Speaking with Forked Tongues: “Male” Discourse in “Female” Surrealism?

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Surrealism is popularly understood as an unreflective indulgence in subconscious material, and to some extent it was. However, the corollary of this notion—that the content thus unearthed was in some way a psychic constant, unchanging in time or place—is entirely untrue. Surrealism, like any other cultural phenomenon, was the product of an enormously complicated network of sources and influences. Some of these were expressly social and political, and only secondarily were they “aesthetic.”

Much has recently been made of the contributions of women artists to Surrealism, but little or no attention has been paid to a fundamental question: given that (male) surrealist art presented a biased image of Woman, is it not possible that the works of female Surrealists are similarly compromised, especially if one can determine that the Surrealists’ “interpretive webs”—that is, networks of allusions which made the content of surrealist art intelligible to other members—undermine descriptions of Surrealism as proto- or proto-feminist? A further question then arises: to what extent does “objective” cultural and contextual description—especially in cases where a patriarchal order is so obviously manifest—actually prohibit the generation of new readings in a contemporary feminist mode? In other words, where do our priorities lie: in reconstructing and attributing historically “true” intentions to female artists or in deconstructing the very hypothesis that such a thing can be done? This paper wrestles with these issues and others chiefly to examine the ways in which “unilingual” patriarchy construes itself as the norm. The conclusion is that there can be no conclusion and that we must simply learn what it is to “speak with forked tongues.”

In her inventorial survey Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement, Whitney Chadwick notes time and again that “almost without exception, women artists viewed themselves as having functioned independently of surrealism. “ Despite a rapidly growing body of research on these women artists, however, a number of fundamental questions must be asked. For example, the commentaries of several writers have made the endeavors of these women seem wholly proto- or at least proto-feminist. The situation is a good deal more involved than this, since it is clear that surrealist doctrine was ideologically patriarchal, and I submit that the work of female artists requires a double interpretation—what my title designates as a forked tongue. This tongue is both that of the artists involved and that of the interpretive community. But as we shall see, this complicates rather than clarifies the issues.

To establish the maleness of the surrealist rhetoric with simple sweeps of the brush is, of course, extremely difficult. Interested parties could refer to my article in Woman’s Art Journal and to Xavière Gauthier’s Surrealisme et sexualité. For the moment, let it suffice to acknowledge that the image “Woman” was the most frequently used tactic in the Surrealists’ revolutionary strategy of articulating desire in order to reshape the world. Of course, the image of “Woman” underwent various treatments which made it clear that it (she?) was more a metaphor of language than a flesh-and-blood entity. As such, she could be more easily manipulated with devices like surrealist juxtaposition—the most basic form of which is the collage which every undergraduate should now recognize as absolutely central the surrealist project. What is not so clear is that the principle of juxtaposition, exemplified most tellingly by the proto-surrealist Isidore Ducasse, his oft-quoted phrase “as beautiful as the chance encounter of an umbrella and a sewing machine on a dissection table,” was interpreted by the surrealist mentality in directly Freudian terms. The coincidence of a phallic accessory and an unhinging domestic instrument on a “bed” designed for bloodletting was simply too potently, aggressively, and violently sexual to be avoided. Since we cannot afford the space to explore this further, let us note in passing that Ducasse’s simile, as the archetypal act of collage, virtually ensured that other juxtapositions would connote sexual violence for the male Surrealist. If there were not such a buried deep structure in this means of defamiliarizing the world in order to reconstruct it in the image of desire, then collage would not have had its compelling power for male Surrealists.

