalies in modern astronomy are rectified by the concept of the world spiral, a form with which, one day, men will identify themselves. And one can understand from what follows why, on the death of Katherine Dreier, in the early 1950's, Duchamp destroyed her portrait of him, of 1918, which was about to enter a public collection, at Yale. Steiner was one of Dreier's favourite authors. Into this portrait Duchamp had personally painted his own etheric, astral portrait. But one cannot imagine Duchamp's burgeoning post-war identity as the ancestor of a new kind of modernism being assisted greatly by the knowledge that for the previous four decades he had been patronised by adherents of a doctrine which advocated that in the future, in replacing the penis, the larynx would become the Holy Grail. As Steiner now said;

At the same time, a man's generative power will be cleansed and purified, and his larynx will become his generative organ. What the human being will have developed, a purified snake body, will no longer work upwards, but from above downwards. The transformed larynx will become the chalice known as the Holy Grail, a united, purified generative organ, an essence of world force and of the great cosmic essence, world spirit, represented by the dove facing the Holy Grail symbolising the spiritualised fructification when men will have identified themselves with the cosmos.. The complete creativity of this process is represented by the rainbow. This is the all-embracing seal of the Holy Grail.

This passage appears to confirm the commonality of belief between variants of the occult doctrines, since Steiner here appears to be paraphrasing Remy de Gourmont paraphrasing Diderot paraphrasing Galen.

Drawing on Galen, which says something about occult 'science', de Gourmont, ⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ presents the view, paraphrased by Clair in respect of the essentially alchemical character of Duchamp's corpus, that all parts of man are to be found in woman, and vice versa, with one difference; women's (reproductive) parts are exterior, and men's, interior; they part from the perineal region.

This would appear to account for Duchamp's preoccupation with the perineum, clearly his embodiment of the *inframince* acting as an interface between the hermaphroditic/gynandrous androgyne - his *Feuille de Vigne Femelle*, for example, that crease of the perineum that he pressed in Man Ray's hand as he boarded an Atlantic steamer; *Man Ray / main raie*.

Discussing sexual dimorphism, physical as well as psychical, de Gourmont advocates the following.

Unfold woman's (interior parts) or fold man's inward and you will find either a replica of the other. Suppose first man's organs are pushed into him and extending interiorly between the rectum and the bladder; in this supposition, the scrotum would occupy the place of the matrix [the *matrice d'Eros*, as the writer of the *Green Box* notes would have it] with the testicles placed at each side of the exterior orifice.

Suppose inversely that matrix should turn inside out and fall outside, would not its testes (ovaries), of necessity, find themselves inside its cavity and would it not envelope them as a scrotum? Would not the throat, hidden up to the perineum, become the male member, and the vagina, which is but a cutaneous appendix of the throat, the foreskin ?

There is in man from the anus to the scrotum, the interval called the perineum, and from the scrotum to the end of the prong, a seam which looks like the re-sewing of a basted vulva.

A veritable *objet dard de reprise perdu*, no less; but before this last sentence, we find a direct quotation from the source de Gourmont had already used, the missing link - the passage [psychic as much as physical, we recall] which Diderot has transposed and put *au courant* with science in his *Rêve d'Alembert*.

Dr Bordeau, responding to Mlle d'Espinasse's suggestion that perhaps man is merely an freakish woman, and vice versa, proposes that the only difference is that between a pouch hanging outside or a pouch reversed to go inside the body; thus a female foetus is indistinguishable from the male foetus:

The part which gives rise to the mistake diminishes in size in the female foetus as the internal pouch grows, but it never disappears to the extent of losing its original shape, which it keeps in miniature, together with the ability to behave in the same way, and it is also the

seat of pleasurable sensations. This part has its glans and prepuce, and at its extremity can be seen a dot which might have been the orifice of a urinary canal now blocked⁽¹⁶⁰⁾

Here he is describing the part whose name Laforgue was reputedly the first to use in French poetry, the clitoris. And in the interchange which follows, Diderot gives us an insight into the character of language. Bordeau has been talking what d'Alembert, waking from his dream, calls smut. The doctor responds that the scientific language essential to the discussion of such matters makes it acceptable, to which d'Alembert agrees, since that way words "lose the string of associated ideas which might make them objectionable."

Steiner now continues;

The world secret is found here as a circular inscription which shows how men in the beginning are born out of the primal forces of the world...born anew out of the forces of consciousness expressed in the Rose Cross by E.D.N., *Ex Deo Nascimur*, out of God am I born.

A man must find the death of the senses in the primal source of all that lives. We have to experience death in order to gain consciousness, find its meaning in the mystery of the Redeemer, as we are born out of God, in the sense of esoteric wisdom, we die in Christ - I.C.M., *In Christo Morimur*. The dove symbolises the spirit that permeates the world, He will rise from death and live again in the spirit - P.S.S R., *Per Spiritum Sanctum Reviviscimus*.

Here stands the theosophical Rosy Cross.

Steiner now informs the faithful of their use;

These seals contain a mighty force...by meditating on them you will disclose infinite wisdom. Hang them in a room where such things are discussed in which one raises oneself to the holy mysteries of the world. They will prove enlivening and illuminating to the highest degree.

But whilst providing an insight into the social functioning of such emblems, Steiner sounds a warning. These seals are not to be profaned, and some people will not be affected by them. Worse still, they cause illness if hung in rooms where no spiritual matters are discussed. Indeed, they even destroy the digestion.

Now we are in the realm of Max Jacob's talismans.

In his section titled *The Mystery Dramas and Materialism*, Creese examines the practical application of Steiner's linguistic theory, as it comes to fruition in his concept of Eurythmy. It quickly becomes apparent that Steiner's linguistics rest on a foundation as scientifically solid as that of Brisset's. It is predicated on the belief that since vowels and consonants emerged from different sources, they could be used in different ways to describe different characters. Vowels, which arise from the astral

body deep inside the inner being, and which flow into the ether body, are the revealers of soul states. Consonants, flowing the other way, have a more direct interaction with the senses, and are more closely tied to objects. Different sounds have different spiritual impacts; four categories of each. The "blown sounds", in German, the letters *h, ch, i, s, ch, s, f* and *w*, allow the audience to hear the intoning of the sound." Impact sounds", *d, t, b, p, q, k, m* and *n*, allow the audience to see the sound. The one "vibrating" sound, *r*, is felt in the arms and hands, whereas the "wave sound", *w*, is felt in the legs and feet.

Eurythmy is, then, a movement form that expresses tones and words; each sound a specific movement, the system encompasses tones, rhythms, colours, movements, patterns and moods: it is not dance or mime. Since movements can be coded to specific organs of the body, it can be used therapeutically. It is a system of correspondences.

By 1923 the basic tenets and conventions of eurythmy were well established, having received their first public outing in *The Guardian of The Threshold* in 1912. Originating in a request from an adherent, in 1911, for a gymnastics or dance course in tune with the ideas of occult science, Steiner began with movements based on formed speech, beginning with stepping to verses with alliteration; because alliteration developed in the windy North, each step was a battle with a victory over the storm. By 1912 the system was sufficiently advanced for the representation of the thought forms of Lucifer and Ahriman to appear on stage in the form of their Beings. By the September, Steiner had developed the first vowel sound movements, the first three, of 'Dionysian' Eurythmy, being *a, i* and *o*.

Eurythmy forms can be described, but Steiner warned that they could not be understood intellectually. They must be experienced inwardly. Their nature is cosmic, and the feeling one gets in a performance is that for the speeches spoken, no other movements are possible. They are in no way arbitrary. Each sound brings to the spirit a specific inner feeling.

With a theoretical grounding worthy of Brisset, for Steiner, no matter what language one speaks, allowing for slight variations of sound, from language to language, sounds always mean the same things, because the materialistic expression of language is only the veneer that distracts us from the soul states we are capable of perceiving, since the vowel expresses inner feelings and the consonants are imitations of the outside world. Since eurythmy is visible speech, each sound is represented by a

specific movement; each one seeks to express physically what the sound expresses audibly. The German sounds are summarized thus:

A expresses wonder and amazement, *b*, to wrap around, envelop and house, *c*, the quality of lightness, *d*, ponderousness and gravity, and so on, to *w*, to seek moving shelter. This is the mysterious consonant, in English, *v*. It expresses the feeling of a nomad's tent or a shelter in the forest. The nomadic quality of *v/w* makes it a favourite letter for alliteration.