Surrealism, having not long ago been dismissed as a decadent, seductive art, has recently been undergoing a reevaluation. The deification of which I speak is now considered by some to be a forerunner of the postmodernist mentality, particularly as it addresses questions of linguistic shifts, figurative language, and the like. However, to lionize Surrealism only in this regard would be to do a grave disservice to ourselves for Surrealism’s iconography and historical mentality are often not worthy of our admiration, even while some of its methods might be. This is not to say that there is something inherently wrong with the expression of desire in and of itself. (That would be prudish, as well as morally, ethically ar theoretically naïve.) But in the surrealist lexicon—which was the result of an admittedly elastic, but still limited, repertory of interpretive webs—
practice of tearing something from its original context in order to associate it with some other, similarly decontextualized image was metaphorically realized as brutally sexual defloration, plain and simple. 3

I have explained elsewhere how André Masson's famous images of earth goddesses are cultural "fib's" made up of meanings and implications torn from their original literary, mythological and psychological contexts. 4 Not the least of these meanings is hidden in the fact that they are usually headless, which Masson explicitly linked to the loss of virginity in brutal drawings like Naissance de la femme (1943). 5 The further association of violent sexual initiation with maternity was very powerful in the patriarchal French mentality between the world wars. In 1939, for example, new legislation made it illegal for women to use contraceptives or to obtain an abortion, because women's role was to repopulate a decimated country. Of course, headlessness also connotes the loss of intelligence, which is particularly interesting in this context since French pro-natalist policy was one of the principal reasons that women did not get the right to vote for another half-decade. It was "natural," then, for women to lose their heads: their biological creativity would not be hindered, and their powers of reason were of no use since women had no political position. Far from being a vindication of matriarchal rights and principles, Masson's reclining, maternal terramorphs were icons of a historically specific antifeminism.

In point of fact, the male Surrealists were almost totally indifferent to the work of women artists as art, even though they exhibited alongside them from time to time. Their writings on art typically ignored the contribution of female artists, and individual women were mentioned chiefly as the wife or companion of a respected male. One looks in vain through their prolific writings for the same intensive level of discussion that is revealed in dozens of pages on Max Ernst or Giorgio de Chirico. Paul Eluard was a bit of an exception because he was a regular collaborator with Valentine Hugo, at least insofar as he had her illustrate his works—usually previously published ones, at that. But setting Breton a little to one side because of the notes on female artists in his Le Surréalisme et la peinture would be a profound error. What he wrote there is of extraordinarily little value as an appraisal of their production. Instead, we find poetically efficacious meditations: the virtually unknown Mimi Parent, for instance, is commemorated only with "In Mimi's thistled eyes shine the gardens of Armide [a celebrated enchantress] at midnight." When a woman's paintings are mentioned, they are never treated with the same perspicuity as those of a man. For example, the art of Frida Kahlo, whose likeness to a sort of seductive butterfly was Breton's primary concern, is summarized quickly as "a ribbon around a bomb." 6 It is a sad fact that a great many of the women who participated in surrealist exhibitions seem to have been allowed to do so precisely because they too were nicely packaged explosives. Of course, this meant that women's works were included to exploit some residual shock, outside of the artists' intentions, like embodiments of Breton's famous conception of the marvelous as convulsive beauty.

This is what brings us to our first female illustration of the male discourse of which I speak: Meret Oppenheim's famous fur-covered cup, saucer, and spoon of 1936. Known only as Object in the permanent collection of New York's Museum of Modern Art—a situation which has undoubtedly contributed to its status as one of the more important surrealist objects—the work's true title is Déjeuner en fourrure. It is particularly crucial to note this because the way the male Surrealists understood the work is very much an elaboration of its title. But it was not Oppenheim's choice. She wanted only to explore the implications of a conversation with Picasso about decorative, if unusual, fur-covered jewelry. 7 Breton, on the other hand, wanted to exploit the aura of scandalous female sexuality that he took for granted in Edouard Manet's celebrated Déjeuner sur l'herbe (1863) and the blatant sexual fetishism of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's Venus im Pelz (Venus in Furs, 1870), known in France as Vénus en fourrures. The concavity of Oppenheim's cup then punned with the rigidity of the spoon which would be inserted into it, while the hairy gustatory sensation that accompanied the act resonated with the sophomoric humor that the male Surrealists found so endearing. Here, the compromised character of the principle of juxtaposition is once again clearly male. In fact, we are justified in asking whether the work is truly Oppenheim's at all, for in a conversation that took place only shortly before she died, she implied to me that it was not her "creation" apart from the actual manufacture. 8 Clearly, then, some of the works of women involved in Surrealism were simply overcome by association with male meanings.

This cannot be said of Leonora Carrington, who seems to have been willing to borrow one of the models of male surrealist endeavor. Chadwick has linked Carrington's Autoportrait: à l'auberge du cheval d'Aube (1937–38) 9 to "childhood worlds of fantasy and magic... capable of creative transformation through mental rather than sexual power" (79). Only the repudiation of the obviously sexual redeems what is otherwise still compromised by adherence to the male modernist models of regression and metamorphosis, for there is nothing intrinsically good about the toys of childhood. Moreover, this femme-enfant's toys provide a clear escape from the enclosing walls only by a transformation begun by a man: the white rocking horse comes alive in the window in the distance, giving a release which Carrington herself explicitly associated with the shamanistic activities of Ernst (79). The implication is that without the intervention of this male element, the central figure would remain trapped, like the female arms and feet of the chair on which she sits, itself so reminiscent of contemporary fetishizing works by Masson and Kurt Seligmann. If Carrington was truly exploring herself in this work, then she seems to have concluded that she was genuinely creative, but chiefly because her ability
to regress had been awakened by Ernst. One could say much the same thing of the ostensibly feminist reclamation of sorcery and the intuitive control of nature signaled by the figure's devil-horned gesture and the mammiferous hyena it invokes.

Gloria Feman Orenstein has argued that Carrington constantly liberated the fundamental animal nature of women as a metaphor of originary female creativity, implying that such a regression was in fact a forward step towards freedom. On the other hand, Renée Riese Hubert has proposed exactly the opposite—that the painting emblemizes female imprisonment. What are we to make of this interpretive contradiction? Is it just a matter of opinion or differences in the respective authors’ horizons of expectations? To what extent does specific cultural analysis of the period in which the work was made support or deny one of the interpretations?

Perhaps the real strength of the picture is in its fusion of biological creativity, represented by the hyena, and artistic creativity, represented by the sorceress-hysteric. Nevertheless, even if this is the picture’s strength, then it is a force imparted by the corrupted vocabulary of male Surrealism: let us not forget that hysteria (of which sorcery was an early manifestation) was a supreme means of expression outside of the control of the hysterical woman, at least as far as Surrealism was concerned. To sum up, then, Carrington’s *Autoportrait* can be understood as toing the party line, so to speak, accepting the dependent role of the prelogical entity. It does so, however, without the usual erotic overtones.

Many other women artists exploited the childhood metaphor, of course—one thinks especially of Dorothea Tanning’s ostensibly autobiographical *Children’s Games* of 1942, in which playtime amounts to a demobilization and disordering of the world analogous to the surrealist revolution. Still, it would be quite incorrect to assume that there is no depiction of adult sexual experience in the work of women. Fini’s graphic works include illustrations of a woman fondling a man’s erect penis, oral sex, a man with an erection subduing a woman, and a number of other such things. One of Valentine Hugo’s illustrations for the Marquis de Sade’s *Eugénie de Franval* (1948) is a fragment of an explicit copulation, with a female hand guiding a phallus into a vagina. Black and white stars twinkle around the lovers, suggesting the cosmos during sex, yet another way to disorder the world.