Steiner meant the meaning of these sounds to be taken literally, believing they were true meanings, confounding critics who reminded him that various languages had different words for things with a response worthy of the cryptographer of Dante, Arensberg; the Germans use the word *kopf* for head because the sound expresses the object's roundness, whereas the Italian *testa* expresses the idea that the head sits atop the shoulders and speaks: if the spirit behind Italian culture had wished to express the roundness of the head, they would have used *kopf*.

Problematic as the theoretical grounding of this linguistics seems to be, nonetheless for Steiner it expressed a semiotic rationale, in a manner akin to Roussel's method, in which words have immediate and specific equivalents in things. For example, by combining the meanings of sounds, one discovers the true meanings of words. In the German for putty, *Leim*, for example, the *L* represents the overcoming of matter by form, the *ei* is the sound expressing clinging and affection, and *m* speaks of imitation.

Whole scenarios could thus be constructed, and deciphered. Steiner described in one lecture the derivation of the word *raschien*, to rustle, thus. The moving around (*r*) of a mouse hidden in the foliage makes us uneasy and astonished (*a*), especially once it runs out of cover and scampers away (*sch*). But this we have confronted (*e*). The little mouse must cling to its surroundings by adapting to high and low places and hollow spaces (*i*). When it emerges and we understand what the whole thing was about, we react (*n*).

Thus is speech as the plastic form of words; apparantly

The indexicality characterising Steiner's semiotics is duplicated in the theory and practice of another Munich occultist bewitching Dreier, Kandinsky. Both *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* and the volume that she was never to translate and publish, *Point and Line to Plane*, make it clear that the relation between a symbol and

its meaning is anything but arbitrary. For him, the authentic avant-garde artist-prophet, creating out of "inner necessity", is the tip of a progressing triangle inexorably penetrating tomorrow. For him, eccentric yellow tends to warm, not the cold that concentric blue tends towards, terrestrial yellow's aggressive violence is not the calm of celestial blue, and so on. And in the chords of the chromatic cosmic piano, the peaceful circle is the soul, not the larynx metamorphosing into a penis.

Such matters as these are examined in two essays in Tuchman's *The Spiritual in Art*. According to Ringbom, on page 132, in theosophical aesthetics the work of art is in its own way a thought form, shaped by the artist's thought vibrations, and itself transmitting those vibrations to the beholder, as Katherine Dreier attests, in 1944, apropos the *Large Glass*. As with Lucifer's 'danced' thoughts, such a definition would embrace Steiner's stage props, the Strader machines, since they represent prototypes of the 'wonder-wares' derided by Hilary's factory manager; and, it follows, Duchamp's post-Munich fabrications.

Ringbom continues, on the next page, with a discussion of Parallel Representation, an idea from occultism, familiar to us thanks to Steiner, readily translated into pictorial forms. This posits that actions and thoughts on the physical plane are paralleled on the higher spiritual plane, a parallel representation via 'parallel action' suspiciously close to Moffit's characterisation of Duchamp's concept of 'elementary parallelism' apropos his *Sad Young Man in a Train* of 1911.

In *Parallel Representation*, discussed by Leadbetter, counterparts of material objects and actions constitute the hidden side of things. Echoing Steiner, in addition to physical bodies, higher bodies manifest themselves as unnatural colours and forms unlike the physical body, as in X-ray photography and radioactivity. According to Besant, Leadbetter and Steiner, this occurs in the higher levels of the spiritual atmosphere, where colour formations thrown off by higher bodies exist, as in Duchamp's portrait of Dr Dumouchel. According to Kandinsky, in this spiritual atmosphere, not only actions can be observed, and feeling can find external expression, but so can perfectly secret actions that no-one knows about – unuttered thoughts and unexpressed feelings – the actions that take place within people. That this concept clearly influenced Kandinsky is shown by two drawings in a sketchbook of 1910, *Study* and *Klange*, illustrating the vacillations of a two-part technique, in which either theatrical props, or pure patches of colour, function as a means of evoking action. According to Ringbom's analysis, forms in *Study* are given a pre-

figural pretext – tree, hill, cloud, rainbow – still connected to the human protagonists in the image. But in *Klange*, similar encounters are accompanied by coloured clouds; an Art Nouveau derived aesthetic has been replaced by images of the everyday world as it appears to the higher spiritual vision of the clairvoyant. In Kandinsky's latter street scene, people mingle with their multicoloured emanations representing feelings, etc, and in *Lady in Moscow*, of 1912, the protagonist is accompanied by a malignant black spot which becomes the fully-fledged, non-objective, *Black Spot* of this same year.

So whilst the post-Munich Duchamp, who never embraced abstraction, would appear to part company with the non-objective Kandinsky at this point, one cannot help but wonder whether the former's later rotary optical devices were designed to induce such after-images which, in hovering on the threshold between the concentric circle and the spiral, might convince the consumer of their own clairvoyance. For Kandinsky, a pictorial artist, 'parallel representation' was one way to escape the impasse of visual reality. But Duchamp's other way, eschewing pictorial art, nonetheless would seem to be informed by 'parallel representation' too. This would seem to make sense of Duchamp's admitted enthusiasm for Hodler, and Wagner, since Kandinsky's move is parallel to the composer's shift of characterisation from stage prop to musical leitmotif.

We recall here that Duchamp was instrumental in securing Kandinsky's transfer to Neuilly in the late '30's; he and Dreier had previously visited Kandinsky at the Bauhaus.

Now we can perhaps understand the strange *Ephemerides* entry on Duchamp's *Aeroplane*, of the 19th of August 1912. Recalling the burden of Kaspar Hotspur and Strader's warnings, apropos the danger to the spirit of misapplied technology, now makes a little more sense of the setting into an entry addressing Duchamp's Munich drawing of Gaby-Buffer Picabia's comment that, at the time, the Machine was considered anti-artistic, and an enemy of the mind, the coincidence of the date of Audemar's triumph notwithstanding:

Tis now proved that nature and the soul, Can be explained as things mechanical. And is indeed a check to all free thought That Dr Strader, with so clear a brain, Should countenance this mystic fallacy. Who thus doth master powers mechanical Should not indeed lack insight to perceive That e'en to gain true knowledge of the soul, All mystic learning needs must be destroyed by this false science So that the artist's cold machinery Might no more lame the soul-life of mankind.

The answer lies in standard definitions of the word Mind, by turns the commemoration of a departed soul, the seat of consciousness, thoughts, volition and feelings, the incorporeal subject of the psychic faculties, the soul as distinct from the body, mental or psychic being, and intellectual powers as distinct from the will and emotions, because Duchamp's drawing looks like nothing less than a blueprint for a piece of spirit-science apparatus, just like the *Large Glass*.

The Rousselian analysis of the word 'aeroplane' accompanying this text demonstrates how whilst the drawing looks nothing like an *avion*, its title evokes the cognate of aviation, viator, or traveller, which conflates a flying machine of the aviator with the departure of the soul, since its cognate, viaticum, the Latin for provision for a journey, also means the Eucharist when administered to and received by one close to death, a risk noted in the Ephemerides entry. ⁽¹⁶¹⁾

7. Semeiological signatures: Semiotics.

Semeiology: Sign language.
That branch of medical science concerned with symptoms.

The form and authenticity of my practice rests on the credibility of Duchamp's acknowledgement of Roussel's model, and the recognition of the significance this had for the relocation of the epistemological grounding of his practice.

Prevailing critical orthodoxy, as represented by scholars published by the October imprint of the M.I.T. Press, Moffit's *bêtes noir*, whose approach is grounded in a post-modern hermeneutic itself grounded in Saussurian Semiotics, takes little or no account of this.

However, Christopher Green⁽¹⁶²⁾ questions whether cubist paintings might legitimately be considered to be susceptible to a Saussurian semiotic analysis in any useful way. In so doing, he unintentionally contextualises Duchamp's own enunciation, beginning thus;

With the exposure of the arbitrariness of the sign, it has been argued, Cubist *collage* and *papiers collés* could be read as a play of language in the largest, most impersonal sense. No longer, in a Saussurian sense, to be taken as utterances of individuals (*Parole*), they exposed above all the workings of language itself, the semiological structuring of all knowledge (*Langue*), as a consequence of which, artists became no more than inessential referents in their work which could now "speak" in their absence since.

But Gris's later theory of the aesthetic, and Gleizes's and Metzinger's 1912 emphasis on qualitative experience, clearly associate Cubist painting with a dominant subjectivism. So whilst on the one hand, the arbitrariness of the sign, exposed, say, by the freedom of the word from a single referent, was routinely discussed in the context of both Cubism and post-Mallarméan poetry from 1910 onwards, as part of a broad-based interest in language - evidence of which lies in the fact that major sections of Kahnweiler's second monograph are taken up with such issues in the context of the theory of the 'sign' - on the other, the latter's discussion on poetry stresses the autonomy of poetic imagery more than the separation of word from referent.