It may be, however, that the sense of disarray is an illusion, for one often uncovers evocations of the same “natural order”—that is, female dependence and subordination—that marks the works of male artists. Hugo’s untitled “object of symbolic function” (Fig. 1) is a thinly veiled allegory of the sexual chase and the psychological games employed by both sexes in the eternal round: on a gaming board which clearly indicates chance and risk, Hugo placed two gloves, one of which penetrates the other by slipping a finger just under the cuff. It is the female that is penetrated, for Hugo has coded the sexes through color (virginal white versus carnal red) and position (male convexity versus female concavity). Moreover, the female fingers hold a die which is not only another sign of chance but may also be a characteristic surrealist pun. Man Ray’s 1929 film *Le Mystère de chateau de dés [The Mystery of the Chateau of Dice]* was inspired by a line of Stéphane Mallarmé’s poetry: “un coup de dés n’abolira jamais le hasard” ("the throw of the dice will never abolish chance"). Hugo’s object may have been intended to play off the same phrase by roughly reversing *coup de dés* to *dé à coudre*, “thimble.” The resonance of a thimble in this context is once again sexual, involving penetrating fingers, an overtone of domestic subordination, and a fashionably Lautréamontesque allusion to a sewing machine. And for those who miss the association, Hugo has literally pinned it down: red and white thumbtacks entrap the gloves in a net of sorts, which may relate to the types of “black widow” representations that one finds in the photographic works of Man Ray. But who can say if this is a condemnation or a desire, for the work can be interpreted as autobiography: it was fabricated in the middle of a short period of eighteen months during which Hugo and Breton were extremely close. The artist loved the suitors of the *femme-enfant* to the point of distraction, but at forty-four years of age she
was simply too old to divert him for long. She was also too sophisticated, presumably, and too capable; unlike Tanning, she did not exploit the imagery of childhood in her art. Of course, it is also quite probable that Hugo was consciously manipulating, tongue in cheek, the same quasi-Freudian clichés that the male artists exploited.

There were other alternatives. Instead of regressive escapism or adult conformism, one could select the mythic origins of the world and the goddess that created it. There is no doubt that many of the women artists knew Robert Graves's *The White Goddess*, an attempt to retrieve matriarchal traditions from a vague past obscured by patriarchal suppression and out-and-out corruption. For example, Carrington certainly knew of the great goddess Danu (Chadwick 198), whom Graves described as a universal Mother existing prior to the Judaeo-Christian Father. Greek myths deprived her of her divinity and made her Danaé, the mortal who was impregnated by Zeus's shower of gold—a dim reflection of the earth-mother fructified by rain. Carrington's restoration of the goddess to her former omnipotent stature leads some to conclude that the artist was making feminist headway, but such observations ignore the multiplicity of ideologies that contribute to feminism. For instance, a feminist could easily ask what purpose is really served if one forgets that all such deities began as allegorizations or personifications of natural processes and rudimentary biology. Add to this the specifically antifeminist mind-set of a postwar France that forbade contraception, and we realize that women's myths of Woman as nature are as culturally determined as men's myths of Woman as nature.

The fundamental ambiguity of goddess-reclamation is reflected in the comments of the artists themselves. Carrington asserted in 1976:

[Women's rights] must be Taken Back
Again, including the mysteries
which were ours and which were violated,
stolen or destroyed. . . .

Tanning, on the other hand, ridiculed the idea of women's mysteries like Mother Nature: "Can't you see her, tentacles waving in the void, her body dragging its track of slime...?" Historians of art are equally divided: Estella Lauter has argued that a uniquely feminine reality is exposed through such salvage operations, whereas Linda Nochlin seems convinced that a return to the mythic nature-woman is the very antithesis of historical action.

Regardless of the goddess, a concern primarily with the self links some of the women artists to the surrealist movement as clearly as any individual motif or technical device. With the exceptions of Grace Pailthorpe, whose psychological concerns with genuine expression led her to describe male surrealist art as unreliable (Chadwick 222), and Lee Miller and Toyen, both of whom turned from themselves to comment on World War II (Chadwick 232–33), the women Surrealists can be described in the same terms of narcissism and abrogation of social responsibility that are applicable to the men. None of them, for example, appeared to have been involved with the women's movement until the 1970s, when it became yet another fashion to retrieve women artists. Only one of them, Eileen Agar, read the writings of Thomas Malthus (Chadwick 130), whose economically and demographically based principles of population control were imperative to some of the more outspoken French feminists' demands for birth control. It is thus not incidental that the artists themselves were quite at odds with the subject of motherhood; they all dealt with it as a personal issue, rather than as a social one. Carrington and Miller both have children, but Agar, Fini, and Oppenheim were indifferent or actively opposed. Tanning depicted reproduction as violent and alienating in her *Maternity* (1946), while her *Maternity II* (1953) shows its as animalistic at best. Where the former painting reveals physical isolation and torn clothing, the latter has a wide-eyed, disheveled woman on all fours, surrounded by a litter of anthropoid pups reminiscent of her famous dog, Katchina. In complete contrast, Kahlo's paintings on the subject are the most intensely moving of any produced by an artist even loosely affiliated with Surrealism; hers are genuine cries of psychological and physical distress, chiefly because of her damaged spine, her broken marriage, and her miscarriages. However, the very authenticity of her self-exploration marks her pictures as well beyond the artificial interlacings of Surrealism, despite their superficial likenesses.

Kahlo's undeniable sincerity marked her as an artist of deeper importance than any other woman with links to Surrealism. Those others may have been more talented—Hugo's draughtsmanship is excellent, if a little mannered. Others were certainly more confrontational—Bona de Mandiargue's nipple-exposing evening dress is provocation through subordination par excellence. But no one was more brutally immediate and deeply personal while, paradoxically, seeming so universal. Because of this, Kahlo's work really should not be discussed here. Nor should those works executed by other women artists after they had escaped the immediate circle of Surrealism, by which time French women had finally received the right to vote—that is, when social and ideological circumstances intervene less in the act of interpretation, ensuring that we can read metaphors more elaborately and with less historical specificity. Works of the later periods seem less "spoiled," as it were, when they are chronologically and geographically remote. Unfortunately, there is no way to assess the sincerity of any of these artists (male or female, I suppose it need not be said). Presumably, they all were true to themselves, but their adherence to surrealist routine colored their work.

We can only conclude that the participation of living women in a move-
ment which disdained them in favor of a number of abstractions is problematic in the extreme. Moreover, the accounts of the women themselves are often contradictory: for every Fini, who sought a degree of independence from her male associates—although it should be noted that there is at least a rumor that Breton prevented Fini from any participation in the movement on personal grounds—there was a Kay Sage, who said it was “natural” that she took more interest in the work of her husband Yves Tanguy than he did in hers, or a Leonora Carrington, seated like a disciple at the feet of Max Ernst (Chadwick 81, 98, and 80, respectively). So why did women participate? The answer is quite unclear: on one side are the women who have freely admitted that it was only because of their attachments to men; on the other are those who participated because Surrealism itself had become a new cultural fashion. With this in mind, it is important to note that the vast majority of women appeared on the horizon just as Surrealism became increasingly preoccupied with advertising, haute couture, and jewelry (see Chadwick 55, 119, 122). That this is so has nothing whatsoever to do with the artists’ integrity or with their gender; it shows only that the historical moment of major innovation had passed. Surrealism’s basic tenets were thoroughly entrenched and its productions, most notably in the visual arts, were rapidly degenerating into easily consumable mannerisms.

The great majority of the women artists were thus pressed into service as reinforcements, as it were. Many of them perpetuated some aspects of the negative iconography of Woman, perhaps unwittingly or in spite of attempts to subvert them. Itthell Colquhoun, Fini, Oppenheim, and Toyen, for instance, all made images that continued to exploit male castration anxiety and/or the femme fatale. Some of those who chose not to draw directly from the stagnant pool of surrealist ideas were nevertheless influenced by it, even if only through their relationships with men. The most productive periods of several women were precipitated by the loss of their painter-mates (Chadwick 84, 92, 102), which suggests such a high degree of dependency that it is no surprise their works became synonymous with self-exploration: they had nowhere else to look.