Both Kahnweiler and Gris drew on the same sources, such as Jacques de Morgan's *L'Humanité préhistorique, Esquisse de préhistoire générale*, and Joseph

Vendryes' *La Langue, Introduction linguistique à l'histoire*, both published in 1921, the latter informing attitudes to language shared by many members of the cubist milieu, as the constant reference, in cubist literature, to such concepts as the 'hieroglyph' and the 'sign', would appear to confirm. Kahnweiler's own theory of signs in painting is characterised by his somewhat original application of Vendryes' analysis of language to de Morgan's account of the development and character of writing, allowing him to connect painting to 'ideographic writing', in which graphic signs do not merely denote things, but also signify ideas. That is, painting, in so far as it is writing, transcribes images, not words.

For Green, Bois's contention that Kahnweiler's theory of signs, and of painting as writing, was inadequate (because it implied a too fixed relationship between signifier and signified, and minimised the Saussurian arbitrariness of the sign), is compromised not only by the fact that the graphic sign is definitely connected through the vocal sign for the image to the idea, but also that Gris, echoing Vendryes' observation that words are used, especially in speech, with as unequivocal a relationship to their referents as possible, himself insisted on a clear, unambiguous relationship between sign, referent and idea - that, for his example, his sign for a fruit-bowl can only be read as a fruit-bowl.

Further, such a conviction did not follow from a lack of awareness of the potential arbitrariness of the sign, since when Vendryes published *Le Language* he was well aware of Saussure's posthumously published *Cours de linguistique générale*, of 1916. Vendryes, whose theory of language as a system of signs did not require a tripartite theory of the sign, considered the realisation of the independent value of the sign in relation to its 'object' to be the first essential step in the development of language, a process he described as successive differentiations.

Even if the sign's relationship to its referent was fundamentally open and arbitrary, it did not mean that in actual use it necessarily remained so. Such a focus on enunciative usage, in the case of, say, Gris and Kahnweiler, did not imply a naïve failure to recognise, on a theoretical level, the arbitrariness of the sign, since it was the contextual placing of signs which gave them a clear denotational meaning; a circle in a painting by Gris denotes an eye or a button only in context, for example. So Kahnweiler's stress on fixed meanings indicates a concern with the analogy between painting and language on the level of utterance; both he and Gris thought of painting as *Parole*, not *Langue*.

Further, Vendryes had made the simple distinction between structural changes in systems of signs, which were slow and broad-based, and changes in the signs themselves - the vocabulary or lexicon - as *used*; fast moving, continual and individual. Whereas the phonetic and grammatical systems of language, their 'morphology', was stable once acquired, vocabulary is never fixed because it depends on circumstances; each speaking subject puts together his vocabulary by means of a series of borrowings from his fellows. This argument was based on work on the dynamics of language carried out at the end of the nineteenth century under the auspices of Saussure's mentor, Michel Bréal. Following him, Vendryes believed that written language observes the logical rules of grammar and conforms to language as it is held in common, changing slowly, whereas fragmented, a-grammatical spoken language develops new vocabularies in direct opposition to language held in common. Vendryes thus associated the languages of art with spoken language at its most volatile and personal: slang. Since the language of art is categorically a language of utterance, it is by definition constantly renewed at the level of vocabulary, and is profoundly subjective in its particularity; *Langue et mots et paroles à tous les étages*, we suggest.

So, according to Green's reasoning, Duchamp's work, which we identify as linguistically predicated on semeiology, is disqualified from any meaningful Semiotic analysis, since Saussurian semiotics did not inform the avant-garde production environment. (Even in 1965, the term 'semiotic' had yet to make its appearance in any edition of the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, whereas, as that same dictionary informs us, 'semeiology' had been in common English, and European, usage since 1694. Similarly, the 1968 reprint of the 1939 edition of the Harrap French and English Dictionary has entries for the more venerable substantive, but not its parvenu cousin-germane.)

Cottingham⁽¹⁶³⁾ supports this analysis. Following Gee, he argues that identifying a shift from iconic to symbolic signs in, say, Picasso's work (which was always more theoretically advanced than Duchamp's) such as the first *papiers collés* of late 1912, is problematic, since it flies in the face of substantial visual evidence, predicated as it is on a particular view of modernism, and Picasso's place within it. The validity of such an identification, at best retrospectively facilitating a semiotic analysis of that work, must assume some consciousness of Semiotic linguistic theory

within the discourse within which the painter's work developed, which Jacobson's later comparison of Cubism with Saussure's ideas cannot confirm retrospectively.

And a review of views published on Picasso's work written between 1910 and 1912, in Paris, Madrid, Germany, Italy, the United States and Great Britain, such as those examples published in *A Picasso Anthology*,⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ identifies no reference to semiotically informed use of symbols in his work. Rather, they universally stress Cubism's search for the higher synthesis of the object, or, as Kahnweiler put it in 1920, in reference to the period ten years before, the object one recognises in the painting which is now seen with a perspicacity of which no illusionistic art is capable.

In his commentary on Apollinaire's *Les Peintres Cubistes*, Read⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ describes the poet's text as patterned by lexical and semantic threads and united by an overall conceptual consistency via images such as flames and light referencing promethian and pentecostal imagery, with Picasso as the new John the Baptist, who cleanses the Arts in a baptism of light, and in Duchamp-Villon's work exemplifying the Immaculate. This structure is stressed again by Read, in a discussion of the problems of translating a text interwoven with highly significant variants, and laced with rhythm and sound patterns, puns, inter-textual references, and held together by multiple cohesive strategies, including recurring key terms which a translator must recognise and address. For example, the polyvalent character of the terms which Apollinaire uses, such as light, in which various meanings flicker simultaneously, advances a metaphorical evocation of, in turn, such specifics as the creative spirit, and of light and shade in a painting.

Whilst Read notes one rare example of Apollinaire's specific reference to pictorial symbols, writing of Picabia's work in terms of his colours which should not function as symbols, but as concrete forms, thus identifying the painter's own perceived inclination towards abstraction, this was in a proof not used in the definitive text of *Les Peintres Cubiste*, and seems to be an example of the critic's characteristic hedging of his bets to keep his options open in the combative milieu of the avant-garde.

And this divergence of response to the same stimuli, illustrated by the exercise of the same method by Apollinaire and Duchamp but for different aesthetic ends, after 1912, is identified by other observers analysing the semiotic environment in which Duchamp came to embrace Roussel's solution.

Moffit sees Duchamp's formative education rehearsing his susceptibility to the aesthetic delineated above. As he later confirmed to Cabanne, Duchamp enjoyed a Cartesian education whose foundation can be located in hermetically closed tautologies establishing self-referential propositions which prove each other. The rigorous curriculum of the Lycée Corneille encouraged the formation of an eclectic reconciliation of positivism and spirituality. In French textbooks of the period, Naturalism deferred to a pro neo-Platonic Idealism, by which Reality was defined as an expressive manipulation of the creative imagination. By 1885, Theodore Ricot's "world of the senses (was) only a mental construct / the only dependable source of knowledge is our will / we seek to understand nature through ourselves", expressing the Macro-microcosmic view of man's relation to the cosmos, perpetuated Schopenhauer's view of 1830's that "the world is wholly my representation." Solutions to problems were taught through dialectic, the symbolic art of synthesis in the reconciliation of thesis, the external, objective reality, and antithesis, the internal and wholly subjective materiality. Moffit quotes Mellier's *Leçons de philosophie* of 1888 as exemplifying this;

The imagination is animated by the law of the association of ideas...the sign is the necessary instrument of every artistic manipulation; and this instrument only fulfils its role once it becomes put into the service of the esprit.

Amplifying this is an observation from von Meierk, ⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ who quotes Paz apropos a subject well represented in the Arensberg papers; "*la forma universale di questo nodo* – the universal form of this knot ...which knits the whole world", which is taken from Canto XXXIII, 91 of Danté's *Paradiso*: "The idea consists of seeing the universe as a language, a script...un-ending....each sentence breeds another sentence, each says something which is always different and yet says the same thing...a metaphor which consists of seeing the universe as a book...(which)..appears also in the last canto of Danté's *Paradiso*...the pluralities of the world...come to rest in this sacred book, not excluding the words of the poet who names it...the union of substance and accident is presented as a knot., the universal form enclosing all forms...the hieroglyph of divine love."

Moffit's characterisation of von Mellier's associational theory, one idea inexorably invoking another if a relationship of similarity, congruity or even contrast exists between the two appears to identify coincidence is, coincidentally, none other than the Paracelsian epistemology grounded in Resemblance, expressed most

familiarly in the Theory of Signatures. Some of the various stock types of resemblance symptomatic of a system of similitudes facilitating an endless interplay of resemblances, the four 'essential' similitudes of Conventientia, Aemulatio, Analogy, Sympathy, and their declensions and conjugations, are outlined by Foucault.⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ Hicken, from page 44 onwards, identifies the same in the construction of a multi-layered eucharistic Emblem through a chain of resemblances utilising such devices as recall, pictorial conventions, assumption, pseudonym and images, personalisation, symbolism, emblematic identification, attribution, illustration, allusion, universal transformation, union, conjunction, redolence, association, signification, representation, attribution, influence, commentary, conflation, analogical relationship, juxtaposition., dialogue, *l'accord*, likeness, presentiment, identification and, finally, explication.

Hicken's chain runs as follows. Apollinaire is equated with Orpheus, in a poem of 1909, in which two wine glasses on a table recall '*le regard d'Orphée mourant*', who is then equated with the wounded poet, who is Apollinaire, (in a painting by Ronvère, his head bandaged, mouth open, with pained expression.)

Apollinaire is then equated poetically with Orpheus/Apollo; in 1902 Kostrowitski, now a '*fils du soleil*', had assumed the pseudonym Apollinaire.

Next Apollinaire is equated with Apollo via personalisation of the sun symbolism reflected in his poetry *I am reborn with the sun*, and, *Comme un elephant son ivoire*, in which the elephant is emblematically identified with Piety, since its trunk is saluting the rising sun. Sun, light and fire are all attributes of divinity, power and creation, and all appear in Apollinaire's art. In, for example, *Le Bestiaire ou Cortège d'Orphée*, 1911, in which Orpheus is treated four times. Both Dufy, for the illustrations, and Apollinaire, returned to 16th century sources, because for Apollinaire, this equals a renewal of tradition as a modernist riposte to historicist preciousness.

And so on.

In *Andre Salmon on French Modern Art*, Beth S Gersh-Nešić⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ defines Nominalism as " the belief that words, ideas and things are separate entities, and that universals exist only in the mind or in language, but not on their own, outside the imagination."

Following Jacqueline Gopard's thesis, apropos Salomon's *Peindre*, of (1919)1999, that Salmon's expository writing displays no poetics, Gersh-Nešić then proposes that at the heart of Salmon's project to privilege artistic personality over group identity lay a non-poetic nominalism, neither philosophy nor theory, but an aesthetic, because it calls attention to individual elements (material, verbal, mental and so on) on their own terms, and in so doing, invites a meditation on random elements collected into various contexts of modern life (such as the newspaper, the department store, the café). This meditation provokes a self-awareness of perceiving, simultaneously, multiple realities (whilst simultaneously) perceiving the subjective experience of reality. " Conception supersedes vision/*La conception l'emporte sur la vision*", Salmon wrote regarding Cubism. Salmon's nominalist aesthetic promotes conceptual thinking.

Gersh-Nešić proposes that this emphasis of Salmon's project, to establish each artistic personality amongst the kindred spirits straining to establish signature styles whilst looking over their shoulders for the newest of new creations, within the context of well-known art movements, stemmed from the fact that his view of art and life was nominalist. That is, the fact that words, images, and their associative meanings existed separately in Salmon's mind is evidence that he focussed not on the general, but the particular.

Salmon's Nominalism as described by Gersh-Nešić might then serve as a model for an understanding of Duchamp's, in which, critically, a linguistically transfigured spiritual Hyper-Reality replaces Salmon's represented Reality.

For example, as " the reader/viewer can try to understand [Salmon's poem] within his or her own limited purview" which does not fix the meaning of the work for all time, just for the individual experience of the work, so the decoder of Duchamp's evaluation-free encryptions accesses the eternal truth of the tenets of their shared esoteric beliefs, by the same method. Thus, unlike Salmon's next reader/viewer who will bring something else to the work, and that is what perpetuates the life of the poem/piece as it continues on its path to the future, the individual, private, devotional consumer of Duchamp's bespoke talismans confirmed meanings

already inscribed in an agreed discourse subsequently articulated by the readymade or constructed object. So, whereas for a Salmon, who believed that art belongs to the audience (life), and (whose) meaning cannot be fixed by one person for all time, since art lives through the people who encounter it every day and who multiply its meaning ad infinitum, Duchamp, who had given up art, practiced precisely the opposite; what derived from Salmon's nominalism was precisely that which derived from Duchamp's, a focus on the individuality of the producer and his/her product, avoiding any interpretation of art.

In *Le manuscrit trouvé dans un chapeau*, Salmon's (figurative) compositional elements are described as encoded and open to interpretation as a sign and/or signifier, (since the aesthetic devices of the work are completely transparent,) the writer constantly playing with our awareness of his ruses that he has disguised as fact, since this is a game, and the reader must assume the role as player who actively deciphers, decodes and analyses the literary devices, and then just lets go, immersing him/herself in the pleasures of a good story.

So whilst acknowledging some 'merit' in Blois semiotic analysis of Picasso's *papiers collés*, Gersh-Nešić ultimately rejects it on the grounds that it ignores the more compelling consideration of the direct influence of an immediate source on the artist, Salmon's Nominalism, citing Jacqueline Gojard's essay *Au rendez-vous des poètes*. This nominalist spirit is thus manifest in Picasso's *Guitar, Sheet Music and Glass*, of late 1912, in which each item exists as an entity unto itself, and each exists as part of a whole. The nominalist would view each visual element as one reality, the interaction of the elements on the surface as another reality, the verbal content as a third reality, and the perception of the viewer as a fourth reality. The deployment of each element in a poem promotes what Salmon called an art still striving to create something in terms of its verbal description, a condition Duchamp's new practice clearly leap-frogged. In a Picasso *papier collé*, the same motivation takes place – the deployment of physical elements to create each thing in terms of its verbal description. All modes of reality are equally real, and the game is to perceive all the constructed levels of reality simultaneously.

To Salmon's mind, the ability to grasp the meaning through identifying the puns and contexts may bring about one interpretation, but it is not necessarily the only interpretation for this piece, because fixating on one reading of the work does not

contribute to its infinitude, but in a nominalist vein, they are still open to interpretation by future generations. Thus the intentionality of the artist is deferred.

In Salmon's writing, names become signs that infer narratives. Then the narratives become signifiers, which in turn produce their own signification –encoded by the cultural context of the moment. Retrospective reading can bring along different or additional signification, much like the diverse elements in Picasso's collages and *papiers collés*. That each reader/spectator enriches poetry/prose/visual art through his or her perceptual set demonstrates nominalist aesthetics in action: conception supercedes vision.

If, however, such a nominalist aesthetic of production and consumption is set within a closed frame of semantic reference deriving from already fixed meanings, such as Hermetic Wisdom, no endless hermeneutic deferment of meaning is possible.

Duchamp's attitude to words is examined by Siegel, ⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ following Setz, and identifying Duchamp as more metaphysician than philosopher, since his (publicly expressed) point of view was to doubt everything, especially truth and being, on the grounds that language deceives people into believing in universal things, claiming that words, like truth, etc, are 'stupid'; his phrase "The words I use are stupid" was thus predicated on the view that language falsifies by imposing the predetermined that it carries within it. But Siegel also reports that speaking about language was one of the rare events which ruffled Duchamp's usually calm demeanour, which, if so, implies an unease which casts some doubt on the sincerity of his expressed opinions.

Siegel cites Setz's interpretation of Duchamp's note in the *Green Box* concerning 'prime words' as evidence of his imputation that language does not refer to concrete things in the world but, since the prime words are abstract, the relationships to which they refer can only be defined as conceptual, meaning that they could then refer to other, more abstract relationships, such as virginity, or delay, or some such, thus equating Duchamp's universals with those of a nominalist such as Boëthius. The section of Duchamp's note selected is translated as follows.

.. a language in which each individual word would be translated into French...by several words, where necessary by a whole sentence which one could translate in its elements into known languages but which would not reciprocally express the translation of French words ...(this) alphabet would be a few elementary signs, like dots, a line, a circle and so on.