The most fundamental aporia now comes into view: if spiritual self-exploration—at least as it surfaces in the frequently appearing motif of the spiritual quest (Chadwick 214, 218)—indicates a heartfelt desire to find oneself without adherence to Freudian clichés, as well as to establish or to renew old metaphors of women’s (nonreproductive) creativity, then certain notions of creativity, even talent, were approved by women, while spirituality was understood at face value, not as metaphor. Since such a defense would therefore reverse two basic surrealist tenets—the repudiation of talent, authorial motivation, or creativity, and spirituality taken strictly as metaphor—it would appear that some of these women artists were not really Surrealists at all. Accordingly, Chadwick herself notes that it might be more profitable to describe these artists as Magic Realists or Neo-Romantics (220). Considering Fini’s work, Marcel Brion has suggested “fantastic realism.” Whatever they are called, some of the works of the women artists with connections to Surrealism redefine it in such a way that they actually leave the movement’s “pioneering exploration of creative waters” behind. It is for this reason that I quite arbitrarily decide not to follow them here.

For the moment, it is imperative to explore further the nature of the contradiction itself, especially since the female iconographies cannot absolutely be distinguished from those of the male artists. Of course, it is now becoming commonplace to assert that men and women may use the same vocabularies, but that they speak fundamentally different dialects. Another, less flattering explanation is that some of the women were making a special effort to “speak,” as it were, the tongue of those who oppressed them. In the current social psychology of language, this phenomenon is studied under the rubric “speech accommodation theory,” which alleges, among other things, that “people are more likely to converge towards the speech patterns of their recipients when they desire their approval and when the perceived costs for doing so are proportionally lower than the anticipated rewards.” Unfortunately, the empirical findings of this discipline are not of much help in the present context, because most experiments have dealt with interacting people of apparently equal status, which certainly is not the case for us. On a theoretical level, however, it is not difficult to imagine why an empowered gender would refuse to listen to a subordinated one unless the latter linguistically accommodated the former. This, in turn, would further ensure that the subordinated group would be perceived as powerless on its own. (Oppenheim spoke most succinctly to this in her Geneviève, whose broken arms signal a plaintive cry of despair in the face of creative paralysis).

Some will say that the brevity of this consideration of women artists gives them short shrift. This is true, but it is defensible on the grounds that this essay is built on the deconstructed ruins of the ideology behind Surrealism, which was entirely the contribution of males. The men who merely subscribed to it deserve no more and no less attention than any other third- or fourth-generation Surrealists, who are also given short shrift. Those women who heroically rose above it—the better part of those whose names are mentioned above—are gradually being more profitably examined in contexts which correctly downplay or elide the surrealist connections. In any case, the women’s Woman was founded to a certain degree on the actual experience of womanhood, even when tinted by male preoccupations. In contrast, the men’s Woman was fabricated from patriarchal habits of mind, sexual proclivities, and even unconscious political attitudes.

With the last point in mind, it is interesting to speculate why none of the
Surrealists, male or female, were interested in the vote for women in the 1930s. The biggest fear of the French Senate was that women, statistically proven to attend church in larger numbers than men, would vote for the clerical parties, thereby threatening the security of the lay republic. The church was anathema to the Surrealists as well. Breton, for one, even threatened his daughter with Mass as a form of punishment (Chadwick 61). In failing to support universal suffrage vocally, the Surrealists were thus in step with the very bourgeoisie they had hoped to overthrow. It follows that the Surrealist Woman would have virtually no power of self-determination.