Siegel's interpretation of this note is that the basic elements are chosen here in the same way the artist chooses signs – dots, etc – to stand for what he wants, since

these correspond to letters or ideographs of other languages, but now as words or sentences which would have no equivalents in another tongue, thereby creating a language functioning in sphere of experience to which it alone gives access, a hermetic world, sealed off from experience. But in fact, all Duchamp is doing is describing his own materialistic *traduction juxtalinéaire*, by which he inscribed meaning in objects. Thus, Siegel's hierarchical scheme of three languages - the first of which comprises elements which refer to (1) concrete objects in the world, as a result of which, expression (2) is given only to its own universe, inaccessible to other tongues, which is then composed of (3) symbols, whose meaning only Duchamp understands - merely stands for the stages in Roussel's pragmatic method for constructing stage props, in which the 'givens', the content, are subjects translated into the lexical material of another language, which are then progressively retranslated in a procedure pursued until an inventory of materials and processes emerges to provide the *matière* and *facture* of a physical object, whose non-pictorial form is initially wholly unpredictable.

Foucault ⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ would appear to confirm the thesis advanced above. Addressing the question of Breton's characterisation of Roussel's work as occultist, he is considering the method of composition that Roussel explained in his posthumously published confession; Foucault is prepared to allow that at the absolute limit it could be that the chain of events in *La Poussière des Soleils* has something in common – in its form - with the progression in the practice of alchemy, even if there is little chance that the twenty-two changes of scenes dictated by the staging of the play correspond to the twenty two cards of the Major Arcana in a tarot deck. In the process of his analysis, Foucault, of necessity, characterises Roussel's method, as follows;

If Roussel did use such material, it would have been not to convey content through an external and symbolic language in order to disguise it, but to set up an additional barrier within the language, part of a whole system of invisible paths, evasions and subtle defences.

In rejecting Roussel's occult credentials with an uneasy reluctance, Foucault identifies the source of that method which Duchamp acknowledged he purloined from Roussel;

It is possible that certain outward signs of the esoteric process might have been used as models for the double play on words, coincidence and encounters at the opportune moment, the linking of the twists and turns of the plot, and the didactic voyages through banal objects having marvellous stories which define their true value by describing their origins, revealing in each of them mythical avatars which lead them to the promise of actual freedom.

And again, in *The Cushions of the Billiard Table* ⁽¹⁷¹⁾;

A whole network of words, secrets and signs issues marvellously from a single facet of language, a series of identical words with two different meanings. . . . It reveals words as the unexpected meeting place of the most distant figures of reality.

According to Foucault, this was well understood by eighteenth century grammarians, hovering subliminally behind the quadrivium of the Lycée Corneille, who, in their purely empirical concept of signs, admired the way a word was capable of separating itself from the visible form to which it was tied, by its signification, in order to settle on another form, designating it with an ambiguity which is both its resource and its limitation, as a result of which, language's ties to its meaning can undergo a metamorphosis without its having to change its form. Developing this topic, Foucault cites Dumarsais, one of the subtlest grammarians of the period, thus;

The same words obviously had to be used in different ways. It's been found that this admirable expedient could make discourse more energetic and more pleasant. Thus by necessity and by choice, words are often turned away from their original meaning to take on a new one which is more or less removed but that still maintains a connection. This new meaning is called 'tropological', and this conversion, this turning away which produces it, is called a 'trope'. In this displacement, all forms of rhetoric come to life, catachresis, metonymy, synechdoche, antonomasia, litotes, metaphors, hypallage, and many other hieroglyphs drawn by the rotation of words into the voluminous mass of language.

So Roussel's experiment is located in what could be called the tropological space vocabulary, in which the tropological space where his process is situated would then show that a word hides what it duplicates, and is separated from it only by the slightest layer of darkness. This analysis is pursued in the chapter entitled Rhyme and Reason, ⁽¹⁷²⁾ in a discussion of Roussel's *Impressions d'Afrique*;

The eponymous sentence displays, in its two versions, a play of metagrams: billard/pillard. The first word is dropped and the second used, but not directly as itself. (I don't think that the word pillard [plunderer] is used once in the 455 pages of the text to designate Talou, a good man, after all, though jealous, ill-tempered, and given to disguises). It will only be used through a haze of associations: cut off heads, tawdry fineries, spoils, the old hereditary conflicts of former cannibal dynasties, punitive expeditions, hoarded treasure, sacked cities. From this fact can be derived a first principle: whereas the two homonymic sentences are what is most evident in the early works, the anti-word (pillard, plunderer) is visibly indicated even if it does not appear. It appears as a watermark beneath all the real words, readily visible against the light.

And in *The Surface of Things*, ⁽¹⁷³⁾ Roussel's view, that he was led to take a random phrase, from which he drew images, by distorting it a little, as though it were a case of deriving them as from the drawing of a rebus, demonstrates language is already fragmented, so that its separate units are used to create image-words, images

that are carriers of a language which they speak and hide at the same time, in such a way that a second discourse is created. This discourse forms a fabric where the verbal thread is already crossed with the chain of the visible. Thus ⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ Roussel's whole work up to *Nouvelles Impressions* revolves around a singular experience, the link between language and this nonexistent space which, beneath the surface of things, separates the internal from the visible face, and the external from the invisible core. There, between what is hidden in the evident and what is luminous in the inaccessible, the task of language is found.

That Foucault's analysis would appear to be confirmed by Michel Leiris, whose comments on Duchamp's *The Bride Stripped Bare* are examined by Richard Sieburth, ⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ is significant, since Leiris had known Roussel as a child. They read;

A code of signs that would be to the things signified what the diagrams of statisticians are to the human realities they express, for example, the so-called 'age pyramid' figure, in which the generational population decreases due to war casualties are translated by a slight indentation.

Whereas one always behaves as if things were available to cabalistic interpretation, what matters here is to take everything "at the letter", as the geometrical expression of "projection" is taken in the procedures of the shots.

The role of inscriptions, or captions, in Duchamp's works, already noted by Apollinaire; it would seem that he wants to oppose two kinds of writing, both sharing a common origin, but divergent: written language, in the strict sense, and plastic writing (if need be, in the extreme form of the readymade).

A series of images indefinitely deducible from each other, like the box of Bendsorp cocoa (a young Dutch girl holding a box of Bendsorp cocoa, decorated with the image of a young Dutch girl, holding a box of Bendsorp cocoa,.....)

The work of art considered in its totality, that is, taking into account all its attendant social circumstances; i.e. the lyrical notion of aesthetic values and - more practically - of the economic value that the art object represents for its owner. The work of art is thus no longer regarded as an aerolith fallen from who knows what supernatural sky, but envisaged within its real framework and content.

The drawing entitled *La Mariée mise à nu par ces Célibataires, même*, of 1913, unequivocally marks Duchamp's switch from avant-garde pictorial conventions to an emblematic form still used in occult representation, and the advertising industry. Since Duchamp didn't seek employment in the latter, we must assume his attention was directed towards the former. This coincided with his employment at the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, whose collection included a large number of incunabula, implying that his assumed audience was that of interpretive communities au fait with the subjects articulated by such conventions.

Duchamp's use of emblematic pictorial conventions ends with the termination of the production of *Large Glass*, made specifically for the exclusive consumption of a Rosicrucian enthusiast, and whose second, private, owner, was an active Theosophist. At the same time, from 1913 Duchamp had been producing individual, non-pictorial works also constructed by encryption, such as the *Three Standard Stoppages*. And once in New York, he produced, by the same linguistic method, now by selection rather than construction, a set of readymades, again exclusively for the cryptographer Arensberg, an activity which also terminated with the demise of Duchamp's pictorial emblematics; like the everyday working tools decorating Masonic tracing boards, which they emulate in form and function, the readymades only existed, *en ensemble*, within an emblematic space, that of the 33 West 67th Street studio, physically integrated with constructed works, such as *A Bruit Secret*, and the *Roue de Bicyclette*.

After Duchamp's abdication of the Arensberg salon, he largely produced only single items, of the constructed type identified above, for various individuals.

By the time Duchamp had arrived in New York in 1915, the *Large Glass*, the rent paying for his accommodation in the 33 West 67th Avenue apartment, was handily on the stocks, since the notes articulating its content had already been written; Duchamp wrote to Arensberg from the steamer taking him to Buenos Aires that he was putting his notes in order, not that he was composing them.

Duchamp's post-1912 adoption of an emblematic pictorial form, which coincides with a sharpening of the focus of his religious, philosophical, metaphysical and literary subject matter, can be considered as extremely appropriate. The emblem, characteristic of a way of thinking and seeing in Renaissance culture, with its philosophical roots, just like the esoteric wisdom it articulated, in late antique gnosticism, was an ideal form for the satisfaction of the interpretive community the provenance of his works produced between 1912 and 1915 confirms, as György Szőnyi, ⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ demonstrates.

The emblem was a form which engaged all the senses, (and thus was ideal for the exercise of catechesis) a character noted in the quotation from Diderot which Szőnyi cites on page 2, that things become told and represented at the same time due to the fact that at the same moment that the eyes and the imagination see and the ears hear, the soul is exalted and reason comprehends. [*Lettres sur les sourds et les muets*, quoted in Praz. (*Studies in Seventeenth Century Imagery* (1964), 14.)]

Szőnyi then cites Schopenhauer's more sober definition of the process in which a poetical allegory, as a datum, results in a concept apprehensible by intuition through an image which, if a painted figure, is not a representation, but a hieroglyphical sign. [*Die Welt...*, 1:3, 50]

The original, Greek, meaning of emblem incorporated both an embellishment and a symbolic expression, the *emblème* or *devise* in which the picture is the body, and the text, the soul; it is a visual image accompanied by words, revealing some secret meaning, leading the reader to further reflection, the standard form we see in Duchamp's oeuvre, a motto/*inscriptio*, a *pictura*/ *impresa* and a *subscriptio*/glossing text (its *inscriptio* and *subscriptio* anticipating hypertext.)

These definitions concur with the synoptic definition of the emblem Szőnyi gives on page 8, as a " tripartite genre organically synthesising picture and words with the purpose of mixing naturalistic pictorial representation, conventional symbols, topoi, rhetorical models and other invented or traditional elements shared by an interpretive community", whose purpose is " to artistically please as well as instruct, bringing a moral, religious, cosmic or philosophical truth to light, sometimes by means of developing a riddle or enigma", unlike scientific data, since these ineffable truths cannot by definition be depicted or illustrated, so they must, perforce, be enigmatically allegorised.

A consideration of emblematic pragmatics highlights the problems Duchamp dispensed with in his abdication of this specific pictorial form, since pragmatics deals with the way an object would be used by a community; Szőnyi reminds us that Gombrich stresses this in *Icones symbolicae*, of 1948.

This means, of course, that an interpreting community for whom an image was not made might have problems divining the meaning accessible to the different community for whom it was. Here, meaning is not of a psychological character, in which case its reconstruction would be impossible, but a construct based on social agreement and conventionality.

Szőnyi cites John Manning's collection of essays entitled *Aspects of Renaissance and Baroque Symbol Theory* (1999), which offers the case of Claude Mignaut who, at the end of 16th century, gave 17 different definitions of 'symbol', (claiming differences between 'perceiving' and 'seeing', and socially conditioned and constructed cognition, and of recognition of differences in the authority of signs, as crucial to its function,) in support of his view that whilst the rise of scientific

observation subverted a post- medieval concept of the 'Book of Nature', no aspect of Renaissance or Baroque life was free from an emblematic way of seeing which determined both the logic of artistic expression and the semiotics of everyday life - from domestic decoration and ornament, fashion, religious vestments, the iconography of the procession and pilgrimage, body language and gesture, the symbolism of entertainment and carnival, tournament, tilting and dance to the court festival, royal funeral, witch-burning and public execution, etc.

Duchamp's abandonment of pictorial emblematics, effectively in 1915, should not be obscured by the hangover of the pragmatic *Large Glass*, which Duchamp described as a 'delay'; this *vielle salopérie* was, after all, just a quit-rent. But his privileging of Roussel's method of encryption, represented by the *Three Standard Stoppages*, or *Erratum Musical*, meant that he could also inscribe content into things, with no more aesthetic judgment than it takes to encode, transmit, receive and decode the contents of a telegram.

This is confirmed by cryptographic work Duchamp produced, such as *Rendez-vous de Dimanches 6 Février 1916* and *The*, for Arensberg, attention to whose cryptographic interests was first drawn by Frances Naumann, in 1977.⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ This, notably dismissive, assessment by Duchamp himself, of Arensberg's method, is taken from the interviews with Cabanne already cited;

His system was to find, in the text, in every three lines, allusions to all sorts of things; it was a game for him, like chess, which he enjoyed immensely...I think it was mostly the conviction of a man at play; Arensberg twisted words to make them say what he wanted, like everyone else who does that kind of work.

Whilst dismissing his friend's obsession with a typically esoteric dissemblance, Duchamp is here, fifty years after the event, pointing to a method of text analysis in which, as Naumann informs us, Arensberg saw a close literal connection between the word and the object, affirmed, in *The Cryptography of Dante*, by the view that the form of the Italian word *omo*, 'man' (actually *uomo*) is written in the human face, the two o's represented by the eyes, and the M represented by the line of the nose and the outlines of the cheeks. Irrespective of what conclusions we might draw as to the scientific basis of Arensberg's linguistics, the fact remains that however flawed his method was deemed to be after the publication of his magnum opus, it was none-the-less predicated on the indexical status of signs standing for specific

meanings residing in established sources, as the further examples which Naumann cites make clear.

The telegram is then an apposite analogy for Duchamp's semiotics, not merely because he liked it, bemoaning its exorbitant cost to his sister Suzanne in 1916 ⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ or could play chess with it remotely, but because it rhetorically inscribed his *motif-à-clef*, the Transubstantiation of the Gnostic Involution-Evolution, the heart of the operation of the *Grande Oeuvre*, no less, since its function depends on the conversion of the phenomenal into the noumenal, and its magical transmutation back again, with nothing lost in translation, so long as subjectivity, a result of interference from medium or agency, is removed from all stages of the operation.

But Duchamp was hardly untypical in his symptomatically alchemical investment of occult significance in the mundane, since this had qualified the telegraph's popular identity since its inception, as Richard Noakes ⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ examines in the case of Cromwell Fleetwood Varley who;

in the years following the failure of the first Atlantic telegraph (in 1858), sought to build confidence in two schemes that had been greeted with skepticism or ridicule as occult; the construction of a commercially workable Atlantic cable and spiritualists' practices of communication with spirits of the dead. In the Early 1850's, the British public grappled with mysterious spirit communications at the same time as new telegraph companies told them it was possible to use electricity to contact friends on earth. Spirits of the dead 'rapped' out messages on a 'spiritual' telegraph, much as messages on the electric telegraph were exchanged by Samuel Morse's code of raps.

Noakes was addressing Varley's attempt to make credible claims about both telegraphy and spiritualism involving dissipating popular misgivings about strange new forms of communication and finding earnest and respectable participants in these 'occult' arts. In this context, William Thompson's definition of telegraphy as the art of interchanging ideas by means of dead matter occupying the space between two intelligent beings has both the ring of the spiritualist, and of Gleizes and Metzinger's definition, in *Du Cubisme*, of a work of art as a passage between two subjective states.

8. **Endgame: Terminal considerations.**

The formal diversity displayed by the different forms of my practice are not the result of an egoistic ethos requiring the continual rebaptism of instincts, but of the application of the same rule-of-thumb method which produced the formal variety of Duchamp's, at the heart of which is the semantic core of a *traduction juxtalinéaire*, the algorithmic *recette*, both a recipe and a receipt - formula, prescription, means of attaining an end and list of ingredients. The former marks a beginning, and the latter, an end.

Thus the subject of any example of Duchamp's expression is enfolded within the convolutions of its superficialities by the algorithmic structure of his method, as in *traduction juxtalinéaire*, in which any privileged, but contingent, discourse is sequestered within an exponentially greater matrix of redundancies serving as its allegorical appearance.

The form of any of Duchamp's discrete enunciations is then analogous to the relationship between the totality of the potential invested in a chess-board before the opening move and, retrospectively threaded through this, the published moves of the resulting game. Since a successful outcome required discernment rather than mere choice, we can see now why, for Duchamp, to whom, we might suppose, the eschatological imputations of Judgement and Election were evident, chess was better than art.

Perhaps Duchamp talked to Southard about this in 1916, over chess games at 33 West 67th Street, or the Marshall Club; he clearly did not articulate the meaning of '*Mlle de l'Escalier*' through a simple linear narrative, but one which concealed one. Given his occult predilections, it would seem apposite to use an electro-mechanical metaphor for Southard's conceptualising, for his describes a structure in which the nodal points of the semantic matrix are fused in a network of cross-connecting main and branch lines, junctions and switches, a metaphor surely not lost on the macro-microcosmic occultist neurologist.

In his description, meaning pulsates along pathways through the matrix, easing through delicate tributaries, coursing along broad confluences of conceptual material. Ideas spark and flare, flowing through homophonic and synonymic junctions of predicates and attributes to dissolve away, their essences finally settling out as deposits on a surface made of language. Successive waves of images crackle and arc

across the synapses of accumulators, condensers and transformers of key concepts, until form and meaning coalesce, exquisitely poised on the threshold of crystallisation.