Here, the thicket of problems becomes denser yet. If we consider the specific case of the iconography of female powerlessness in Surrealism, it becomes impossible to determine the intentions of a particular artist. An image of a bound woman, for example, could be either a fetishistic indifference for antifeminist reasons or an outcry against the oppression of women. This situation is unresolvable, unless we reorient ourselves and the terms of the discourse entirely. To this end, we note the words of Susanne Kappeler, who considers the iconography of powerlessness to be a pornography of representation, by which she means not sex or morality, but a new perspective on the very function of representation itself in contemporary society: “We have a cultural discourse that is monologic, a self-representation of a dominant group, and a distribution of roles that reflects the inequality of the subject and the object.” As much could be said of Surrealism. The women who did speak up during that particular monologue were drowned out by male voices because their historical moment—which was not that of political representation but of insights and values—had not yet come.

Where do we end vis-à-vis the interpretability of the women’s works? If we end by describing them as having objective meaning relating only to the social codes created by men, the works suffer and we seem to be blaming the victims for their own oppression. Besides, we must begin to think of all artists as “reactive beings... capable of selecting their own input and negotiating their status...”, at least to some extent. If, on the other hand, we say it is up to our own interpretive ingenuity to see the works as locales for the proliferation of pro- or proto-feminist meaning, then we may be giving our own horizon of expectations priority over the historical and material conditions which infused the work to begin with. The long and the short of the story, then, is that we have discovered the issue of methodology itself to be deeply problematic in such a socially crucial area. It is necessary, in a word, to learn to speak with forked tongues. And since we have no metalanguage with which to characterize absolutely where the female Surrealists stand, what we must do is remain eternally vigilant to our own psychological, social, ideological, and methodological preoccupations. Only when they are exposed and examined can we begin the great interpretive endeavor Kappeler calls the “dialectic of intersubjectivity.” What this means for the layman is that we must keep our minds open and share, or at the very least intervene with, each other’s monologues.

Isn’t this what most feminists always wanted anyway?

Notes

1. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 11. Subsequent references will be retained in the text.
3. I have discussed the work of André Masson and Alberto Giacometti in this regard in “On the Image of Woman in Surrealist Art” (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1988).
6. Breton, Le Surréalisme et la peinture, rev. ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), 391 and 144, respectively. Curiously, Parent is not mentioned in Chadwick, nor are almost two dozen other women who have equal claim to be included in a book purporting to deal with female artists associated with Surrealism, whether they accepted or rejected the label of “Surrealist” (p. 10). Fortunately, they are represented in La Femme surréaliste: Obligues 14–15 (1977), 1–321.
7. For the origins of the piece, see Nicolas Calas, “Meret Oppenheim: Confrontations,” Artforum 16:10 (Summer 1978), 24.
9. Perhaps the most frequently reproduced of Carrington’s paintings, the Autoprotait has most recently been fruitfully discussed in Janice Helland, “Surrealism and Esoteric Feminism in the Paintings of Leonora Carrington,” RACAR 16:1 (1989), 53-61 and fig. 98. (One wonders if the Auto of the title is just the metaphorical dawn or an allusion to André Breton’s daughter, who would then have been between eight and twenty-four months old.)
11. Reproduced in Hubert, 76.


17. Reproduced in Alain Bosquet, Dorothea Tanning (Paris: Pauvert, 1966), 34 and 72, respectively.


20. See Colquhoun's Pine Family (1941) and Fini's Chthonian Divinity Watching Over the Sleep of a Young Man (1947), reproduced in Chadwick, figs. 106 and 107. An untitled and undated drawing by Oppenheim features a crucified penis; reproduced in La Femme surréaliste: Obliques, 192. Toyen's Dessin érotique (1936) is a drawing of a woman's gloved hands manipulating severed male genitals bleeding from the urethra; reproduced in Styrsky, Toyen, Heisler (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1982), 65.


22. With this final phrase, Chadwick, 237, leaves the reader with the impression that Surrealism was a harmless investigation of aesthetic originality and productivity. This is precisely the impression that we are here trying to avoid.

23. The sources are far too numerous to list here. A useful introduction with a comprehensive bibliography is Mary Ritchie Key, Male/Female Language (Metcullen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1975).