Remove any single element and the circuit is broken; add another and the matrix shifts the core of its meaning.

In 1916 Duchamp was an enthusiast for the work of Richard Wagner, whose mature theory of operatic semiotics embodied the concept of the work permanently suspended at the point of orgasm. The technical device from music theory that Duchamp borrowed from Wagner - suspension – was itself purloined by him from Schopenhauer, for whom suspension meant suspense; in Wagnerian aesthetics it is applied to the penultimate chord occurring just after what the listener thinks is the penultimate chord, which is invariably a discord, in tonal music, an insufficient chord which requires resolution on a concord, which is what the listener is expecting. But it moves onto another discord, which only then resolves on the tonic. At the point at which discord moves to discord, the tension is prolonged and intensified, ultimately producing a heightened satisfaction. The first chord of *Tristan*, known as the Tristan Chord, exemplifies this, containing within itself not one but two dissonances, creating within the listener a double desire, agonising in its intensity, for resolution. As Schopenhauer says of the effect of suspension;

This is clearly an analogue of (the) satisfaction (of the will) which is enhanced through delay.⁽¹⁸⁰⁾

Perhaps then it is no accident that in a work Duchamp described as a 'delay in glass' we find a *suspendu*.

It would appear then that Duchamp composed works, analogous to those of Wagner, predicated on the way suspension operates. The *traduction juxtalinéaire* proceeds dialectically, from discord to discord, in such a manner that the senses are always on tenterhooks for a resolution which does not come - Southard's "no decision rendered" - since for Wagner, expression was the equivalent of the un-assuaged craving that is life, each discord resolved in such a way that another is created, the aesthetic sensibility simultaneously satisfied and frustrated.

Southard's construction was elaborated in his description of Duchamp's exegesis of a work which he admitted took as its model a poem whose subject was a failed alchemical Operation. According to Southard, the form never sets but, constantly dissolving and reforming, assumes the appearance of a Symbolist field of

relationships slithering in and out of focus according to the analyst's progress, the consumer's shifting perspective.

This would seem to advance the concept of a work as a magnification of material reality, and so serve as a metaphor for the refractive and recalcitrant Philosopher's Stone; as Duchamp later said to Cabanne, the work is a "sort of constant euphoria."

A conversation between Ralph Rumney and Francois Le Lionnais ⁽¹⁸¹⁾ throws interesting light on this, apropos Duchamp's chess compositions of 1911, in which two minds form the core of a four-dimensional matrix. Le Lionnais, who had both seen Duchamp play and played against him, was asked by Rumney to describe Duchamp's qualities as a chess player; Le Lionnais was, variously, a construction engineer working on telephone cables, chief engineer at the French Ministry of Works, scientific adviser to the new Larousse dictionary, a member of committees for the restoration of works of art in French national museums and Radiodiffusion Television Francais, and author of numerous books on science and chess. The following synopsis gives the sense of his response;

In his style of play I saw no trace of a dada anarchist. To bring Dada ideas to chess one would have to be a chess genius, not a Dada genius. In my opinion, Nimzovitch was a dadaist before Dada. He introduced an anti-conformism of apparently stupid ideas which won. For me that's real Dada. I don't see this in Duchamp's style. What I did find was considerable honesty; he was very serious and applied. This may have been a fundamental trait in his character.

When he represented France in the Chess Olympiads, he was always up against stronger players than himself, international players, and this prevented him from playing brilliant games; it's easier to play brilliantly against weaker players.

He was not an innovator. He applied absolutely classical principles. He was very conformist, which is an excellent way of playing, if you're not a genius; it's safer to be a conformist.

He liked talking to people with a scientific background, but until the end of his life he was stuck at Henri Poincaré. He'd read a lot of books, not mathematical texts, which he wouldn't have been able to understand, but popular science, philosophical musings of great mathematicians. This influenced him a lot. In his work there is a quasi or pseudo scientific approach; there is always the margin of error which an artist can't avoid because his culture is inadequate.

The serious *appliqué* side of Duchamp shows up everywhere. I regard it as a characteristic of Duchamp and I liked it better than Picabia and Tzara, though I admire them both much more than Breton, who seems to be lost in the mists of the bourgeoisie. Duchamp seems to me to represent a tendency to combine a simulation made with scientific methods but applied to an area which is not science.

The same thing might be said of Raymond Roussel.

List of illustrations.

Preamble.

The text is not illustrated, in the conventional manner, for the following reasons.

A vast literature on Duchamp, including dozens of exhibition catalogues, and the internet, provides ample multiple access to high quality reproductions of the works cited in this text. Thus, the following list acts as a synopsis of the complete corpus.

Comprehensive catalogues raisonné of Duchamp's total corpus, 'complete' for the time, particularly by Arturo Schwartz, (see Bibliographic entry No. 134.) are readily available; examples of different editions are held on reservation at four locations within twenty minutes walking distance of The Old Mining Building School Office, the School Study Centre, the Boddington library, The City Art Library and the Henry Moore Study Centre.

The *Text*, and the accompanying *Pinacotheca*, express, in different forms, analyses of the semantic structure of key works, which serve to elucidate, exemplify and make illustrious, i.e., to illustrate.

Works by Duchamp cited in the text, in order of appearance, with initial location and ownership.

This information, and the itemised numbering, is taken from References and Sources, entry No. 69.

Tu m' 1918 (New York). Katherine S Dreier, West Redding, Connecticut. 1918. (114)

Fania (Profil) 1916 (New York). Coll. Louise and Walter Arensberg, New York (probably acquired around 1915.) (104)

Absent. *Vous pour Moi ? 1922*. (New Haven (CT), Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library.

Broyeuse de Chocolat No. 2. 1914 (Paris). Frank Stella between 1915 and 1918. (93)

La Marie mise à nu par ces Célibataires, même (The Large Glass.) 1915-23. New York. Coll. Louise and Walter Arensberg, New York, 1918. (133)

Trois Stoppages-Étalon 1913-14 (Paris). Katherine S Dreier, West Redding, Connecticut. (94)

La Boîte de 1914 1913-14 (Paris.) M Duchamp. Paris. (90)

La Marie mise à nu par ces Célibataires, même (The Green Box). September 1934. (Paris). Edition of 300. (142)

A L'Infinitif (The White Box) 1967 (New York) Edition of 150. (170)

Absent. *Posthumously Published Notes*. 1983. (Boston)

Le Printemps ou Jeune Homme et Jeune Fille dans le Printemps 1911 (Neuilly). Mme Suzanne Desmares. (Rouen) (47)

- Moulin à Café 1911* (Neuilly). Raymond Duchamp-Villon, Paris. (61)
- Portrait du Docteur Dumouchel 1911* (Neuilly). Dr R Dumouchel, Rouen. (38)
- Nu Debout 1910* (Neuilly). Mme Ferdiand Tribout. Rouen. (36)
- Apropos de Jeune Soeur 1911* (Rouen). M Duchamp. (43)
- Le Buisson 1910-1911* (Neuilly). Dr. R Dumouchel, Neuilly.(42)
- Paradis 1910-1911* (Neuilly) M Duchamp. (40)
- Erratum Musical 1913* (Rouen) M Duchamp.(77)
- La Marie mise à nu par ces Célibataires même Erratum Musical 1913.* (Rouen)
M Duchamp. (78)
- In Advance of the Broken Arm 1915* (New York). Original lost.(102)
- La Bagarre d'Austerlitz 1921* (Paris).Mme Marie Sarlat, Brussels.(132)
- Pistons de Courant d'air 1914* (Paris) M Duchamp. (98)
- Flirt 1907 (Paris)* Private Collection, Paris. (20)
- Absent "*La critique est aisé, mais la raie difficile.*"
- La Mariée mise à nu par ces Célibataires 1912* (Munich) M Gustave Candel,
Paris.(72)
- La Marie mise à nu par ces Célibataires, même. 1913 (Neuilly)* M Duchamp. (82)
- Recette 1918* (New York) Coll. Louise and Walter Arensberg, New York. (113)
- Machine célibataire (Élévation) 1913* (Neuilly) M Duchamp. (80)
- Machine célibataire 1° en plan et 2° en élévation 1913* (Neuilly) M Duchamp.(81)
- Encore à Cette Astre 1911* (Neuilly). M Duchamp.(F C Torrey 1913) (60)
- Nude Descendant un Escalier No. 2 1912* (Neuilly) M Duchamp. (F C Torrey 1913)
(64)
- Nude Descendant un Escalier No 1 1912* (Neuilly) M Duchamp. (61)
- Jeune Homme triste au Train. 1911* (Neuilly) M Duhamp. (62)
- Pour une Partie d'Echecs 1911* (Neuilly) S Duchamp.(55)
- Etude pour les Joueuers d'Echecs 1911* (Neuilly) M Duchamp.(53)
- Le Passage de la Vierge à la Mariée 1912* (Munich) M Duchamp. (71)
- With my Tongue in my Cheek 1959* (Cadaquès) R Lebel, Paris.(162)

Neuf Moules Malic 1914-15 (Paris) M Duchamp. (98)

Cimetière des Uniforms et Livrées N° 1 1913 (Neuilly) M Duchamp.(86)

La Mariée 1912 (Munich) F Picabia. (75)

Vierge N° 1 1912 (Munich). J Villon, Puteaux. (72)

Vierge N° 2 1912 (Munich). B Poissonnier, Paris. (73)

Absent Jura-Paris Road text.

Feuille de Vigne Femelle 1950 (New York) Man Ray. (154)

A Bruit Secret 1918 (New York) Coll. Louise and Walter Arensberg, New York. (107)

Roue de Bicyclette 1913 (Paris) Destroyed. (86)

Rendez-vous de Dimanches 6 Février 1916 (New York). Coll. Louise and Walter Arensberg, New York. (105)

<<*The*>> 1915 (New York). Coll. Louise and Walter Arensberg, New York.(102)

This group of works forms a hypertextual algorithm at the core of Duchamp's total corpus, a Rousellian parenthesis serving as the foundations of the history, historiography and hagiography of Duchamp's ultimate oeuvre. Their subjects, genres, provenance and locations in turn function as the '*mots*' and '*paroles*' of '*touts les étages*' of the text to which they are annexed.

References and Sources.

(1) Thierry de Duve cites Duchamp's use of the term " *ironisme*", which has no direct equivalent in English, and for which 'irony' has to serve, on page 132 of *Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade*. Minneapolis. Univ. of Minnesota Press. 1991
 " His " *conditions for a language*" rely on an " *ironism*" and a " *talonism*", and give pictorial nominalism a sarcastic and vengeful air."

(2) Kuenzli, R and Naumann, F. eds. *Marcel Duchamp: Artist of this Century*, MIT Press. 1989.

(3) Henderson, L Dalrymple. *Duchamp in Context: Science and Technology in the " Large Glass" and Related Works*. Princeton Univ. Press. 1996.

(4) Hicken, A. *Apollinaire, Orphism, Cubism*. Ashgate. 2002

(5) This view of the aesthetic autonomy of the avant-garde artist was well established in the milieu Duchamp was to pass through in New York between 1915 and 1918. For example, it was expressed in print by Marius de Zayas and Paul B Haviland, in *The Study of the Modern Evolution of Plastic Expression*, published by '291' on March the 1st, 1913. Quoting John Marin, " It is this 'moving of me' that I try to express, so that I may recall the spell I have been under and behold the expression of the different emotions which have been called into being." the authors continue:

The true artist works first of all to satisfy a natural need of expressing himself for his own satisfaction and he has created a work of art when he has expressed himself in such a way that his conception is clearly represented for himself. If the public wishes to share the pleasure of the artist they should take the pains of trying to understand what the artist has tried to express, and they are arguing beside the point when they blame him for not having taken them into consideration in a purely personal question. That is why our personal likes and dislikes have nothing whatever to do with the achievement of the artist which should be measured solely by his success in expressing what he attempted to express. The work of art exists then irrespective of the effect it may produce on the public, as the mind of the public exists irrespective of the work of art. It is when the work of art corresponds in meaning to the feelings and emotions that the public is conscious of that it finds a response in the public. When the work of art is the product of the beliefs, feelings and emotions of a kind not known to the public, the public must first know those beliefs, feelings and emotions, be conscious of them and look for them in the work of art before it can understand the expression of the artist.

Many other things exist without being known to man. It is only when the laws of the existence of these things have been revealed to us, when experimental science has proven the fact of their existence and made us understand it that we adopt them as a matter of course. The radium, the X-rays, wireless telegraphy, are good examples of our point.

(6) Apollinaire, G. *The Cubist Painters*. Trans. Peter Read. Artists. Bookwork. 2002. First published as *Les Peintres Cubistes*. Figuière. Paris MCMXII.

(7) in *Apollinaire on Art: Essays and Reviews 1902-1918*, by Guillaume Apollinaire, Thames and Hudson, page 388. Under the heading *The Engraving that will become a Collectors Item*, Apollinaire notes that no paintings have been exhibited

by Duchamp for the two years since he began cataloguing books at the Bibliothèque Ste-Geneviève.

(8) See Foucault, M. *The Order of Things*. Tavistock Publications. London. 1970. Chapter 2: *The Prose of the World*, and Tillyard, E. M. W. *The Elizabethan World Picture*. Chatto and Windus. 1943. (passim.)

(9) Douglas A, Skopa K and Gray C, *Research through Practice; positioning the practitioner as researcher*, in *Working Progress in Art and Design 1*. University of Dundee. 2000. [http://www.herts.ac.uk/art des/ research / papers/wpades/ vol 1/ douglas.html](http://www.herts.ac.uk/art%20des/research/papers/wpades/vol1/douglas.html). ISSU 1466-4917

(10) I have been obliged to resort to the only German typeface contained in the fonts of my software, **Haettenschweiler**, to effect my rhetorical point here.

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"Viewing relics from the perspective of rhetoric and art", Patricia Cox Miller, in *The Little Blue Flower is Red: Relics and the Poetising of the Body*. (Journal of Early Christian Studies 8:2, 213-236. 2000 The John Hopkins University) examines the "essentially aesthetic transformative process whereby body parts became relics"

in the "Early Christian religio-aesthetic environment in which the remains of special human beings could be regarded as spiritual objects worthy of ritual devotion", through the particular use of the rhetorical form of ekphrasis, which she highlights as a major component of the "aesthetic style which vested bones with a signifying capacity, as relics, within in the sensuously intense atmosphere within which the cult of relics achieved expression."

A work of art about a work of art, the literary form of Ekphrasis – described in antiquity as “a descriptive speech bringing the thing shown vividly before the eyes” - was the rhetorical device used to construct what Thomas Matthews describes, in *The Clash of the Gods: A Reinterpretation of early Christian Art* as the “wrap-around environment”, paralleling art in its role as a "visual stimulant for engaging the active interpretive imagination of participants in the cult" in which "bones became relics." Its subject matter, in most cases, was art, and what it presented was not a technical art-historical description, of a painting, mosaic or building, but rather, according to James and Webb, in *To Understand Ultimate Things and Enter Secret Places: Ekphrasis and Art in Byzantium*, *Art History* 14 (1991): 4., it represents “a living response to works of art, conveying emotional response, not objective observation, and rivalling art in its ability to bring its subject alive.” The purpose of ekphrasis is then to induce the "reader who has become viewer" to be “taken into a visionary world beyond objects” in order to experience that “uncanny moment of intensity in which”, as Elsner puts it, “the ontological difference between the artist’s imitations and their objects” is erased.

It was according to such a process that Duchamp’s own corpus would assume an equivalent status far removed from the identity his original intentions bestowed upon it since, as Miller continues, as a consequence, it is at "this moment of effacement of the boundary between an opaque object and a living body", that "the artistry which produces the poetics of the body in the Early Christian cult of relics" can be situated.

Miller illustrates this by citing Bryson (p. 222, n 41) on an example of an ekphrasis from Prudentius’ *Peristephanon*, on the underground shrine of the martyr Hippolytus, after whom the street into which Duchamp moved in the autumn of 1913 was named, in which words both in and as pictures collaborate “to produce a hyper-real, sensuously intense experience that goes beyond the limits of both”. For Miller, this ekphrasis typically interrupts a narrative in order to present a work of art. This is not, "as Martha Malamud has explained, a digression", since it “dissolves its own frame, erasing the distinction between the painting being described and the poem describing it”, a view confirmed by Gabriel Bertonière who remarks that “it is...curious that the description of the painting is not only mentioned in the context of the narration, but serves as a part of the narration itself..... (so that).....one is not sure where the description of the painting ends and the thread of the story is taken up again.” (Miller 223 n 46.) This erasing of the distinction between exegesis and hermeneutics, inscribing the practise of scholarship within Fine Art practice, thus establishes the fundamentally rhetorical character of this text.

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Key to Pronunciation.

The use of italics signifies the following.

- (1) Titles of works.
- (2) Words in French.
- (3) Words in languages other than French subject to French pronunciation.